

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE 34TH MEETING

AGENDA ITEM 1 - OPENING OF THE MEETING

The 34th meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission was held at the Sheraton Harbor Island Hotel, San Diego, California, on June 27, 28 and 29, 1977. The meeting was opened on Monday June 27, at 10:15 a.m. by Dr. James Joseph, Director of Investigations. He noted that it was Costa Rica's turn to assume chairmanship of the meeting and that this duty would normally be carried out by Mr. Eduardo Bravo of that nation. However, Mr. Bravo had advised Dr. Joseph that he felt that he could better carry out his duties as head of Costa Rica's delegation if he were relieved of his chairmanship duties. There being no objections, Dr. Joseph called for nominations for the chairmanship. Mr. Bravo nominated Mr. E. Blyth Young of Canada. This nomination was unanimously approved and Mr. Young assumed the chairmanship.

At the request of the Chairman, the heads of the delegations of Canada, Costa Rica, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and the U.S.A. introduced themselves and their delegations. There was no delegation from France. Observers from Bermuda, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru also introduced themselves. Observers from Honduras and Italy joined the meeting in later sessions. All attendees are listed in Appendix I.

AGENDA ITEM 2 - CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The provisional agenda prepared by the Director of Investigations was acceptable to all in attendance and was adopted without change.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - REVIEW OF THE TUNA-PORPOISE PROBLEM

The Chairman called upon Dr. Joseph to review the 1977 fishery for tunas and the tuna-porpoise problem.

Dr. Joseph began by reviewing the 1977 fishery for tunas. He noted that determination of a closure date for 1977 has been more difficult than in previous years due to the size of the fleet and the uncertainty as to whether or not U.S. vessels would be able to fish for tunas associated with porpoises. He announced that the closure date would be July 5, 1977, at 00:01 a.m. Later, when it was ascertained that some vessels would be unable to return to port prior to that time, the closure date was changed to July 7, 1977, at 00:01 a.m. The total catches to date of both yellowfin and skipjack are considerably below the equivalent catches in 1976 because the U.S. fleet has been idle during a considerable portion of the year. As a result, U.S. catches of both species have decreased

by almost exactly 50 percent. However, these decreases have been partially offset by increases in the catches of Ecuador, Mexico (yellowfin only), Panama, and Peru, as well as in the combined catches of Costa Rica, the Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Senegal, Spain, and Venezuela (yellowfin only). (The catches of these latter seven nations were combined to avoid revealing details on the operations of individual vessels or companies.) Yellowfin catches have been widely scattered within its range in the eastern Pacific Ocean. This is also true to a somewhat lesser extent for skipjack. Skipjack catches were higher than usual off of northern Central America and the southernmost part of Mexico. Fleet capacity has increased to about 181,000 short tons, about 10,000 tons over the mid-1976 level. Purse seiners make up about 175,000 tons of this capacity.

Following this brief review of the 1977 fishery, Dr. Joseph proceeded to discuss the problem of incidental mortality of porpoise captured in association with tuna, with emphasis on past porpoise research, current porpoise management, and possible IATTC roles in future research and management. At the Commission's 33rd meeting, held in Managua, Nicaragua, in October, 1976, a background document outlining a rationale for possible IATTC involvement in the tuna-porpoise problem was discussed. It was agreed that IATTC involvement was justified and that the IATTC's objectives should be as follows: "[1] the Commission should strive to maintain a high level of tuna production and [2] also to maintain porpoise stocks at or above levels that assure their survival in perpetuity, [3] with every reasonable effort being made to avoid needless or careless killion of porpoise." It was also agreed that the IATTC would hold the present special meeting to further consider this matter and that the IATTC staff would prepare a background document for this meeting reviewing the tuna-porpoise situation. The resulting document entitled "The Tuna-Porpoise Relationship: Research, Management, and Possible IATTC Role" was circulated to Commissioners and other attendees. The principal stocks of porpoise caught in association with tunas are the offshore spotted porpoise stock and the eastern and whitebelly spinner porpoise stocks. The IATTC staff focused its attention on these three stocks in preparing the background document.

The U. S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) conducted aerial porpoise surveys in the eastern Pacific in 1974 and shipboard surveys in 1974, 1975, and 1976. Data collected on these surveys were used by participants at a NMFS sponsored workshop and also by the IATTC staff to estimate the population sizes of the three principal stocks of porpoises. The estimates in millions of animals, are as follows:

Year	<u>Offshore spotted</u>		<u>Eastern spinner</u>		<u>Whitebelly spinner</u>	
	<u>Workshop</u>	<u>IATTC</u>	<u>Workshop</u>	<u>IATTC</u>	<u>Workshop</u>	<u>IATTC</u>
1974	4.3	4.11	-	1.52	-	0.92
1975	5.0	7.42	1.4	1.75	-	1.02
1976	4.4	8.83	1.2	2.02	0.69	1.82
Mean	4.56	6.59	1.33	1.73	0.69	1.15

Dr. Joseph emphasized that estimation of porpoise populations involves many assumptions which may or may not be satisfied and also that there is considerable statistical variation involved. It can be noted, however, that the population estimates of the IATTC staff are generally higher than the Workshop estimates. These differences are largely due to differences in the treatment of estimates of searching path widths from data reported by NMFS shipboard observers. Neither set of population estimates can be considered definitely more or less reliable than the other.

Reproduction rates for each stock were also estimated. The gross reproductive rate for a population is the annual number of births expressed as a percentage of average population size. The net reproductive rate is the number of births less the number of deaths, again expressed as a percentage of average population size. Gross reproductive rates for each stock were estimated indirectly from data on sex ratios, proportions of pregnant and lactating females, etc. observed in NMFS samples of porpoises killed incidentally in the fishery. A natural mortality rate estimate for an unexploited stock of spotted porpoise in the western Pacific Ocean was used in conjunction with the gross reproductive rate to obtain a net reproductive rate estimate of 5 percent for the offshore spotted porpoise stock. Net reproductive rates of 5 percent were also assumed for the two spinner porpoise stocks. These estimates must also be considered as only very tentative.

