

INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM  
PROGRAMA INTERNACIONAL PARA LA CONSERVACION DE LOS DELFINES

**INTERNATIONAL REVIEW PANEL**

**30<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

MANZANILLO (MEXICO)  
JUNE 19-20, 2002

**DOCUMENT IRP-30-16 (REVISED<sup>1</sup>)**

**CLASSIFICATION OF VESSELS REQUIRED BY THE AIDCP TO CARRY  
OBSERVERS**

At the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the IRP the Secretariat was asked to outline the issues concerning the classification of vessels in respect of the requirement of Annex II of the AIDCP that vessels with a carrying capacity of more than 363 mt should carry an observer. Vessel assessments are now based on well volume, in cubic meters (m<sup>3</sup>), but the requirement to carry an observer is still based on carrying capacity, in metric tons (mt).

The issue arose following the unloading of 390 mt of tuna by a vessel that previously had been classified as having a carrying capacity of less than 363 mt. The Secretariat proposed to the interested states that the vessel should be classified as having a carrying capacity of more than 363 mt. The vessel's wells were subsequently measured by a Party government and found to have a volume of 486 m<sup>3</sup>, and the vessel will now carry an observer.

In a similar case, another vessel with a well volume of 490 m<sup>3</sup> had been classified by one Party as having a carrying capacity of more than 363 mt, but after changing flags to another Party was classified as less than 363 mt on the basis of a lower packing density for fish.

This situation is further illustrated by the discrepancies in well volume in m<sup>3</sup> and current estimated carrying capacity in mt for the following sample list of purse-seine vessels from the IATTC Regional Vessel Register:

Vessel	m <sup>3</sup>	mt	Vessel	m <sup>3</sup>	mt	Vessel	m <sup>3</sup>	mt
1	374	280	7	459	206	13	511	600
2	381	359	8	490	350	14	543	601
3	382	329	9	490	350	15	552	590
4	390	347	10	490	360	16	584	517
5	412	297	11	495	624	17	586	555
6	423	339	12	497	601	18	591	505

The relationship between the two values for these vessels is shown in Figure 1.

Under the AIDCP, DMLs are assigned only to vessels with a carrying capacity of more than 363 mt; smaller vessels are prohibited from setting on dolphins and are not required to carry an observer. The cutoff point of 363 mt was intended to separate vessels which were large enough to set on dolphins from those which are not, and was based on the IATTC staff's system of classifying vessels devised originally for categorizing catch statistics. A vessel's ability to fish on dolphins is not just a matter of its size but also of its equipment, in particular the number of speedboats and the type of net.

Well volume is an objective, unvarying and easily determined value, and thus a fairer criterion for requiring a vessel to carry an observer and be eligible for a DML than the subjective measure of carrying capacity, and would also have the merit of using the same measure as the basis for vessel assessments and for determining whether an observer need be carried.

<sup>1</sup> The legends on the axes of the figure were reversed in the document presented at the meeting

If this proposal was to be implemented it would be necessary to choose an appropriate cutoff level of well volume, in m<sup>3</sup>, and to amend Annexes II, IV and VIII of the AIDCP.

**Figure 1.**

