

**INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION**  
**PERMANENT WORKING GROUP ON COMPLIANCE**

**8<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

CANCUN (MEXICO)  
21 JUNE 2007

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**AGENDA**

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Approval of the minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting
4. Review of relevant [Commission Resolutions](#)
5. Compliance with IATTC measures in 2006:
  - a) [Resolution on bycatch](#) (C-04-05):
    - i. release of live bycatch
    - ii. full retention
  - b) [Resolution on fish-aggregating devices](#) (C-99-07)
  - c) [Resolution on the conservation of tuna](#) (C-04-09):
    - i. Purse-seine closures
    - ii. Limitation on longline catch
  - d) [Resolution on at-sea reporting](#) (C-03-04)
  - e) [Resolution on fleet capacity](#) (C-02-03)
  - f) [Resolution on data provision](#) (C-03-05)
  - g) [Resolution on northern albacore tuna](#) (C-05-02)
  - h) National reports
6. Other business
7. Recommendations for the Commission
8. Adjournment

**1. Opening of the meeting**

The meeting was called to order by the chairman, David Hogan of the United States.

**2. Adoption of the agenda**

The provisional agenda was adopted as presented, with one addition regarding an item on the approval of the minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group.

### **3. Approval of the minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

The minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group were approved as presented.

### **4. Review of relevant [Commission Resolutions](#)**

The staff presented its report on compliance in 2006 (Document COM-8-04). It was noted that, because of the use by IATTC observers of a new compliance reporting form some new information was being presented.

### **5. Compliance with IATTC measures in 2006:**

The discussion of the compliance report first touched on the time frame used by the Secretariat, with Mexico recommending that the actual year of the violation or other event be used, rather than the year in which a trip began.

Several delegations noted that the compliance picture was improving overall, but that for several key areas there is very little information on compliance by longline vessels. The importance of government holding seminars to promote compliance was stressed by delegations.

#### **a) [Resolution on bycatch](#) (C-04-05):**

##### **i. Release of live bycatch**

Regarding sea turtles, it was noted that in 2006 there were 1,565 sets involving 1,795 sea turtles, compared to 1,350 sets involving 1,955 turtles in 2005. Of the 1,795 turtles involved in 2006, 89% were released unharmed and 5% escaped, so 93-94% of the turtles involved suffered no adverse effects from the fishery, and only 6 turtle mortalities were recorded by observers. In 2006 a total of 69 violations involving no effort to avoid entanglement or no recovery effort were identified and reported to governments.

Comments reflected the improving trend in compliance, in particular for the purse-seine fishery, but again noted no information on bycatch by some longline vessels.

Regarding sharks, observers reported 3,224 sets that involved 24,796 sharks. Of these, 2,085 were released alive, 11,218 were discarded and 11,309 were retained. In 87 of the 257 trips for which an RDC was completed, 4,526 sharks were finned. Spain asked that the table on shark bycatch be broken down by set type, and that differences in shark bycatch between set types be examined.

It was pointed out that compliance with the restrictions on finning of sharks required attention by the Commission, and several delegations described the actions they are taking to implement the restriction and improve compliance.

Venezuela reminded the Parties of the obligation to work on reducing the bycatch of small fish, including such devices as sorting grids. Ecuador reiterated its proposal from last year, and indicated that it would be brought back to the IATTC again this year.

##### **ii. Full retention**

The full retention requirement was again discussed in the context of examining the compliance rate and the contribution toward conservation.

Regarding the requirement for purse-seine vessels to retain on board all tuna caught, the staff reported that observers reported 1,089 sets with discards during 2006, resulting in an estimated 6,297 tons discarded. Only approximately 7% of the sets with discards have been properly documented by the captains during 2006.

#### **b) [Resolution on fish-aggregating devices](#) (C-99-07)**

The staff has received no reports of transshipments at sea. The last definitive report to the staff of a

tender vessel in the EPO was on 17 June 2000.

c) **Resolution on the conservation of tuna (C-04-09):**

**i. Purse-seine closures**

Regarding compliance with the purse-seine closures, there were two reported violations.

The cases of fishing during a closure were examined, including one of the extraordinary circumstances related to a vessel operating under two national regimes (one of its flag and the other of a member with whom it had a contract of association) in one year, and concerns were expressed that such circumstances could in the future lead to diminishment of the effectiveness of the IATTC conservation and management measures. Spain noted that it did not anticipate that this situation, which involved a Spanish-flag vessel, would occur in future.

**ii. Limitation on longline catch**

Regarding the bigeye catch limits, none of the reported catches exceeded the established limits.

