

## INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

### RESOLUTION FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CATCH LIMIT FOR YELLOWFIN TUNA IN 1999

10 October 1999

*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 63rd meeting of the IATTC, and

*Observing* that the size of the purse-seine and baitboat fleet in the eastern Pacific Ocean has increased considerably, 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* that currently the fishery for yellowfin tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean includes a variety of fishing gears and methods of operation which require the implementation of differentiated management systems adapted to this complexity, and

*Considering* that most of the indicators and the scientific information presented by the Director of the IATTC indicate that in general the fishery is at a level which can support maximum catches close to those presented at the 63<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the IATTC, however,

*Noting* that fishing for juvenile yellowfin has increased considerably during 1999, and that these small fish must be protected,

*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 1999, as provided for in the Resolution referred to in Paragraph 2 above, and

*Noting* that the resolution on bigeye tuna adopted at the 64<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IATTC limits the catch of bigeye tuna taken in the purse-seine fishery in the EPO to 40,000 metric tons in 1999 by prohibiting sets on all types of floating objects at such time as the limit is reached, and that the Director notified the 65<sup>th</sup> Meeting that that limit would be reached on November 8, 1999,

*The IATTC therefore recommends to the High Contracting Parties* that a limitation on the catches of yellowfin in the CYRA is necessary before the end of 1999, and will take effect on the date on which the total catch of yellowfin tuna from the CYRA in 1999 reaches 240,000 metric tons. (This date will henceforth be referred to as the "closure date," and the period beginning on the closure date and ending at midnight, December 31, 1999, will henceforth be referred to as the "restricted period.") Further, on the basis of the analysis of the most recent information, presented by the Director of the IATTC, the limitation may be implemented on a differential basis. The limitation would be implemented as follows:

1. Purse-seine vessels and baitboats must refrain from fishing for yellowfin tuna in the following areas of the CYRA (the "restricted areas") during the restricted period:
  - a. The area between the coast of Mexico and longitude 125°W north of latitude 23°N, and

- b. The area between the coast of South America and longitude 85°W from latitude 5°N to latitude 5°S.
2. As of December 2, 1999, or the date on which a catch of 265,000 metric tons of yellowfin tuna is reached in the CYRA, purse-seine vessels with an observer aboard from the On-Board Observer Program established under the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program must refrain from fishing for yellowfin in the CYRA.
3. The landings of fish caught in the restricted areas during the restricted period or in the entire CYRA after the date established in section 2 above 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 those periods) caught while fishing for other species of tunas.
4. Vessels with an observer aboard which are at sea on December 31, 1999, will not be subject to the 15-percent maximum after that date during the remainder of that trip.
5. 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.
6. 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 staff shall evaluate landings of small tuna during the period when this area closure is in effect in order to determine whether the actual reduction in catches of small yellowfin tuna is consistent with the expected reduction, and shall report on the results of that evaluation at the Meeting of the IATTC in June 2000.

The IATTC staff shall continue to review and study alternatives for reducing catches of small yellowfin tuna, including time and area closures, gear modifications, and other measures, and shall report on the results of this review at the Meeting of the IATTC in June 2000.

The Parties shall make all possible efforts to strengthen procedures for collecting data on catches and landings of yellowfin tuna.

*The IATTC finally recommends* that all member states and other interested states work diligently to achieve the implementation of this yellowfin conservation program for 1999.