

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

94TH MEETING

Bilbao, Spain
22 – 26 July 2019

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

AGENDA

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Opening of the meeting | |
| 2. Adoption of the agenda | |
| 3. General presentation of proposals submitted by Members on resolutions and others | |
| 4. a. The tuna fishery, stocks, and ecosystem in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in 2018 | IATTC-94-01 |
| b. Review of the Commission staff's research | IATTC-94-04 & Add. 1 |
| c. Report and recommendations of the 10 th meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee | IATTC-94-02 |
| d. Conservation recommendations by the Commission staff | IATTC-94-03 |
| 5. Reports of subsidiary bodies and working groups: | |
| a. 4 th Meeting of the <i>Ad Hoc</i> Working Group on FADs | |
| b. 7 th Meeting of the Committee on Administration and Finance | |
| c. 10 th Meeting of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures Adopted by the Commission | |
| d. 21 st Meeting of the Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity | |
| 6. Report of the consultant on a fleet capacity management plan and associated measures | |
| 7. Report of the consultant on human resources | |
| 8. Observer program for transshipments at sea | |
| 9. Implementation of Article XII, paragraph 1, of the Antigua Convention | |
| 10. Discussion of resolutions and recommendations | |
| 11. Election of Chair and Deputy Chair of the Commission | |
| 12. Election of Chairs of subsidiary bodies and working groups | |
| 13. Other business | |
| 14. Place and date of next meeting | |
| 15. Adjournment | |

APPENDICES

1 List of attendees

2. RESOLUTIONS

2a Amendment to Resolution C-18-05 on the collection and analyses of data on fish-aggregating devices

C-19-01

2b	Amendment to Resolution C-15-01 on establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the eastern Pacific Ocean	C-19-02
2c	Financing for fiscal year 2020	C-19-03
2d	Resolution to mitigate impacts on sea turtles	C-19-04
2e	Amendment to the Resolution C-16-06 - Conservation measures for shark species, with special emphasis on the silky shark (<i>carcharhinus falciformis</i>), for the years 2020 and 2021	C-19-05
2f	Conservation of whale sharks	C-19-06
2g	Terms of reference for management strategy evaluation workshops	C-19-07
2h	Resolution on scientific observers for longline vessels	C-19-08

3. PROPOSALS [Not adopted]

3a	A-6A	Variou s. Consolidated draft proposal on FADs
3b	A-7	Variou s. FADs working group
3c	C-2	Colombia. IUU fishing
3d	D-1	European Union. Marine pollution
3e		Variou s. Consolidated draft proposal on observers for longline vessels
3f	F-1	European Union. Port State measures
3g	G1-C	European Union. Transshipments
3h	G2	Ecuador. Transshipments
3i	I-1	Japan. Bluefin tuna
3j	J-1	Mexico. Confidentiality
3k	M-1	Ecuador. Sorting grid

4 REPORTS

4a	Report of the 7 th Meeting of the Committee on Administration and Finance
4b	Report of the 10 th Meeting of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures Adopted by the Commission ("Review Committee")
4c	Report of the 21 st Meeting of the Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity
4d	Report of the 4 th Meeting of the <i>Ad Hoc</i> Working Group on FADs
4e	Recommendations of the 2 nd meeting of the Tuna RFMOs Joint Working Group on FADs
4f	Report of the Chair of the <i>Ad Hoc</i> Virtual Working Group to review the legal and operational coherence of IATTC resolutions

5 OTHER

5a	Bolivia statement on capacity request
----	---------------------------------------

The 94th meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) was held in Bilbao, Spain on 22-26 July 2019. The attendees are listed in Appendix 1.

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chair of the IATTC, Mr. Carlos Marín, of Guatemala. In accordance with paragraph 10 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure, Mr. Pablo Nieto, of Peru, was elected rapporteur.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes, informing that, under item 13 "Other business", the Commission

would consider the following matters:

- Request by Ecuador to consider the cases of two vessels flying its flag.
- Request by Nicaragua regarding the change of closure exemption period of a vessel flying its flag.
- Request by Japan for an update on the 4th joint meeting of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna scheduled for September 2019.

The Commission also took note of the request of the Chairs of the Administration and Finance and Compliance Committees and of the Meeting of the Parties to the AIDCP that they be granted enough time during the week to be able to conclude the review of pending issues and close their respective meetings, so as to be able to duly inform the Commission of their results and recommendations.

3. General presentation of proposals submitted by Members on resolutions and others

Members that had submitted resolution proposals were given the opportunity to present them in a general manner. This presentation enabled the process of discussion and negotiation of these proposals to commence without delay, before their consideration under item 10 of the agenda. It was recalled that these proposals were uploaded to the IATTC website: [Resolution proposals](#).