Japan again expressed concern over the 2001 catch data from Vanuatu, on which the 2006 catch limit for longline vessels of that Party were based.

d) **Resolution on at-sea reporting (C-03-04)**

The staff reported that the reporting rate of 85% in 2006 was a decrease from the 89% rate from 2005. The range of reporting rates varied from 74% to 100%. It was pointed out that the compliance rate reflected submission of reports by vessels rather than by observers.

e) **Resolution on fleet capacity (C-02-03)**

Discussion of compliance with the capacity resolution revolved around continuing concerns by some delegations that sealing wells may not be an effective way of managing capacity, though Mexico pointed out that this was not the only reason that wells might be sealed.

The staff reported that the Colombian vessel *Martha Lucia R* and the Venezuelan vessel *Athena F* continued to fish in the EPO in 2006 without being on the Regional Vessel Register. The staff also reported that two other vessels, the *Vicente F* (Panama) and the *Don Abel* (Venezuela), fished in the EPO while not on the Regional Vessel Register. It was reported that three vessels, the *Aracely F*, *Jeannine* and *Atlantis IV*, stored fish in wells that were supposed to be sealed. Mexico noted that it had advised the Secretariat that capacity would be made available from a sunk vessel to account for the volume of the sealed wells on the *Jeannine*, so that they could be unsealed.

f) **Resolution on data provision (C-03-05)**

All the countries with purse-seine vessels fishing in the EPO are meeting the requirements of the resolution.

g) **Resolution on northern albacore tuna (C-05-02)**

The staff identified several areas where the Commission may want to provide some clarity within the resolution to better implement and track compliance with the resolution.

**h) National reports**

Japan and Chinese Taipei commented on the resolution on longline fishing capacity, with Chinese Taipei reporting that they had scrapped 160 large-scale tuna longline vessels in 2005-2006, and had plans to scrap 23 more by the end of 2007, for a total of 183 scrapped vessels.

The discussion on VMS implementation generated a significant number of reports from delegations, summarized in Appendix 2.

## **6. Recommendations for the Commission**

The Working Group recommends that the Commission:

1. Take note of the poor compliance with the measure on finning of sharks and examine what can be done to improve this.
2. Endorse asking national observer programs to use the new compliance reporting form (RDC) if they are not doing so already.
3. Examine the provisions of the albacore tuna resolution to determine whether it would be useful or necessary to clarify or amend the resolution to define the concept of “current levels of effort” and other provisions, as noted in Document COM-8-04.
4. Clarify its intention with respect to the reporting provisions of the trade measures resolution.

Also, some Parties want the Commission to consider how more could be done to establish a program or activities to develop better methods or technologies to reduce the bycatch of small and juvenile fish.

## **7. Other business**

There was discussion of the nature of the import and landing data reporting requirement of the resolution on trade measures, and although no clear compliance-related issues were raised, it was considered useful to seek a clarification from the Commission on the reporting aspect of the resolution.

A discussion of compliance with the resolution on the IATTC IUU Vessel List generated some explanations regarding the unloading by vessels cited in the report, as well as some information on the status of the flag and disposition of some IUU vessels that would be discussed in the Joint Working Group on Fishing by Non-Parties, both with respect to the specific vessels and with the intent of the IUU resolution in relation to re-flagging of IUU vessels.

The Working Group will meet in conjunction with the annual meeting of the IATTC in 2008.

## **8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.

## Appendix 1.

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## Appendix 2.

### Summary of VMS implementation

#### Members

Costa Rica	No vessels longer than 24 m, but implementing pilot programs for VMS for smaller vessels.
Ecuador	Target of having a national system for all purse-seine vessels by the end of 2007. Most purse-seine vessels already have VMS equipment installed.
El Salvador	As of February 2007, all purse-seine vessels are reporting using VMS
Spain	Under EC legislation, all vessels longer than 15 m are required to have VMS systems.
France	
Guatemala	Completing preparations for a system for vessels longer than 24 m. The provider has been selected. Considering application to vessels shorter than 24 m.
Japan	All vessels in the EPO have VMS.
Korea	
Mexico	All the vessels on the IATTC Regional Register have VMS.
Nicaragua	All purse-seine vessels are required to have VMS.
Panama	All fishing vessels with an international license are required to have VMS. Next year VMS will be required for all fishing vessels.
Peru	All industrial vessels are required to have VMS.
United States	74% of tuna vessels fishing in the EPO have VMS.
Vanuatu	
Venezuela	All vessels over 15 m are required to have VMS equipment; currently in the process of selecting a VMS provider.
<b>Other CPCs</b>	
Belize	All longline vessels on the high seas have VMS.
Canada	Has begun the implementation process of VMS for tuna vessels, based on the requirements of WCPFC and IATTC.
Chinese Taipei	All vessels in the EPO have VMS
China	All vessels in the EPO have VMS
Cook Islands	All vessels in the EPO have VMS
Honduras	