Estimates of the annual porpoise kills for the years 1971-1976 were calculated from data collected by NMFS observers on trips made during that period. Certain assumptions were made which permitted estimation, with somewhat less confidence, of porpoise kills during the 1959-1970 period. The total kill estimates, like those of population sizes and net reproductive rates, are very tentative.

Estimates of population sizes, net reproductive rates, and total kills were combined to estimate the population sizes of each of the three principal stocks, at the beginning of each year over the entire 1959-1977 period during which porpoise have been incidentally killed. In general, a population of animals can be maintained in equilibrium at any level in the range extending

from the maximum possible average population size down to some greatly reduced level at which there still is little or no danger of extinction. At present all three of the principal porpoise stocks appear to be at or above half of their original unexploited abundance. This is true using either Workshop or IATTC estimates. Furthermore, using either set of estimates the populations of offshore spotted and eastern spinner porpoises appear to have increased since the late 1960's and early 1970's. The whitebelly spinner population is apparently decreasing, but this is to be expected because this stock has been exposed to the fishery for only a few years. Thus, since tuna catches remain at a high level and the survival of porpoise stocks in perpetuity is not threatened, the first two Commission objectives are presently being realized.

The third Commission objective, to eliminate the needless or careless killing of porpoises is of equal importance to the first two objectives. It can be effectively approached through gear and behavior research and education. Incidental porpoise mortality could be virtually eliminated by not capturing porpoise associated with tuna. The most direct way to accomplish this would be to curtail purse-seining for tuna associated with porpoise. However, since neither baitfishing or longlining could effectively replace purse seining in the porpoise fishing areas, this would result in a sharp reduction of yellowfin catches and would conflict with the first Commission objective. Eventually it is conceivable that some entirely new and effective fishing technique may be developed for harvesting tuna without harming porpoise, such as use of floating traps or artificial aggregating devices, but this is rather speculative. Over the short term then, by far the most promising approach is to release as many porpoise as possible from the purse-seines without harming them.

An important porpoise release technique known as "backing down" was developed by fishermen in about 1960. Briefly, the vessel runs its engines in reverse, submerging part of the corkline and permitting most of the porpoise to escape. The next important development came in 1971 when fishermen began to install finer mesh "safety panels" in the backdown release area of the net to reduce mortality due to entanglement. In recent years the safety panel concept has been extended by enlarging the panels, by constructing them of still finer mesh webbing, and by addition of various types of aprons. Adoption of these and other modifications in gear and fishing techniques by most of the vessels in the fleet has resulted in a considerably reduced kill during the mid-1970's relative to the 1960's and early 1970's.

Consideration was next given to possible IATTC roles in management and research. Dr. Joseph noted that the tuna fishery of the eastern Pacific is international in scope, and that the porpoise stocks that associate with tuna in that region are an integral part of the fishery. It seems reasonable that a single international body should be responsible for management of both tuna and porpoise. Therefore it was the staff recommendation that the IATTC should be assigned responsibility for management of porpoise as well as tuna. At present, neither of the first two IATTC objectives appears to necessitate management

action with regard to porpoise, so any management action undertaken would be aimed at reducing the incidental kill of porpoise to the greatest extent possible. This could be accomplished through gear regulations, quotas on the total kills of porpoises, area closures, etc.

If the IATTC assumes responsibility for porpoise management, it should also be involved in certain areas of porpoise research. This does not mean that it would undertake to execute all of the research that is currently being performed by the NMFS and other organizations. Over a period of years these organizations have developed research expertise in various aspects of porpoise biology and also in gear research. The simplest and most efficient course would be for these organizations to continue to carry out research in their areas of expertise.

One activity which the IATTC staff could undertake would be to organize an international program to place scientific technicians aboard between 10 and 20 percent of all trips made by purse seiners that fish on porpoise. Data collected by these technicians would enable the Commission to estimate total porpoise kills so that progress towards achieving the goal of minimizing porpoise mortality can be effectively monitored and evaluated. Dr. Joseph emphasized that technicians would collect only scientific data, and that the data would not be made available to any organization or individual in any form that could be used for non-scientific purposes. Depending on the extent of coverage, the cost of such a program would fall roughly between \$700,000 and \$1,400,000. The IATTC staff could also be involved in studies of porpoise population dynamics such as calculation of indices of porpoise abundance, computer simulation studies of the fishery, etc. The staff could also undertake a limited gear and behavior program. Altogether, the cost for IATTC involvement in such a research program would amount to roughly \$950,000 to \$1,600,000.

At the conclusion of Dr. Joseph's presentation, the Chairman asked for questions regarding the technical material that had been covered. Mr. Kaufmann of the United States asked what the total estimated porpoise kill was by stock for the 1959-1976 period, and inquired as to whether or not the totals included injured animals that might have died subsequent to their release. These totals in thousands, which include only deaths in the net, were as follows: offshore spotted, 3962; eastern spinner, 1830; whitebelly spinner, 219 striped dolphin, less than 6; common dolphin, 48; other, less than 5. Other questions directed to Dr. Joseph involved minor points of clarification.

There being no further technical questions, the Chairman opened the meeting for discussion concerning the possible role of the IATTC in porpoise research and management. Ambassador Ridgway of the United States read a prepared statement presenting the U.S. position supporting IATTC involvement in a porpoise conservation program. This statement is presented as Appendix II of these minutes. Mr. Diaz Rojo of Mexico indicated that he would have a

statement presenting the viewpoint of his government ready the next day. With this, the meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 9:40 a.m. on Tuesday, June 28. The Chairman announced that the Spanish translation of the U.S. statement was not yet ready and asked if anyone else had a statement in the meantime. Mr. Diaz Rojo said that he had read the English version of the U.S. statement and that he considered the exchange of viewpoints concerning the porpoise mortality problem highly useful. Noting that Mexico's statement was not yet ready, he suggested a recess until the afternoon. Mr. Obarrio of Panama supported Mexico's proposal to recess and noted that this would give the delegations an opportunity to study the U.S. statement more carefully. Ambassador Ridgway apologized for the fact that the Spanish version of the U.S. statement was not available at the time that it was presented in English, due to the fact that the final English version was not ready until shortly before it was presented. At this point the Chairman was advised that the Spanish version of the U.S. statement was ready, and copies were distributed to the delegations. The meeting was then recessed until the afternoon.

