

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

90TH MEETING

La Jolla, California (USA)

27 June-1 July 2016

RESOLUTION C-16-03

RESOLUTION ON PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in La Jolla, California (USA), on the occasion of its 90th Meeting:

Taking into account that the stock of Pacific bluefin tuna is caught in both the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) and the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Expressing concern that the latest stock assessment in 2016 by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) shows the following:

- The spawning stock biomass (SSB) declined steadily from 1996 to 2010
- The decline appears to have ceased since 2010, although the stock remains near historically low levels and is experiencing exploitation rates above all calculated biological reference points except F_{MED} and F_{loss} ;
- If the low recruitment of recent years continues, the risk of the SSB falling below its historically lowest observed level would increase; and
- Further reductions in fishing mortality, particularly of juveniles, would contribute to achieving the recovery objective, *i.e.*, rebuilding the SSB to the historical median by 2024 with a probability of at least 60%.

Recognizing that the 2012 stock assessment by the ISC showed that further reductions in fishing mortality and catch over the whole range of ages should be considered in both Commissions to reduce the risk of the SSB falling below its historically low level.

Recalling that Article VII, paragraph 1(c) of the Antigua Convention provides that the Commission shall “adopt measures that are based on the best scientific evidence available to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fish stocks covered by this Convention and to maintain or restore the populations of harvested species at levels of abundance which can produce the maximum sustainable yield...”;

Recognizing also that the impact of the fishery for Pacific bluefin tuna in the WCPO on SSB is proportionally much greater (84%) than in the EPO fisheries (16%), and that its rate of increase in recent years has also been comparatively much greater;

Affirming that it is necessary to adopt comparable, compatible, and rigorous management measures, taking into account the catch in the EPO and WCPO fisheries in both Commissions (IATTC and WCPFC) that have the responsibility and competence over this resource, in order to reduce the fishing mortality throughout its range and to ensure to the rebuilding of the stock;

Noting that, consistent with guidance from the 89th Meeting of the IATTC, the Chairman of the IATTC wrote to the Executive Director of the WCPFC on 1 December 2015, exhorting the WCPFC to consider at its annual meeting, among other things, working on the development of a coordinated rebuilding and management plan for the stock of Pacific bluefin tuna, and that the IATTC shall ask the WCPFC for a joint meeting with all interested parties after the stock assessment by the ISC in 2016, in order to adopt equivalent reference points;

Noting further that, in a 24 June 2016 communication from the Chairman of the Northern Committee

(NC) of the WCPFC to the Director of the IATTC, the NC Chairman proposed a joint IATTC/NC meeting on Pacific bluefin tuna management, and proposed further that it be held in conjunction with the next meeting of the NC (NC12) in Fukuoka, Japan, in August 2016; and

Acknowledging once again the importance for both Commissions taking complementary and effective measures to reduce the fishing mortality of Pacific bluefin tuna throughout the entire range of age classes, and the importance of moving forward with such a Joint IATTC/NC meeting on Pacific bluefin tuna management at the earliest time practicable;

Resolves as follows:

1. In order to review the current management measures, notably the initial rebuilding target, and to promote the objectives of rebuilding the Pacific bluefin stock and a long-term management framework for the stock and associated fisheries, CPCs shall coordinate with the WCPFC, through a series of joint meetings to occur at least annually, beginning with the first meeting in August 2016, and continuing until CPCs have accomplished the objectives.
2. The Director, on behalf of the Commission, shall respond to the communication from the Chairman of the NC, agreeing to an initial Joint IATTC/NC working group meeting, with the following comments concerning structure and objectives:
 - a. IATTC agrees to hold the joint meeting during NC12.
 - b. The joint meetings shall be co-chaired by one representative from the IATTC and NC, respectively.
 - c. Meetings shall be open to observers.
 - d. The outcomes of the meetings shall be directly reported to the NC and IATTC so they may be considered for adoption through IATTC Resolutions and WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures;
 - e. The objectives of the joint meetings are the following:
 - i. To review the current management measures and the initial rebuilding target, and discuss at this first joint meeting (i) the conduct of the meeting(s) under joint chairmanship; (ii) the respective roles and responsibilities of the ISC and the IATTC scientific staff, and ways to promote further cooperation between the two; and (iii) how future joint meetings will be held, including a commitment to holding the joint meeting on an annual basis.
 - ii. To reach agreement that the basin-wide rebuilding plan for Pacific bluefin and long-term management framework will be harmonized across the Pacific, and will be designed to return the population to a target reference point to be agreed.
 - iii. To reach agreement that the joint meeting shall develop advice for the two Commissions consistent with the objective that the IATTC and WCPFC are able to adopt harmonized management objectives with precautionary levels of risk; target and limit reference points that are based on best scientific practices and the best available science, the respective Convention mandates, and appropriate candidate harvest control rules that include pre-agreed management actions; and
 - iv. To reach agreement that the candidate harvest control rules will be tested through a Management Strategy Evaluation, and then a harmonized final harvest control rule will be proposed for adoption by the respective Commissions.