

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

90TH MEETING (RESUMED)

La Jolla, California (USA)

12-14 October 2016

PROPOSAL IATTC-90 F-1A

SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES

**MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF
PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN,
2017-2018**

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in La Jolla, California (USA), on the occasion of its 90th Meeting:

Taking into account that the stock of Pacific bluefin tuna is caught in both the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) and the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Expressing concern that the latest stock assessment of 2016 by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) shows the following:

- The spawning stock biomass (SSB) appears to have grown slightly in the last few years;
- Spawning stock biomass remains near the historic low point (ratio of SSB in 2014 relative to the theoretical unfished SSB ($SSB_{2014}/SSB_{F=0}$, the depletion ratio) estimated in this assessment is 2.6%) and experiencing high exploitation rates above all biological reference points except for F_{MED} and F_{loss} ; and
- Further substantial reductions in fishing mortality and catch over the whole range of ages should be considered in both Commissions to reduce the risk of the SSB falling below its historically lowest levels.

Noting that the IATTC scientific staff recommends extending the current management measures in C-14-06 an additional two years, as well as encouraging the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) to adopt additional measures to reduce the catch of adults in order to reduce the immediate risk of low spawner abundance on recruitment;

Recognizing the last recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC-7) derived from its last meeting in May 2016, in which there was consensus to support the recommendation of the IATTC Scientific Staff that the measures established for Pacific bluefin tuna in the current resolution be maintained and extended in the EPO for two more years;

Recalling that Article VII, paragraph 1(c) of the Antigua Convention provides that the Commission shall “adopt measures that are based on the best scientific evidence available to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fish stocks covered by this Convention and to maintain or restore the populations of harvested species at levels of abundance which can produce the maximum sustainable yield ...”;

Affirming that it is necessary to adopt compatible and effective management measures in both Commissions (IATTC and WCPFC) which have the responsibility and competence over this resource in order to reduce fishing mortality throughout the range of the Pacific bluefin tuna resource to contribute to the rebuilding of the stock;

Recalling the outcomes of the first Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group meeting held 29 August– 2 September 2016 in Fukuoka, Japan;

Putting on record again that greater than 84% of the impact on the spawning stock biomass of Pacific bluefin tuna results from WCPO fisheries, and urging joint action with the WCPFC to reduce the fishing mortality of Pacific bluefin tuna throughout the entire range of age classes to recover the stock;

Highlighting concerns that measures adopted in the EPO alone will not fulfill the objective of this resolution if effective and substantial measures are not taken for all fisheries involved by both Commissions, recognizing the need for a basin-wide rebuilding plan for Pacific bluefin and a long-term management framework for the stock and associated fisheries;

Urging all IATTC Members and Cooperating non-Members (CPCs) involved in this fishery to participate in a fair and equitable manner, and without exceptions, in the discussion and adoption of conservation measures applicable to the stock throughout its entire range;

Mindful that these measures are intended as an interim step towards assuring sustainability of the Pacific bluefin tuna resource, consistent with the precautionary approach, and that future conservation measures should be based not only on these interim measures, but also on the development of future scientific information and advice of the ISC and the IATTC scientific staff;

Noting that the IATTC has adopted mandatory conservation and management measures for Pacific bluefin tuna for 2012-2016, and that the measures resulted in reducing catches in the EPO;

Recalling that the Commission has adopted interim limit and target reference points for tropical tunas, but not for Pacific bluefin, and the IATTC scientific staff has recommended for the adoption of B_{MSY} and F_{MSY} as interim target reference points for Pacific bluefin tuna;

Noting that the WCPFC has adopted an interim rebuilding target, and a workplan for establishment of a precautionary-approach based management framework, including: (1) recommend appropriate reference points; (2) agreeing in advance to actions that will be taken in the event each of the particular limit reference point is breached (decision rules); (3) recommend any changes to the rebuilding program and Conservation and Management Measure (CMM);

Also noting that the initial rebuilding target adopted by WCPFC, the historical median of SB of 42,592 t, is equivalent to a depletion ratio below 6%, below the limit reference point adopted for other tunas in the EPO and the WCPO and below the limit proposed for Pacific bluefin tuna by the IATTC scientific staff;

