

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE THIRTY FIFTH MEETING
(PART I)

October 17-18, 1977
Mexico City, Mexico

Chairman: Lic. Joaquin Mercado, Mexico

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Consideration and Adoption of the Agenda
3. Review of Current Research
4. The 1977 Fishing Year (Background Paper No. 1)
5. Condition of the Yellowfin Stock and Recommendations for 1978
(Background Paper No. 2)
6. A Review of the Proposed Tuna-Porpoise Study, and the Corresponding
Budget for FY 1978-1979
(Background Paper No. 3)
7. Recommended Research Program and Budget for FY 1979-1980
(Background Paper No. 4)
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SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING (PART I)

AGENDA ITEM 1 - OPENING OF THE MEETING

The 35th meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission opened at the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores in Mexico City, D.F., Mexico, on Monday, October 17, 1977, at 10:50 A.M. The meeting was opened by Dr. James Joseph, Director of Investigations, who served as Chairman pro tem. He explained that it would be necessary to elect a Chairman and opened the floor to nominations. Mr. Rodolfo Sáenz of Costa Rica nominated Mr. Joaquín Mercado of Mexico. There were no further nominations and Mr. Mercado was elected by acclamation.

Taking the chair, Mr. Mercado welcomed all delegates and observers to the 35th meeting of the IATTC. He then called for introduction of the delegations. The heads of the delegations of Canada, Costa Rica, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and the U.S.A. introduced themselves, their fellow Commissioners, and their advisors. This was followed by introductions of observers from Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Venezuela, and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). Observers from Spain joined the meeting in later sessions. Those in attendance are listed in Appendix I.

AGENDA ITEM 2 - CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chairman asked for any comments or suggested changes in the provisional agenda which had been distributed to Commissioners several weeks earlier as is usual. There being no comments or suggested changes, the U.S. delegation moved that the provisional agenda be adopted, and this was done unanimously. The Chairman then suggested that the meeting be organized into two daily sessions, the first lasting from 9:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. and the second from 4:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M., with deviations from this schedule if necessary. This schedule was agreeable to all delegations.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - REVIEW OF CURRENT RESEARCH

The Chairman introduced this agenda item by explaining that it was the customary practice at these meetings for the Director of Investigations to review research progress during the past year. He then gave the floor to Dr. Joseph for this purpose.

Dr. Joseph explained that for this meeting he would like to deviate somewhat from the past practice of presenting a general review of research. Instead, he explained that because of the extensive discussions concerning highly migratory species both in the current negotiations underway on Law of the Sea matters and in negotiations concerning a new convention for the conservation of tuna and tuna-like species in the eastern Pacific Ocean, he would like to present a general review covering tunas and tuna-like fishes. He explained that in this review he would discuss taxonomic relationships among the various highly migratory species and

also briefly describe their distributions and life histories and the fisheries for them.

He began his discussion by showing a figure depicting the relationships among fishes of the taxonomic group called Scombroidei which includes three families:

(1) Scombridae (the tunas, bonitos, seerfishes, and mackerels); (2) Istiophoridae (the spearfishes, the sailfish and marlins); and (3) Xiphiidae (the swordfish). Included in the 56 species of fishes in this taxon are nearly all of the species of fishes which are considered to be highly migratory and are listed as such in the annex of the Informal Composite Negotiating Text of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. Catches of these highly migratory species in 1975 exceeded 2 million metric tons; they represent, in terms of monetary worth, one of the most valuable classes of commercial fish in the world.

Dr. Joseph then showed a series of slides presenting drawings and color photographs of representative species. Following these, a series of slides was shown depicting the world distribution of some of the more economically important species of the taxon. In addition to the general geographic distribution of each of the representative species, information was presented on areas of surface and longline fishing, major spawning areas, and migrations as demonstrated by tagging experiments. It was abundantly clear from the information presented that the tuna and tuna-like fishes, including the billfishes, undertake extensive migrations with some species making trans-oceanic migrations.

In concluding his presentation, Dr. Joseph stated that because of the highly migratory nature of many species of tunas and billfishes, as well as the mobile fisheries for them, their proper conservation and management can only be achieved through international cooperation. The Chairman then opened the floor for general discussion and comments.

Dr. Olegario Rodríguez-Martín of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) commented on the current situation regarding the tuna fisheries of the Atlantic Ocean. He noted the difficulties encountered in compiling good statistical records covering the catches of tuna, particularly noting the problem of identifying smaller fish and the difficulties due to the same fish having many common names. He also called attention to the high level of fishing in the Atlantic Ocean and noted that, with the important exception of skipjack tuna, most species were being fully exploited. He called attention to the fact that the ICCAT is planning to undertake an extensive study of the skipjack population of the Atlantic as well as the fisheries that exploit this population, and he urged the cooperation of the IATTC in this program which will hopefully be approved at the 1977 ICCAT meeting in November.