Previously, Korea had expressed doubts regarding the possibility of considering some of these proposals in view of rule 15 of the rules of procedure established in Resolution [C-12-03](#), which states that "*Any proposal or other relevant document to be discussed at a meeting shall be submitted to the Director not less than twenty-one (21) days before the opening of the meeting.*" In this regard, Korea noted that some proposals had been published on the IATTC website the previous week and therefore not within the indicated time frame. The Director commented that the Secretariat had proceeded to their publication on the assumption of the good faith of the Member that had submitted them. Said Member emphasized that it had sent them previously, before the 21 days indicated in the rules of procedure, but that due to a transmission issue it had been necessary to send them again.

The long debate that resulted from this situation prompted the Commission to agree that in the future each Member should ensure that all documents they send to the Secretariat have been received by requesting the corresponding acknowledgement of receipt.

4. a. The tuna fishery, stocks, and ecosystem in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in 2018

Dr. Guillermo Compeán, Director of the IATTC, presented Document [IATTC-94-01](#): "The tuna fishery, stocks, and ecosystem in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in 2018".

He reported that the EPO yellowfin tuna catches in 2018 were 239,000 t, which is lower than the average of the previous five-year period (244,000 t). The preliminary estimate of retained skipjack catch in 2018, 287,000 t, was 8% higher than the 2003-2017 average, and 15% lower than the record catch of 2016. The average annual retained purse-seine catch of bigeye in the EPO was about 5,000 t before the increase in the use of FADs; in 1994, it reached 35,000 t, and in 1996, more than 60,000 t. Since then, it has fluctuated between 44,000 and 95,000 t. The preliminary estimate of retained catch in the EPO in 2018 is 65,000 t.

During 1989-2018, the annual retained catch of bluefin tuna in the EPO by purse-seine vessels averaged 5,000 t; the preliminary estimate for 2018 is 2,900 t.

Several delegations commented that the fishery on dolphins has reduced considerably with respect to the FAD fishery and that clear information on this matter is needed since this has caused greater pressure on the tuna resources. Costa Rica mentioned that it is necessary to apply the precautionary approach and management measures that will provide greater certainty over the resource.

Japan mentioned that it is concerned about the increase in the FAD fishery in the eastern Pacific area. It noted that this has affected the catch of bigeye tuna and that longline fishery is relatively low and purse-

seine vessels put more pressure on this species, so work must be done to address this. Ecuador stated that the FAD fishery has increased, but fishing mortality has been reduced with respect to fishing on schools and this should be taken into consideration, in addition to the fact that the EPO is the only ocean in the world where the fishery is closed for 72 days.

The Coordinator of Scientific Research, Dr. Aires-da-Silva, presented the status of the tuna and billfish stocks. Regarding tropical tunas, he mentioned that for yellowfin tuna in the EPO, the only assessment conducted in 2019 was an update assessment of yellowfin tuna. Issues similar to those in the 2018 bigeye assessment were identified, so the results of the assessment are not considered reliable, which precludes their use as a basis for supporting changes in the number of closure days currently used for managing tropical tunas in the EPO. Consequently, the staff produced stock status indicators for yellowfin, and these were used to monitor the stock in 2019. It is not clear from the indicators whether the abundance of yellowfin tuna is decreasing, or whether the fisheries are changing. Several scenarios will be explored in preparation for the 2020 benchmark assessment.

Regarding bigeye tuna in the EPO, with the expansion of FAD fisheries since 1993, the purse-seine fishery has been a growing factor in its catch. In 2018, the staff concluded that the bigeye tuna assessment model had become overly sensitive to the inclusion of new data and, for this reason, the staff did not recommend using it to define management measures in 2018. The staff has continued to work on resolving these issues in 2019 and will conduct a benchmark assessment of bigeye in 2020; in the meantime, stock status indicators are being used to evaluate the status of the stock as for yellowfin and skipjack. All the indicators, except catch, show strong trends over time, indicating increasing fishing mortality and reduced abundance, and are at, or above, their reference levels. The increasing number of sets and the decreasing mean weight of the fish in the catch suggest that the bigeye stock in the EPO is under increasing fishing pressure.

Regarding skipjack tuna in the EPO, there is a general trend toward decreasing average weight (which is near the lower reference level in 2015-2017). This could be the result of the increase in fishing mortality, in turn, as a consequence of the substantial increase in the number of sets on floating objects. A conventional assessment of skipjack is necessary to determine the status of the stock, but this is not possible without much more extensive tagging data. Implementing the large-scale tagging program in the EPO proposed in the Strategic Science Plan for 2019-2023 is therefore critical.

