

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

14TH MEETING

La Jolla, California (USA)

15-19 May 2023

DOCUMENT SAC-14-02

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED AT THE PREVIOUS SAC MEETING: PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES

At its annual meetings, the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) makes recommendations to the Commission, many of which involve actions by the staff. This document lists the recommendations currently requiring action by the staff and/or the Commission, and their current status: **green**: completed; yellow: in progress, incomplete; **orange**: planned, but pending funding; red: no action. For the full recommendations made by SAC-13, see [here](#).

	Recommendation, SAC-13	Status (13 May 2023)
1. TROPICAL TUNA (YELLOWFIN, SKIPJACK AND BIGEYE)		
1.1. Management strategy evaluation (MSE)		
a)	Recognizing the importance of the ongoing MSE process for tropical tunas: that the Commission provide the appropriate resources, considering the proposal of the staff to be submitted at the next regular meeting of the Commission, in order to continue and complete the MSE process, including dialogue between scientists, managers, and other relevant stakeholders.	Current funding (provided by the EU) for the MSE process for tropical tunas ends at the end of 2023. A proposal (Project 1.1.b) seeking IATTC funds to continue the MSE process was prepared for the 100 th meeting of the IATTC held in August 2022, however it was not discussed during the meeting. A proposal was submitted to the EU in April 2023 for final BET work during 2024. A presentation will be made during the 14 th meeting of the SAC under agenda item 7.a.
1.2 Landings and processing plants sampling scheme		
a)	That the work of the pilot project coordinated by the IATTC staff to strengthen the sampling of landings in port, referred to in paragraph 6 of Resolution C-21-04, initially focused upon Class-6 vessels and gradually applicable to other classes within the framework of the pilot program and its extension to all relevant ports, be carried out subject to the availability of economic resources and sampling personnel as well as prior coordination with the CPCs of the ports involved.	During the 100 th meeting of the IATTC held in August 2022, the Commission discussed this issue extensively with the full conviction of the need to carry out the pilot study. In this regard, the Commission discussed the budget and agreed that the resources would come from the following sources: 50% from the current budget surplus; 25% from Members participating directly in the program and the other 25% by all Members. The pilot study was executed between September 2022 and February 2023 resulting in the Enhanced Monitoring Program sampling protocol, which began in March 2023 (see SAC-14-10). This topic will be

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		covered during the 14 th meeting of the SAC under agenda item 8.b.i.
b)	That the IATTC staff endeavor to minimize any possible negative effects of sampling on the unloading operations of tuna vessels and on the unloaded product quality.	This is a priority in the work scheme that has been proposed in the pilot program and will be monitored at all times to ensure that the unloading process is not affected by this sampling program. See Document SAC-14 INF-I on logistical aspects of data collection under the Enhanced Monitoring Program for bigeye catches (SAC-14 agenda item 8.b.ii).
c)	That, within the framework of the pilot program, the staff consider whether the enhanced sampling program can be carried out at the processing plants, and report back to the SAC on this matter in 2023.	Based on its experience with the EMP pilot study, the staff considers that developing and implementing an enhanced sampling program at processing plants would likely require more resources than sampling in port, and thus, at this time, a feasibility study for sampling at processing plants has not been undertaken (SAC-14 INF-I). The rationale for this decision is based on the following observations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the variability in catch composition within and among wells, even for wells with catch from the same set type and area (SAC-14-10) suggests that sampling containers could be at least as involved as sampling individual wells aboard the vessel; 2) if catch from different areas and set types is loaded into the same container, catch estimation cannot be done by strata, requiring additional sampling to estimate the trip catch (i.e., sampling more containers); 3) during the EMP pilot study, it was observed that some BET catch may be diverted during unloading for sale elsewhere (not at the cannery), requiring more resources to monitor the unloading of a trip; and, 4) comparison of observer and EMP catch estimates and observer and cannery catch estimates (SAC-14-10) suggests that cannery data presently provided to IATTC may underestimate BET catches, and thus, any sampling at canneries might require modification to the current catch sorting procedures conducted at canneries.
1.3 Skipjack tuna		
a)	While recognizing the interim nature of the first skipjack stock assessment, which was conducted by the scientific staff, who was congratulated for it by the SAC, that the Commission take into account the results of	In accordance with this recommendation, the 1st external review of the stock assessment of skipjack tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean was held from 7 to 10 November 2022.