When the meeting reconvened the Chairman asked for further statements. Mr. Diaz Rojo of Mexico read a statement presenting Mexico's view on porpoise conservation. This statement is presented as Appendix III of these minutes. Mr. Bergman of Nicaragua then read a statement giving Nicaragua's view which appears as Appendix IV. Mr. Obarrio of Panama stated that Panama would gladly cooperate with an international porpoise conservation program under the auspices of the IATTC. The program could include gear and behavior studies, training of vessel captains in porpoise-saving techniques, an observer program utilizing Panamanian observers aboard Panamanian vessels, calculation of indices of abundance, computer simulation studies, and tagging of porpoises. Most Panamanian vessels now have 2-inch mesh safety panels, and the rest have ordered them. He closed by extending his congratulations to the IATTC staff for its preparation of the background document. Mr. Bravo of Costa Rica said that his nation was also anxious to cooperate with international efforts to minimize porpoise mortality, and pointed out that Costa Rica has had laws directed toward that purpose for many years. He also spoke highly of the quality of the background paper. Mr. Beckett of Canada said that Canadian vessels have used porpoise-saving gear since 1974, although no regulations requiring this are presently in effect. He also noted that Canada would soon have its own program for placing scientific technicians aboard Canadian vessels. In his government's view, the IATTC is the proper forum for collecting all data necessary for porpoise conservation and for developing meaningful management measures. The IATTC should also be responsible for implementing porpoise-saving techniques throughout the fleet and should coordinate and evaluate all porpoise research. Mr. Abe of Japan said that Japan presently had only a single baitboat operating in the eastern Pacific. When Japanese vessels did conduct purse-seining operations in the eastern Pacific from 1972 until early 1976, it was on an experimental basis. He said that although he endorsed

the IATTC's objectives relating to porpoise conservation, he nevertheless thought that the Commission's principal job should continue to be tuna research and management. He believed that the IATTC staff should play a coordinating role in porpoise research, acting in parallel with research organizations in the individual nations.

At this point there was a short recess for coffee. During the break the English versions of the Mexican and Nicaraguan statements were distributed. Upon reconvening, Ambassador Ridgway of the United States said that she perceived from the statements of the various nations that all basically agreed that porpoise mortality should be minimized and that international cooperation is necessary to achieve this goal. With regard to estimation of porpoise population sizes, she noted the IATTC staff estimates differed from those made by the NMFS Porpoise Workshop participants. This is because, under the guidelines of the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act, certain assumptions were made at the workshop which differed from those made by the IATTC staff. She noted that nothing was to be gained by further debating the merits of the somewhat different results. Rather, it would be far more fruitful to gather more data and analyze them in conjunction with the data already available to improve the estimates and resolve the differences cooperatively. Ambassador Ridgway then inquired as to what the various proposals were for placing scientific technicians aboard vessels and what the costs and time table for such a program would be.

The Chairman asked Dr. Joseph to review the proposed IATTC porpoise program, especially in regard to placing scientific technicians aboard vessels. Dr. Joseph began by noting that there was general agreement as to the need for coordination in the conservation of porpoise and the management of tuna. There was also agreement as to need for IATTC involvement. If the Commission takes full responsibility, it would hire and train enough scientific technicians to accompany between 10 to 20 percent of all trips at a cost of between \$700,000 to \$1,400,000 per year depending upon the extent of coverage. Alternatively, individual nations could hire their own scientific technicians and detail them as necessary to the Commission for training and placement aboard their own flag vessels. In addition, about \$250,000 would be required for the ancillary studies that the staff would undertake (calculation of indices of abundance, computer simulation studies, gear and behavior research and education, etc.). Thus the total cost, assuming that the Commission hires its own technician observers, would be roughly \$950,000 to \$1,600,000. The staff could prepare a more concrete and detailed proposal in about 1 to 2 months. The IATTC is now in its 1976-1977 fiscal year, and will begin its 1977-1978 fiscal year in October, 1977. The budget for the 1977-1978 fiscal year has been approved by the Commissioners, but has not yet been approved by the governments. If the 1977-1978 budget can be augmented or if a special appropriation can be made, the program could be started in 1978; otherwise it would be necessary to wait until the 1978-1979 fiscal year beginning October 1, 1978.

