

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

RESOLUTION ON BIGEYE TUNA

16 June 2000

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), having responsibility for the scientific study of the tunas and tuna-like fishes of the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO), which for the purpose of this resolution is the area bounded by the coastline of the Americas, the 40°N parallel, the 150°W meridian, and the 40°S parallel, and for the formulation of recommendations to the High Contracting Parties with regard to these resources, and having maintained since 1950 a continuing scientific program directed toward the study of those resources:

Recalling the provisions of its Resolutions on the conservation and management of bigeye tuna in the EPO approved at the 61st and 64th meetings of the IATTC, including the establishment of a limit of 40,000 metric tons on the catch of bigeye tuna in the surface fishery in 1999 and the resolution approved at the 65th meeting of the IATTC, which established a provisional limit of 40,000 metric tons and a process to review the status of bigeye tuna during its Annual Meeting in 2000, and

Considering the information presented by the IATTC staff on the need to take measures to ensure that catches of juvenile bigeye by the surface fishery do not threaten the sustainable yield of bigeye tuna in the EPO, and

Concerned about the reduction in the average size of bigeye tuna caught by the purse-seine fishery in the EPO during 1994-1998, and in the uncertainty with respect to the catches during 1999 and the first quarter of 2000, and

Aware that there was an increase in the average size of the bigeye tuna in the catch of the surface fishery in 1999 and the first quarter of 2000, and

Recognizing the uncertainties about the life history parameters of the bigeye stock, and

Observing that catches of bigeye tuna in the first quarter of 2000 may have increased at a faster rate than expected, resulting in considerable uncertainty and management difficulties for the surface fishing fleets of the EPO and for the IATTC, and

Noting that it is necessary to limit the catch of bigeye tuna by the surface fishery in the EPO in the year 2000:

Therefore recommends to the High Contracting Parties and non-parties under whose jurisdiction vessels operate in the EPO that they agree that:

1. The fishery on all types of floating objects shall be closed from September 15 through December 15, 2000.
2. Notwithstanding paragraph 1 above, the fishery shall be closed earlier if the Director determines, based on the best scientific and fishery data available, that the catch of bigeye tuna less than 60 centimeters has reached the level achieved in 1999, in which case he shall advise all Parties that the fishery on floating objects shall close two weeks after such determination.
3. To make this determination, the Director shall review the information in paragraph 2 above in order to decide on the question of a closure by August 1 and, if necessary, August 15.
4. Each Party shall send to the Director information on the legal and administrative provisions for implementing the closure, at the latest 10 days after its entry into force.
5. With the cooperation and assistance of the Parties, all landings by vessels of Classes 4 and 5 shall be monitored by the Director, and landings by smaller vessels shall be sampled to the extent possible.

6. The Director, in cooperation with the Parties, shall prepare a comprehensive draft plan for regional management of fishing capacity in accordance with the FAO International Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity, including consideration of the measurement of fishing capacity, by the Meeting of the IATTC in June 2001. This plan should include, *inter alia*:
 - A regional register of tuna-fishing vessels;
 - The determination of the level of capacity of the fleet that will ensure that levels of fishing effort are commensurate with the sustainable use of tuna resources.
7. The Scientific Working Group shall meet in October 2000 to review the status of the bigeye stock and recommend management measures for 2001. The Group should consider, *inter alia*:
 - the patterns of catches of bigeye tuna;
 - any data available on size composition of the bigeye catches;
 - previous evaluations of the impact of catches by longline and small purse-seine vessels and of interactions between the longline and purse-seine fisheries;
 - alternative methods for reducing the catch of juvenile bigeye tuna; and
 - other relevant information provided for consideration by the IATTC.
8. The Parties shall, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Scientific Working Group, adopt management measures for 2001 before the end of the year 2000.
9. At the Meeting of the IATTC in June 2001, they shall review the status of the bigeye tuna stock and the fisheries and, if appropriate, modify the management measures.
10. They shall take all the necessary measures to ensure that no tender vessels operate in the EPO, in accordance with the resolution on fish-aggregating devices of the 64th Meeting of the IATTC.
11. Non-parties shall be requested and encouraged to comply with the requirements and commitments of this resolution.