

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION  
COMISIÓN INTERAMERICANA DEL ATÚN TROPICAL

**70<sup>a</sup> REUNION - 70<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

ANTIGUA (GUATEMALA)  
24-27 JUN 2003

**RESOLUTION C-03-08**

**CONSOLIDATED RESOLUTION ON BYCATCH**

*The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC):*

*Recalling and reaffirming* the Resolutions on Bycatch adopted at the 66<sup>th</sup>, 68<sup>th</sup>, and 69<sup>th</sup> Meetings of the Commission in June 2000, 2001, and 2002, respectively;

*Recognizing* the value of consolidating the operative parts of these resolutions into one comprehensive resolution on bycatch;

*Believing* that any additional measures on bycatch should also be incorporated into this single resolution;

*Has agreed as follows:*

**ACTIONS BY GOVERNMENTS**

**1. Reduction of the incidental mortality of juvenile tunas:**

- a. Until January 1, 2005:
  - i. Implement programs to require all purse-seine vessels to first retain on board and then land all bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin tuna caught, except fish considered unfit for human consumption for reasons other than size. A single exception shall be the final set of a trip, when there may be insufficient well space remaining to accommodate all the tuna caught in that set.
  - ii. Review annually the effect and effectiveness of this program.
- b. Support, and seek the necessary funds for, the following future studies and research:
  - i. Develop technology for releasing juvenile tunas, particularly sorting grids.
  - ii. Apply technology for the identification of species and size composition in schools prior to setting, for example acoustic technology.
- c. Pursue the establishment of mechanisms for communicating information on areas of high concentration of juvenile tunas in real time within the fleet or parts of the fleet, taking account of the importance of ensuring confidentiality of such information.

**2. Release of non-target species**

Require fishermen on purse-seine vessels to promptly release unharmed, to the extent practicable, all sharks, billfishes, rays, mahi mahi (dorado), and other non-target species.

**3. Sea turtles:**

- a. Require fishermen on purse-seine vessels to promptly release unharmed, to the extent practicable, all sea turtles.
- b. Encourage all the Parties to voluntarily provide the Commission with all data on incidental catches of sea turtles in all fisheries, mainly those for tunas, recognizing that a comprehensive approach is necessary to deal effectively with sea turtle issues;
- c. Encourage FAO to address the conservation and management of sea turtles, including the issue of bycatches of sea turtles as part of such a comprehensive approach;
- d. Implement the following actions:

- i. Train crews of tuna purse-seine vessels, particularly those without observers, in techniques for handling turtles to improve survival after release, and encourage States to take similar actions for other tuna fisheries.
- ii. Prohibit tuna-fishing vessels disposing of salt bags or any other type of plastic trash at sea.
- iii. Encourage the release, when practicable, of sea turtles entangled in FADs.
- iv. Foster the recovery of FADs when they are not being used in the fishery.
- e. Require specific measures for encircled or entangled sea turtles, as follows:
  - i. Whenever a sea turtle is sighted in the net, all reasonable efforts should be made to rescue the turtle before it becomes entangled in the net, including, if necessary, the deployment of a speedboat.
  - ii. If a turtle is entangled in the net, net roll should stop as soon as the turtle comes out of the water and should not start again until the turtle has been disentangled and released.
  - iii. If a turtle is brought aboard the vessel, all appropriate efforts to assist in the recovery of the turtle should be made before returning it to the water.

**4. General:**

- a. Publicize the provisions of the Resolutions, particularly the requirement to promptly release unharmed, to the extent practicable, all sea turtles, sharks, billfishes, rays, dorado and other non-target species.
- b. Encourage fishermen to develop and use techniques and equipment to facilitate the rapid and safe release of any such animals.
- c. For longline vessels, urge those governments with such vessels operating in the region to provide the required bycatch information as soon as possible.

**ACTIONS BY IATTC STAFF**

**1. Reduction of the incidental mortality of juvenile tunas:**

- a. Seek the necessary funds for the following future studies and research:
  - i. Develop technology for releasing juvenile tunas, particularly sorting grids.
  - ii. Apply technology for the identification of species and size composition in schools prior to setting, for example acoustic technology.

**2. Species of large pelagic fish of interest to the artisanal fishery, particularly dorado:**

- a. identify areas of high bycatches of these species, and verify the stability in time and space of any such areas.

**3. Billfish, sharks and rays:**

- a. Develop techniques and/or equipment to facilitate their release from the deck or from the net.
- b. Seek the necessary funds to carry out experiments to determine the survival rates of released billfish, sharks and rays.
- c. Define areas and periods in which any of these species are most likely to be caught.

**4. Sea turtles:**

- a. Study and formulate recommendations regarding modifications of the design of FADs to eliminate entanglement of sea turtles, particularly the use of webbing hanging below FADs.

**5. General:**

- a. For longline vessels, urge those governments with such vessels operating in the region to provide the required bycatch information as soon as possible.