Following Dr. Joseph's remarks, the Chairman asked for comments on the various alternatives for organizing an international observer program. Mr. Beckett of Canada stated that such a program should be undertaken as soon as possible and that it should be flexible, as this would maximize the likelihood that the work could be done as efficiently as possible. Some observers could be national observers detailed to the Commission; other could be regular Commission employees. For example, if a nation did not want to start its own program it could enter into a contractual arrangement with the IATTC to supply observers for its vessel. Mr. Bravo of Costa Rica agree that an international observer program should be undertaken. He though that the IATTC should operate the program and recruit scientific technicians from all nations. He also indicate that Costa Rica would approve an increase in the Commission budget to support such a program. Mr. Obarrio of Panama also endorsed the concept that the observer program should be international in scope and coordinated by the IATTC staff. He stated that employees of the Departamento de Pesca of Panama could serve as observers on Panamanian vessels. Mr. Bergman of Nicaragua stated that his nation had in its budget appropriations for two new positions in fishery biology, and that these persons could be used as observers. Mr. Diaz Rojo of Mexico agreed with the concept of an international observer program coordinated by the IATTC. He believed that observers aboard Mexican vessels should be employees of the government of Mexico who would be trained by IATTC staff. These observers, in addition to collecting porpoise data for the IATTC, would also collect data for national research programs. Mr. Diaz Rojo then called upon Dr. Carranza of Mexico to amplify his remarks. Dr. Carranza stated that the desire of Mexico was for designated Mexican government employees to be trained as observers by the IATTC staff before being assigned to trips made by Mexican vessels. Other nations, however, might wish that observers on their vessels be both selected and trained by the IATTC staff. Following Dr. Carranza's remarks, Mr. Diaz Rojo pointed out that some of the vessels fishing in the eastern Pacific are from nations which are not members of the IATTC. Observers should be placed aboard these vessels as well as vessels of member nations, but it would be unfair for the associated costs to be borne by the IATTC members. Although it may prove difficult, some way should be found for non-member nations to share in costs of an observer program. Ambassador Ridgway of the United States indicated that originally her delegation had in mind a multinational group of Commission employed observers who would be placed aboard vessels without regard to nationality. Such a program would operate in addition to any national observer program. She noted, however, that a number of delegations had expressed the belief that observers should be of the same nationality as the vessels they serve on. She indicated that the United States is agreeable to this approach and would like the IATTC to develop such a program as soon as possible so that observers can be assigned beginning in 1978. The U. S. Commissioners are ready to initiate action to secure the funding necessary for such a program.

At this point it was decided that a committee of representatives of concerned nations would meet informally early the next morning to work out the

details of a Commission observer program. The committee proposal would then be discussed in the next session of the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened on Wednesday June 29, at 10:30 a.m. The Chairman announced that a consensus had been reached at the informal session to work out the organization of an IATTC program to place scientific technicians on a sample of the vessels in the international fleet. He then asked Dr. Joseph to describe the program. Dr. Joseph stated that the IATTC staff would coordinate the program, including training the observers, designing the experiments (determining how many trips were to be made and allocating these among area, time, and vessel type strata), and designating which vessels were to carry observers. Each nation would have to guarantee that observers would be placed on any of their flag vessels that were selected for inclusion in the sample. Observers would be selected for detail to the Commission by the various nations, but the IATTC staff would have to approve their qualifications. Training would be carried out at two training centers, one in Southern California and the other in Central America, probably Panama. The IATTC would receive the observer data for use in estimation of the total porpoise kills, population sizes, etc. It is hoped that observers can be placed on vessels of non-member nations as well as member nations. The cooperation of non-member nations can be sought either through direct contact or at an Inter-Governmental meeting. The cost of the observer program would be roughly \$200,000 for training, designation of vessels, and analysis of data. Since the cost of other ancillary studies (computer simulation, indices of abundance, coordination of gear and behavior research and education, etc.) would be about \$250,000, the total cost would be between \$400,000 and \$500,000 per year. A detailed budget can be ready in approximately one to two months. The observer program could be implemented in 1978. Based on experience gained during the first year, it may be desirable to modify the program in subsequent years. Hence, it should be thought of as a trial program.

The Chairman asked for comments and questions concerning the observer program outlined by Dr. Joseph. Ambassador Ridgway of the United States requested that Mr. Howard speak on this subject. Mr. Howard asked if a national observer program would be distinct from the IATTC program. Dr. Joseph said that they would be separate, but that there would be nothing to prevent any nation from organizing its own observer program if it wished to do so. However, there should not be two observers on a single trip, and if the situation should arise, the Commission observer should take precedence. Mr. Howard asked how the costs were estimated. Dr. Joseph said that the costs for salaries, travel, and expenses at sea were subtracted from the previous estimates for an observer program wholly financed by the IATTC to obtain the costs for training, data processing, etc. He stressed, however, that this cost estimate may require modification. Mr. Howard asked about the rationale for separation of the IATTC and national programs. Dr. Joseph declared that such separation is necessary because international observers should only be involved in scientific activities and not in regulatory activities. Mr. Howard asked how many trips would be involved annually. Dr. Joseph said that between 10% and 20% of all trips would be involved but that he would

not know the exact number until the experimental design was completed. In general, the objective would be to design the most efficient experiment possible with the amount of money that was available. He also noted that the ability of nations to provide funds could be a constraint. Mr. Howard then asked about planning of the program and how quickly it could be implemented. Dr. Joseph recalled his earlier statement that a detailed budget would be prepared in about one to two months. This can be accomplished utilizing existing funds. Training of observers could start almost immediately after funds become available, and observers could be placed aboard vessels as early as January 1, 1978, if the budget was approved by September.

Mr. Godoy of Nicaragua inquired as to the qualifications of the observers. Dr. Joseph said that they would be university graduates with backgrounds in biology.

Mr. Diaz Rojo of Mexico asked if the data collected by the observers would be available to IATTC member nations. Dr. Joseph answered that they would be available in summarized form, but that he hoped that details of the operations of individual vessels and fishing companies could be kept confidential. Mr. Diaz Rojo asked if the system for allocating assessments among member nations to pay for porpoise work would be the same as the present system for funding for the tuna work. Also, he hoped that the total cost would not be more than \$500,000. Dr. Joseph said that he assumed the present system of assessment would not be modified. He said that the best estimate, at present, of the total cost was roughly \$450,000 per year.

Mr. Howard of the United States inquired as to what steps would be taken to transfer fishing technology. Dr. Joseph replied that workshops to train Captains were planned. These could be paid for out of the \$250,000 for activities ancillary to the observer program. Mr. Howard then asked if the IATTC might convene meetings of experts to assist in porpoise population assessments studies and gear research. Dr. Joseph indicated that this was definitely a possibility and noted that the assistance of a review committee of experts had been sought in preparing the background paper for the present meeting.

