

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

93RD MEETING

**San Diego, California (USA)
24, 27 – 30 August 2018**

PROPOSAL IATTC-93 M-2B

SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES

**MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF
PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN,
2019 AND 2020**

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) gathered in La Jolla, California (USA), on the occasion of its 93rd Meeting:

Taking into account that the stock of Pacific bluefin tuna is caught in both the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) and the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Recognizing with concern that the 2018 stock assessment of Pacific bluefin tuna by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) shows the following:

- Although the spawning stock biomass (SSB) appears to have grown slightly in the last few years, SSB remains near the historic low point (ratio of SSB in 2016 relative to the theoretical unfished SSB ($SSB_{2016}/SSB_{F=0}$, the depletion ratio) estimated in this assessment is 3.3%);
- The stock is overfished relative to 20%SSB_{F=0}, which is the second rebuilding target recommended by the Joint IATTC-Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee (NC) Working Group, and is subject to overfishing relative to most of the common fishing intensity-based reference points;
- The projection results are strongly influenced by the inclusion of the relatively high, but uncertain recruitment estimate for 2016; and,

~~● Harvest controls are needed to reduce the risk of the SSB falling below its historically lowest levels.~~

Taking into consideration that IATTC Members, through resolutions and voluntary actions, have, since 2012, effected 40% reductions in the catch of Pacific bluefin tuna across the entire range of age classes available in the EPO;

Noting that in 2018 the IATTC Scientific Staff did not recommend additional measures because the measures established in Resolution C-16-08 are adequate to meet the rebuilding targets recommended by the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group;

Recognizing the recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) from its ninth meeting in May 2018, in which the SAC recommended that the Commission take note of the current status of Pacific bluefin tuna, the different impacts of harvesting small and large Pacific bluefin tuna, and of the increased risks of not achieving the rebuilding targets if the Resolution (C-16-08) is modified to increase catch limits;

Recalling that Article VII, paragraph 1(c) of the Antigua Convention provides that the Commission shall “adopt measures that are based on the best scientific evidence available to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fish stocks covered by this Convention and to maintain or restore the populations of harvested species at levels of abundance which can produce the maximum sustainable yield...”;

Urging all IATTC Members and Cooperating Non-Members (CPCs) involved in this fishery to participate in a fair and equitable manner, and without exceptions, in the discussion and adoption of conservation measures applicable to the stock throughout its entire range;

Mindful that these measures are intended as an interim step towards assuring sustainability of the Pacific bluefin tuna resource, consistent with the precautionary approach, and the objectives of the long-term management framework for the conservation and management of Pacific bluefin tuna in the EPO;

Noting that the IATTC has adopted mandatory conservation and management measures for Pacific bluefin tuna for 2012-2018, and that the measures resulted in reducing catches in the EPO; and,

Desirous that combined conservation and management measures by the WCPFC and the IATTC, together with other voluntary measures aimed at controlling fishing mortality, should be implemented to better the condition of the Pacific bluefin tuna stock.

Resolves as follows:

1. The Commission shall implement this Resolution in accordance with the long-term management objectives of Pacific bluefin tuna in paragraph 1 of Resolution C-18-XX [Amendment to Resolution C-16-08].
2. Each CPC shall report sport fishery catches of Pacific bluefin tuna semi-annually to the Director. ~~CPCs shall continue their current management of sport fisheries taken in accordance with paragraph 5 of Resolution C-14-06.~~ Each CPC shall continue to ensure that catches of Pacific bluefin tuna by sportfishing vessels operating under its jurisdiction are reduced in a manner commensurate with reductions in commercial catches.
3. During 2019 and 2020, in the IATTC Convention Area, combined total commercial catches of Pacific bluefin tuna by all CPCs shall not exceed the catch limit of 6,260 metric tons¹. No CPC shall exceed 3,500 metric tons in 2019.
4. Any CPC other than Mexico with historical commercial catches of Pacific bluefin tuna in the Convention Area may catch 600 metric tons of Pacific bluefin tuna in commercial fisheries in 2019 and 2020, combined, but not exceeding 425 tons in any year. The 600 t catch limit for each CPC under this paragraph will be subtracted and reserved from the total catch limit in paragraph 3 for the exclusive use of that CPC.
 5. Any over-harvest shall be deducted from catch in the following year in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Resolution C-18-XX [Amendment to Resolution C-16-08]. Over-harvest of the biennial catch limits established in Resolution C-16-08 shall be deducted from catch limits applicable to this Resolution-2019. IATTC-93 PROP M-2B USA Bluefin tuna (2019-2020)

