MEMORAMDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION (IATTC) AND FISHERIES RESOURCES INSTITUTE OF JAPAN ON PROVISION OF LONGLINE AGGREGATED OR OPERATIONAL-LEVEL-LOGBOOK DATA AND SIZE DATA TO ADVANCE THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AT THE IATTC

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and Fisheries Resources Institute (FRI) of Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency (FRA), hereafter referred to as the Parties, desirous to further their collaboration in conformity with their respective mandates and objectives, have agreed to the terms of this Memorandum of Understanding on provision of aggregated or operational-level-logbook data and size data to conduct scientific studies in line with the IATTC's Strategic Science Plan (IATTC-93-06a).

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Background

Japan has been contributing to the science done at IATTC since the early days of the Commission. Collaborative work with Japanese scientists has resulted in multiple publications over several decades, mostly on the evolution of the Japanese fleet operations in the EPO. The length frequency data from the Japanese fleet has been used to inform the selectivity of all industrial longline fisheries for yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna, swordfish and other stocks in the EPO since the implementation of the first statistical catch-at-age assessment models at the IATTC in the early 2000's. Most importantly, the catch and effort data from the Japanese fleet has been used to construct indices of abundance, which represent the main piece of information to which those models are fit. Collaboration on improving the indices of abundance has been done over the years (e.g. SAC-04-05B, SAC-07-03d; SAC-07-04a, OTH-30), and resulted in much improved benchmark assessments and fisheries indicators.

Purpose

To advance the scientific research on bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna through the use of fisheries data owned by Japan.

Agreement

The Parties have agreed on usage for the longline aggregated or operational-level-logbook data and size frequency data stored in FRI, for the Pacific Ocean, only for the purpose mentioned in the item 4 below.

The following procedures and conditions shall be followed in the implementation of this work:

1 This MOU shall enter into force on the date of the second signature and shall remain in effect until the end of the 104th IATTC meeting.

2 Logbook data

2.1 Aggregated data

Aggregated catch and effort data, unraised, for the Pacific Ocean for all years including the following information.

a. Catch year
b. Catch month
c. Size of vessel (where available)
d. Hooks between floats (where available)
e. Position (latitude, longitude) at a 1-degree resolution

f. Number of hooks
g. Catch, in number of bigeye, yellowfin, albacore, southern bluefin tuna, swordfish, striped marlin, blue marlin, black marlin, sailfish (where available) and shortbill spearfish (where available) (zero-catch cells that had a positive number of hooks will also be included)
h. Vessel identifier (where available)

Note: The data extends beyond the IATTC management area of the eastern Pacific Ocean (west of 150 W). The data for activity that took place outside of the IATTC management area in the eastern Pacific Ocean will be used for assessing the impact of nearby catch and effort on the CPUE standardization process and for addressing hypotheses that could improve the assessments of yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna in the EPO (e.g. spatial analyses). Data of species other than bigeye and yellowfin will be used for support analyses, such as cluster analyses, to define fishery targeting indicators.

2.2 Operational-level-logbook data

The operational-level-logbook catch and effort data, unraised, for the Pacific Ocean for all year. The usage of the data is strictly limited to the period of in-person collaborating work with FRI scientist. Notwithstanding paragraph 6, all operational-level-logbook catch and effort data (except the Japanese participant's own original data files) and intermediate work files, which can be used to reconstruct the original data, shall be completely deleted at the end of the period of in-person collaborating work. The data include the following information.

a. Date (year, month and day)
b. Time (start and end time of operation)
c. Time zone
d. Position (latitude, longitude) at a 1-degree resolution
e. Vessel identifier (license number, call sign, vessel registration number)
f. Size of vessel
g. Gear configurations (number of hooks between float, number of light sticks, materials of main line and branch line, length of branch line and float line, distance of branch line)
h. Set type (indicator targeting species; sword fish, shark species and tuna species)
i. Cruise identifier (logbook id)
j. Departure date and return date to port
k. Number of hooks
l. Catch, in number and weight, of bigeye, yellowfin, albacore, southern bluefin tuna, swordfish, striped marlin, blue marlin, black marlin, sailfish and shortbill spearfish (zero-catch cells that had a positive number of hooks will also be included)

Note: The data extends beyond the IATTC management area of the eastern Pacific Ocean (west of 150°W). The data for activity that took place outside of the IATTC management area in the eastern Pacific Ocean will be used for assessing the impact of nearby catch and effort on the CPUE standardization process and for addressing hypotheses that could improve the assessments of tropical tunas and other highly migratory species in the EPO (e.g. spatial analyses). Some data fields are not available historically.

3 Size data

Aggregated size frequency data for bigeye, yellowfin, for the Pacific Ocean for all years including the following information.

a. Catch year
b. Catch month
c. Spatial resolution (1x1, 5x5, 10x20 etc.)

d. Position (latitude and longitude)
e. Size unit (length (cm) or weight (kg))
f. Size
g. Vessel type (commercial vessel (observer, fisherman) or training vessel)
h. Sex
i. Species

Note: If the spatial resolution of raw size data is larger than the 1-degree grid, the spatial resolution of the raw data is provided instead of providing estimated size composition at a 1-degree resolution. Some data fields are not available historically.

4 Purpose:
a) For a selected group of species (namely: yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna) the data will be used for research related to stock assessments.
b) For the rest of the species the data will be used in ancillary analysis including targeting analysis.

5 The participants in the collaborative work are listed below. The Parties shall be notified in writing should any changes to the staff occurs.

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6 The data can be used only under the following conditions and confidentiality arrangements:
- The usage of the data is strictly limited to the purpose and period of this collaborating work;
- The data is allowed to be accessed only by participants listed above in item 5;
- The data shall be held on one PC of each participant listed above in item 5 copying of the data from those PCs is not permitted (except for the Japanese participant's own original data files);
- The IATTC staff shall not disseminate the data or upload it to any internet website or email address;
- After the end of the period indicated above in item 1, all data (except the Japanese participant's own original data files) and intermediate work files, which can be used to reconstruct the original data, shall be completely deleted;
- Any document or presentation derived from the result of this collaborative work should be released only with the mutual approval of the IATTC and the FRI and/or Fisheries Agency of Japan.

7 Any report or presentation that documents the results of this collaborative work shall be shared among Parties prior to release, allowing reasonable time for comments.

8 Copies of the procedures shall be provided to
Hidetada Kiyofuji (Fisheries Resources Institute)
Nobushige Shimizu (Fisheries Agency of Japan)
Alexandre Aires-da-Silva (Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission)

Signature

西田 宏

Director-General, Fisheries Resources Institute, Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency
Hiroshi Nishida

(DD/MM/YYYY: 10 / 02 / 2026)

Director – Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
Arnulfo Franco (DD/MM/YYYY: 11 / 02 / 2026)