As for bluefin tuna, Alexandre Aires-da-Silva mentioned that the stock is currently reduced with a current biomass close to the minimum level. There is a gradual growth since around 2010 and an estimated high, but uncertain, recruitment in 2016. Regarding North Pacific albacore, he mentioned that the 2017 assessment shows an improvement over 2014 and that everything indicates that the population is not overfished.

In response to a question from the United States, it was noted that the number of sets on floating objects, per day and per vessel, is increasing, and it may be due to the increased effectiveness of vessels for finding FADs with tuna, due to both the increased number of FADs deployed and the increased use of satellite-linked fish-detecting sonar buoys.

Several delegations commented that there are discouraging issues such as the increase in fishing for juveniles, mainly yellowfin, as a result of the increase in FAD sets, which shows the importance and urgency of reviewing the number of FAD sets by fleet and analyzing how this fishing method has evolved and changed. While on the one hand the number of FAD sets has not increased, on the other hand the size of catches is smaller, so work must be done on the recommendation of the IATTC scientific staff, endorsed by the SAC, that states the need to limit the number of FAD sets. One delegation stressed that applying a limit to FAD sets should apply mainly to those vessels that do not have an observer on board.

Venezuela mentioned, as in other meetings, that it was identified that a small group of vessels are the ones that catch the largest amount of small juvenile tunas according to data collected during two years, so it would be advisable to review the situation of those vessels in order to specifically apply measures to reduce

juvenile catches.

4b. Review of the Commission staff's research

The Coordinator of Scientific Research, Dr. Aires-da-Silva, presented Document [IATTC-94-04](#), "Staff Activities and Research Plan." He pointed out that the document outlines the staff's work and research plans for the next five years, as well as the 52 research projects that are currently underway, or planned and funded for the near future.

The staff's research activities are classified into the 7 main research areas of the proposed Strategic Science Plan (SSP; IATTC-93-06a), which are as follows:

1. Data collection
2. Life-history studies for scientific support of management
3. Sustainable fisheries
4. Ecological impacts of fisheries: assessment and mitigation
5. Interactions among the environment, the ecosystem, and fisheries
6. Knowledge transfer and capacity building
7. Scientific excellence

Dr. Aires-da-Silva emphasized that this organization of the work of the Commission's scientific staff in the above-mentioned areas was in turn related to the new organigram of the Secretariat. In particular, the Commission's scientific staff working under his supervision is divided into 4 main programs: Stock Assessment; Ecosystem and Bycatch (2 subprograms: Ecosystem and Bycatch Mitigation and Gear Technology); Biology (2 subprograms: Early Life History and Life History and Behavior); Data Collection and Database (3 subprograms: Database, Observer Program, IT Support). Ecuador mentioned that work with FADs requires experienced personnel and therefore did not understand the recent changes in the IATTC staff. He requested that if such changes were made, the Members be consulted first and that sufficient time be given for an appropriate transition, considering and taking advantage of the experience gained by the staff that had led this work. Two delegations clarified that, according to the Antigua Convention, it is the prerogative of the Director to manage the staff of the Commission, including the assignment of their functions, responsibilities and specific tasks.

Dr. Jon López, of the Commission's scientific staff, presented a series of statistics related to the FAD fishery in response to several requests made by delegations during the meeting. Most of this work had been presented previously in the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on FADs and shows evidence of increased use of FADs by the majority of the fleet, spatiotemporal indices of their use, as well as the need for higher-quality data to develop better management measures, including high-resolution data from buoys associated with objects.

Dr. Aires-da-Silva presented the following table with projects that require funding to be carried out. The table includes nine research projects that are considered important by the staff, but for which there is currently a lack of human, technical or financial resources to carry them out.

1. Data collection for scientific support of management
C.1.a: Develop an effective and reliable floating-object marking scheme to assist scientific advance
C.4.b: Long-term sampling program for shark catches of artisanal fisheries in Central America. Phase 1.
2. Life-history studies for scientific support of management
E.2.a: Investigate spatiotemporal variability in the age, growth, maturity, and fecundity of yellowfin tuna in the EPO

3. Sustainable fisheries
H.1.d (ext): Improve indices of abundance and length composition based on longline data
H.7.b: South Pacific swordfish assessment
H.8.b: Survey for dolphins in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean (ETP)
4. Ecological impacts of fisheries: assessment and mitigation
M.5.c: Evaluate and reduce post-release mortality of Mobulid rays
5. Interactions among the environment, the ecosystem, and fisheries
O.1.a: Develop a fishery-dependent ecological sampling program for EPO tuna fisheries
6. Knowledge transfer and capacity building
7. Scientific excellence
X.1.c: Workshop on good practices in fisheries stock assessment

The European Union appreciated the presentations of the research plans and actions, whose development it had requested. It particularly referred to the tuna tagging project that is being carried out with funds it has provided and asked about the results of the cruise that took place at the beginning of the year. The Secretariat informed that the goal set had not been achieved completely, since it was impossible to access all the areas in which tuna tagging had been planned, in particular the waters of the Galapagos National Park, the Malpelo National Natural Park and the core zone of the Revillagigedo Archipelago. Colombia and Ecuador criticized this situation and requested that, in the future, planning be carried out adequately and on time so that all the areas necessary for tagging tuna can be accessed; in particular, they referred to the need to take into account the time needed so that the relevant administrations can grant the required permits.