Desirous that combined conservation and management measures by the WCPFC and the IATTC, together with other voluntary measures aimed at controlling fishing mortality, should be implemented to better the condition of the Pacific bluefin tuna stock; and

Considering the recommendations made by the Seventh Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee, which recommends strengthening scientific cooperation with the WCPFC and promotion of the adoption of harmonized conservation measures for bluefin and bigeye tunas in both organizations;

Resolves as follows:

Long-term Management Framework

The Commission shall implement a provisional rebuilding plan with an initial rebuilding target of SSBmed1952-2014 to be achieved by 2024 with at least 60% probability. The Commission shall do so by adopting catch limits and other necessary management measures that, based on information provided by the IATTC scientific staff and the ISC, are expected to achieve the rebuilding plan. Implementation and progress of this plan shall be reviewed at least every two years, and catch limits and other management measures shall be modified, if necessary, based on the review

1. The Commission shall select a harvest control rule consistent with a rebuilding plan adopted at the earliest possible date.
2. In 2018 and taking into account the outcomes of the 2nd IATTC-WCPFC NC Joint Working Group Meeting expected to be held in 2017, adopt a second rebuilding target, to be achieved by 2030.
3. No later than the IATTC meeting in 2018, The Commission shall select one or more limit reference

points.

4. The decisions made in respect to Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 shall be designed so as to conserve and recover the Pacific bluefin tuna stock, and, to the extent feasible, be comparable to those made by the WCPFC. This cooperative process should be informed by the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group meetings. Additionally, the decisions made with respect to Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 shall be evaluated when new stock assessment or management strategy evaluation results become available.
5. To enhance the effectiveness of this resolution and Pacific-wide progress towards rebuilding the Pacific bluefin tuna stock, CPCs are encouraged to coordinate with the concerned WCPFC members bilaterally. Additionally, the IATTC shall coordinate with the WCPFC to reduce catch in regions where Pacific bluefin tuna are known to spawn.
6. CPCs shall, wherever possible and to the extent practicable, work bilaterally and/or multilaterally towards ensuring the objectives and timelines in this resolution are successfully achieved.
7. CPCs shall continue to cooperate to develop a catch documentation scheme (CDS) for Pacific bluefin tuna that is, if possible, electronic. Decisions related to a CDS for Pacific bluefin tuna, specifically, should be informed, in part, by the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group meetings.

Catch Limits and Reporting

8. Each CPC shall report sport fishery catches of Pacific bluefin tuna semi-annually to the Director. CPCs shall continue their current management of sport fisheries.
9. During 2017 and 2018, in the IATTC Convention Area, total commercial catches of Pacific bluefin tuna by all CPCs shall not exceed 6,600 metric tons, for an effective maximum annual catch rate of 3,300 metric tons per year by all CPCs combined. No CPC shall exceed 3,500 metric tons in 2017.
10. Any CPC other than Mexico with historical commercial catches of Pacific bluefin in the Convention Area may catch 600 metric tons of Pacific bluefin in 2017 and 2018, combined. This catch (i.e., 600 metric tons) is included within the catch referenced in paragraph 9.
11. CPCs should endeavor to manage catches by vessels under their respective national jurisdictions in such a manner and through such mechanisms as might be applied, with the objective of reducing fish of less than 30 kg in the catch toward 50% of 2014 catch limits¹, taking into consideration the scientific advice of the ISC and the IATTC staff. At the annual meeting of the IATTC in 2018, the scientific staff shall present the actual results of the 2017 fishing season in this regard for the Commission's review.
12. CPCs shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the catch limits specified in paragraphs 9 and 10 are not exceeded in 2017 and 2018.
13. CPCs shall report to the Director when their catch has reached 80%, 90%, and 100% of the limits specified in paragraphs 9 and 10.
14. At the 2018 annual meeting, the Commission shall evaluate the effectiveness of this resolution taking into consideration the results of the latest ISC's Pacific bluefin tuna stock assessment, and conservation and management measures for Pacific bluefin tuna adopted by the WCPFC.

¹ The catch limits in Resolution C-13-02, from which IATTC scientific staff recommended reducing catch by 25-40%, and the Commission subsequently adopted Resolution C-14-06