

**INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION**

**SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**TENTH MEETING**

**San Diego , California (USA)**

**13-17 May 2019**

**DOCUMENT SAC-10 INF-A(i)**

**2018 ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER REPORT FOR UNITED STATES TUNA  
LONGLINE FISHERY IN THE IATTC CONVENTION AREA**



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
West Coast Region  
Sustainable Fisheries Division  
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200  
Long Beach, California 90802

150413WCR2014SF00073:TD

May 6, 2019

Dr. Guillermo Compeán, Director  
Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)  
8901 La Jolla Shores Drive  
La Jolla, California 92037-1508

Re: Submission of United States longline observer data per Resolution C-11-08

Dear Dr. Compeán:

This letter and report are submitted pursuant to IATTC Resolution C-11-08, *Resolution on Scientific Observers for Longline Vessels*. Attached is a report that summarizes observer data and provides information on effort (i.e., fishing days); these data are preliminary and subject to change. The enclosed report does not include the total and percent observed effort in the deep-set longline fleet because those data have not yet been summarized for 2018. When they are complete, the National Marine Fisheries Service will submit an update to the report.

The raw data (set-level) for 2018 will be submitted shortly, as agreed to by the parties at the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SAC and 92<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the IATTC.

Please contact me at 562-980-4036 or [Rachael.Wadsworth@noaa.gov](mailto:Rachael.Wadsworth@noaa.gov) if there are any questions regarding the United States data reporting in accordance with Resolution C-11-08.

Sincerely,

Rachael Wadsworth  
Acting Highly Migratory Species Branch Chief

Enclosure

cc: w/ enclosure

Barry Thom, U.S. Commissioner to the IATTC  
Andrew Lawler, Alternate U.S. Commissioner to the IATTC  
David Hogan, U.S. Department of State  
William Fox, Jr., U.S. Commissioner to the IATTC  
Mike Thompson, Alternate U.S. Commissioner to the IATTC  
Kristen Koch, NMFS, Southwest Fisheries Science Center  
Bob Harman, NMFS, Pacific Islands Regional Office



Enclosure

**United States Summary of 2018 Observer Data per  
Resolution C-11-08, *Resolution on Scientific Observers for Longline Vessels***

This summary is submitted pursuant to Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Resolution C-11-08, *Resolution on Scientific Observers for Longline Vessels*. Scientific observers are required on 100 percent of all shallow-set longline trips targeting swordfish and at least 20 percent of all deep-set longline trips targeting bigeye tuna, regardless of vessel size. The observer data in this report contain only data from longline vessels based in Hawaii, which comprise over 99 percent of the U.S. pelagic longline fleet. The tables below are summaries of observer data for sets that occurred on vessels greater than 20 meters (m) in length in the IATTC Convention Area in 2018, based on begin-set position and haul date.

**Sets (i.e., fishing days<sup>1</sup>)**

A total of 267 shallow sets by vessels >20m in length were observed in the IATTC Convention Area in 2018. One-hundred percent of shallow sets (fishing days) in the IATTC Convention Area were observed. A total of 735 deep sets by vessels >20m in length were observed in the IATTC Convention Area in 2018. The percent of deep sets (fishing days) in the IATTC Convention Area by vessels >20m are not available at this time but will be updated upon receipt.

**Sea Turtle Release**

United States regulations require fishermen to release all sea turtles, alive or dead. There is no record of fishermen not complying with these regulations in 2018.

**Hook Type and Quantity**

Both the shallow-set and deep-set longline fisheries used the following hook types:

1. Offset round circle: a hook with either the point or point and barb that curves towards the shank, but is also bent so that the point and shank do not lay in the same plane. The hook has no flat edges along its shank. In 2018, these hooks were only used by the observed deep set longline vessels >20m - sizes 15/0-16/0.
2. Offset flat circle: a hook with either the point or point and barb that curves towards the shank, but is also bent so that the point and shank do not lay in the same plane. The hook will have, at least, some portion of its shank flattened. In 2018, these hooks were used in observed shallow and deep sets by longline vessels >20m. Shallow sets used size 18/0 hooks and deep sets used sizes 14/0-16/0.

In 2018, the number of hooks per set in the shallow-set longline fishery ranged in quantity from 429 to 1,590. The number of hooks per set in the deep-set longline fishery ranged from 211 to 3,836; however, the minimum number may be an outlier, with a more representative minimum being 936.

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<sup>1</sup> Each set is effectively one fishing day with a single set typically completed within 24 hours of starting.

### **Catch Species Composition**

Below are tables summarizing the species composition of animals observed caught in shallow-set and deep-set longline sets by vessels >20m in 2018 (Tables 1 to 6).

Table 1. Number of individual fish, except sharks, billfish, and rays, observed caught by the U.S. shallow-set longline fleet of vessels >20m in the IATTC Convention Area in 2018.

