

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
RESOLUTION ON FLEET CAPACITY

October 1998

1. *The High Contracting Parties to the Commission:*

Seeking to address the potential problem of excess capacity in the tuna purse-seine fleet operating in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) by limiting such capacity to a level which, when viewed in relation to other agreed management measures and projected and actual catch levels, will ensure that tuna fisheries in the region are conducted at a sustainable level:

Welcome the commitment by states (both members and non-members of the IATTC) with vessels licensed to fish for tuna in the EPO or with significant installed processing capacity in the region as of June 12, 1998, to move towards this level of fishing capacity by regulating the size of their fleets fishing in the EPO during calendar year 1999 in accordance with the limits set forth below. The limit established for each state takes into account various factors including: the catch of national fleets during the period 1985-1998; the amount of catch historically taken within the zones where each state exercises sovereignty or national jurisdiction; the landings of tuna in each nation; the contribution of each state to the IATTC conservation program; including the reduction of dolphin mortality; and other factors.

	Carrying capacity (metric tons)
Belize	1,877
Colombia	6,608
Costa Rica	6,000
Ecuador	32,203
El Salvador	1,700
Honduras	499
Mexico	49,500
Nicaragua	2,000
Panama	3,500
Spain	7,885
United States	8,969
Vanuatu	12,121
Venezuela	25,975

2. The capacity levels established above shall not apply to a limit of 32 United States vessels authorized and licensed to fish in other areas of the Pacific Ocean under an alternative international fisheries management regime, and that may occasionally fish to the east of 150 degrees west longitude, provided that: a) the fishing activity of any such vessels in the EPO is limited to a single trip not to exceed 90 days in one calendar year; b) the vessels do not possess a Dolphin Mortality Limit; and c) the vessels carry an approved observer. A similar exception shall be considered for vessels from other countries with a similar record of participation in the EPO tuna purse-seine fishery and that meet the criteria listed above.
3. The High Contracting Parties also acknowledge and affirm the right of several states without vessels currently fishing in the EPO, but with a longstanding and significant interest in the EPO tuna fishery, to develop their own tuna fishing industries. They further acknowledge that, in accordance with their legitimate rights under international law, several EPO coastal states, including France and Guatemala, have expressed an immediate interest in developing their own tuna fishing fleet in the EPO.

4. Other states, including Colombia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, and Peru, have expressed their interest in increasing the carrying capacity of their fleets licensed to fish for tuna in the EPO.
5. Any state listed in Paragraph 3 seeking to enter the fishery through the development of its own fishing fleet in the EPO shall not be bound to a national capacity level for calendar year 1999. Should the actual fishing capacity for new entrants approach 6,000 tons, the Commission would meet to consider immediate action in accordance with paragraph 6, below. Further decisions on establishing national capacity limits for any state that brings a new vessel or vessels into the fishery shall take into account the criteria established in paragraph 1 above and the state's right under international law.
6. The High Contracting Parties agree to review annually the level of actual fishing capacity in the EPO. The Parties agree to consider measures to ensure that fishing capacity corresponds to the level of fishing capacity described in paragraph I above. At such time as the actual level of fishing capacity approaches a level where the sustainability of the fisheries is of concern, the Parties agree to meet to consider immediate action to adjust capacity or to take other action to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries.

The High Contracting Parties agree to establish a permanent working group to review, on an annual basis, the capacity of the tuna purse seine fleet in the EPO and formulate additional recommendations for the consideration of the Commission.