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	this assessment as well as the management advice issued by the staff.	The meeting was chaired by Dr. James Bence from Michigan State University. The review panel was tasked to conduct a review and issue recommendations regarding the current assessment, as well as to conduct a tagging analysis, taking into account how such analysis could be used in future assessments. The final report of the external review is available and a presentation will be made during the 14 th meeting of the SAC under agenda item 6.d.ii.
b)	Given that more time was requested by the staff to integrate the tagging information and complete the assessment of skipjack tuna in the EPO and given that all three species of tropical tuna are managed together, that the staff conduct the skipjack tuna assessment in 2024, together with the bigeye and yellowfin tuna assessments.	Following SAC recommendation 1.3.b, the staff has postponed completion of the skipjack benchmark assessment onto May 2024, when it will be presented to the SAC. This will give the staff additional time to complete assessment research, implement the recommendations of the external review, and complete the spatiotemporal tagging analysis. See Document SAC-14-08 and agenda items under 6.a for information related to the skipjack assessment.
2. TEMPERATE TUNAS		
2.1 Swordfish		
a)	That the IATTC staff publish on the IATTC website, within 2 months, the benchmark assessment of the swordfish stock in the EPO with its respective recommendations.	The south EPO swordfish benchmark assessment was published on the 100 th IATTC meeting website as document IATTC-100 INF-B . The document has been revised and improved and a new report has been posted on the website of the 14 th SAC meeting (SAC-14-15). The benchmark assessment for South EPO swordfish is now completed. The north EPO assessment will be conducted by the ISC Billfish Working Group in April 2023.
b)	That the staff also maintain in its scientific research plan periodic assessments on this species.	The 2024-2027 IATTC Strategic Science Plan will include the assessment of South EPO swordfish by the staff and staff participation in the ISC Billfish Working Group.
2.2 North Pacific albacore tuna		
a)	That the Commission use the results of the concluded MSE process to establish reference points and harvest control rules for the North Pacific albacore tuna.	In August 2022, Resolution C-22-04 on north Pacific albacore tuna harvest strategy was approved, which seeks to implement a management strategy for this stock. The adopted harvest strategy clearly defines management objectives, reference points, acceptable levels of risk, and monitoring mechanisms. The resolution provides guidelines on the harvest control rules which shall be adopted by 2023.

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2.3 South Pacific albacore tuna		
a)	That CPCs provide the fisheries information as recommended by the scientific staff, for the purpose of improving the stock assessment of South Pacific albacore tuna in conjunction with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).	Data provision mechanisms are already in place under Resolution C-03-05. However, the staff is recommending improvements in data reporting for target and non-target species, with an initial focus on longline fisheries (see report of the 1 st Workshop on data improvement: industrial longline fishery). This topic will be covered during the 14 th meeting of the SAC under agenda item 8.c.
b)	That the staff also maintain in its scientific research plan periodic assessments on this species.	The 2024-2027 IATTC Strategic Science Plan will include staff participation in the ISC North Albacore Working Group and collaboration with the SPC for the south Albacore assessment.
3. DATA COLLECTION		
3.1. Data collection for sharks		
a)	That the Commission provide adequate resources to establish or strengthen the data collection programs for shark species in the EPO, especially for fisheries carried out by EPO artisanal fisheries and for vulnerable species, including taking into account the proposal made by the IATTC staff in document IATTC-98-02(c) and the upcoming work under ABNJ Phase II.	<p>Efforts are being made to continue activities in this area with the help of resources obtained from the special fund for capacity building in developing countries, which is being implemented in accordance with Resolution C-14-03 on capacity building.</p> <p>Paragraph 3 of this resolution establishes that: <i>"The Director shall present to the Commission for its approval every year the strategic investment plan chargeable to the Fund, which shall be constructed on the basis of the requirements of the developing countries and territories and the analyses carried out by the Commission staff."</i></p> <p>This activity, for the shark fishery, has been approved in recent years and work will continue.</p>
3.2. Electronic monitoring system (EMS)		
a)	<p>Recognizing the importance of implementing an electronic monitoring system in the EPO for the conservation and management of the fish stocks covered by the Antigua Convention:</p> <p>that the Commission provide the appropriate resources to continue and complete the work plan;</p>	<p>Based on the dispositions of Resolution C-21-02, workshops have been held to discuss the technical aspects of the implementation of an electronic monitoring system. The 4th workshop was held from 12 to 14 December 2022 by videoconference. The report of this meeting can be found here: Report. A presentation on the results of this workshop will be made during the 14th meeting of the SAC under agenda item 8.a.</p> <p>The 5th workshop will be held from 24 to 26 April 2023 to analyze the financial and budgetary</p>

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		<p>considerations of an EMS. The results will also be discussed during the 14th meeting of the SAC.</p> <p>It is expected that the Commission will support the continuation of this work, including budgetary issues.</p>
b)	that an EM Working Group be established in parallel with the EM Workshops.	<p>In August 2022, Resolution C-22-07 on the establishment of an <i>Ad Hoc</i> Working Group on Electronic Monitoring was approved.</p> <p>This resolution describes the functions to be carried out by the group and indicates that a Chair must be elected for this group and the Secretariat must initiate the election process by January 2023. Two nominations have been received and it is expected that the Chair will be appointed at the SAC meeting.</p>
4. WORKING GROUP ON BYCATCH		
a)	that the Commission replace the Bycatch Working Group with an Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group;	In August 2022, Resolution C-22-06 on the Terms of Reference for a Working Group on Ecosystem and Bycatch was approved.
b)	that the Commission adopt clear Terms of Reference for the Working Group.	This resolution describes the Terms of Reference for the group's mandate and expands its responsibilities to address ecosystem conservation issues caused by the effects of fishing activities.