

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

95TH MEETING

(By videoconference)

30 November-4 December 2020

RESOLUTION C-20-02

MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN, 2021

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) gathered virtually, on the occasion of its 95th Meeting:

Taking into account that the stock of Pacific bluefin tuna is caught in both the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) and the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Recognizing with concern that the 2018 stock assessment of Pacific bluefin tuna by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) shows the following:

- Although the spawning stock biomass (SSB) appears to have grown slightly in the last few years, SSB remains near the historic low point (ratio of SSB in 2016 relative to the theoretical unfished SSB ($SSB_{2016}/SSB_{F=0}$, the depletion ratio) estimated in this assessment is 3.3%);
- The stock is overfished relative to 20% $SSB_{F=0}$, which is the second rebuilding target recommended by the Joint IATTC-Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee (NC) Working Group, and is subject to overfishing relative to most of the common fishing intensity-based reference points;
- The projection results are strongly influenced by the inclusion of the relatively high, but uncertain recruitment estimate for 2016; and,

Taking into consideration that IATTC Members, through resolutions and voluntary actions, have, since 2012, effected 40% reductions in the catch of Pacific bluefin tuna across the entire range of age classes available in the EPO;

Noting that in 2018 the IATTC Scientific Staff did not recommend additional measures because the measures established in Resolution C-16-08 are adequate to meet the rebuilding targets recommended by the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group;

Recognizing the recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) from its ninth meeting in May 2018, in which the SAC recommended that the Commission take note of the current status of Pacific bluefin tuna, the different impacts of harvesting small and large Pacific bluefin tuna, and of the increased risks of not achieving the rebuilding targets if the Resolution (C-16-08) is modified to increase catch limits;

Recalling that Article VII, paragraph 1(c) of the Antigua Convention provides that the Commission shall “adopt measures that are based on the best scientific evidence available to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fish stocks covered by this Convention and to maintain or restore the populations of harvested species at levels of abundance which can produce the maximum sustainable yield...”;

Urging all IATTC Members and Cooperating Non-Members (CPCs) involved in this fishery to participate in a fair and equitable manner, and without exceptions, in the discussion and adoption of conservation measures applicable to the stock throughout its entire range;

Mindful that these measures are intended as an interim step towards assuring sustainability of the Pacific bluefin tuna resource, consistent with the precautionary approach, and the objectives of the long-term management framework for the conservation and management of Pacific bluefin tuna in the EPO;

Noting that the IATTC has adopted mandatory conservation and management measures for Pacific bluefin tuna for 2012-2020, and that the measures resulted in reducing catches in the EPO; and,

Desirous that combined conservation and management measures by the WCPFC and the IATTC, together with other voluntary measures aimed at controlling fishing mortality, should be implemented to better the condition of the Pacific bluefin tuna stock.

Resolves as follows:

1. The Commission shall implement this Resolution in accordance with the long-term management objectives of Pacific bluefin tuna in paragraph 1 of Resolution C-18-02 [Amendment to Resolution C-16-08].
2. Each CPC shall report sport fishery catches of Pacific bluefin tuna semi-annually to the Director. Each CPC shall continue to ensure that catches of Pacific bluefin tuna by sportfishing vessels operating under its jurisdiction are reduced in a manner commensurate with reductions in commercial catches.
3. During 2021, in the IATTC Convention Area, combined total commercial catches of Pacific bluefin tuna by all CPCs shall not exceed the catch limit of 3,925 metric tons.
4. Noting that the United States could catch up to 425 metric tons in any year within the biennial limit under Resolution C-18-01, the United States may catch up to 425 metric tons in 2021. Any catches that exceed 300 metric tons shall be subtracted from the catch limit to be adopted for 2022; however, if there is under-harvest from Resolution C-18-01, catches that exceed the sum of 300 metric tons and the under-harvest quantity shall be subtracted from the catch limit to be adopted for 2022. The under-harvest from Resolution C-18-01 shall be applied in accordance with Paragraph 7 of this Resolution and notified in accordance with Paragraph 11 of this resolution. The catch limit for the United States will be subtracted and reserved from the total catch limit in paragraph 3 for the exclusive use of the United States.
5. Noting that Mexico could catch up to 3,500 metric tons in any year within the biennial limit under Resolution C-18-01, Mexico may catch up to 3,500 metric tons in 2021. Any catches that exceed 3,000 metric tons shall be subtracted from the catch limit to be adopted for 2022; however, if there is under-harvest from C-18-01, catches that exceed the sum of 3,000 metric tons and the under-harvest quantity shall be subtracted from the catch limit to be adopted for 2022. The under-harvest from Resolution C-18-01 shall be applied in accordance to Paragraph 7 of this Resolution and notified in accordance with Paragraph 11 of this resolution. The catch limit for Mexico will be subtracted and reserved from the total catch limit in paragraph 3 for the exclusive use of Mexico.
6. Any over-harvest shall be deducted from the catch limit in the following year in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Resolution C-18-02. Over-harvest of the biennial catch limits established in Resolution C-18-01 shall be deducted from catch limits applicable to this Resolution.
7. Under-harvest of biennial catch limits established in Resolution C-18-01 shall be added to catch limits applicable to this Resolution in accordance with Paragraph 4 of Resolution C-18-02.
8. CPCs should endeavor to manage catches by vessels under their respective national jurisdictions in such a manner and through such mechanisms as might be applied, with the objective of reducing the proportion of fish of less than 30 kg in the catch toward 50% of total catch, taking into consideration the scientific advice of the ISC and the IATTC staff. At the

annual meeting of the IATTC in 2021, the Scientific Staff shall present the results of the 2020 fishing season in this regard for the Commission's review. CPCs shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the catch limits specified in paragraphs 3, 4 and 4 5 are not exceeded in 2021, without prejudging the adoption by the CPCs of additional management and conservation measures within their national jurisdiction.

9. In 2021, each CPC shall report its catches to the Director weekly after 50% of its annual catch limit in each year is reached.
10. The Director will send out notices to all CPCs when 75% and 90% of the limits in Paragraphs 3, 4 or 5 have been reached. The Director will send out a notice to all CPCs when the limits in Paragraphs 3, 4 or 5 have been reached. CPCs shall take the necessary internal measures to avoid exceeding the limits established in Paragraphs 3, 4 or 5.
11. By January 31 2021, the Director shall notify all CPCs of the catch limit for 2021 established in Paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of this resolution that considers any over-harvest or under-harvest in accordance with Paragraphs 6 and 7 of this Resolution, and Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Resolution C-18-02.
12. In 2021, the IATTC Scientific Staff shall present an assessment to the Scientific Advisory Committee of the effectiveness of this resolution also taking into consideration the results of the ISC's latest Pacific bluefin tuna stock assessment, harvest scenario projections performed by the ISC, and conservation and management measures for Pacific bluefin tuna adopted by the WCPFC. The Commission shall consider new management measures to apply beyond ~~2020~~ 2021 based on the best available information, including the latest assessment, recruitment information, projections or other relevant information.
13. Taking into consideration the outcomes of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group on Pacific bluefin tuna and meetings of the WCPFC, the Commission shall review this Resolution and consider revising the catch limits established in this resolution, taking into account the need for an equitable distribution of catch, during the 2021 Annual Meeting of the IATTC.