

**The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Ocean Foundation  
Statement to the 103<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission  
September 1-5, 2025, Panama City, Panama**

The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Ocean Foundation welcome the opportunity to participate in the 103<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) as observers. We urge members to hasten the adoption of new approaches that will provide greater resiliency and stability for the region's fisheries. As such, we urge members to make the following decisions:

***Advance management procedures for IATTC stocks***

Members, industry and non-governmental organizations agree that the development of management procedures, also called harvest strategies, using management strategy evaluation (MSE), is key to the future sustainability and profitability of the region's fish stocks. Two MSE-tested management procedures were scheduled to be adopted this year, but unfortunately there are no posted proposals for either stock. To get the processes back on track to ensure adoption in 2026, members should:

- **Adopt conceptual management objectives for bigeye tuna and ensure that the MSE is completed in 2026.** The MSE should test the IATTC scientific staff's proposed bigeye tuna harvest strategy and other candidates developed through the Ad Hoc Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation (WGMSE) and be supported by one or more intersessional meetings of the WGMSE. The objectives for bigeye tuna and time-bound workplan could be adopted through an addition to [Proposal J-1](#) or one of the proposed revisions to Resolution C-24-01.
- **Accelerate progress on Pacific bluefin tuna.** Members should use the opportunity of meeting face-to-face in Panama to continue discussions on the Pacific bluefin management procedure and agree to schedule additional meetings of the joint working group for later this year and early 2026. A range of options permit increased catches while ensuring the stock remains above the second rebuilding target with a high probability.

Additionally, to continue the Individual Vessel Threshold's (IVT) successful reduction of juvenile bigeye bycatch in the purse seine fishery, we strongly urge the IATTC to maintain the Enhanced Monitoring Program (EMP) or to replace it with the Integrated Port Sampling Program (IPSP).

***Strengthen the effectiveness and transparency of the compliance review process***

A robust, efficient, and transparent compliance review process is essential in ensuring members are held accountable for meeting their obligations, identifying members' capacity needs, and supporting sustainable fisheries. As such, members should:

- **Establish a process to categorize instances of non-compliance by their severity and identify follow-up actions that include the elements proposed in [COR-16-INF-A](#).** Such a

process would allow the COR to focus its review on the more impactful violations and could be used to help determine appropriate and effective follow-up actions.

- **Agree that the final compliance report should be made publicly accessible.** This would align IATTC with the practices of other RFMOs and ensure greater transparency in the outcomes of the compliance review process.

### ***Reduce opportunities for illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing***

High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) schemes are recognized globally as essential tools for ensuring effective enforcement of RFMO resolutions, promoting transparency, and maintaining a level playing field among members. Such mechanisms are consistent with international law and aligned with the FAO's International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing. **We urge members to adopt [Proposal G-1](#) on boarding and inspection procedures and seize this opportunity to strengthen compliance and conservation efforts in the eastern Pacific Ocean.**

Effective port State measures minimize the risk of illegally caught fish entering international markets. Since IATTC adopted Resolution C-21-07, more countries around the globe have joined the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), including an IATTC member. However, the IATTC scheme remains voluntary. Several aspects are not aligned with the effective practices of the PSMA. **Members should update IATTC's port State measures to require all CPCs to participate and to include provisions that are in line with the PSMs of other RFMOs and mirror effective international practice. This update should:**

- Strengthen provisions, especially in relation to national coordination and information exchange, which are critical to ensure real time data exchange and inform effective decision making at port and
- Mandate the use of a regional port State information system, either one developed by IATTC or application of the PSMA Global Information Exchange System (GIES), which in consultation with the FAO could be enhanced to meet the region's specific needs.

Further, the IATTC should promote greater transparency over who engages in and profits from fishing operations. **Members should adopt a new measure to prevent their nationals from deriving benefits from or supporting IUU fishing and discuss amending the IATTC vessel registry (Resolution C-24-07) to collect the beneficial owner's name and country of residence.** The beneficial owner is the person or entity who profits most from the vessel's activities. Collecting this data would help ensure that fishery managers know exactly who is fishing within the Convention Area and empower them to take appropriate and prompt action.

Finally, we welcome the commitment taken at the 102<sup>nd</sup> Meeting for the development of a catch documentation scheme for bluefin tuna by 2026 in line with the joint working group on Pacific bluefin and call on members to continue deliberations to ensure they meet the deadline.

### ***Reduce the impact of fishing on the ecosystem***

We are concerned by the status of key shark species in the eastern Pacific Ocean, including hammerheads and silky sharks, and the inability of the IATTC to assess several shark-related

provisions for their effectiveness. **With the silky shark measure (Resolution C-23-08) expiring in 2025, it is imperative to act in a precautionary manner and adopt a strengthened measure that reduces the impact of fishing on this vulnerable shark species.** Practices that have proven effective in other RFMOs should be applied in the IATTC, such as prohibiting retention in all IATTC fisheries, removing wire leader from longline fisheries, and freeing longline-caught sharks with as little trailing gear as possible.

#### ***Improve data sharing and management with other RFMOs***

The IATTC fisheries are overlapping with or adjacent to fisheries managed by other Pacific regional fisheries management organizations. Opportunities exist to strengthen data sharing and cooperation to the benefit of the IATTC. As such, members should:

- **Adopt the cooperative agreement on south Pacific albacore** outlined in [Proposal C-1](#). The terms of reference would establish a new joint working group with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) to improve data sharing, harmonization and management of this important pan-Pacific stock.
- **Adopt the cooperative agreement pertaining to the north Pacific.** The agreement with the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) would facilitate the formal exchange of scientific and fisheries data with the IATTC, which is necessary given overlapping management areas and fishing operations, such as transshipment.

#### ***Address the impact of climate change on IATTC fisheries***

The IATTC has developed a comprehensive climate change workplan. We urge members to adopt [Proposal D-1](#), which would amend the resolution on climate change to reflect the progress in developing this workplan and support the regular convening of meetings to discuss its progress and implementation. We urge members to strive to accelerate the advancement of the tools highlighted in it.

#### ***Assess the impact of other relevant international agreements***

The IATTC should consider the impact of recent international treaties - including the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies and the United Nations Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement - and continue discussions on how IATTC and its members might assist relevant signatories to meet their obligations.