¹ The catch limit for 2019-~~and~~2020 is subject to final data on commercial catches of Pacific bluefin tuna in 2018 and does not prejudice the outcome of relevant domestic legal issues in affected CPCs, the consideration of which does not create a precedent for compliance with catch limits in this or future resolutions. Pursuant to Paragraph 10, the Director will notify the possible change to the catch limit for approval by the Commission subject to the Commission’s rules for intersessional decision-making (Rules of Procedure, Section VIII). The catch limit for 2019-2020 shall not exceed 6,600 t, consistent with noting the IATTC Scientific Staff recommendation that Resolution C-16-08 which established a catch limit in the EPO of 6,600 t is adequate.

6. Under-harvest of biennial catch limits established in Resolution C-16-08 shall be added to catch limits applicable to this Resolution2019 in accordance with Paragraph 4 of Resolution C-18-XX.
7. ~~If practicable,~~ CPCs should endeavor to manage catches by vessels under their respective national jurisdictions in such a manner and through such mechanisms as might be applied, with the objective of reducing the proportion of fish of less than 30 kg in the catch toward 50% of total catch, taking into consideration the scientific advice of the ISC and the IATTC staff. At the annual meeting of the IATTC in 2020, the Scientific Staff shall present the results of the 2019 fishing season in this regard for the Commission's review. CPCs shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the catch limits specified in paragraphs 3 and 4 are not exceeded in 2019 and 2020, without prejudging the adoption by the CPCs of additional management and conservation measures within their national jurisdiction.
8. In 2019 and 2020, each CPC shall report its catches to the Director weekly after 50% of its annual catch limit in each year is reached.
9. ~~The Director will send a first notice to the CPCs when total catches by all CPCs reaches 50% (i.e., 3,300 mt) of the combined 2019-2020 limit. The Director will likewise send similar notices when 60% (3,960 mt), 70% (4,620 mt), and 80% (5,280 mt) of 6,600mt is reached. When 90% (5,940 mt) is reached, the Director will send the corresponding notice to all CPCs, with a projection of when the combined catch limit for 2019-2020 established in Paragraph 3 will be reached, and the CPCs will take the necessary internal measures to avoid exceeding the limits established in Paragraphs 3 and 4. The Director will send out notices to all CPCs when 75% and 90% of the limits in Paragraphs 3 or 4 have been reached. The Director will send out a notice to all CPCs when the combined catch limit of 6,600 mt has limits in Paragraphs 3 or 4 have been reached. CPCs shall take the necessary internal measures to avoid exceeding the limits established in Paragraphs 3 or 4.~~
10. By January 31 in 2019 and 2020, the Director shall notify all CPCs of the catch limit for 2019 and 2020 in accordance with Paragraphs 3 and 4 of this resolution and taking into account any over-harvest or under-harvest in accordance with Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Resolution C-18-XX [Amendment to Resolution C-16-08].
11. In 2019 and 2020, the IATTC Scientific Staff shall present an assessment to the Scientific Advisory Committee of the effectiveness of this resolution also taking into consideration the results of the ISC's latest Pacific bluefin tuna stock assessment, harvest scenario projections performed by the ISC, and conservation and management measures for Pacific bluefin tuna adopted by the WCPFC. The Commission shall consider new management measures to apply beyond 2020 based on the results of the assessment.
12. Taking into consideration the outcomes of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group on Pacific bluefin tuna and meetings of the WCPFC, the Commission shall review this Resolution and consider revising the catch limits established in this resolution, taking into account the need for an equitable distribution of catch, during the 2019 Annual Meeting of the IATTC.