Mr. Abe of Japan noted that in the Japanese view the primary objective of the IATTC is to maintain tuna production. Porpoise research and related activities are separate from this objective. Therefore, the budget to support porpoise work should be kept separate from the regular budget. Mr. Abe further stated that assessments for porpoise work should be based on yellowfin catches made by purse seining in the CYRA. Since Japan has not engaged in purse seining in the convention area since early 1976 and since she presently has no plans for resuming purse seine operations in the area, she should not have to share in the cost of an IATTC program of porpoise studies. In response to Mr. Abe, the Chairman noted that the

Japanese position would be reflected in the minutes of the 34th meeting just as it was previously incorporated in the minutes of the 33rd meeting. He also noted that Japan would have an opportunity to review and comment on the budget in the near future when it is formulated in more detail.

There being no further comments or questions, the Chairman suggested that the meeting be recessed until the afternoon so that a drafting committee could meet informally to prepare a draft resolution. This suggestion met with approval, and the Chairman asked each delegation to appoint representatives to serve on the drafting committee. The meeting was then recessed pending completion of the draft resolution.

The meeting was reconvened in the afternoon and the completed draft resolution was distributed to the delegations. After some discussion, which led to certain improvements in wording, the resolution was unanimously approved by those delegations present. It appears as Appendix V of these minutes.

AGENDA ITEM 5 - OTHER BUSINESS

Ambassador Mercado of Mexico was recognized. He noted that the 35th meeting of the IATTC will be the annual meeting presently scheduled for San Jose, Costa Rica, on October 17-22, 1977. He also noted that Mexico has requested that a meeting of plenipotentiaries be held to negotiate a new management convention for the eastern Pacific. Mexico has suggested that Costa Rica host the meeting of plenipotentiaries, as this would enable certain nations to participate which could not attend a meeting in Mexico. Costa Rica is also an appropriate location in view of her participation in and support of the IATTC since its inception. Ambassador Mercado went on to indicate that Costa Rica has generously agreed to host such a meeting in San Jose on September 19-28, 1977. In turn, Mexico offers to host the IATTC annual meeting in Mexico City on the originally planned dates, October 17-22, 1977. Ambassador Ridgway of the United States asked about the level of the September meeting. Would it be preparatory meeting at which ideas would be exchanged or is it to be a full negotiation at which a new convention could be adopted? Ambassador Mercado replied that he hoped that it would be a higher level meeting at which a new convention could be adopted, and that he would convey the U.S. desire to know more about the nature of the meeting to the Mexican government so that this can be made clear when invitations are formally made. There was no further discussion on this matter and all delegations present approved of the change in the location of the October annual meeting from San Jose to Mexico City.

Mr. Diaz Rojo of Mexico expressed regrets that Ambassador Ridgway would soon be leaving her present assignment to assume the post of U.S. Ambassador to Finland. He went on to acknowledge the many contributions that she has made to the IATTC and to international cooperation in fisheries in general, and he asked the other delegations to join him in acclaiming her for a job well done. The persons in attendance responded with a standing ovation for Ambassador Ridgway. Ambassador Ridgway said that she was deeply touched by

the kind words of Mr. Diaz Rojo and similar sentiments expressed by others in attendance. She said that she looked forward to her next assignment, but was sorry to leave the many friends she had made through her association with the IATTC.

Dr. Joseph said that he would contact the government of France to seek approval of the resolution adopted at the meeting and all other actions taken.

Mr. Diaz Rojo of Mexico congratulated Mr. Young of Canada for his excellent performance of his duties as chairman of the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 6 - ADJOURNMENT

The final session of the 34th meeting of the IATTC was adjourned at 6:20 p.m. on Wednesday, June 29, 1977.

APPENDIX I - ANEXO I

LIST OF ATTENDEES AT THE 34th MEETING OF THE IATTC
LISTA DE ASISTENTES A LA XXXIV REUNION DE LA CIAT

BERMUDA

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

James Burnett-Herkes
Perry A. West

CANADA

Commissioners - Delegados

James S. Beckett
E. Blyth Young

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

B. M. Chatwin
G. E. Waring

COLOMBIA

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

Inés Jaramillo de Santa

COSTA RICA

Commissioners - Delegados

Fernando Flores

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

Eduardo Bravo Pérez
Gabriela S. Myers

ECUADOR

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

Enrique Jurado Game
Eurípides Nogales I.
Raúl Serrano

HONDURAS

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

Ella Flores Lester

ITALY

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

Renato Curto

JAPAN

Commissioners - Delegados

Tadahiro Abe

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

Masao Shimomura

MEXICO

Commissioners - Delegados

Arturo Díaz Rojo
Joaquín Mercado
Amín Zarur-Méñez

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

Abel Acosta A.
Jorge Carranza
Luis García-Cacho
Raúl Inda López
J. Jesús Mejía Mejía
Walter Ocampo
I. A. Pesqueira
Roberto Rivas Muñoz
Tomás de Rueda C.
Roberto G. Tucker
Jorge A. Vargas

NICARAGUA

Commissioners - Delegados

Gilberto Bergman P.
José B. Godoy
Jamil Urroz Escobar

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

Antonio Flores A.
Octavio Gutierrez D.

PANAMA

Commissioners - Delegados

Juan L. de Obarrio

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

Herman Bern
Jesús Antonio Correa

PERU

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

Fernando Martínez Hübner
E. Pastor

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Commissioners - Delegados

Glenn H. Copeland
Jack Gorby
Robert C. Macdonald

Advisors and observers
Asesores y observadores

Franklin G. Alverson
Eva Archuleta
Patrice Ashfield
P. Barnes
Izadore Barrett
John M. Barriero
Lauralee Bennett
Gail M. Bergman