Several delegations welcomed the work being done on sharks under the FAO-GEF-ABNJ project and encouraged the continuation and allocation of the necessary resources. They also highlighted the importance of working towards the development of electronic monitoring that will allow an increased coverage of purse-seine vessels smaller than Class 6, as well as longliners in general.

In response to a delegation's question, the Secretariat clarified that workshops had been held for fishing captains to facilitate the filing of FAD identification forms in accordance with Resolution C-18-05. It informed that one was held in May 2019 in San Diego, California, and that more are planned, as well as the production and publication of tutorials to facilitate the completion of the forms.

Chile indicated its interest in a swordfish assessment. The Secretariat informed that there is a research proposal for this year and possibly a workshop will be held in October 2020.

4.c Report and recommendations of the 10th meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)

The Director, in his capacity as Chair of the SAC, reported on the 10th SAC meeting held in May 2019 in La Jolla, California. He noted that the SAC endorsed 12 of the 13 recommendations of the 9th meeting of the Working Group on Bycatch, and adopted a series of recommendations (see Document [IATTC-94-02](#), "Recommendations of the 10th Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee").

There were no comments or observations from the Commission regarding the report or its presentation. The representatives of some environmental non-governmental organizations expressed their support for the IATTC to continue its work on the assessment of dorado. They also supported the recommendations concerning seabirds made by the Working Group on Bycatch and expressed the wish that they be translated into improved mitigation measures, including through an amendment to Resolution C-11-02.

4.d Conservation recommendations by the Commission staff

Dr. Alexandre Aires-da-Silva presented Document [IATTC-94-03](#), "Conservation Recommendations by the

Commission Staff.” He highlighted the following recommendations:

- Maintain the provisions of the current resolution on tuna conservation (C-17-02), mainly regarding the duration of the closure (72 days).
- For the purse-seine fishery, given the current concern about increasing mortality of bigeye and skipjack tunas, the number of floating-object and unassociated sets should not increase. On the contrary, the total annual number of floating-object and unassociated sets combined by Class-6 vessels in 2019 and 2020 should be limited to 15,723. Once the limit is reached, only dolphin-associated sets should be allowed during the rest of the year, and all vessels without a Dolphin Mortality Limit should cease its activities and return to port.
- For bluefin tuna, maintain the measures of the current resolution (C-16-08).
- For north Pacific albacore tuna, the implementation of resolutions C-05-02 and C-13-03 should be continued.
- Achieve at least 20% observer coverage of longline vessels over 20 m length overall.

5. Reports of subsidiary bodies and working groups:

a. 4th Meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on FADs

Dr. Josu Santiago, Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on FADs, presented his report (Appendix 4d). He mentioned that the working group had held its fourth meeting during the previous week and recalled that the 2nd meeting of the Tuna RFMOs Joint Working Group on FADs had been held in May 2019. He took the opportunity to present in detail the recommendations adopted by the Joint Working Group, which are reproduced in its corresponding report (see Appendix 4e [2nd Meeting of the Joint Tuna RFMOs Working Group on FADs](#)).

He also presented the recommendations adopted by the 4th meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on FADs, with the clarification that only the third one had not reached consensus.

1. That the Commission request the IATTC staff, in collaboration with the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on FADs, to identify the difficulties that different CPCs have with the implementation of the requirements established by resolutions C-18-05 and C-17-02 and develop recommendations that could improve their compliance with these requirements, in particular with regard to the submission of the corresponding reports.
2. That the Commission adopt specific requirements for CPCs to provide information regarding the make of buoys used by each of their vessels so that the IATTC staff can identify whether the information provided by the buoy data providers under Resolution C-17-02 is complete.
3. [That the Commission consider that the use of satellite buoys for FADs, instead of other types of beacons, be mandatory].
4. That Resolution C-18-05 be amended so that vessel owners and operators are not required to provide data that are collected by observers. However, captains should be responsible for providing the make, model and serial number of the buoys when the observer is unable to obtain such information, when the captain is able to provide this information.
5. That the IATTC staff give priority to training operators to comply with data provision as required by the resolutions in force, and that such training activities be included permanently in the staff's work schedule, including the use of new technologies such as videoconferences or collaboration in their implementation by staff located in the IATTC field offices, and that such activities be carried out, preferably, during closure periods.

