

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

87TH MEETING

**Lima (Peru)
14-18 July 2014**

PROPOSAL IATTC-87 I-2

SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES

RESOLUTION C-14-XX

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

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The Antigua Convention requires the IATTC to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fish stocks covered by the Convention. Taking into account the Scientific Staff of the IATTC concern about the recent stock assessment results, the United States submits the following proposal for consideration.

The United States is proposing to replace Resolution C-13-02 on Measures for the Conservation and Management of Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean with this proposal. The U.S. proposal, in light of recent stock assessment aims to further reduce catch levels for Pacific Bluefin as well as commit the commission to meaningful communications on a rebuilding plan with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. The U.S. proposal takes both the recent IATTC staff recommendations and the ISC PBFWG's conservation advice into account and includes a graduated approach to reductions in the Commission-wide catch limits for 2015 and 2016 from those of Resolutions C-12-09 (10,000 mt for 2012 and 2013) and C-13-02 (5,000 mt for 2014). These reductions to the 2015 and 2016 Commission-wide catch limits represent a 40 percent and a 50 percent cut, respectively.

In paragraph 4 the U.S. suggests that each nation with non-commercial catch take measures domestically to reduce catch consistent with IATTC scientific staff recommendations. The U.S. is currently analyzing a suite of options related to reduced catch limits and will take action in September 2014 to implement its final decision.

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) gathered in Lima, Lima Province, Peru, on the occasion of its 87th Meeting;

Taking into account that the stock of Pacific bluefin tuna is caught in both the Western and Central Pacific Ocean and in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Affirming that it is necessary to adopt management measures to reduce fishing mortality of Pacific bluefin tuna throughout the range of the resource to conserve the stock of Pacific bluefin tuna;

Recognizing that the impact of the fishery for bluefin tuna in the Western and Central Pacific, due to their magnitude and composition, is far greater than in the EPO fisheries (Document SAC-05-INF-A, page 40);

Reiterating that the conservation measures adopted in the Western and Central Pacific are more important, due to their magnitude and composition, for the conservation of these stocks, and those that are currently

in force cannot be expected to be sufficient in rebuilding this stock if recent low recruitment continues (Document SAC-05-INF-A, page 40);

Encouraging both Commissions to take effective measures to substantially reduce the mortality of bluefin tuna throughout the entire spectrum of ages, especially juveniles including taking domestic actions consistent with conservation advice related to non-commercial catch;

Urging all IATTC Members and Cooperating non-Members (CPCs) involved in this fishery to participate in a fair and equitable manner in the discussion and adoption of conservation measures applicable to the stock throughout its entire range;

Mindful that these measures, while difficult for Members, are intended as an interim means for exercising caution in the harvest of the Pacific bluefin tuna resource, and may only be required in the short-term if successful in rebuilding the stock.

Urging action by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) that is complementary in effectiveness towards rebuilding the stock of bluefin tuna, and that future conservation measures should be based not only on these interim measures, but also on development of future scientific information and advice of the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) and the IATTC scientific staff;

Taking into account the IATTC scientific staff's conservation recommendation for the Convention Area (Document SAC-05-16) as well as those measures adopted by the WCPFC in maintaining a commitment to fishing at sustainable levels;

Recognizing that, although they are not complementary in their effectiveness, the WCPFC adopted conservation and management measures for bluefin tuna at its annual meeting in 2013 (CMM 2013-09) and the IATTC approved at its 85th annual meeting in 2013 measures for all the commercial fleets that catch Pacific bluefin in the EPO for the 2014 period; and therefore urges its counterparts to further reduce fishing mortality of bluefin tuna in all the WCPFC commercial fleets, and by at least 50 percent of 2002-2004 levels for those fleets catching juveniles.

Noting that the recently updated ISC stock assessment of Pacific bluefin indicates that current 2012 biomass is near historically low levels and experiencing high exploitation rates, and that the recruitment level in 2012 was estimated to be the eighth lowest in 61 years (Document SAC-05-INF-A, pages 39 and 40);

Acknowledging the ISC's findings that projections for rebuilding the Pacific bluefin stock are highly sensitive to recruitment levels, and that if current low recruitment continues, further reduction of fishing mortality and juvenile catch over the whole range of juvenile ages should be considered to reduce the risk of biomass falling below its historically lowest level.

Demonstrating the long-standing leadership of the IATTC in ensuring fisheries are managed at sustainable levels.

Resolves as follows;

1. In the IATTC Convention Area, the commercial catches of bluefin tuna by all the CPCs shall not exceed 3,000 metric tons in 2015 and shall not exceed 2,500 mt in 2016.
2. Notwithstanding paragraph 1, any CPC with a historical record of Pacific bluefin tuna catches in the IATTC Convention Area may take a commercial catch of up to 500 metric tons of Pacific bluefin tuna in the IATTC Convention Area in each of 2015 and 2016.
3. CPCs shall take the measures necessary to ensure that the total commercial catch of Pacific bluefin in the Convention Area in 2015 and 2016 does not exceed the catch limit for each year. For this purpose, each CPC shall report its catches to the Director in a timely fashion. The Director will send a first notice to the CPCs when 50% of the limit is reached. He will likewise send similar notices when 60%,

70%, and 80% of the limit is reached. When 90% is reached, the Director will send the corresponding notice to all CPCs, with a projection of when the limit established in paragraph 1 will be reached, and the CPCs will take the necessary internal measures to avoid exceeding the limit.

4. CPCs shall take meaningful measures to reduce non-commercial catches of Pacific bluefin in the IATTC Convention Area. Each CPC shall report non-commercial catches to the Director in a timely fashion.
5. CPCs shall report to the Director by December 15th, 2015 any measures that they have taken domestically to implement paragraph 4 of this resolution.
6. The Commission shall again ask the WCPFC to adopt appropriate and effective mandatory measures for immediate implementation at its 2014 Regular Annual Session to address the impact of the fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific on the Pacific bluefin stock.
7. Based upon actions and measures adopted by the WCPFC, as referenced in paragraph 6, and appropriate analysis thereafter by the ISC, the scientific staff of the IATTC shall assess, by means of projected simulations, the likelihood of meeting candidate rebuilding targets for the bluefin tuna stock under a range of management scenarios, including the IATTC measures adopted in 2014. These assessments shall be presented at the meeting of the IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee in 2015.
8. To enhance effectiveness of this Resolution and Pacific-wide progress towards rebuilding the Pacific bluefin tuna stock, CPCs are encouraged to communicate with and, if appropriate, work with the concerned WCPFC members bilaterally.
9. The Commission, through the IATTC Secretariat, shall request the WCPFC to attend a joint intercessional meeting of the IATTC and WCPFC in 2015 to develop and agree to a rebuilding plan for the Pacific bluefin tuna stock, including a rebuilding target and schedule, taking into account the scientific information and management advice from the ISC, the IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee and IATTC scientific staff. The joint IATTC-WCPFC meeting should also consider limit reference points and associated harvest control rules to guide the management of the Pacific bluefin tuna stock for the long term.