

COMISION INTERAMERICANA DEL ATUN TROPICAL (CIAT)
INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION (IATTC)

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

**2nd Workshop on improvements in data collection and provision:
small purse-seine fishery**

(by videoconference)

18-20 February 2025

ANNOUNCEMENT

Many aspects of the research conducted by IATTC's staff have expanded since the Antigua Convention entered into force over a decade ago, and data provision has not kept pace. This has severely hampered the staff's work, ultimately impacting the research that can be undertaken to provide conservation and management advice to the Commission pursuant to Article XIII of the Convention.

The major data challenge associated with the small purse-seine fishery (i.e., vessels with a carrying capacity of ≤ 363 mt; size classes 1–5) is the limited information available on discards of the target tropical tuna species and on animals caught incidentally (i.e., "bycatch"), both retained catch and discards, as well as the lack of systematic and independent collection of data related to FAD activities undertaken by these vessels. Total catches, retained and discarded, as well as the use of FADs, are essential for implementing tuna conservation measures (e.g., Resolution [C-24-01](#)). For example, these measures currently rely on vessel-specific annual catches for bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) whereby the status quo 72-day purse-seine fishery closure period may be extended for vessels that exceed certain annual catch thresholds in the previous year.

Detailed data from purse seiners is needed not only to estimate catch and discards but also to provide indices of abundance for the target tuna species. Data on catch and effort of purse-seines associated with dolphins has been used to build indices of adult abundance for the yellowfin stock assessment. Data on acoustic signals of electronic buoys, and FAD operations of purse-seines associated with floating objects has been used to build indices of juvenile abundance for the three species.

Additionally, the need to address ecosystem considerations as well as the impacts from the eastern Pacific Ocean's (EPO) tuna fisheries have on associated and dependent species, as stipulated in the Antigua Convention, has become more and more relevant in recent years as a consequence of increasingly demanding external market and conservation drivers (e.g. fishery certification) that requires greater demonstration of ecologically sustainable fisheries. In this respect too, undertaking the required ecological analyses to demonstrate sustainability has been hampered by the limited high-quality data on

species caught as bycatch in the various fisheries, with limited to no data available for fisheries other than large purse-seine vessels (IATTC Class-6; fish carrying capacity > 363 t) that carry observers onboard.

Such limitations led the IATTC staff to review all current Resolutions related to the provision of data, as they constitute the foundation of all of the staff's research, mainly the overall Resolution on data provision, [C-03-05](#). Upon review, the staff concluded that this Resolution requires updating to be consistent with the mandates of the Antigua Convention and other instruments adopted by the Commission, with the IATTC's Strategic Science Plan (SSP), as well as to harmonize with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations rules, policies and practices, where possible.

In 2021, the staff prepared a background document [SAC-12-09](#) "Improving species and catch data reporting (Resolution C-03-05)" to highlight the need for updating C-03-05. This document was presented at the 12th meeting of the SAC in May 2021 (by videoconference). However, due to time constraints, this presentation was brief, and Members had limited time to adequately comment on the contents of the document. This did not prevent the SAC to endorse a staff recommendation on general data provision (see [IATTC-97-01](#), section 3.1) which called for holding a series of workshops to improve data collection and submission, with the ultimate goal to update C-03-05.

This is the second workshop in the series and will focus on the small purse-seine fishery. Information from the first workshop that focused on the "industrial longline fishery" can be found on the meetings page of IATTC's website (see [WSDAT-01](#)). Recommendations based on previous workshop discussions and participant feedback are provided in [SAC-14 INF-Q](#).

Data limitations from all fisheries are described in [SAC-12-09](#). Two documents being prepared for this workshop on the small purse-seine fishery detail (1) background information, available data sources and incentives for improving data collection and submission (WSDAT-02-01) and (2) an assessment of coverage rates needed to accurately estimate total catch of bycatch species by small purse-seine vessels (WSDAT-02-02). These documents are complementary to those either presented at the first workshop ([WSDAT-01-01](#)) or considered in prompting recommendations on data improvement ([BYC-10 INF-D](#)) that focused on industrial longline. They will be posted to IATTC's meetings page prior to the workshop for participant review.

OBJECTIVES: The primary objectives of this workshop are two-fold:

1. To discuss potential improvements in data collection for small purse seiners, including any required additional resources and capacity building activities;
2. To gather elements regarding small purse seiners that can be used to modernize the data provision resolution ([C-03-05](#)) so that it aligns the data reporting requirements with the Antigua Convention.

PARTICIPATION: The workshop will address several organizational and logistical issues pertaining to data collection and submission for small purse seiners. It is therefore important that each CPC designate representatives who will participate in the workshop on its behalf, in addition to the expert(s) who would accompany them. Designated representatives of Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) including RFMOs, as well as relevant IGOs and NGOs, and the experts accompanying them, would also be welcome to participate as observers. A registration form will be posted on the meeting website to allow participants

to register individually. It would be most appreciated if, in addition, each CPC, RFB, IGO and NGO interested in participating sends a list with its respective representative and accompanying expert(s) to Ms. Monica Galvan, Assistant to the Director, at mgalvan@iattc.org.

ARRANGEMENTS: The Workshop will be held by videoconference, utilizing the Zoom platform. An invitation to join will be sent individually to each registered participant. As indicated above, the Workshop will be held on 18, 19, 20 Feb 2025, will have a duration of three hours and will start at 3 PM PDT (UTC - 7) to finalize around 6 PM PDT (UTC -7). For the convenience of the participants, a document will be posted on the website with more precise indications on the ways the meeting will be conducted, taking into account the special requirements and limitations of videoconferencing, using as a model the similar documents that were used for previous IATTC meetings by videoconference. A preliminary agenda is provided below, which will also be posted in the meeting website.

Languages: English and Spanish, with simultaneous interpretation.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA:

1. Opening of the workshop
2. Presentations of DAT-02-01, DAT-02-02 and other associated background information
3. Discussions of recommendations for updating C-03-05 pertaining to small purse-seine vessels
4. Others
5. Adjournment