Mr. Gerald Howard of the U.S., after commenting on the usefulness of the review presented by Dr. Joseph, requested that it be expanded and published in a form that could receive wide distribution. Spokesmen for all of the other delegations concurred in this suggestion including Mr. José Cabrera of Panama who suggested the possibility of updating such a report from time to time. Dr. Joseph said that he would undertake to prepare such a publication as soon as possible. With this, the meeting recessed for lunch at 12:58 P.M., October 17.

Questions concerning Dr. Joseph's presentation continued when the meeting reconvened at 4:17 P.M. of the same day. Mr. Howard of the U.S. asked Dr. Joseph if he intended to comment on current IATTC research programs at any point on the agenda. Dr. Joseph replied that he planned to touch on current programs briefly when he discussed agenda item 7 pertaining to recommended research. This being the case, and there being no further questions, the Chairman suggested that agenda item 3 be kept open for later consideration.

AGENDA ITEMS 4 AND 5 - THE 1977 FISHING YEAR AND CONDITION OF THE YELLOWFIN STOCK AND RECOMENDATIONS FOR 1978

The Chairman then asked Dr. Joseph to discuss agenda item 4, a review of the 1977 fishery, and to present the details of Background Document 1. Dr. Joseph explained that agenda items 4 and 5 were quite closely related because they dealt with a review of the 1977 fishery (Background Document 1) as well as a review of the assessment of the yellowfin stock through 1977 and recommendations for 1978 (Background Document 2). Hence, he requested permission to deal with these two agenda items simultaneously. There was general agreement on this approach.

Dr. Joseph opened by noting that evaluation of the condition of yellowfin stocks and preparation of appropriate management recommendations is complicated by several factors. One of these is the fact that the 1977 fishing year is still far from complete so that full data for the year are not available. A second complicating factor, and one unique to 1977, was the late winter and spring tie-up of most large U.S. purse seiners. Because of this tie-up, less data than usual are available for this period during which fishing normally is heavy.

Dr. Joseph then very briefly sketched the development of the tuna fishery in the eastern Pacific and outlined the basic IATTC tuna management objectives. These are, first, to carry out a variety of scientific studies on tunas, and second, based on the results of these studies, to recommend conservation measures to member governments designed to maintain stocks at levels that will allow the taking of maximum sustainable yields. He noted that 1977 represents the 12th year that the yellowfin tuna stocks of the eastern Pacific Ocean have been under international management.

Early quantitative analysis of catch statistics and biological data suggested that the stocks of yellowfin being exploited in the area prior to the initiation of a management program were capable of supporting average maximum yields of between 92,000 and 96,000 short tons. During 1960 and 1961, catches of about 120,000 tons were made. On the basis of these catches, it was predicted that potential yield and catch per standard days fishing (used as an index of yellowfin tuna abundance) would decline. They did decline and remained low until management was instituted in 1966. Although catch rate was expected to increase slightly under management, it increased much more than anticipated and continued to do so through 1968. Because of this, there was good reason to believe that a larger portion of the yellowfin stock of the eastern Pacific was being fished than prior to 1966, due mostly to a seaward expansion of fishing effort. Hence, an experimental program was recommended for empirically establishing the maximum potential of the stock on a sustained basis by increasing yields beyond the then current best estimate of maximum sustained yield. Experimental quotas were first

set at the 120,000-ton level for three years beginning in 1969. Even though this resulted in an increased level of fishing the catch per days fishing did not decline but, instead, continued to trend upward. Since that time quotas have been slowly increased until 1977 when the highest yellowfin quota ever was set -- 175,000 to 210,000 short tons.

The yellowfin fishery began quite normally during early 1977, and the catch accumulated at about the same rate as it did during early 1976. However, as already noted, in early March more than 60% of the fleet (nearly all of the large U.S. purse seiners) returned to port and remained there until mid-May. By midyear this caused the cumulative CYRA yellowfin catch to fall about 30,000 tons behind the catch for the same period in 1976. When the large U.S. seiners returned to fishing, the yellowfin catch accumulated quite rapidly, and the 1977 catch has now caught up to that for 1976 for the same period of time.

The catch rate per standard days fishing for 1977 to date, based on data from seiners over 400 tons in carrying capacity, is somewhat lower than in 1976. However, because so much of the fleet was not fishing during the early part of the year when catch rate is normally highest, there is a reasonably good chance that the 1977 catch rate and hence yellowfin abundance is underestimated.

Employing catch data from 1967 through 1977 and utilizing a form of the general production model, estimates of average maximum sustainable yield were made. They varied between 155,000 and 200,000 short tons with the best estimate being about 175,000 tons. Based on these estimates and taking into account that catch rate is probably underestimated for 1977, the CYRA catch in 1977 will probably equal or exceed that for 1976, and 1977 recruitment appears to be about average for recent years, the staff of the Commission recommended continuing the experimental quotas during 1978 at their 1977 levels. Specifically, it recommended a CYRA yellowfin quota of 175,000 short tons, with the opportunity to increase it, based on conditions early in the 1978 fishing year, in two steps to a maximum of 210,000 short tons.