6. The Commission should consider clarifying the terms of reference of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on FADs, including the process related to the formulation and subsequent submission of recommendations to the Commission.

There were no comments or observations on this report or its presentation.

b. 7th Meeting of the Committee on Administration and Finance

The Chair of the Committee, Mr. Luis Fleischer, of Mexico, presented his report (Appendix 4a).

The Committee made the following recommendations:

1. Consider approving a budget for the IATTC considering three scenarios: the budget requested by the staff (US\$ 8,444,897); one considering no increase (same as in 2019 for US\$ 8,133,837); and another one that considers an average amount (US\$ 8,289,367). The third scenario would be related to the approval of new projects and also to prior knowledge of the AIDCP budget, since the Commission must contribute 30% of its amount.
2. Approve the activities planned for 2019 and 2020 related to the special fund for promoting institutional capacity-building established by Resolution C-14-03, as indicated in section 5b of the Chair's report.
3. That the Secretariat draft a proposal on the allocation of financial support through the special fund, to be reviewed during the intersessional period.
4. Approve a budget of US\$ 1,305,000 for the program of transshipments at sea in 2020 and renew the contract with MRAG for three years.

China requested that the amount of its contribution to the Commission's budget be reviewed as it had been miscalculated. Nicaragua, Belize and Ecuador indicated that they could not accept increases to the budget. Ecuador offered to host the meeting in 2020 and noted that the costs under this budget line in the proposed budget could be reduced.

Korea stated that, in the future, the possibility of holding parallel meetings should be excluded, as was the case with the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on FADs that met at the same time as the Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF), which prevented its delegation from attending the CAF meeting.

After this discussion, the Commission approved a budget of US\$ 8,133,836 for 2020, that is, a total amount identical to that of the previous year. The Commission also approved the renewal of the contract with MRAG for the observer program for transshipments at sea for three more years, as well as a budget for this program of US\$ 1,305,000. Finally, it approved the implementation of the proposed activities under the special fund for institutional capacity-building.

c. 10th Meeting of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures Adopted by the Commission (“Review Committee”)

The Chair of the Committee, Mr. David Hogan, of the United States, presented his report (Appendix 4b). He noted that the Committee made the following recommendations:

a. Recommendations for the Committee/Secretariat

1. Continue the retrospective progress review represented by COR-10-01
2. Reintroduce the breakout for the status of released bycatch – disaggregate “Affected” back to more specific categories such as injured or killed.
3. Continue to track cases of discrepancies between transshipment observer estimates of transshipped fish and reported landings and other available information, and to examine other models for

monitoring transshipment in other RFMOs or fora, to consider the utility of recommending the development of a threshold for determining whether any differences may be a compliance matter.

4. In order to address cases of wrapping large sharks by the tail to remove them from the net, ask the Secretariat to examine from a scientific perspective any available information on handling of large sharks based on threats to human safety, and determine at the Commission whether the existing protocols in force in the shark resolution may need to be revised. The Committee recognized and reiterated that the shark handling requirements remain in force.
5. Members that continue to experience challenges with reporting operational level data under Resolution C-11-08 should be prepared to present to the Committee with a description of those challenges and any steps they are taking to improve.
6. The Secretariat should seek to ensure coherence and reduction of discrepancies between and among the responses to the questionnaire, the issues reported in the Compliance Report, and the Compendium.
7. Secretariat should examine what types of data or monitoring would be needed to report on compliance with FAD requirements, including rules on activation/deactivation.
8. Recognizing that the requirements to retrieve FADS in the period before a closure remains in force, and consider the implications of this requirement for vessels setting opportunistically on FADs with satellite buoys they do not own.
9. The Members recommend that the Secretariat should endeavor to send all available evidentiary and documentary information when reporting any cases to Members, in particular for any possible violations that were not included on the compliance record for a trip.

b. Recommendations for the Commission

1. Renew Cooperating Non-Member status for Bolivia, Chile, Honduras, Liberia and Indonesia.
2. No changes were recommended for the IUU Vessel List.
3. Communicate to the CPCs that were absent from the CPC-by-CPC review of their responsibility to attend and participate in the work of the Committee.
4. Reiterate the recommendations arising from the 9th meeting which are still pending discussion and consideration by the Commission, and note that some actions may benefit from a Member exercising their prerogative to submit a proposal to facilitate action by the Commission.
5. In order to reduce redundant reporting, consider revising the FAO Sea Turtle Guidelines implementation reporting requirement to change it from annual to only when any changes occur, possibly taking into account a model used in ICCAT or other RFMOs.
6. Reiterate obligation to retrieve FADs within 15 days of closure regardless of whether the set is opportunistic.
7. Reiterate the Secretariat's memo to Members of 11/20/18 regarding implementation of C-17-02.

c. Discussion not resulting in a recommendation

The Committee discussed asking the Commission to review and consider affirming or, if needed, ratifying through decision making the status of work delegated to the Scientific Advisory Committee for the development of reporting standards, including forms, data fields, data resolution aspects and other work that the Committee has seen as being considered differently among CPCs where, in some cases, there is no consistent understanding of the status of those data standards.