<b>Species Common Name</b>	<b>No. of Indiv.</b>
Dolphinfish	70
Escolar	75
Lancetfish, Longnose	586
Mola, Common	34
Oilfish	89
Opah	174
Pomfret, Brama spp.	70
Pomfret, Sickle	4
Snake Mackerel	8
Tuna, Albacore	17
Tuna, Bigeye	961
Tuna, Bluefin	1
Tuna, Skipjack	10
Tuna, Unidentified	5
Tuna, Yellowfin	346
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,450</b>

Table 2. Number of individual fish, except sharks, billfish, and rays, observed caught by the U.S. deep-set longline fleet of vessels >20m in the IATTC Convention Area in 2018.

<b>Species Common Name</b>	<b>No. of Indiv.</b>
Bony Fish, Other Identified	3
Bony Fish, Unidentified	10
Cigarfishes	5
Crestfish	5
Dolphinfish	1,876
Dolphinfish, Pompano	42
Escolar	2,285
Escolar, Longfin	112
Escolar, Roudi's	1
Fanfishes	4
Gemfish, Black	5
Hammerjaw	6
Lancetfish, Longnose	12,068
Lancetfish, Shortnose	2
Mola, Common	2
Mola, Sharptail	2
Mola, Slender	15
Oilfish	55
Opah	3,453
Pomfret, Brama spp.	129
Pomfret, Dagger	330
Pomfret, Lustrous	2
Pomfret, Rough	55
Pomfret, Sickle	2,148
Pomfret, Unidentified	5
Puffer, Pelagic	2
Puffer, Unidentified	1
Ribbonfish, Tapertail	13
Scabbardfish, Razorback	2
Snake Mackerel	4,159
Snake Mackerel, Unidentified	2
Swallowers	8
Tuna, Albacore	89
Tuna, Bigeye	9,463
Tuna, Skipjack	1,078
Tuna, Unidentified	104
Tuna, Yellowfin	1,551
Wahoo	1,372
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40,464</b>

Table 3. Number of individual sharks, rays, and billfish observed caught by the U.S. shallow-set longline fleet of vessels >20m in the IATTC Convention Area in 2018.

<b>Species Common Name</b>	<b>No. of Individ.</b>
<i>Sharks</i>	
Shark, Bigeye Thresher	1
Shark, Blue	2,440
Shark, Cookie Cutter	1
Shark, Salmon	1
Shark, Shortfin Mako	384
Shark, Oceanic White-Tip	1
Shark, Unidentified	7
Shark, Unid. Thresher	1
TOTAL	2,836
<i>Rays</i>	
Stingray, Pelagic	380
TOTAL	380
<i>Billfish</i>	
Billfish, Unidentified	1
Marlin, Blue	5
Marlin, Striped	51
Spearfish, Shortbill	7
Swordfish	3,343
TOTAL	3,407

Table 4. Number of individual sharks, rays, and billfish observed caught by the U.S. deep-set longline fleet >20m in the IATTC Convention Area in 2018.

<b>Species Common Name</b>	<b>No. of Individ.</b>
<i>Sharks</i>	
Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark	1
Dogfish, Velvet	52
Shark, Bigeye Thresher	87
Shark, Blue	3,087
Shark, Cookie Cutter	1
Shark, Crocodiel	25
Shark, Longfin Mako	8
Shark, Oceanic White-Tip	1
Shark, Other Identified	1
Shark, Pelagic Thresher	17
Shark, Shortfin Mako	383
Shark, Silky	2
Shark, Smooth Hammerhead	1
Shark, Unidentified	38
Shark, Unid. Mako	4
Shark, Unid. Thresher	19
TOTAL	3,727
<i>Rays</i>	
Stingray, Pelagic	121
TOTAL	121
<i>Billfish</i>	
Billfish, Unidentified	9
Marlin, Black	1
Marlin, Blue	51
Marlin, Striped	564
Sailfish	6
Spearfish, Shortbill	377
Swordfish	285
TOTAL	1,293

Table 5. Number of individual marine mammals, seabirds, and sea turtles observed caught by the U.S. shallow-set longline fleet >20m in the IATTC Convention Area in 2018.

<b>Species Common Name</b>	<b>No. of Indiv.</b>
<i>Marine Mammals</i>	
Dolphin, Bottlenose	1
TOTAL	1
<i>Seabirds</i>	
Albatross, Laysan	1
Albatross, Black-footed	1
TOTAL	2
<i>Sea Turtles</i>	
Turtle, Loggerhead	16
Turtle, Leatherback	4
TOTAL	20

Table 6. Number of individual marine mammals and seabirds, and sea turtles observed caught by the U.S. deep-set longline fleet >20m in the IATTC Convention Area in 2018.

<b>Species Common Name</b>	<b>No. of Indiv.</b>
<i>Marine Mammals</i>	
Unidentified Whale, Dolphin, or Porpoise	1
Whale, False Killer	3
TOTAL	4
<i>Seabirds</i>	
Albatross, Black-footed	15
Booby, Brown	1
Shearwater, Unidentified	1
TOTAL	17
<i>Sea Turtles</i>	
Turtle, Green/Black	2
Turtle, Olive Ridley	1
TOTAL	3