

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

RESOLUTION ON YELLOWFIN TUNA

JUNE 1998

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, having responsibility for the scientific study of the tunas and tuna-like fishes of the eastern Pacific Ocean, 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 1996, excepting 1987, although no conservation programs were implemented, 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

Understanding that yellowfin tuna in the area west of the Commission's Yellowfin Regulatory Area (CYRA) (as defined in the resolution adopted by the Commission on May 17, 1962) and east of 150°W are of such a size that limiting the catches in that area is currently not necessary, and

Concludes that, if conditions warrant, a limitation on the catch of yellowfin tuna should be implemented during 1998.

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission therefore recommends to the High Contracting Parties that a quota of 210,000 metric tons be established for the 1998 calendar year on the total catch of yellowfin tuna from the CYRA, and that the Director be authorized to increase this limit by up to three successive increments of 15,000 metric tons each if he concludes from examination of available data that such increases will pose no substantial danger to the stocks, and

Finally recommends that all member states and other interested states work diligently to achieve the implementation of such a yellowfin conservation program for 1998.