Dr. Joseph next discussed the yellowfin fishery in the area west of the CYRA but east of 150°W. He reported that catches in that area during 1977 to date were less than half of what they were for the comparable period in 1976. He attributed this to the fact that fishing effort has been reduced in the area by more than half. However, the catch rate has remained at the same general level that has been characteristic in recent years. Examination of all of the catch and effort data for this area from 1970 on demonstrated a linear relationship between catch and fishing effort. It was also noted that fishing in this area was only conducted during the second half of the year. For these reasons, the staff concluded that, at present, there is no reason to establish controls on the fishery west of the CYRA.

Dr. Joseph also discussed the catches of skipjack and bluefin tuna in 1977. Skipjack catches trail far behind catches achieved in 1975 and 1976. There are two reasons for this. First, skipjack availability appears to be down from the levels in the two previous years, both of which were exceptional skipjack years. Second, the tie-up of a major portion of the U.S. fleet at a time when skipjack availability is normally good undoubtedly greatly reduced catches. By the end of 1977 the total skipjack catch should be no more than 75,000-80,000 tons. The bluefin catch in 1977 is less than average. At present the bluefin catch stands at about 6,000 tons, and it probably will not exceed 7,000 tons by the end of the year.

After the conclusion of Dr. Joseph's presentation the Chairman noted that the hour of adjournment was quickly approaching but he opened the floor for a few questions and general comments.

Mr. Howard of the U.S., commenting on the fact that the catch per effort as presented by Dr. Joseph was lower than it had been in both 1975 and 1976, questioned whether this might not be due to extraneous factors rather than reflecting a lower abundance of yellowfin.

Dr. Joseph repeated his earlier remarks concerning the fact that much of the fleet did not fish during the early part of the year when yellowfin abundance is normally highest. He also noted that during 1977 restrictions have been placed on fishing for yellowfin associated with porpoise. Both of these factors could cause the abundance of yellowfin to be underestimated.

Mr. Howard also asked Dr. Joseph if there was any merit in considering the possibility of opening up further portions of the CYRA to experimental fishing (as had been done previously), and if so, which areas. Dr. Joseph said that he would answer this question on the following day. Mr. James Beckett of Canada asked Dr. Joseph if he and his staff could prepare for next year's meeting a brief review and analysis of the results and implications for the overall fishery, of the spread of fishing effort into the two experimental areas that had previously been opened in the CYRA. Dr. Joseph replied that he would prepare such an analysis for next year's meeting.

It being 6:30 P.M., the Chairman recessed the meeting until the following day.

After opening the second day's session on Tuesday, October 18, 1977, at 9:50 A.M., the Chairman explained that agenda items 3, 4, and 5 were still open and that questioning of Dr. Joseph which had started the previous day would be continued.

Mr. Amfn Zarur of Mexico asked Dr. Joseph if he could clarify his earlier comments concerning the possibility that the yellowfin abundance during 1977 was underestimated. Dr. Joseph reviewed once again the comments presented earlier concerning the seasonal abundance of yellowfin in the eastern Pacific.

Recalling the question posed the previous day by Mr. Howard of the U.S. concerning possible opening of new experimental fishing areas, Dr. Joseph responded as follows: The value of opening up experimental fishing areas where fishing effort does not currently exist is to force effort into such areas, thereby establishing whether or not yellowfin and/or skipjack occur there. Additionally, by distributing fishing effort more broadly over populations in both time and space, higher yields should theoretically be obtainable from them. Dr. Joseph then identified an area bounded by 90°W from 30°S to 12°S, thence east to 85°W, thence south to 15°S, thence east to 80°W, thence south to 30°S, and finally west along the southern boundary of the CYRA to 90°W. Within this area no fishing takes place, but yellowfin and/or skipjack might occur here, so it could be considered for designation as an experimental fishing area during 1978.

Mr. Arturo Díaz Rojo of Mexico commented that the 1977 and 1978 projected fleet growth figures for Mexico, as presented in Background Document 1, appeared to be too low.

Mr. Sáenz of Costa Rica, after noting his government's intention to limit its fleet to a maximum of 20,000 tons, called attention to the fact that the Costa Rican fleet was expected to grow in 1977 and 1978 by an amount substantially greater than suggested in Background Document 1.

Asking for the floor, Dr. Joseph explained that the figures for expected fleet growth presented in Background Document 1 represented only new additions to the fleet and that transfers of vessels among countries were not considered. With this clarification, the delegates from both Mexico and Costa Rica concurred that the figures in the Background Document correspond with their plans for new construction, but that they would also be adding capacity to their fleets by vessel transfers from other flags.

Mr. Howard of the U.S. asked for a clarification of the staff's recommendation for the yellowfin quota in the CYRA for 1978. Dr. Joseph reiterated that the staff recommendation was for a quota of 175,000 short tons of yellowfin with the option to increase the quota in two increments to 210,000 tons if the stock condition in early 1978 indicated such increases were warranted.

