

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

RESOLUTION ON YELLOWFIN TUNA

JUNE 2001

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, 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,

Notes that the yellowfin tuna resource of the eastern Pacific supports one of the most important surface fisheries for tunas in the world, and

Recognizes that, based on past experience in the fishery, the potential production from the resource can be reduced by excessive fishing effort, and

Recalls that from 1966 through 1979 the implementation of a successful conservation program maintained the yellowfin stock at high levels of abundance, and

Notes that from 1980 through 2000, excepting 1987, conservation measures were recommended to the Commissioners by the scientific staff, and that in turn such measures were approved by the Commissioners for recommendation to their respective governments, and

Observes that, although the stock of yellowfin is currently near a level of optimum abundance, nevertheless it can be over-exploited, and

Believing that it is important to follow a precautionary approach when addressing conservation and management measures for yellowfin tuna, and

Observing that currently the fishery for yellowfin tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean includes a variety of fishing gears and methods of operation which require the implementation of differentiated management systems adapted to this complexity, and

The IATTC therefore recommends to the High Contracting Parties that a limitation on the purse-seine catches of yellowfin in the Commission's Yellowfin Regulatory Area (CYRA) is necessary before the end of 2001, and will take effect on the date on which the total catch of yellowfin tuna from the surface fishery in the CYRA in 2001 reaches 250,000 metric tons ("the closure date"). However, the Director shall be authorized to increase this limit by up to three successive increments of 20,000 metric tons each if he concludes from examination of available data that such increases will pose no substantial danger to the stocks.

After the closure date and before January 1, 2002, catches of any vessel may include a maximum of 15 percent yellowfin (relative to its total catch of all species of fish) caught while fishing for other species of tunas.

Baitboats, longline and sportsfishing vessels are not subject to the measures above.

Finally recommends that all member states and other interested states work diligently to achieve the implementation of such a yellowfin conservation program for 2001.