Herbert L. Blatt
C. J. Blondin
Jack C. Bowland
Vincent James Bozzo
Lou Brito
Gordon C. Broadhead
Peter Buchan
Manuel Caboz
C. R. Carry
Joe Codinha, Jr.
Wym Coerr
Cosimo L. Cutri
Faye S. Dickie
James De Silva
Pablo Drobny
William E. Evans
August Felando
Pamela Ferris
Charles E. Finan
Paul P. Finnerty
Virginia G. Flagg
William W. Fox, Jr.
Thomas R. Garrett
Margaret Gordon
Vern Griffin
Brian S. Hallman
Virginia Handley
Martin B. Hochman
Mary Elizabeth Hoinkes
Gerald V. Howard
Martin D. Howell
Ken Hudson
Ron Hutcherson
W. P. Jensen
Richard Joseph
Rolf Juhl
Milton M. Kaufmann
Robert Kaneen
Stephanie Kaza
Barbara Keith
O. E. Kerns, Jr.
Judith T. Kildow
Dennis Kremer
Janous J. Marks
John F. Mauricio
Raymond O. Medeiros
Joe M. Medina, Jr.
William C. Miller
John P. Mulligan
Anthony Nizetich
Anthony Pisano
Margaret Radford
Dannie Sue Reis

R. Ridgway
Steven G. Rockland
John J. Royal
Andrew San Filippo
Manuel A. Silva
Steven Sinell
Milton C. Shedd
J. Gary Smith
Jack Tarantino
John R. Twiss, Jr.
Robert B. Young
John Zuanich

STATEMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO
THE THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE
INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
MONDAY, JUNE 27, 1977

Commissioners, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to be with you and to have the opportunity to address, in an international setting, the very serious problem of the incidental mortality of porpoise while purse-seining for tuna. This special meeting of the IATTC is perhaps the first time that concerned governments have come together to focus solely on the tuna-porpoise problem and to seriously explore ways to reduce the accidental killing of porpoise by tuna vessels of all nations. For the United States, this meeting of the Commission is thus a very special meeting indeed. I believe it is fair to say that many people and institutions concerned with this problem the world over will be watching closely to see what happens here in San Diego this week.

This meeting does not represent, of course, the first time anyone has addressed the international aspects of the tuna-porpoise problem. The United States and other countries have expressed concern on a number of occasions at Commission meetings and in other fora about this problem and have made efforts to further international porpoise conservation through the enactment of legislation and in other ways. In a sense, this meeting and the background paper which has been prepared for it are a culmination of these efforts and, hopefully, the beginning of meaningful international porpoise conservation. In this regard, I am pleased to see that the reputation of the Commission for producing reports worthy of serious study has been upheld and enhanced by the background paper prepared for this meeting. I believe the IATTC staff is to be commended for a fine effort.

I would like to say, at this point, that the United States completely supports the concept of IATTC involvement in the porpoise issue. We can only do ourselves and the living resources of our oceans a disservice if we fail to consider the interrelationship of stocks and thereby create obstacles which prevent our conducting the research vital to rational conservation and management of the living resources of the sea.

Commissioners and distinguished Delegates, the United States attaches the greatest importance to the conservation of porpoise. This is evident, we believe, from the strict regulations imposed on U.S. tuna fishermen regarding the incidental mortality of porpoise. The problem, however, is not a U.S. problem; U.S. fishermen are not the only fishermen who are causing the incidental mortality of porpoise. This is clearly an international problem and it must ultimately have an international solution. One nation acting alone cannot properly conserve porpoise, just as it takes a multilateral effort to conserve the highly migratory tuna. The United States believes all nations with vessels which purse-seine for yellowfin tuna in the eastern Pacific should ensure that their fishermen do all they can to avoid porpoise mortality.

I believe it is fair to say that many of the programs and possibilities for reducing incidental porpoise mortality presented in the background paper are already a part of the U.S. domestic program. We, in the United States, have been trying to come to grips with the tuna-porpoise issue for some time. We recognize that we have a head start in terms of having in effect a program designed to reduce porpoise mortality. We also recognize that the other nations involved cannot, immediately, either acting on their own or through a multilateral effort, achieve a standard for porpoise conservation similar to that of the United States -- a standard which has taken the United States several years of difficult effort to achieve. We realize that the time lag involved can be greatly reduced by our sharing with you all that we have learned.

The United States believes it would be useful to establish a timetable, or calendar, regarding meaningful international action. It would be our hope that by the end of 1978 an effective international program for porpoise conservation can be in place for all countries purse-seining for yellowfin tuna. At the same time, I must add that, as you know, the United States is serious about the conservation of porpoise and we cannot tell you what the particulars of the U.S. standard will be at that time. It is our hope, however, that technological advances will have made it possible to catch yellowfin tuna with only an insignificant incidental mortality of porpoise. We hope that all countries can agree by that time to have their fishermen utilize the most advanced gear and fishing techniques available, and, working through the IATTC, to take whatever other measures are necessary to reduce incidental porpoise mortality. If the member nations of the Commission were to adopt this as a goal, this would be consistent, in our view, with the already agreed objective of the Commission to avoid the incidental mortality of porpoise.

In order to achieve this longer-range goal -- and we hope that all of the nations gathered here can agree that this is a goal worth striving for -- it is clear that we must begin now. We believe there are a number of actions which the Commission can and should take immediately. Let me take the liberty of summarizing for you now what the United States is prepared to propose along these lines. The IATTC report has outlined areas in which the Commission could become involved in the tuna-porpoise problem, and we believe there is a role at this time for the Commission to play in many of these areas.

The United States believes that an international observer program is an especially critical activity which could lead to reducing the incidental mortality of porpoise. At this time, as a beginning, it would appear appropriate for international observers to collect only relatively simple data, to include the numbers of porpoises killed per set, by species and stock, as well as the causes of porpoise mortality and other information that can be recorded without

extensive training. While data collection should be relatively simple in the beginning, in time it will be possible for this work to become more sophisticated. We believe that at the start, a minimal international observer program should include observers on at least ten percent of all fishing trips, or approximately fifty trips. The IATTC could recruit and train an international staff of scientific observers to do this work, and would also analyze the data flowing to the Commission from these observers.

Also very important to the United States is the area of education and the transfer of porpoise saving technology. We believe the Commission could play an especially constructive role in this area. Workshops designed to inform tunaboat captains as to the most effective porpoise saving fishing techniques and gear developments could be held by the IATTC. For fishermen from nations which prefer to hold their own domestic workshops, IATTC participation would be sought to ensure that objective minimum standards are met. There are any number of other critical activities that the Commission could facilitate which would be designed to make porpoise-saving technology available to all nations and fishermen involved in purse-seining for yellowfin tuna. For the United States, the importance of this work cannot be overemphasized.