There being no further discussion on agenda items 3, 4, and 5, the Chairman closed agenda items 3 and 4, but left agenda item 5 open particularly with respect to the matter of approval of a quota for 1978.

AGENDA ITEM 6 - A REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED TUNA-PORPOISE STUDY, AND THE CORRESPONDING BUDGET FOR FY 1978-1979

After introducing agenda item 6, the Chairman asked Dr. Joseph to discuss the proposed tuna-porpoise budget for FY 1978-1979. Dr. Joseph began by reviewing the Commission's 34th meeting held in San Diego, California, which was convened to deal specifically with the tuna-porpoise situation in the eastern Pacific Ocean. He also reiterated the 3 objectives which the Commission had set for itself with regard to this problem at its 33rd meeting held in Managua, Nicaragua: (1) to maintain a high level of tuna production, (2) to maintain porpoise stocks at or above levels that assure their survival in perpetuity and (3) to make every reasonable effort to avoid needless or careless killing of porpoise.

Dr. Joseph then went on to explain that the FY 1977-1978 budget for porpoise, the first one prepared by the Commission, had already been approved by the Commission and was now waiting approval by member governments. This budget calls for research in four areas: (1) a sea-going technician program, (2) aerial surveys and porpoise tagging, (3) analyses of indices of abundance of porpoise and computer simulation studies, and (4) gear and behavioral research and education.

Dr. Joseph then recalled that at the 34th meeting when preparation of the FY 1977-1978 tuna-porpoise budget was authorized, he had stated that if the

supplementary funds were made available by September 1, 1977, then it would be possible to have the international observer program in operation by January 1, 1978. Unfortunately funds are still not available so that initiation of the international observer program has been delayed. If and when the funds do become available, it will take approximately 4 months for the observer program to become operational.

He then presented the FY 1978-1979 budget for porpoise, which he explained was exactly the same program as that for FY 1977-1978 but increased from U.S. \$572,560 to U.S.\$640,427. The increase was due primarily to a 5% increase in staff salaries and a 7% increase in all other budget objects to meet expected inflationary increases.

Following Dr. Joseph's presentation, the Chairman called for comments and questions concerning the proposed tuna-porpoise program and the corresponding budgets for FY 1977-1978 and FY 1978-1979.

Mr. Howard of the U.S. noted that the U.S. porpoise kill rate for 1977 is down sharply from prior years and stands at about 0.25 porpoise killed per ton of yellowfin caught. He stated that he was hopeful that this progress could continue but cautioned that his optimism was somewhat guarded because porpoise fishing conditions toward the end of the year normally differ from those earlier in the year.

He went on to note that, with respect to budgeting for Commission tuna-porpoise studies there are two elements: First, the national contributions made to the Commission to support its budgeted activities; and second, appropriations of funds to cover salary costs of national observers detailed to the Commission. The U.S. had hoped for a commitment of funds in both categories before the end of the 1977 calendar year, but this may not prove possible due to the cumbersome budgeting process in the U.S. Presently the formal request for the U.S. contribution to the Commission tuna-porpoise program is under consideration by the Bureau of Budget where approval is soon anticipated. The request will then go to Congress for its approval, but Congress probably cannot take action on the request until early in 1978.

Mr. Howard stated that the U.S. hoped that this budgeting process would not cause undue delays in commencement of the Commission's international observer program. In this regard, he noted that, because it is the largest contributor, the U.S. has historically moved first in regard to funding of Commission studies. However, in the present instance he raised the question as to whether other nations might be willing to take the lead so that the Commission staff could initiate planning activities for its tuna-porpoise program. He then asked Dr. Joseph if the staff could get started on such a basis.

Dr. Joseph responded that the U.S. presently provides about 90 percent of Commission funding based on its utilization of the tuna catch. If, in the near future, all other governments were to make their supplementary contributions for the FY 1977-78 tuna-porpoise program, then the total amount available would be in the U.S.\$60,000-70,000 range. These funds would be used to hire a senior

person to start organizing the observer training program and to start recruiting other personnel for the program. This would accelerate fielding of observers somewhat because training of observers could begin as soon as funds from the U.S. became available. Dr. Joseph emphasized that his remarks assumed that all countries contributed to the support of the tuna-porpoise program in the same manner as they contributed to other Commission programs, although he realized that some delegations had questioned this procedure in the past. He also repeated that each nation would be responsible for paying the salaries of its own technician observers.

Mr. Hirosuke Oshima of Japan then stated his government's position that contributions for support of the tuna-porpoise program should be based on purse-seine catches only and should not include longline catches.

Mr. Díaz Rojo of Mexico then noted that his government also had budgeting problems due to recent government changes but that there was some possibility that Mexico might be able to advance the funds. He stated that he would consult with the appropriate officials on this matter. He also reserved the opportunity to comment further on the tuna-porpoise budget in the 21st Inter-Governmental Meeting. With regard to observer salaries, these have been approved and are available immediately.

