

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

RESOLUTION ON YELLOWFIN TUNA

OCTOBER 1998

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, 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 its Resolution on the conservation of yellowfin tuna approved at the 61st meeting of the IATTC, and

Observing that the size of the purse-seine and baitboat fleet in the eastern Pacific Ocean has increased from an average capacity of about 105,000 metric tons during 1991-1995 to a capacity of about 145,000 metric tons during 1998, and that studies by the staff of the IATTC indicate that the maximum sustainable catch of yellowfin in the eastern Pacific Ocean can be realized with a purse-seine and baitboat fleet size of about 120,000 metric tons of capacity, and

Observing further that the average size of yellowfin in the catches has been decreasing since 1995, and that a decrease in the sizes of yellowfin caught during the late 1970s and early 1980s was accompanied by a decline in the catches of yellowfin during those years, and

Understanding that the yellowfin 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,

Notes that it may be necessary to limit the catch of yellowfin tuna in the CYRA during 1998, as provided for in the Resolution referred to in Paragraph 2 above.

The IATTC therefore recommends to the High Contracting Parties that, if a limitation on the catches of yellowfin in the CYRA is necessary before the end of 1998, it will take effect on a date to be determined by the Director of the IATTC. (The aforementioned date will henceforth be referred to as the "closure date," and the period beginning on the closure date and ending at midnight, December 31, 1998, will henceforth be referred to as the "restricted period.") This would be carried out as follows:

1. During the restricted period purse seiners with an observer from the On-Board Observer Program established under the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program aboard must refrain from fishing for yellowfin within the CYRA.
2. The landings of fish caught within the CYRA during the restricted period by any individual purse seiner with an observer aboard may include a maximum of 15 percent yellowfin (relative to its total catch of all species of fish during that period) caught while fishing for other species of tunas.
3. Vessels with an observer aboard which are at sea on December 31, 1998, will not be subject to the 15-percent maximum after that date during the remainder of that trip.
4. Purse-seine vessels and baitboats without an observer aboard which are at sea on the closure date may continue to fish for yellowfin without restriction until they return to port for unloading.
5. Purse-seine vessels and baitboats without an observer aboard which are not at sea on the closure date, but which depart from port to fish for tunas during the restricted period, must refrain from fishing for yellowfin. The landings of vessels in this category, regardless of the date the trip is

completed, may include a maximum of 15-percent yellowfin caught while fishing for other species of tunas.

The IATTC finally recommends that all member states and other interested states work diligently to achieve the implementation of this yellowfin conservation program for 1998.