The Committee discussed this in the context primarily of FAD data reporting as well as longline catch and observer reporting. The Commission could also take into consideration the incremental implementation by some Members, given their uncertainty around the status of the data standards, and examine the utility of a phase-in of compliance expectations or the development of an action plan to achieve full implementation

over time. The Committee did not reach consensus on using this discussion as the basis for a recommendation.

After the presentation of the report and the recommendations by the Chair of the Committee, there was a discussion that allowed to clarify that, according to Resolution C-16-05, lifting sharks by the tail for their rescue or release should be considered an infraction.

Finally, the Commission agreed to approve the renewal of Cooperating Non-Member status for Bolivia, Honduras, Indonesia, Chile and Liberia. It also took note of the other recommendations without any additional comments or observations.

d. 21st Meeting of the Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity

The Chair of the Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity, Mr. Alfonso Miranda, of Peru, presented his report (Annex 4c). He noted that the consultant on a fleet capacity management plan and associated measures presented his report during the meeting of the Group (see Document CAP-21 Consultant's report) and that the following recommendation was agreed:

Gathering the elements of consensus reached during the discussion of item 4 of the agenda, the Working Group agreed to recommend the development, in coordination with the consultant, of a schedule of his visits to CPCs with purse-seine fleets in the near future. An important purpose of these visits will be to discuss the possible concerns of those CPCs regarding the proposed scheme, in order to take them into account in the review of the proposal.

He also reported that, during the meeting, Ecuador presented a request to include a vessel of its flag in the IATTC Regional Vessel Register, which had already been circulated and consulted intersessionally through an exchange of emails. However, the Group agreed that this type of decision should not be taken by correspondence during the intersessional period but rather in the framework of a face-to-face meeting. Since no consensus was reached on this matter, Ecuador informed that it would present its request at the IATTC plenary meeting under item 13 "Other business".

Bolivia presented a written statement regarding a request for the return of well capacity that it has submitted repeatedly for several years, which is included as Appendix 5a.

6. Report of the consultant on a fleet capacity management plan and associated measures

During the plenary meeting of the Commission, Dr. Dale Squires presented the report he had already presented to the Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity on the progress and results of his work.

After taking note of this presentation, the Members generally expressed their interest and concern regarding several topics and issues related to this ongoing work.

In conclusion, the Commission approved the recommendation of the Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity regarding the development of a visit schedule, which would be circulated to IATTC Members within a month for consultation.

7. Report of the consultant on human resources

The consultant, Mr. Driss Meski, presented his report, which is available in its entirety on the IATTC website ([Report of the Consultation on the Management of the Human Resources at the IATTC](#)). He clarified that it was not a criticism of the current human resource management, but rather an identification of a number of opportunities for improvement in relation to both institutional and organizational aspects, including, *inter alia*, the status of the Commission and its headquarters and staff, the need to respond with appropriate human resources to the Commission's broadened mandate beyond its previous scientific functions, particularly in the field of policy and compliance, and matters related to the career development of the Commission's staff members, including their evaluation and retirement. The United States, as the host

country of the Commission, expressed its willingness to discuss any aspect related to the status of the Commission, its headquarters and its staff should it be necessary to develop and complete existing arrangements. In this regard, China expressed its support for the Secretariat to initiate consultations with the United States so that the Commission can have a headquarters agreement as recommended by the consultant, similar to the headquarters agreements in force in other RFMOs. Mr. Meski noted that his study includes an example-model of a headquarters agreement that could be useful. He added that the signing of a headquarters agreement is critical to the operation of the IATTC and could facilitate and resolve several existing issues related to the operation of the Commission and its staff in the host country, and would be an important tool to improve the work of the Commission and the staff.

The European Union noted that the document was very useful and comprehensive and responded to what had been requested of the consultant and what was needed in response to the concerns that had been expressed. The European Union added that it agreed with the analysis and conclusions of the report and requested that the Secretariat prepare a document on the staff rules based on the consultant's report and his recommendations, which would allow the Commission to make further progress in the development and adoption of relevant recommendations.

8. Observer program for transshipments at sea

Mr. Ricardo Belmontes, of the Commission staff, noted that the report on the progress of the program and its results had already been presented to the Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF) and the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). He recalled that the Review Committee also considered cases of possible infractions on carrier vessels. The Commission, in addition to expressing its interest in making the best use of the information collected through programs, reiterated its approval of the budget for the observer program for transshipments at sea, as well as the renewal of the contract with MRAG.