Mr. Blyth Young of Canada noted that his government also had budgeting problems. Canada's fiscal year runs from April to March which differs from the Commission's October to September fiscal year. At present there is no funding available for the tuna-porpoise program, and it is hard to say what the situation will be over the next 6 months. With regard to observer salaries, Mr. Young noted that he had been advised verbally that these had been viewed favorably by his Government.

Mr. Cabrera of Panama also noted that his government had budgeting problems and that no firm commitment on funding could be made at the present meeting.

In view of the comments by other delegations, the U.S. next inquired as to whether or not there might be some latitude in the regular IATTC budget for FY 1977-1978 that would allow reprogramming of funds to get started on the planning of the tuna-porpoise program.

Dr. Joseph stated that there was a certain degree of flexibility for reprogramming of funds under certain circumstances. However, he noted that at present he had no solid commitment that funds to support the tuna-porpoise program would be made available by the U.S. In the absence of a reasonably firm commitment, he could not justify the shifting of funds from other approved and budgeted studies because he had no assurance that such reprogrammed funds could be replaced later.

Mr. Gilberto Bergman of Nicaragua stated that he also was uncertain about the possibility of advancing funds for the Commission tuna-porpoise program, but that salaries for Nicaraguan observers had been approved.

At this point the Chairman noted that the delegations had been addressing themselves to the tuna-porpoise supplement for FY 1977-1978 which had already been approved by the Commission. It is necessary now, he said, to consider the

proposed supplementary budget for FY 1978-1979 which is contained in Background Document 3, and to which no delegation has so far objected.

Mr. Howard of the U.S. stated that with regard to reprogramming of funds to get started on the tuna-porpoise program, his delegation would endeavor to provide sufficient assurances that funding for FY 1977-1978 was forthcoming so that the staff could proceed with reprogramming.

Mr. Howard then moved that the supplementary budget proposal for FY 1978-1979 be approved. Mr. Young of Canada seconded the motion with the observation that Commission actions are advisory to his government. Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, and Nicaragua all indicated their approval of the proposed supplementary budget. Mr. Oshima of Japan also indicated his delegation's approval with respect to the budget itself but with the reservation mentioned earlier as to the basis for making contributions for tuna-porpoise studies. The Chairman then declared the supplementary tuna porpoise budget for FY 1978-1979 approved with reservations as noted.

AGENDA ITEM 7 - RECOMMENDED RESEARCH PROGRAM AND BUDGET FOR FY 1979-1980

The Chairman in opening discussion on agenda item 7 called on Dr. Joseph to comment on the research and budget proposal contained in Background Document 4.

Dr. Joseph began by noting that the proposed budget for FY 1979-1980 includes the Commission's tuna-porpoise program for the first time. (For FY 1977-1978 and FY 1978-1979 supplemental budget proposals were prepared covering the tuna-porpoise program.) The tuna-porpoise program proposed for FY 1979-1980 is identical to the proposed programs for the two previous fiscal years, with the only increases being associated with anticipated salary increases and inflationary increases. However, Dr. Joseph noted that the IATTC staff has no experience in the area of tuna-porpoise studies, so estimates of program costs could turn out to be considerably in error. Thus, as experience accumulates it may become necessary to modify this budget. If so, the staff will recommend appropriate adjustments when their need becomes apparent.

Commenting further with regard to the tuna-porpoise portion of the proposed budget, Dr. Joseph stated that the staff must have guidelines concerning how these contributions are to be computed. This matter must be taken up at this meeting.

Turning to the proposed FY 1979-1980 budget as a whole, Dr. Joseph noted an increase of U.S.\$896,423 over the probable budget for FY 1978-79 (U.S.\$2,126,647 versus U.S.\$1,230,224). Approximately 73% of this increase, U.S.\$693,493, is directly attributable to the funding of the special tuna-porpoise study approved at the Commission's 34th meeting in San Diego in June of this year.

With regard to changes in the Commission's research programs, Dr. Joseph noted that the Marquesas Islands tagging program (presently under way with a staff scientist tagging in the area) will continue for another 18-20 months;

hence it is not included in the FY 1979-1980 budget proposal. A new program proposed for FY 1979-1980 will involve sonic tagging of yellowfin. The main objective of these experiments will be to study the vertical distribution of yellowfin in relation to environmental variables such as time of day, temperature, dissolved oxygen, etc. Sonic tagging will be carried out in conjunction with regular tagging by adding about 10 days to a baitboat tagging charter.

Dr. Joseph then made a few brief observations concerning certain ongoing Commission programs. The Commission has a strong tagging program that will continue into FY 1979-1980. It is aimed primarily at elucidating tuna migrations, but it is also pertinent to population dynamics and growth studies. Commission genetics studies focus on stock identification. There may be from two to five subpopulations of yellowfin in the eastern Pacific, but it may not be possible to manage them separately. Current yellowfin genetics studies will probably end in 1980. Genetic studies on skipjack will probably continue beyond 1980. Otolith growth studies will continue for several years. These involve collection of otoliths at sea and at canneries for study and analysis. The Commission will continue its oceanography studies but has no present plans to expand them.

