

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

94TH MEETING

Bilbao, Spain, 22-26 July 2019

PROPOSAL IATTC-94 E-3

SUBMITTED BY MÉXICO

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION C-11-08 ON SCIENTIFIC
OBSERVERS FOR LONGLINE VESSELS**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Since 2014, and on an uninterrupted annual basis, the IATTC scientific staff has calculated that the minimum and sufficient level of coverage on longline vessels to produce reliable estimates of the species caught is 20%.

Resolution C-11-08 on scientific observers for longline vessels, currently in force, establishes the mandatory coverage of 5% of the fishing effort carried out by longline fishing vessels greater than 20 meters length overall.

Taking into account that the recommendation of the IATTC scientific staff for observer coverage in the longline fishery recommends the following:

“The staff maintains its recommendation of at least 20% observer coverage of longline vessels over 20 m length overall.”

“Resolution C-11-08 requires that at least 5% of the fishing effort by longline vessels greater than 20 m length overall (LOA) carry a scientific observer. However, 5% coverage is too low for calculating accurate estimates of the catches of species caught infrequently in those fisheries, such as some sharks of conservation concern; 20% coverage is considered the minimum level required for such estimates. Both the staff and the SAC have recommended that this level of coverage be adopted for longline vessels over 20 m LOA (SAC-10 INF-H)”.

In addition, the recommendations of the tenth meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), recommend the following in the “*Electronic monitoring*” portion of the data section:

“The SAC recommends that the Electronic Monitoring (EM) initiatives implemented on purse seiners, both Classes 1-5 and Class 6, which will improve data collection for the purse-seine fleet, are also tested in the longline fleet.

In this context, it is considered essential that the current resolution be modified to accommodate a necessary coverage, in a gradual manner that will allow it to reach the proposed level of 20%, through two alternatives. One is the gradual increase in the number of observers on board or, alternatively, the use of electronic methods of remote monitoring and the use of conventional video cameras.

RESOLUTION C-19-XX

AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION C-11-08 ON SCIENTIFIC OBSERVERS FOR LONGLINE VESSELS

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Bilbao, Spain, on the occasion of its 94th Meeting:

Recognizing the need to collect **better** scientific information on target species as well as comprehensive data on interactions **mandated by the Antigua Convention in relation to** non-target species, in particular, sea turtles, sharks and seabirds;

Noting the considerations of Parties with extensive longline fisheries and the need to ensure uniform and equitable treatment of all tuna-fishing vessels operating in the Convention Area;

Acknowledging that large purse-seine vessels operating in the Antigua Convention Area **have already been operating for years and comply with carrying 100% scientific observers aboard**, in accordance with the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program; and

Taking into account and reaffirming the recommendation of the IATTC scientific staff of 20% observer coverage as a minimum level required to calculate accurate estimates in longline fisheries.

Agrees that:

1. A gradual increase in the IATTC Regional Observer Program for longline fisheries shall be implemented to ensure the 20% coverage recommended by the scientific staff of the Commission and for this purpose:
2. Each Member and cooperating non-Member (CPCs) shall ensure **a constant and gradual increase in the coverage of scientific observers aboard** longline fishing vessels greater than 20 meters length overall, so that:
 - a) Coverage is at least 10% by 1 June 2021.
 - b) Coverage is at least 15% by 1 June 2022.
 - c) Coverage is at least 20% by 1 June 2023.
 - d) Or, alternatively, beginning in 2021, coverage will be gradually increased by the same percentages using electronic methods of remote monitoring and conventional video cameras to conduct the inspections provided for in this resolution and to ensure that, through the option of electronic monitoring, the country controls the management of its vessels from land in a timely manner and generates the necessary information for proper management, as has been suggested by the IATTC scientific staff.
3. The main task of the scientific observers **or the electronic monitoring systems** shall be to record any available biological information, the catches of targeted fish species, species composition and any available biological information as well as any interactions with non-target species such as sea turtles, seabirds and sharks **and, when appropriate, to apply the mitigation measures agreed by the Commission in a timely and accurate manner.**
4. When the Parties notify the results of the electronic monitoring program, the margin of error inherent in the technical specifications of the system onboard, which shall not exceed a range of +/- 5%, shall also be reported.
5. With this information, the State/CPC authorities shall provide a report on the catching vessel, including the following documents: a) technical report on the remote monitoring system used; b) general information on date and location (longitude and latitude); c) species, statistical

information on length distribution, average size and weight. Additionally, effort will be determined by the number of days fished.

6. Each CPC shall ensure that gradual coverage up to 20% by observers and/or remote electronic systems, or combinations of both, will be representative of the activities of its fleet and shall inform the IATTC staff of the duration of its fishing operations.
7. The aforementioned video recordings shall also be available for analysis by the Commission and each CPC shall establish the necessary measures to prevent any replacement, editing or manipulation.
8. Each CPC shall update the list of its vessels by specifically indicating which vessels are active and the percentage of observers aboard and/or remote monitoring systems, in addition to inactive and/or sunk vessels.
9. The Director, in cooperation with the **scientific staff and the Scientific Advisory Committee**, shall review the reporting format detailing the required data to be collected by scientific observers **or by electronic methods of remote monitoring and video cameras on longline vessels, and shall communicate it to the Commission.**
10. Scientific observers shall submit to their flag CPC authorities a report on these observations at the latest 30 days after the end of each fishing trip.
11. Every year, CPCs shall submit to the Scientific Advisory Committee, through the Director, by 31 March, the scientific observers' information on the previous year's fishery in a format established by the Scientific Advisory Committee.
12. Large-scale longline fleets shall: 1) share operational data with the IATTC through a specific format proposed by the Commission, and 2) collaborate with the IATTC staff to develop improved indices of abundance.
13. An evaluation of the use of electronic monitoring systems shall be conducted in order to establish minimum standards and be able to extend observer coverage in the longline fisheries in the EPO through these two options.