

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

100<sup>TH</sup> MEETING

Phoenix, Arizona, USA

1-5 August 2022

PROPOSAL IATTC-100 K-1 REV 2

SUBMITTED BY ECUADOR

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION C-19-08 ON  
SCIENTIFIC OBSERVERS FOR LONGLINE VESSELS

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

IATTC Resolution C-19-08 requires a 5% observer coverage of the fishing effort made by longline fishing vessels greater than 20 meters length overall.

Taking into account that the 2022 staff recommendation in Document SAC-13-14, item 7.2.1, “Longline fishery observer coverage”, states the following:

*“Resolution C-19-08 requires that at least 5% of the fishing effort by longline vessels greater than 20 m length overall (LOA) carry a scientific observer. However, recent analyses undertaken by IATTC staff with the new operational-level data collected by observers onboard large longline vessels showed that, at such a low level of coverage, the data are not representative of the fishing activities of the entire fleet and cannot even be used to produce accurate estimates of total catch of target species such as bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna (BYC-10 INF-D). Therefore, the staff concludes that 5% coverage is too low for calculating accurate estimates of the total catches of bycatch species caught by these vessels, particularly those species caught infrequently, such as sea turtles, seabirds and some sharks of conservation concern. In fact, several studies of sampling coverage for other longline fisheries have shown that 20% coverage is considered the minimum level required for estimating total catch of bycatch species. Both the staff and the SAC have recommended that this level of coverage be adopted for longline vessels over 20 m LOA (SAC-10 INF-H).”*

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Working Group on Bycatch to the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) at its 9<sup>th</sup> meeting in May 2019, particularly item 1: *“Revise Resolution C-11-08 to increase longline observer coverage on vessels >20 m LOA to 20% and consider ways to supplement observer requirements with electronic monitoring.”*

Furthermore, the recommendations of the tenth meeting of the SAC, Document IATTC-94-02, Section 3. “Data”, item 3.1.a. “Electronic Monitoring”, recommends the following:

*“The SAC recommends that the Electronic Monitoring (EM) initiatives implemented on purse seiners, both Classes 1-5 and Class 6, which will improve data collection for the purse-seine fleet, **are also tested in the longline fleet.**”*

Noting that 100% of the large purse-seine vessels that fish in the Convention Area are required to carry 100% scientific observers aboard, in accordance with the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program. In addition, some CPCs’ shipowners of purse-seine vessels smaller than Class 6 make economic efforts to provide information on their activities and carry observers aboard in support of scientific research.

In this context, it is considered essential that the current resolution be modified to accommodate a complete observer coverage, whether by humans or by electronic means, which is an important action to measure effort in fishing days of the longline tuna fishery.

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in ~~Bilbao, Spain~~ Phoenix, Arizona (USA), on the occasion of its ~~94<sup>th</sup>~~ 100<sup>th</sup> Meeting;

Recognizing the need to collect scientific information on target species as well as comprehensive data on interactions with non-target species, in particular, sea turtles, sharks and seabirds;

Noting the need to ensure uniform and equitable treatment of all tuna-fishing vessels operating in the Convention Area;

Noting that all large purse-seine vessels operating in the Convention Area are required to carry scientific observers aboard, in accordance with the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program, and that the Commission has recommended the extension of observer coverage to smaller purse-seine vessels on a voluntary basis;

Taking into account that IATTC scientific staff and the IATTC Working Group on Bycatch have reiteratedly recommended at least 20% observer coverage on longline vessels fishing for tunas in the Convention Area, and that the Working Group on Bycatch suggested that human observer coverage could be supplemented by electronic monitoring systems (EMS) in order to achieve that goal; and

Noting that the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), at its 10<sup>th</sup> meeting in May 2019, determined that the appropriate measure of longline fishing effort for calculating observer coverage is “number of hooks.”

Agrees that:

1. Each Member and Cooperating non-Member (CPC) shall ensure that active longline vessels greater than 20 meters length overall carry human observers or electronic monitoring systems, in accordance with the following timeline:

<u>30 June 2024</u>	<u>10%</u>
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~~2.~~ For the purposes of this Resolution, longline fishing effort is defined as the number of effective days of fishing<sup>1</sup> or hooks deployed.

~~3.~~ The main task of the scientific observers and/or EMS shall be to record, consistent with data standards established by the SAC, any available biological information, the catches of targeted fish species, species composition, and any available biological information, as well as any interactions with non-target species such as sea turtles, seabirds and sharks.

~~4.~~ Each Member and Cooperating Non-Member (CPC) shall ensure that at least 5% of the fishing effort made by its longline fishing vessels greater than 20 meters length overall carries a scientific observer.

~~5.~~ Each CPC shall endeavor to ensure that observer coverage is representative of the activities of its fleet, including in terms of gear configuration, target species and fishing areas.

~~6.~~ CPCs shall:

- a. Ensure that the minimum level of coverage is met;
- b. Take all necessary measures to ensure that observers are able to carry out their duties in a competent and safe manner;
- c. Endeavor to ensure that observers alternate vessels between their assignments;
- d. Ensure that the vessel on which an observer is placed provide suitable food and lodging during the observer's deployment at the same level as the officers, where possible. Vessel masters shall ensure that all necessary cooperation is extended to observers in order for them to carry out their duties safely, including providing access, as required, to the retained catch, and catch which is intended to be discarded.

~~7.~~ The reporting requirements established by the SAC pursuant to resolution C-11-08 can be found in Annex A. The SAC may decide to modify these reporting requirements or establish new ones whenever

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by SAC-03 in 2012

deemed necessary and shall notify the Commission as appropriate for endorsement at the subsequent annual meeting of the IATTC.

- ~~7~~8. CPCs shall submit operational data collected by observers from the previous year, consistent with the Minimum Data Reporting Standards (Annex B), to the Director no later than June 30 of each year.
- ~~8~~9. Unless otherwise specified by the SAC, CPCs shall submit other reporting under this Resolution by 31 March of each year.
- ~~9~~10. The IATTC Scientific Staff, in consultation with CPCs, shall prepare a draft proposal for the development of minimum standards for the implementation of an EMS for the longline fleets, taking into account the experience of CPCs that are implementing EMS on longline vessels and progress made in other tuna RFMOs, to be submitted to the SAC meeting of 2020.
- ~~10~~11. The SAC, in consultation with the IATTC Scientific Staff, shall present recommendations on this proposal to the Commission for its consideration at its annual meeting in 2020.