

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

WORKING GROUP ON BYCATCH

11TH MEETING

(by videoconference)

10-11 May 2022

DOCUMENT BYC-11-03

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A WORKING GROUP ON
ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH

BACKGROUND:

The current Working Group on Bycatch was established by the IATTC in June 1997 at its 58th meeting. Its role was further elaborated, two years later, through the adoption of Resolution [C-99-11](#) on bycatch, which was afterwards successively replaced by a series of resolutions on this topic, the latest being Resolution-C-04-05 (Rev.2) *Consolidated resolution on bycatch*.

In April 2000, at the opening of the second meeting of the Working Group, the IATTC Director gave a verbal account of its terms of reference, as recorded in the report of the meeting, as follows:

1. To define the relationships between bycatch and target species;
2. To develop gear technologies for bycatch reduction;
3. To formulate and evaluate management schemes for reducing bycatch.

Since then, the negotiations leading to the adoption of the Antigua Convention in 2003 and the entry into force of the convention in 2010 significantly expanded the mandate of the IATTC, through the incorporation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, in line with the principles and standards contained in the international instruments adopted at the global level, particularly within FAO.

That evolution is still not reflected appropriately in the current terms of reference of the Working Group on Bycatch. There is in addition an increasing disparity between the original mandate of the Working Group, on the one hand, and, on the other, the Strategic Science Plan 2019-2023 and programme of work that were endorsed by the Commission¹.

Accordingly, the Co-Chairs of the Working Group, in coordination with the staff of the Commission, considered necessary to prepare a draft of terms of reference that would be more precise, comprehensive, and detailed, as well as reflecting appropriately the broadening of the mandate of the Commission under the Antigua Convention. It is also proposed to modify that its name be modified to “*Working Group on Ecosystem and Bycatch*”.

¹ This is also illustrated and reflected in the restructured organigram of the IATTC staff, with the consolidation of an “Ecosystem and Bycatch Program”, as one of the four main scientific research programs.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE:

The 11th meeting of the Working Group is invited to consider and review the draft terms of reference attached to this document (see Annex 1). In view of its nature as well as for the convenience of the participants, it is presented in what would be its final format, as a draft resolution of the Commission.

The text that would result from that review and discussion, if adopted by the Working Group, will be submitted to the Commission at its next annual meeting in August 2022 for its consideration and decision.

Annex: as indicated

Annex 1

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A WORKING GROUP ON ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in La Jolla, California (USA), on the occasion of its 100th Meeting:

In accordance with the provisions of Article VII, paragraph 1 (u), of the Antigua Convention;

Agrees:

To establish a permanent Working Group on Ecosystem and Bycatch (EBWG), with the following terms of reference:

1. The EBWG shall be open to the participation of all stakeholders. In addition to those representatives designated for that purpose by each Member of the Commission, it may comprise representatives of inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and as well as natural persons such as scientists, researchers, managers, fishers, etc.
2. The functions of the EBWG shall be the following:
 - (a) To define the relationships between bycatch and target species;
 - (b) To promote and facilitate a better understanding of the relationship between species and the environment across different spatio-temporal scales;
 - (c) To evaluate and recommend, as appropriate:
 - i. bycatch mitigation and reduction measures as well as resilience and adaptation plans for fisheries and target species under a changing environment, including, but not limited to, adaptive management and climate change impact and adaptation plans;
 - ii. conservation and management measures and recommendations for species belonging to the same ecosystem and that are affected by fishing for, or dependent on or associated with, the fish stocks covered by the Antigua Convention, with a view to maintaining or restoring populations of such species above levels at which their reproduction and sustainability may become seriously threatened;
 - iii. measures and best practices to avoid, reduce and minimize waste, discards, catch by lost or discarded gear, catch and mortality of non-target species (both fish and non-fish species) and impacts on associated or dependent species and habitats, in particular endangered species and sensitive habitats;
 - iv. programs and/or standards for monitoring and data collections to support the Commission's scientific investigations on ecosystem and bycatch topics;
 - (d) To the extent practicable, assist with the technical development, evaluation and promotion of selective, environmentally safe and cost-effective fishing gear and techniques for bycatch reduction and minimization of ecosystem impacts, as well as making recommen-

dations to the Commission regarding related activities such as education, training, technology transfer and capacity building.

3. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the EBWG:
 - i. shall be submitted first of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), for its consideration and endorsement and later submission to the Commission, as endorsed;
 - ii. may be submitted to the Commission directly, whenever they could not be considered and/or endorsed by the SAC or upon the request of the Commission itself.
4. In order to optimize its work, the EBWG:
 - i. shall ensure an appropriate coordination with all other relevant IATTC bodies and fora in addition to seek their inputs, in order to avoid duplication and ensure consistency within the IATTC
 - ii. may seek appropriate inputs from all relevant stakeholders, such as inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations or natural persons such as scientists, researchers, managers, fishers, etc.
5. This resolution shall enter into force at the time of its adoption and the EBWG shall immediately replace the existing Working Group on Bycatch.