In the area of statistics, the IATTC collects catch and effort data for tuna fishing, and we believe it would be useful for the Commission to use this data, along with other information collected, to calculate indices of abundance of porpoises.

With respect to aerial surveys, the United States believes there is a role for the IATTC to play as a participant in such surveys. A Commission staff member could participate in the planning and execution of the aerial surveys and the analysis of the data. Such a person could also perhaps be responsible for supplying the data gathered to the member nations of the IATTC and other cooperating nations.

In the area of porpoise tagging, we believe there is a role for the

Commission to play as a participant in this work, involving itself in the planning and execution of the tagging and analysis of the data, much as it might do for aerial surveys and other work.

I have already touched on the general question of Commission involvement in the planning of the experiments or data collection, and analyses of the results. The United States believes the Commission should become meaningfully involved in this work. This would mean, essentially, direct Commission involvement in the estimates of total porpoise kill and of indices of abundance of porpoises, and in computer simulation studies and other facets of data collection and analysis.

Another important area in which the United States believes the IATTC should become actively involved is in gear and behavioral research. The Commission staff should keep abreast of all ongoing research and be responsible for evaluating new concepts. As suggested in the IATTC background paper, the Commission could evaluate proposals to designate fishing vessels as research vessels in order to test new fishing techniques. All suitable vessels in the international fleet might be eligible for such charters, and the Commission could call on scientists and technicians of all member nations for planning input. The Commission would then be in a position to make recommendations, or proposed regulations, to nations participating in the fishery concerning the adoption of technology found to be effective in saving porpoise. As pointed out in the background document, such a role would not require the development of major IATTC staff expertise to carry out gear and behavioral research. The Commission could rely on other existing expertise for this, but could participate in the work in a number of meaningful ways.

These then, are some areas and ways in which the United States, subject to formal approval with respect to budgetary considerations, believes the Commission should become involved in porpoise research and conservation. Thank you for bearing with me while I have outlined them in some detail, but,

I think it is important from the outset that the specific views of the United States be well understood.

The United States believes the Commission has a meaningful and important role to play in porpoise conservation. This, to us, seems logical and appropriate. The nations participating in the fishery which results in the accidental killing of porpoise are involved with the IATTC. The IATTC conservation area, and the eastern Pacific Ocean in general is where the fishery for yellowfin tuna associated with porpoise takes place, and perhaps most importantly, there is an existing institutional structure in the very professional and competent IATTC staff which is capable of immediately addressing the tuna-porpoise problem. And, of course, the fact that yellowfin tuna and porpoise are so closely associated is a compelling reason why each must be considered in its relation to the other. With respect to future porpoise conservation efforts, we believe this question can be addressed at an appropriate time later on. I note this, because, as is well known, there have been strong expressions of interest on the part of some nations to renegotiate the tuna convention, and it is not clear what the result of this effort might be in terms of porpoise conservation. Also, we do not know what other efforts might be advanced internationally in the future to further porpoise conservation.

In discussing the timetable for a meaningful international program to be achieved, I noted that the United States already has a domestic program in place. As we move forward together towards serious international porpoise conservation, there should be no doubt as to the fact that the United States is likely for some time to have standards in effect applicable to U.S.

fishermen which are stricter than those being applied on an international basis. The international effort must not, in the view of the United States, preclude a participating nation from having domestic standards more stringent than those it would be required to impose pursuant to an international

obligation.

Finally, in considering the role of the Commission in porpoise research, I must point out that the United States will continue its activity in this field. It is important to us that any action by the Commission not diminish U.S. research efforts and activities, the results of which will continue to be made available to the IATTC or any interested nation. The proposals which we have suggested do not, in the view of the United States, have any such effect. To the contrary, we believe they will enhance and complement U.S. activities in this area.

Commissioners and distinguished Delegates, I have said that the United States believes all nations with vessels which purse-seine for yellowfin tuna in the eastern Pacific should ensure that their fishermen do all they can to avoid the incidental mortality of porpoise. I believe most of you are aware that the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act requires the United States to restrict the importation of tuna caught in a manner proscribed to our fishermen or contrary to U.S. standards. We recognize, however, that restrictions of this nature cannot themselves create an effective program for international porpoise conservation. This can only be done by the nations involved -- by those nations represented here. I believe we have a unique opportunity this week to begin such a program together. I am looking forward to a productive three days and to working closely with each of the delegations represented here as we explore international solutions for porpoise conservation.

Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Please allow me, in the first place, to express my delegation's satisfaction for the excellent document presented by Dr. James Joseph on "The Tuna-Porpoise Relationship: Research, Management, and Possible IATTC Role". Once again, this document demonstrates the fine preparation and organization of the Commission's scientific staff which, in an efficient and diligent manner, undertakes the tasks assigned to it.

Mexico, in the same way as the U.S., has been concerned about the problems involving unnecessary mortality of porpoises, and the analysis of the relationships among the stocks, should be dealt with by all the countries participating in the tuna fishery as a collective responsibility, since it is the obligation of each of us to adopt measures to recognize and accept in its proper value the right each creature has to live within the ecological framework of our world. Therefore, we agree with the opinion expressed by Ambassador Ridgeway that a multilateral effort is required to protect porpoise.

However, we would like to clarify that assertion with certain caveates that we consider of major importance to all of us:

1. We believe that it is necessary that an international organization, in this case the Commission, should coordinate, develop and undertake the programs necessary to reach the objective which brings us here. Such coordination does not mean for my country any deviation from any rights, but a wise way to handle this problem.
2. We also believe it is necessary to point out that Mexico has enacted legislation and administrative regulations which tend to protect marine mammals. We consider that an important part of this problem rests upon legal principles. Mexico, very shortly, will attempt to

introduce before Congress pertinent fishery legislation.

