

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

101ST MEETING

Victoria, B.C., Canada

7 - 11 August 2023

RESOLUTION C-23-03

AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION C-99-07 ON FISH- AGGREGATING DEVICES

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Victoria, Canada, on the occasion of its 101st Meeting:

Considering that Document SAC-14-16 on the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) to the Commission states the following with respect to fish-aggregating devices (FADs): “Taking into account the importance of FAD recovery, the SAC requests that the Commission clarify if vessels other than authorized purse seiners could carry out this recovery and under what circumstances, and considers, should it be necessary, an update of Resolution C-99-07 on FADs”;

Noting that the fishery on FADs has grown in the last years, in catches of juvenile tunas, in particular yellowfin, in the purse-seine fishery in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Noting that the activity on FADs is one of the main fishing strategies in recent years, making it important to devise solutions for FADs recovery in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Concerned about the reduction in the average size of bigeye tuna caught by the purse-seine fishery in the EPO;

Concerned about the use of non-biodegradable materials in the construction of FADs that might be found abandoned and drifting in the EPO;

Reiterating the need to seek a viable solution to reduce incidental catches of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna in the purse-seine fishery in the EPO;

Reaffirming its commitment to the application of the precautionary approach, which establishes that “[t]he absence of adequate scientific information shall not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures” (Antigua Convention, Article IV, par. 2);

Recalling that under Resolution C- 22-03 (not applicable “to troll vessels, pole-and-line vessels or vessels engaged in the transshipment of fresh fish at sea” par. 3), except under the transshipment monitoring program established by the Resolution, “all transshipment operations in the Antigua Convention Area of tuna and tuna species and sharks (...) must take place in port.” (par. 2);

Recalling that Resolutions adopted by the IATTC at its 61st and 62nd Meetings contained recommendations that the Parties prohibit the use of tender vessels whose role it is to deploy, repair, pick up, or maintain FADs at sea,

1. *Recommends to the Members and Cooperating Non-Members (CPCs) under whose jurisdiction vessels operate in the EPO that they:*

- (a) Prohibit the use of tender vessels operating in support of vessels fishing on FADs in the EPO, without prejudice to similar activities in other parts of the world.
 - (b) Continue with the scientific working group established in accordance with Resolution C- 99-07 to carry out comprehensive research, in conjunction with the IATTC staff, to include, but not be limited to:
 - i. The relationship between catches of bigeye and yellowfin tuna and the maximum depth of FADs.
 - ii. The effect of the use of baited FADs on catch rates and size composition of the catch of tunas.
 - iii. Estimates of the natural mortality of the various populations of tunas.
 - iv. The establishment of a maximum number of sets on floating objects which the tuna fishery in the EPO can support.
 - v. The catches of tunas and associated and dependent species in the fishery on floating objects between 130°W and 150°W.
 - vi. The impact of permanent or temporary closure of areas to the use of FADs, especially in combination with other regulatory measures being considered by the Commission.
 - vii. The feasibility of a program to place observers on purse-seine vessels smaller than Class 6 (≤ 363 metric tons carrying capacity) and the appropriate level of observer coverage necessary to obtain reliable scientific information.
2. *Requests* that the Director continue research into the use of fishing gear and/or techniques to reduce the catch of small tunas and the bycatch of non-target species and continue to report to the Commission on the results of this research.
 3. To prevent drifting loss or stranding, CPCs are encouraged to initiate recovery programs of drifting FADs through cooperative initiatives among fishing vessels operating in the Convention Area or vessels implementing projects for the recovery of such FADs. Without restricting regular fishing operations of purse seine vessels fishing with FADs, such recovery activities shall be limited to the collection of drifting FADs for final disposal and not to perform any type of maintenance or adjustment. Except for authorized tuna purse seine vessels, these vessels shall not deploy FADs. Drifting FADs collected under the voluntary recovery program shall be taken on board and brought to port for recycling or disposal. The provisions of this paragraph shall be in effect until 31 December 2028, while the initial results are analyzed. This paragraph shall be applied without prejudice to the existing obligations of fishing vessels including those in other IATTC Resolutions.
 4. CPCs that decide to initiate these programs shall report all associated information on FAD recovery activities to the IATTC Secretariat, so that the scientific staff can analyze the data on a year- by-year basis and report these results to the *Ad Hoc* Permanent Working Group on FADs and the SAC.