Following this explanation of the FY 1979-1980 budget proposal, the Chairman asked for comments and questions.

Mr. Sáenz of Costa Rica indicated his delegation's approval of the proposed budget for FY 1979-1980 with the observation that Commission actions are advisory to his government.

Mr. Howard of the U.S. also indicated his delegation's approval of the proposed budget, noting that because negotiations are under way to establish a new conservation agreement for the eastern Pacific, all contributions should be computed in the usual fashion on the basis of tuna utilization.

Mr. Díaz Rojo of Mexico also indicated his delegation's approval of the proposal and concurred with the U.S. remark concerning the method of making contributions. He also reserved the right to comment further on the proposed budget during the 21st Inter-Governmental Meeting.

The delegations of Costa Rica, Canada, Nicaragua, and Panama also indicated their approval of the proposed budget with contributions to be collected in the usual fashion.

Mr. Oshima of Japan also indicated his delegation's approval of the proposed budget and went on to say that he had no objection to continuing with the present system of making contributions.*

* At the 21st Inter-Governmental Meeting Mr. Satoshi Moriya of Japan indicated that Japan would modify this statement to make it clear that it did not apply to the section of the proposed budget pertaining to tuna-porpoise studies.

Since all nations had expressed their concurrence with the proposed budget and research program for FY 1979-1980, the Chairman declared it approved.

At this point the U.S. delegate requested the floor in order to report to the Commission on the use that the U.S. had made of a special 1000-ton closed-season allocation for porpoise mortality reduction studies in 1976. He also reported on plans for utilizing a similar 1000-ton closed-season allocation in the latter part of 1977. His statement on these matters is presented in Appendix II, together with a proposal that during the 1978 closed season the U.S. be allocated a further 1000 tons from the 1978 IATTC yellowfin quota in order to continue research on the reduction of incidental porpoise mortality.

The Chairman raised the question as to whether this U.S. request should be considered immediately or after completion of the 21st Inter-Governmental Meeting. The U.S. delegate indicated that this matter could be taken up after the Inter-Governmental Meeting, and this course was agreed upon.

At 12:50 P.M., October 18, 1977, having completed agenda items 1-4, 6, and 7, the Chairman adjourned the 35th meeting of the IATTC until after completion of the 21st Inter-Governmental Meeting.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF ATTENDEES AT THE 35TH MEETING OF THE IATTC (PART I)

CANADA

James S. Beckett - Commissioner
E. Blyth Young - Commissioner

Donald Banks
B.M. Chatwin
Michael Hunter
G.E. Waring

COSTA RICA

Manuel Freer Jimenez - Commissioner
Gabriela S. Myers - Commissioner
Rodolfo Sáenz - Commissioner

Oscar Ernesto Andrade R.
Francisco Guevara Huete
Francisco Vargas Sancho
Germán Villarreal Díaz

JAPAN

Satoshi Moriya
Hirosuke Oshima
Shojiro Shimura

MEXICO

Arturo Díaz Rojo - Commissioner
Joaquín Mercado - Commissioner
Amín Zarur-Menez - Commissioner

Margarita Herrera Azcona
Víctor Manuel Solano
Jorge Monterrubio de E.
Dolores Serrano Cancino

NICARAGUA

Gilberto Bergman P. - Commissioner
Antonio Flores A. - Commissioner
José B. Godoy M. - Commissioner
Jamil Urroz Escobar - Commissioner

PANAMA

José Ma. Cabrera Jované
Arquímedes A. Franqueza

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Wymerley Coerr - Commissioner
Jack Gorby - Commissioner
Gerald V. Howard - Commissioner
Robert C. Macdonald - Commissioner

Herbert L. Blatt
C.J. Blondin
Jack C. Bowland
Gordon G. Broadhead
August G. Felando
Charles E. Finan
William W. Fox
Brian S. Hallman
Martin Howell
Rolf Juhl
Milton M. Kaufmann
Barbara Keith
O.E. Kerns, Jr.
Janous J. Marks
Joe Medina, Jr.
John P. Mulligan
John Negroponte
Anthony Nizetich
Anthony Pisano
John J. Royal
James De Silva
Manuel A. Silva
Jack Tarantino
Tory Trutanich
Richard E. Zellers

COLOMBIA

Alfonso Medina Delgado

GUATEMALA

Luis Fernando Martínez Avalos

PERU

Marcos Carbo Berger

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Han Mo Kim

SPAIN

Jesús Alonso Fernández
Ignacio Lachaga Bengoechea

VENEZUELA

Hernán Rodríguez Berroteran

ICCAT

Olegario Rodríguez-Martín

IATTC

Joseph W. Greenough
James Joseph
Regina A. Newman

APPENDIX II

U.S. STATEMENT ON YELLOWFIN TUNA ALLOCATION FOR U.S. PORPOISE RESEARCH

Two years ago at the 32nd meeting of the IATTC and last year at the 33rd meeting, the Commission allowed special allocations of 1000 tons of yellowfin tuna after closure of the CYRA open season for United States porpoise research. The special allocation by the Commission to the United States at the 32nd meeting provided 64 days in late 1976 aboard a chartered tuna seiner, the M/V Elizabeth C. J., to test improved fishing gear and techniques designed for the reduction of porpoise mortality incidental to tuna purse seine fishing and to make behavioral observations on tuna and porpoises. The results of this cruise are described in the two cruise reports provided to each delegation.