3. My delegation agrees with the statement made by the U.S. delegation that it would be desirable that by the end of 1978 we could have an efficient international program for the conservation of porpoise to be adopted by all the countries fishing yellowfin with purse-seiners.
4. With regard to the term of "observers", utilized to name the technical personnel at sea, we consider that this word could convey a wrong connotation of their functions and as a result it could induce certain rejections on the part of the fishermen. Consequently, we suggest that they should be known as "sea going scientists" and that their activities should be more constructive than the simple observer or data gathering person.

The research program proposed in the Commission's document, contemplates the tagging of porpoise and tuna, the precise identification of species, stocks, behavioral studies, migrations, etc. A number of significant studies could be added in order to better understand the complex problem of the relationship between these mammals and the tuna, as well as to use the results of these studies for the protection of the porpoise and perhaps to improve the fishing techniques in this fishery.

However, it is necessary for this purpose that the technical personnel who go to sea should have an adequate technical preparation and receive additional training to carry out their mission efficiently.

The Mexican delegation agrees that the Commission be in-charge of training and coordinating the activities of the technical staff which each member country agrees to provide and which will carry out their functions aboard their own vessels, with the purpose of establishing an international mechanism of data gathering or the evaluation of the porpoise mortality during the trips selected by the regional organization. On the other hand, and with the intention to utilize the presence of those technicians on tuna vessels, Mexico is planning to undertake an

enlarged research program in order to have first hand information which will be the basis for the adoption of regulatory measures which will help to reduce the marine mammal mortality and that, at the same time, will initiate the development of a solid infrastructure covering all the aspects that the tuna industry faces. Probably, other countries might develop similar programs and, in their planning, the Commission could provide them with the necessary advice.

We would like to underline the double function which will be undertaken by the technicians, which on one hand should comply with the monitoring program established by the Commission and, on the other hand, the research of any other problems associated with the fishing activities of each country.

We would not like to be simple spectators or data gatherers of fishing operations, which is of great importance, but to concentrate on the details which could lead us not only to evaluate the damage that we are causing to the marine mammals, but to plan actions which will result, in the future, in the rational utilization of a fishing resource and the conservation of others which might be related to them.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to refer to a question which was incidentally mentioned in the U.S. presentation. Mexico would like to emphasize, clearly, that any change which might arise in the current Commission's system or substitution of the present regulatory system by another which might have greater elements of equity, would not affect Mexico's position regarding its interest for the conservation and protection of marine mammals. Every effort to be undertaken in this field and all the results obtained will be welcomed.

NICARAGUAN STATEMENT AT THE 34TH
MEETING OF THE IATTC

Distinguished Commissioners and Observers:

Nicaragua takes this opportunity to express to the member countries of the IATTC its concern regarding the mortality of the various species of porpoise associated with the tuna fishery, in the eastern tropical Pacific.

Already on different occasions our country has expressed to this Commission its firm support of all that would tend to perpetuate the resources of the sea, and this has been demonstrated by the promulgation of internal legislation which leads to the conservation of fishery resources as a heritage for our future generations.

We have listened carefully to the brilliant exposition made by Dr. James Joseph, focused on the porpoise problem and alternative solutions to the problem. Regarding this matter, Nicaragua wishes to express the following considerations, which we hope will be acceptable to the Honorable Commissioners:

- a) We recognize the international prestige of the IATTC as a scientific body which has done a great deal of work on behalf of tuna conservation in the eastern Pacific Ocean. Thus Nicaragua would be pleased to have the Commission assume the responsibility of planning, coordinating and evaluating the results of the porpoise conservation program.
- b) Being aware of the support which we should give in everything which tends to conserve the resources and, in this case, the porpoise associated with the tuna fishery, we have initiated a plan to equip our fleet with all the measures which would guarantee minimum mortality of the porpoise. Also we take a positive attitude toward any future modification of fishing gear which would help increase survival of the porpoise, even though this will mean considerable expenses for our country.
- c) Therefore, Nicaragua will gladly provide the Commission

with all the facilities to furnish Nicaraguan technicians, who would participate in the development of the program designed by IATTC to conserve porpoise, with the object of carrying out the necessary work of collecting data from our fleet at the proper time.

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

RESOLUTION

Recalling that at the 33rd meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, the member nations agreed that the IATTC should concern itself with problems arising from the tuna-porpoise relationship in the eastern Pacific Ocean, and requested the Director of Investigations to prepare a review of existing information on such problems and to submit proposals for a possible Commission role, and

Having received that report and discussed its contents at the 34th meeting of the IATTC held in San Diego, June 27-29, 1977, and

Having concluded that the IATTC should undertake activities to evaluate the populations of porpoise in the eastern Pacific Ocean and implement programs designed to reduce to the maximum extent feasible the incidental mortality of porpoise by vessels involved in the fishery for yellowfin tuna in accordance with the Commission's objectives,

Therefore recommends to the high contracting parties that they take joint action to empower the IATTC staff to:

- a) Prepare a detailed program and itemized budget to carry out the activities listed below for distribution to member nations as soon as practicable for their review;
- b) Recruit and/or select and train scientific technicians from member or non-member nations to collect data from vessels at sea on the stocks of porpoise in the eastern Pacific Ocean which can be used to estimate porpoise mortality induced by fishing and to evaluate the effect of this mortality and other factors on porpoise abundance. When requested by any nation, the scientific technician will be of the same nationality as the flag of the vessel;
- c) As appropriate, convene meetings of scientists and other experts to confer with the Commission staff in its porpoise-related studies;
- d) Plan, coordinate, and conduct workshops and seminars to evaluate and disseminate porpoise-saving techniques and gear technology;
- e) Hire the Commission staff necessary to carry out the above activities and any related analyses, to participate in porpoise population research and, as appropriate, to prepare recommendations designed to reduce porpoise mortality;

and further, calls upon the high contracting parties to take action necessary to make it possible for the Commission to undertake these responsibilities.