



The Pew Charitable Trusts'
Statement to the 101st Meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
August 2023

The Pew Charitable Trusts welcomes this opportunity to comment on important items that will be discussed at IATTC this year. We commend the Secretariat and staff for their continued efforts to convene these meetings. With the help of all members, this gathering can be a successful one, where progress is made toward more sustainable fisheries in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO).

Pew recommends that the IATTC:

1. Adopt a formulaic [harvest control rule](#) for North Pacific Albacore and advance other harvest strategies efforts

In 2022, IATTC adopted resolution C-22-04 which commits to adopting a full harvest strategy for North Pacific Albacore, this year. In May, the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) recommended the inclusion of a harvest control rule (HCR) based on the management strategy evaluation (MSE). This effort was further reinforced in July 2023 by the WCPFC Northern Committee's endorsement of a draft measure for adoption at WCPFC. IATTC must now see this work through by adopting a harvest strategy with a fully specified HCR as laid out in the proposal [IATTC-101 K-1](#) from the USA, Japan and Canada. This momentous decision would lead to IATTC's first MSE-tested harvest strategy, and we acknowledge the co-sponsors for their leadership.

An MSE is also underway for bigeye with the anticipated adoption of a harvest strategy next year. To help guide this process, the Commission should discuss and further specify its management objectives for the stock this year. Successfully implementing harvest strategies requires adequate financial resources, particularly for the MSE. While there is already a harvest strategy workplan through 2024, funding is secured only through 2023. The Commission must commit sufficient financial resources, especially to support MSE staff positions at IATTC and to support a science-management dialogue group, to carry out the workplan.

2. Adopt [amendments to resolution C-14-02 on vessel monitoring systems](#)

The proposal from the EU is an initial step to better align IATTC's vessel monitoring requirements with best practices of other tuna RFMOs. By requiring standardized manual reporting - every 6 hours - in the case of technical failure, CPCs will ensure accurate reporting is maintained to assist fisheries managers and enforcement authorities in tracking vessel activities. Pew urges IATTC members to strengthen this proposal by increasing the frequency of VMS polling rates and improving information sharing practices.

3. Improve compliance review processes

Following the adoption of C-22-02, members should determine a compliance status for each CPC using annex 2 of the measure to ensure effective implementation of the resolution. In addition, the Commission should agree to host the first biennial compliance committee in 2024 per the commitments adopted at the 2022 Commission meeting.

4. Convene the Electronic Monitoring working group to comply with the 2024 standards deadline

Recalling the EM program workplan developed by the scientific staff in 2019, Pew urges the IATTC Commission to provide the appropriate resources to complete the scheduled workshops and support the working group. The updated list of recommendations from the workshops should inform the EM working group's tasks and guide the development of an EM program for adoption in 2024.

In addition to the key items mentioned above, IATTC should make progress on FADs and shark management. There is an opportunity for countries to consolidate FAD proposals that incorporate much needed amendments to FAD design, retrieval, and biodegradability. Similarly, IATTC members should adopt a consolidated measure on sharks to improve data collection and research, require fins naturally attached, and require the development of national plans of action. Finally, IATTC should join other tuna RFMOs in incorporating climate change impacts into its fisheries management decisions. This effort begins with adopting the [resolution on climate change](#) proposed by the US and supporting the actions outlined to make climate change a standing agenda item.

As tropical tuna management discussions are projected to dominate future Commission meetings, this year, IATTC has a key opportunity to make progress on all the urgent matters highlighted above. Pew supports many of the proposals submitted by members and urges IATTC to adopt them in an effort to advance sustainable fisheries management in the EPO.