There were two major objectives on the 1976 charter. The first was to test the effectiveness of the most advanced design of the apron modification to the purse seine net. The second was to observe and record the behavior of tuna and porpoise throughout all phases of the capture and release of porpoises in order to develop new ideas to further reduce incidental porpoise mortality. The new gear was extremely successful. During the 31 net sets where the advanced gear was used without the interference of behavioral observations, 554.5 tons of yellowfin tuna were captured and only four incidental porpoise mortalities occurred. This is a kill rate of only 0.007 porpoises killed per ton of yellowfin tuna caught as compared with the U.S. fleet's average of 1.1 porpoises per ton of yellowfin tuna for 1976. The gear and procedures tested on the 1976 charter have been field tested on 18 U.S. seiners during the 1977 fishing season and the results to date indicate that it is the current best system for reducing incidental porpoise mortality.

Two chartered seiners, the M/V Margaret L. and the M/V Independence, have been chartered with the special allocation provided the United States at the 33rd meeting last year. These vessels are expected to leave imminently on their trips (1) to test the gear developed on the 1976 charter on a smaller and older vessel (M/V Independence), and (2) to test further modifications of the purse seine net and pre-backdown porpoise release procedures. Results from these cruises will be made available to the members of the Commission and other countries with tuna purse seiners fishing in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean as soon as practicable.

While the methods and gear developed to date and those currently being tested are expected to reduce incidental porpoise mortality, the United States believes it is necessary to continue research on the problem to further reduce it. The United States requests that 1000 tons of the 1978 IATTC yellowfin tuna quota for the CYRA be allocated during the closed season to the United States for continued, effective research on practical technology to reduce the mortality of porpoise incidental to yellowfin tuna purse-seine fishing.

Successful research efforts by the United States benefit all tuna fishing nations of the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. The results, open to all nations, will greatly increase fishing efficiency through (1) the prevention of considerable lost fishing time when large numbers of porpoise are killed in a set and (2) ensuring large porpoise populations for locating tuna. The results will also reduce the hazards of serious injury to crew members while handling large numbers of dead porpoise.

In summary then, the United States proposes:

that 1,000 tons of the 1978 IATTC yellowfin tuna quota be allocated during the closed season to the United States for continued research on the reduction of incidental porpoise mortality. The research results will be made available to the member countries at the earliest practicable date, and a report will be submitted at the Commission meeting immediately following the research cruise(s).

COMISION INTERAMERICANA DEL ATUN TROPICAL
INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

Scripps Institution of Oceanography
La Jolla, California 92037, U.S.A.

Date: January 31, 1978
Ref: 8550-160

To: Director of Investigations

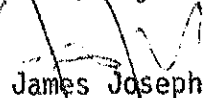
To: All Commissioners and attendees of the 35th Meeting (Part II)

Subject: 35th Meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (Part II)

Transmitted herewith are the minutes of the second part of the 35th Meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission which was held in San Diego, California on the 26 of January 1978.

All action approved during the second part of the meeting is pending approval by France.

Sincerely


James Joseph,
Director of Investigations

JJ/rn
enc.

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE THIRTY FIFTH MEETING
(PART II)

January 26, 1978
San Diego, California

Chairman: Gerald V. Howard, USA.

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING (PART II)

EXPLANATORY NOTE: The first part of the 35th Meeting of the IATTC convened on October 17, 1977, in Mexico City. On October 18, upon completion of Agenda Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7, the meeting was recessed to be reconvened following the 21st Inter-Governmental Meeting. The business of the Inter-Governmental Meeting was not completed in Mexico City and it was recessed until January 25, 1978, at which time it reconvened at the Shelter Island Inn, San Diego, California. Once again the business of the Inter-Governmental Meeting was not completed, and it was recessed on January 26, with the understanding that its continuing business will be conducted through diplomatic channels and a final resolution transmitted to the Commission for its consideration.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The second part of the 35th Meeting of the Commission was convened on January 26, 1978 at 3:20 p.m. at the Shelter Island Inn, San Diego, California. In the absence of Chairman Joaquin Mercado of Mexico, Commissioner Gerald V. Howard of the U.S.A. was selected as Chairman.

AGENDA ITEM 5 - CONDITION OF THE YELLOWFIN STOCK AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 1978

Noting the failure to reach agreement at the 21st Inter-Governmental Meeting on measures for implementing a conservation program for yellowfin tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean for 1978, Mr. Howard explained that final measures for a conservation regime during 1978 could not be adopted at this time. He did, however, ask Dr. Joseph to reiterate the staff proposal for a 1978 yellowfin quota which had been presented in Mexico City.