9. Implementation of Article XII, paragraph 1, of the Antigua Convention

The Chair of the Commission reported that the Heads of Delegations had met to ascertain whether, at the ordinary meeting of the Commission of the year preceding the expiration of the Director's mandate, there was consensus to reappoint him, as established in Section 1 of Resolution C-14-07 on procedures for the implementation of Article XII, paragraph 1, of the Antigua Convention. After having verified the absence of consensus, as a result of the reservations expressed by two delegations during said meeting, the Commission noted that the selection process would be initiated in accordance with the procedure under Section 2 of Resolution C-14-07.

10. Discussion of resolutions and recommendations

a. Resolutions adopted

The following resolutions were adopted:

Subject	Resolution
Collection and analyses of data on fish-aggregating devices	C-19-01
IUU Vessel List (Amendment to C-15-01)	C-19-02
2020 financing	C-19-03
Sea turtles	C-19-04
Management of shark species, with emphasis on the silky shark (Amendment to C-16-06)	C-19-05
Conservation of whale sharks	C-19-06
Management strategy evaluation	C-19-07
Observers on longline vessels	C-19-08

b. Proposals submitted but not approved*:

The outcomes at the end of the presentation of these proposals were as follows:

Prop.	Subject	
A-6A Vari- ous	Consolidated draft proposal on FADs	The Chair requested that the authors of the 5 proposals initially submitted (Venezuela, the European Union, Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador) consolidate them into one. Despite achieving this, it was finally impossible to reach consensus on the unified proposal and only the one initially submitted by Venezuela could be approved.
A-7 Vari- ous	Amendment of Resolution C-18-05 on the collection and analysis of data on fish-aggregating devices	This consolidated proposal submitted by Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, the European Union and Venezuela, in substitution of several individual proposals that aimed to modify the rules of procedure of the <i>Ad Hoc</i> Permanent Working Group on FADs, could not reach consensus either.
C-2 COL	IUU fishing	The purpose of this proposal by Colombia was that decisions on the inclusion of vessels in the IUU list would not be taken by consensus of all the Members in attendance, to avoid, as experience has shown, making it impossible to include a vessel of the flag of these Members. As Mexico and the United States insisted that the Antigua Convention required that all decisions be taken by consensus, the proposal was not adopted.
D-1 EU	Marine pollution	The EU submitted this proposal that seeks to establish a regulatory framework on the marking of fishing gear and the discharge of plastics from fishing vessels in the IATTC Convention Area in order to limit the negative effects of plastic residues in the ocean affecting marine life on shore and off shore. As a result of the difficulties encountered in the consideration of the issue of the marking of fishing gear and equipment, it was not possible to reach consensus on this proposal.
Vari- ous	Consolidated proposal on observers for long-line vessels	The main purpose of this consolidated proposal was to gradually increase observer coverage on longline vessels from 5 to 20%, and to complement it with electronic monitoring. Consensus was not reached, but a proposal submitted by the European Union was adopted, which, among other aspects, establishes specific requirements for the submission of data by on-board observers (Resolution C-19-08).
F-1 EU	Port State measures	Once again, no consensus was reached on this proposal, which had already been presented at previous meetings, because some Members stated that they could not support it until the FAO Agreement on the matter is ratified.
G-1C EU	Transshipments	The EU submitted this proposal that sought to amend and refine some elements of the current Resolution C-12-08. China and Japan indicated that they cannot accept that only vessels flying the flag of a CPC are able to receive transshipments, in addition to not accepting any modification to the current format of the transshipment declaration.
G-2 ECU	Transshipments	Ecuador submitted this proposal that sought to prohibit transshipments at sea and only allow them to take place in port. Objections were raised by several Members, who stated that not only was this practice common and economically important, but it was also well regulated and monitored through the Regional Observer Program on authorized carrier vessels.

I-1 JPN	Bluefin tuna	This proposal by Japan on possible changes to the current catch limits in the current resolution could not reach consensus, particularly due to the objections raised in order to reflect the results properly. Mexico and the United States indicated that no new measures could be accepted until the next meeting of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC Northern Committee (NC) Working Group scheduled for September. Korea also expressed its interest in holding an extraordinary IATTC meeting after that Working Group meeting, which was not agreed by the Commission.
J-1 MEX	Confidentiality	This proposal, whose purpose was essentially to prohibit the use of information presented in the Compliance Committee to adopt unilateral sanctions, was supported by several delegations, but could not reach the necessary consensus because of the objections presented by the USA and the EU related to transparency issues.
M-1 ECU	Sorting grid	The purpose of this proposal was for the Commission to approve a pilot project of sorting grid experiments. In addition to the possibly inappropriate nature of a resolution for the adoption of specific projects of this nature, a similar project had already been adopted by the Commission and is currently being implemented. After acknowledging the lack of support for its proposal, Ecuador requested a timeline of the ongoing work and added that it could provide additional resources with the support of the Ecuadorian industry.

