



Call for the IATTC to support stronger transparency and anti-IUU measures

August 2026

Oceana, The Pew Charitable Trusts and WWF are working together in a coalition of non-governmental organisations to ensure that the EU's engagement with Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and key partners leads to strong transparency and anti-illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing measures worldwide.

In a coalition report titled "[Achieving transparency and combating IUU fishing in RFMOs](#)"¹, we outline the minimum transparency and anti-IUU fishing measures that we consider essential for RFMO Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) and fishing entities to adopt and implement in order to end IUU fishing. The report's annexes are updated annually to reflect the progress achieved in RFMOs in adopting these key measures.

This document details vital measures for discussion and adoption at the 104th meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC).

To promote transparency and tackle IUU fishing, we ask IATTC Commission Members, Cooperating Non-members and participating Territories (CPCs) to prioritise the following actions:

1. Adopt a new measure to improve traceability through an electronic Catch Documentation Scheme

Regional fisheries bodies need to deliver effective enforcement mechanisms and create a culture of compliance with fishing regulations among their CPCs. One of the most effective mechanisms for monitoring catches, verifying their legality and preventing IUU fishing, is the adoption of electronic Catch Documentation Schemes (CDS). Although a CDS may not prevent all forms of IUU fishing, it can complement other monitoring, control and enforcement efforts, and significantly improve traceability along the value chain. The key role of CDS has been highlighted by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), including in the last two meetings,² and more recently at the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade.³ Other regional fisheries bodies, such as CCAMLR, CCSBT and ICCAT, have successfully deployed such schemes for years.

The EU IUU Fishing Coalition welcomes the ongoing inter-sessional work, including the work at the IATTC-WCPFC Joint Working Group on CDS for Pacific bluefin, and is particularly encouraged by Resolution C-24-03 on establishing a CDS for Pacific bluefin tuna compatible with other Pacific bluefin

¹ <http://www.iuuwatch.eu/2019/06/new-report-achieving-transparency-and-combating-iuu-fishing-in-rfmos/>

² Thirty-fifth Session: <https://www.fao.org/3/nk497en/nk497en.pdf>; Thirty-sixth Session: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/bitstreams/d81df4ca-492b-443a-bd43-a4f63a294472/download>

³ 20th Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Virtual meeting, 8–12 September 2025, <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd7976t>

tuna CDSs by 31 December 2026. We also welcome the draft Resolution presented at the seventh IATTC-WCPFC Joint Working Group meeting on an electronic Pacific Bluefin tuna Catch Documentation scheme (ePBCD).

This year there is a clear opportunity to advance CDS in bluefin tuna fisheries in the Pacific Ocean to ensure bluefin catches are properly monitored. The EU IUU Coalition urges CPCs to adopt the ePBCD proposal. IATTC should ensure alignment of ePBCD's key data elements with existing CDS and also agree on a phased approach that would eventually cover more at-risk stocks (i.e. bigeye, swordfish and north Pacific striped marlin).

2. Adopt a measure to improve transparency over who engages in and benefits from IUU fishing

RFMOs should adopt measures that require their contracting parties to verify and take appropriate measures if any of their nationals, whether a natural or legal person subject to their jurisdiction, are responsible for, benefiting from, supporting or engaging in IUU fishing activities. Where such involvement is established, CPCs should be required to take appropriate and effective action. Other regional fisheries bodies, including CCAMLR, GFCM, ICCAT, SIOFA, SPRFMO, and most recently IOTC, have adopted or strengthened measures that promote compliance by nationals.

Effective implementation of such measures requires greater transparency over the ownership and control of fishing vessels. The IATTC should collect beneficial ownership information, identifying the natural person(s) who ultimately profit from the vessel's activities, including where ownership or control is exercised indirectly through one or more legal entities or arrangements. Collecting this information would help ensure that fishery managers know who is fishing within the Convention Area and benefits from its resources, and empower them to take appropriate and prompt action, particularly in cases of IUU fishing.

The EU IUU Fishing Coalition urges IATTC to amend its regional vessel registry (C-24-07) in order to collect the beneficial owner's information. Furthermore, we urge IATTC to adopt a Resolution that explicitly requires the CPCs to identify, verify and take appropriate action against nationals who are found to be engaged in, responsible for, benefiting from or supporting IUU activities (e.g. as operators, effective beneficiaries, owners, logistics and service providers, including insurance providers and other financial service providers). Such measures are already in place in ICCAT, IOTC, CCAMLR and SIOFA.

3. Further strengthen Resolution C-21-07 on Port State Measures

Adopting effective port State measures minimises the risk of IUU-caught fish entering international markets. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) is the only legally binding international agreement that specifically targets IUU fishing and is the most cost-effective means to ensure the sustainability of fisheries through the enforcement of rules and regulations at port.

While acknowledging the progress made with the adoption of Resolution C-21-07 (PSMs), the measure is non-binding and more needs to be done to better align it with the PSMA to bridge several gaps in its effective implementation.

The EU IUU Fishing Coalition calls for all IATTC Members to make the PSM Resolution binding, 20 of the 26 have opted in already and of the 6 remaining, 3 are already Parties to the PSMA. We recognise

the special requirements for developing States and the need to support those that have not done so already to opt-in/support a mandatory measure, we therefore urge Members to ensure the assistance fund is sufficiently resourced and ready to disperse to support effective implementation.

