

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

MEMORANDUM

26 March 2025

Ref.: 0120-410

To: Commissioners and Heads of Delegation
From: Arnulfo L. Franco, Director
Re: 2nd Sea Turtle Bycatch Mitigation and Circle Hook Workshop (28-30 April 2025 – by videoconference)

I have the pleasure of informing you that, thanks to the consultations held in coordination with the Co-Chairs of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group (EBWG), the *2nd Sea Turtle Bycatch Mitigation and Circle Hook Workshop*, which had to be postponed, will be held by videoconference from Monday 28 to Wednesday 30 April 2025.

For your convenience and easy reference, please find attached the meeting announcement that had been circulated through Memorandum ref. 00641-410 dated 19 February 2025.

Likewise, as I did in that memorandum, I wish to draw your attention to the invitation to CPCs which would be interested in making a presentation on any of the topics listed in the provisional agenda (see meeting announcement).

The Co-Chairs of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group and I wish to thank those who already responded positively to that invitation and would like to invite those who have not done so to send to the Co-Chairs the titles of these presentations as well as a sentence or two clearly identifying how they will address the corresponding provisional agenda item as well as an indication of the approximate time required for the presentation.

I wish also to reiterate the invitation to provide any background material that you would deem of interest for the meeting, with sufficient anticipation, for its posting on the meeting website.

Annex: as indicated. -

Annex

2nd Sea Turtle Bycatch Mitigation and Circle Hook Workshop (28-30 April 2025 – by videoconference)

Announcement

At its first and second meetings the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group (EBWG) recommended that a second sea turtle bycatch mitigation and circle hook workshop be co-hosted by the IATTC staff to address gaps in the mandates of Resolution [C-19-04](#), whose paragraph 3(d) requires shallow-set longline vessels to adopt one of three bycatch mitigation measures: using ‘large’ circle hooks, using only finfish bait, or implement an alternative mitigation measure approved by the Commission.

The workshop will be held prior to the third meeting of the EBWG and has been scheduled for April 28-30, 2025, from 3PM to 6PM PDT (UTC-7).

Objectives

This meeting aims to meet the objectives identified by the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group at its 1st and 2nd meetings, specifically:

- I. Conduct a second circle hook workshop that will fulfill the mandate of paragraph 3(d)(i) of Resolution C-19-04 and generate a definition of the size characteristics for ‘large’ circle hooks.
- II. Advice to be provided by the workshop on the impacts of fishing operations on the form and structure (i.e., longevity and integrity) of circle hooks of various sizes and from different manufacturers.
- III. The workshop shall include the development of a third mitigation measure as described in Paragraph 3(d)(iii) of C-19-04 for small coastal multi-species vessel fleets as well as best handling and release practices for sea turtles.

Participation

The meeting will be open to all interested IATTC members and cooperating non-members as well as other relevant stakeholders. Relevant IGOs and accredited NGOs are encouraged to participate as observers. Given the nature of the topics to be covered, it is recommended that designated participants have proven expertise, knowledge, experience, or interests in matters related to sea turtles and their conservation. In addition, it is understood that the IATTC staff may identify and invite individual experts as well as representatives of other relevant entities that have experience in the field. In addition, CPCs are also invited to notify their interest in making a presentation or presentations on any of the topics listed in the provisional agenda. It would be most appreciated that these notifications be addressed to the co-chairs (Manuel Correia: manuel.correia.a@gmail.com and Yonat Swimmer: Yonat.swimmer@noaa.gov) and to Melanie Hutchinson (mhutchinson@iattc.org) by April 3rd. They should include the presentation title, a sentence or two clearly identifying how the presentation will address the related provisional agenda item and an indication of the time that would be needed for making it. In addition, all CPCs and other participants are invited to provide any background material that they deem relevant and useful for the meeting (i.e. peer reviewed publications, data reports, etc.), so that it can be posted to the meeting website.

As usual, a registration form is posted on the meeting website to allow each participant to register individually. This registration form can also be used for the designated representatives of IGOs and NGOs. If there are problems using the registration form, interested participants should contact directly Ms. Monica Galvan, Assistant to the Director, at mgalvan@iattc.org.

Arrangements

The 2nd Sea Turtle Bycatch Mitigation and Circle Hook Workshop will be held by videoconference, utilizing the Zoom platform and will be organized and facilitated by the IATTC staff. An invitation to join the meeting will be sent individually to each registered participant. As indicated above, the meeting will be held from Monday 28 to Wednesday 30 April 2025. The meeting will be scheduled for a maximum duration of three hours per day, starting at 3 PM PDT (UTC -7) and finalizing 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, considering the special requirements and limitations of videoconferencing, based on the practice followed by the Commission and its bodies for previous IATTC meetings by videoconference. A provisional agenda is shared below, which will also be posted on the meeting website, as soon as possible.

Languages: English and Spanish, with simultaneous interpretation.

Provisional agenda:

1. Welcome to participants and adoption of the agenda
2. Review of EBWG recommendations and workshop objectives:
 - a. Define large circle hook size
 - b. Review data on longevity and integrity of hooks from different configurations and manufacturers
 - c. Discussions on 3rd mitigation options
 - d. Develop BHRP for sea turtles in small-scale / shallow-set longline fleet
 - e. Resolve language for Resolution C-19-04
3. Presentations by invited experts and by CPCs and discussion on each objective
 - a. Characteristics of circle hooks
 - b. Impacts of circle hooks
 - i. Target species and non-target species
 - c. Hook longevity and integrity
 - d. Third mitigation options
 - e. Further development of best handling and release practice guidelines for sea turtles
4. Conclusions and Recommendations
5. Adjournment