* All the original proposals can be found on the IATTC website: [94th IATTC meeting documents](#).

11. Election of Chair and Deputy Chair

The Commission elected Mr. Alfonso Miranda, of Peru, as Chair of the Commission, who expressed his gratitude for the confidence entrusted in him and his country and offered to work not only in the conduction of the meetings but also during the intersessional period to try to facilitate the necessary agreements for the benefit of the work of the IATTC. Since there was no agreement on the election of the Deputy Chair, it was left pending.

12. Election of Chairs of subsidiary bodies and working groups

The Commission elected or re-elected the following persons:

Working Group or Committee	Chair(s)
Review Committee	David Hogan (USA)
Committee on Administration and Finance	Pending
Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity	Luis Molledo (EU)
Working Group on Bycatch	Yonat Swimmer (USA) Manuel Correia (Venezuela)
<i>Ad Hoc</i> Working Group on Coherence of Resolutions	Bernal Chavarría (Honduras)

The Commission thanked Dr. Luis Fleisher, of Mexico, for his work as the CAF Chair during this annual meeting, and agreed that the election of a new Committee Chair should be postponed until next year.

13. Other business:

As announced at the beginning of the meeting, the Commission considered the following three issues under this item of the agenda:

a. 4th meeting of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna

(September 2019)

Ms. Dorothy Lowman, who serves as Co-Chair of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna, reported that the 4th meeting of the group would be held on 3-5 September 2019 in Portland, Oregon, USA. She added that it is expected that, among others, this meeting would be used to discuss possible coherent and balanced conservation and management measures for this species agreed upon by the two organizations.

Japan and Mexico appreciated the information and indicated that they would be awaiting the results in order to evaluate whether additional conservation and management measures were needed for bluefin tuna in the Antigua Convention Area under the responsibility of the IATTC.

b. Situation of two Ecuadorian vessels

b.1. Inclusion of the *Maria del Mar* in the IATTC Regional Vessel Register

After a new presentation by Ecuador of this case, described as an involuntary omission of the fisheries authorities at the time of the establishment of the Regional Vessel Register, in the absence of objections and, on the contrary, with the support of several delegations, the Commission approved the inclusion of this vessel in the Register, in the list of sunk vessels, with the understanding that this concluded an old request by Ecuador and that there would not be more similar cases in the future. Furthermore, it was clarified that issues of this nature could not be resolved by correspondence during the intersessional period but only at face-to-face meetings of the Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity and the Commission.

b.2. Request for additional capacity for the *Ricky A*, which had increased its well volume

Ecuador recalled that this case had been presented for several years and that it had repeatedly requested that the increase in the well volume of the *Ricky A* be recognized with the capacity of the *Victoria A* (ex *Cabrillo*), which, as the *María del Mar*, had not been included in the Register due to an involuntary omission by the Ecuadorian authorities. Ecuador's request regarding the *Ricky A* was not approved, since several delegations pointed out that this case had been presented repeatedly to the Compliance Committee as a clear violation of Resolution C-02-03, consisting of the increase in well volume of a vessel without first having the capacity legally recognized by the Commission to do so.

c. Transfer of the exemption period granted in 2018 to the Nicaraguan vessel *Olivia D* for 2019

Nicaragua requested that it be allowed to use the reduced closure period corresponding to the exemption due to *force majeure* that was granted for the vessel *Olivia D* in 2019 instead of 2018, given the issues encountered by the vessel for its operation. Recalling similar cases that had been favorably considered in the past, and based on the provisions of Resolution C-17-02, paragraph 6.e.ii, the Commission decided to approve this request.

d. Preliminary report of the Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Coherence of IATTC Resolutions

In his preliminary report (see Appendix 4f), the Chair of the Working Group, Mr. Bernal Chavarría, noted that the preparation of a comprehensive document as a basis for the group's work had been initiated and was underway and could be presented next year. At Mr. Chavarría's request, the Commission approved the continuation of the Working Group and the extension of its mandate.

14. Place and date of next meeting

The Commission agreed that its 94th meeting would be held on dates to be determined during the months of July or August 2020, taking into account the amendment introduced by Resolution [C-17-04](#) to the rules of procedure so that the annual meeting would preferably be held no less than three months after the conclusion of the meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee. With regard to the place of the meeting, the Commission welcomed the

generous offers of Nicaragua and Ecuador to host the meeting, and a decision on this matter was left pending.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 20:00 on 26 July 2019.

DRAFT