Dr. Joseph noted that conditions in the fishery since the first part of the 35th Meeting held in October, 1977, had not altered the staff's opinion that there should be a 1978 yellowfin quota of 175,000 tons with the option to increase it in two increments of 20,000 tons and 15,000 tons to a maximum of 210,000 tons, dependent upon the condition of the yellowfin stock in early 1978.

Mr. Blyth Young of Canada moved that the quota recommendation of the staff be approved, with the understanding that it would be implemented upon agreement by the Inter-Governmental Meeting on provisions for inclusion in the 1978 conservation program. This motion was seconded by the USA and unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - PLACE AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman explained that it has been the usual practice of the Commission to rotate the locations of the meetings among the member governments. Following the regular sequence of meeting sites, the location of the 36th Meeting of the Commission would be in Japan.

Mr. Yoshimoto Nagashima of Japan announced that his government would be pleased to invite the Commission to hold its 36th Meeting in Tokyo, and suggested October 16-20, 1978, as a meeting time. The members present agreed unanimously to accept the Japanese invitation.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Diaz-Rojo of Mexico nominated Dr. Kunio Yonezawa of Japan as Chairman of the Commission for 1978; Costa Rica seconded this nomination and there was unanimous agreement.

Mr. Fernando del Castillo of Costa Rica nominated Mr. Gilberto Bergman Padilla as Secretary for 1978; the nomination was seconded by the U.S. and was unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Howard explained that while France was not in attendance, all actions taken during the second Part of the 35th Meeting would require the approval of France. He instructed Dr. Joseph to request France's vote on these matters by cable.

Dr. Joseph asked for the floor and explained that even though a conservation quota had been approved, he did not have the authority to close the fishery. Such authority could only come through the approval of a resolution by the Commission detailing the full provisions for a conservation regime for 1978. He further explained that to insure that closure would take place early enough to keep the catch within the recommended quota, Inter-Governmental approval for special provisions would need to be transmitted to the Commission no later than March 1, 1978. Upon receipt of a resolution from the Inter-Governmental Meeting, a draft resolution would be prepared by the staff and circulated among member governments of the Commission by cable for their approval. He further explained that approval for final adjournment of 35th meeting would also be accomplished by cable.

ADJOURNMENT

At 3:45 p.m., January 26, 1977, having completed all agenda items with the exception of items 5 and 11, the Chairman adjourned the second part of the 35th meeting of the IATTC until a resolution is received from the 21st Inter-Governmental Meeting detailing a recommended conservation program for 1978.

LIST OF ATTENDEES AT THE 35TH MEETING OF THE IATTC (PART II)

CANADA

James S. Beckett - Commissioner
E. Blyth Young - Commissioner

B. M. Chatwin
G. E. Waring

COSTA RICA

Gabriela S. Myers - Commissioner
Rodolfo Sáenz Forero - Commissioner

Oscar E. Andrade
Raúl H. Canessa Murillo
Fernando del Castillo
Henry Sauter F.

JAPAN

Tadahiro Abe
Will Hippen Jr.
Yoshinobo Nagashima
Nasao Shimomura

MEXICO

Arturo Díaz Rojo - Commissioner
Walter Ocampo
Ignacio A. Pesqueira
José A. del Rivero
Gustavo A. Roviroso M.
Gustavo Rozental
Jorge A. Vargas

NICARAGUA

Gilberto Bergman P. - Commissioner
José B. Godoy M. - Commissioner
Jamil Urroz Escobar - Commissioner

Francisco Campbell
Antonio Flores A.

PANAMA

Carolina T. Mouritzen - Commissioner

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Wymberley Coerr - Commissioner
Jack Gorby - Commissioner
Gerald V. Howard - Commissioner
Robert C. Macdonald - Commissione

Patrice Ashfield
Cindy Bain
Jack C. Bowland
Gordon C. Broadhead
Peter Buchan
Harold E. Cary
Cosimo L. Cutri
Jeffrey Dunn
August Felando
Charles E. Finan
Virginia Flagg
William W. Fox, Jr.
E. C. Fullerton
Gregory Gay
Vern Griffin
Brian S. Hallman
Mary Elizabeth Hoinkes
Ken Hudson
Rolf Juhl
Milton M. Kaufman
E. A. Keen
Barbara Keith
O.E. Kerns, Jr.
Dennis M. King
Janous J. Marks
Karen McClintock
Jose M. Medina Jr.
John P. Mulligan
John Negroponete
Howard Nevins
Anthony Nizetich
Joel W. Osborn
Paul Passovoy
Susan Reynolds
John J. Royal
Faye Seaton
James de Silva
Manuel A. Silva
Matthew Slavin
Jack Tarantino
Louis M. Terrell
Robert Thornton
Tony Trutanich
Richard E. Zellers
Michael Zolezzi

COLOMBIA

Inés Jaramillo de Santa

ECUADOR

Raúl Serrano

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Han Mo Kim

SPAIN

José Angel Angulo Errazquin
Carlos Velez