

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
RESOLUTION ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF BIGEYE TUNA
IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

JULY 1999

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), having responsibility for the tunas and tuna-like fishes of the eastern Pacific Ocean (which for the purposes 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 having maintained since 1950 a continuing scientific program directed toward the study of these resources:

Recalling the Resolution adopted by the IATTC at its 61st Meeting regarding the conservation of bigeye tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Considering the information presented by the scientific staff of the IATTC in the documents on “Estimated Effects of Various Restrictions on the Fishery for Tunas in the Eastern Pacific Ocean” and on “Assessment of Bigeye Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean” and the Report of the Bycatch Working Group;

Concerned about the reduction in the average size of bigeye tuna caught by the purse-seine fishery in the EPO;

Reiterating the need to reduce the incidental catches of juvenile bigeye tuna in the purse-seine fishery in the EPO;

Reaffirming its commitment to the application of the precautionary approach, which establishes that lack of scientific evidence should not be used as a reason for not taking management measures for fisheries resources;

Recommends to the Parties and non-parties under whose jurisdiction vessels operate in the EPO that they:

1. Limit the catch of bigeye tuna taken in the purse-seine fishery in the EPO to 40,000 metric tons in 1999, this limit to be implemented by prohibiting sets on all types of floating objects at such time as the limit is reached;
2. Review the status of the bigeye tuna stock and consider further reductions of the catches of small bigeye tuna at the time of the meeting of the IATTC in October 1999, commensurate with the scientific advice of the IATTC staff;
3. Establish a scientific working group to carry out comprehensive research, in conjunction with the IATTC staff, to include, but not be limited to:
 - (a) an estimate of the natural mortality rate of bigeye tuna, and
 - (b) an assessment of the impact on the stock of bigeye tuna of catches by purse-seine vessels of less than 400 short tons carrying capacity and longline vessels;
4. Work diligently to implement this conservation program for bigeye tuna for 1999.

Requests the Director to establish a system for notifying all Parties and non-parties with vessels fishing in the EPO under their jurisdiction when three-quarters of the quota has been reached. The IATTC staff shall also notify all such Parties and non-parties at least two weeks in advance of the closure date of the fishery on floating objects, in order to provide sufficient time to ensure that the quota is not exceeded.