



September 9, 2025

Dear Council Members and Staff,

I have a few updates for you for the 204th Council Meeting:

State Department Representative to the Council: Due to recent staff departures at the State Department, the Office of Marine Conservation has reorganized some of its work to ensure coverage of all issues and to better align with regional expertise. Colin Brinkman will serve as the State Representative to the Pacific Fishery Management Council, due to his work with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and NOAA's West Coast Region. Rachel Ryan will serve as the State Representative to the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council due to her work with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, the South Pacific Tuna Treaty, broader Pacific Islands policy issues, and NOAA's Pacific Islands Regional Office.

Foreign Assistance Payment for South Pacific Tuna Treaty: On August 11, in a meeting with Pacific Island ambassadors, Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau announced the United States has released \$60 million in foreign assistance to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency FFA. This funding was provided pursuant to a 10-year Economic Assistance Agreement (EAA) signed in 2023 that is associated with the South Pacific Tuna Treaty. Delivering the Year 1 EAA payment demonstrates our ongoing cooperation with the Pacific Islands, and that continued partnership is critical to United States' economic and security interests. The foreign assistance provided will support fishery sector administration and management, maritime domain awareness, counter-illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing operations, and economic development in the Pacific Islands – all of which have positive impacts on U.S. fishing in the Pacific.

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Meeting: At its 103rd meeting September 1-5, 2025, the Commission adopted: 2026 IATTC budget that includes a line item to cover an integrated monitoring/sampling program that builds upon the Enhanced Monitoring Program; creation of an ad hoc joint working group with Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) to develop a harvest strategy for South Pacific Albacore

Tuna; creation of a working group to assess Dorado stocks; an amendment to the resolution on FADs to support recovery efforts of non-fishing FADs; and an extension of the tropical tuna measure. The latter contains an eight-day reduction in closure days and the inclusion of Regional Tuna Tracking Project (RTTP) and Integrated Port-Sampling Program (IPSP) to ensure enforcement of the Bigeye Tuna Individual Vessel limit, and gather data on landings from across IATTC fisheries, support a much-needed skipjack tuna stock assessment, as well as improve understanding of yellowfin and bigeye tuna stock structure. The RTTP will be funded by a one-time levy of \$6.16 per cubic meter on purse seine vessel capacity. The tropical tuna measure could remain in force as long as three years depending upon scientific advice with respect to the current measure over the next two years.

The U.S. also submitted a proposal to establish a High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) scheme but that was not adopted this year.

Other adopted proposals:

- EU proposal tasking the Secretariat with Reviewing in force Resolutions and data submission requirements and recommend revisions and simplifications to eliminate outdated or redundant requirements;
- Two-year rollover of the Silky Shark measure;
- Amendment to the Resolution on Vessel Capacity Loans and Chartering to codify the current practice of recording catch under such loans to the loaning CPC.

Sincerely,

Rachel Ryan
Office of Marine Conservation