Furthermore, the EU IUU Fishing Coalition calls for IATTC to align the Resolution with the PSMA, by introducing more detailed provisions on national coordination, information exchange (including through the development of an electronic-PSM system or by adopting the FAO's Global Information Exchange System), use of ports and training to ensure that ports are not an avenue for IUU products to enter the seafood supply chain.

4. Amend Resolution C-14-02 to further strengthen vessel monitoring

Vessel monitoring systems (VMS) are crucial for RFMOs and a vital requirement with respect to monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing and fishing-related activities. Current RFMO practices vary with different levels of accuracy, reporting and polling requirements and frequencies, sharing protocols and implementation rates. These diverging modalities can create gaps, inefficiencies and difficulties for cross-jurisdiction operators, allowing IUU vessels to slip through the net.

The EU IUU Fishing Coalition calls on IATTC to align its vessel monitoring requirements with the best practice of other RFMOs, including ICCAT, NAFO, NEAFC and NPFC, by increasing polling rate to hourly, introducing provisions on manual reporting in case of malfunction and sharing positioning and vessel id data with coastal state or the Secretariat when deemed necessary, including for enforcement or inspection purposes.

5. Adopt a high seas boarding and inspection scheme

Duly established high seas boarding and inspection (HSBI) procedures, as called for in articles 21 and 23 of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and in FAOs International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (IPOA-IUU), are crucial to ensure compliance with conservation and management measures. CCAMLR and other RFMOs, for example NAFO, NEAFC, SIOFA, SPRFMO and WCPFC, have adopted and have been implementing such schemes for years to ensure effective, transparent, and consistent high seas boardings and inspections in their respective convention areas. Others, like ICCAT, have initiated discussions on introducing one.

The EU IUU Fishing Coalition calls on all CPCs to engage in the discussions over the establishment of an HSBI scheme and agree and adopt a resolution that takes into account best practices by other RFMOs. To support these efforts, we have published a white paper on high seas boarding and inspection schemes that also includes an indicative step by step guide on how HSBI schemes work.

6. Improve labour standards for crew on fishing vessels in line with international conventions

As acknowledged by the member States of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the FAO during the 5th FAO/ILO/IMO Joint Working Group meeting on IUU Fishing and other related matters in Geneva, Switzerland, , on 8-12 January 2024, vessels with substandard safety and working conditions for fishers and observers are frequently linked to IUU fishing activities and the need for States to share information on labour and fisheries issues.

A recent study by the FISH Safety Foundation has found that more than 100.000 fishing-related deaths occur each year.⁴ Widespread implementation of relevant minimum international standards and full reporting of safety and labour-related incidents will allow for the identification and potential mitigation of dangerous situations and indirectly help to reduce IUU fishing activity. Other RFMOs have work streams on labour and safety standards and have also established working groups, including ICCAT in 2021, “acknowledging that unfair and abusive labour practices and unsafe working conditions are dire problems in international fisheries.”

The EU IUU Fishing Coalition calls on IATTC parties to adopt a resolution on crew safety, wellbeing and labour standards during the 2026 annual meeting and to establish a working group charged with developing recommendations based on relevant international conventions, including the ILO Work in Fishing Convention (C188) and the 2012 IMO Cape Town Agreement on fishing vessel safety. Safe and decent working and living conditions for all fishers and fisheries observers on board vessels flying their flag and operating within the Convention Area must be ensured.

We also encourage CPCs to coordinate inspections between PSM and port State control regimes, as recommended by the FAO/IMO/ILO, as these would enable ports to provide an effective and cost-efficient front in combatting IUU fishing, while contributing to improved safety and labour conditions onboard fishing vessels. We recommend that CPCs take advantage of the pilot training course on coordinated inspections led by IOTC and the Indian Ocean MoU and for CPCs to attend the relevant FAO training courses.

7. Strengthen the compliance process and improve transparency

Transparency is a particularly important but often overlooked aspect of RFMOs’ compliance review processes. Granting public access to information about those who violate rules and jeopardize the health of fisheries is vitally important in ensuring that RFMOs are accountable to all stakeholders with interests in the shared public resources under their management. The more accountable and transparent an RFMO, the more likely it is to make decisions that favour the long-term sustainability of fish stocks.

The EU IUU Fishing Coalition acknowledges the recent positive development with the adoption of Resolution C-22-02 and the introduction of status categories and suggested actions in response to non-compliance (Annex 2) – additions that will improve compliance reporting within the RFMO. The Coalition calls on IATTC to further continue efforts to strengthen the compliance process by publishing the compliance reports annually as per best practice by most RFMOs, addressing the significant existing backlog and introducing a ranking system to assess the severity of non-compliance cases. Compliance mechanisms must be strengthened to ensure processes are transparent and robust so that members are held accountable for the implementation of all conservation and management measures and data reporting requirements and there are clear consequences for non-compliance. In this context, it has been agreed in section 2b of the Resolution C-22-02 to convene an intersessional committee meeting, biennially, specifically to improve the compliance review process.

The EU IUU Coalition calls upon the IATTC to use the 2nd Special Biennial Meeting of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures Adopted by the Commission scheduled this year to further develop the workplan to improve the IATTC compliance process based on the above recommendations.

⁴ S. Willis and E. Holliday, “Triggering Death: Quantifying the True Human Cost of Global Fishing” (FISH Safety Foundation, 2022), <https://the-human-cost-of-fishing.org>