

**INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
69TH MEETING
MANZANILLO (MEXICO) 26-28 JUN 2002**

RESOLUTION ON BYCATCH

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), meeting in Manzanillo (Mexico), on the occasion of its 69th Meeting:

Recalling and reaffirming the Resolutions on Bycatch adopted at the 66th and 68th Meetings of the Commission in June 2000 and June 2001;

Recognizing that a number of the objectives established in these resolutions have not been achieved;

Considering that many of these objectives can be achieved easily and with little expense;

Noting the recommendations of the 3rd meeting of the Working Group on Bycatch in March 2002;

Has agreed as follows:

1. To continue the program requiring the full retention and landing of tunas and the release, to the extent practicable, of non-target species, as described in those Resolutions, for two additional years, beginning January 1, 2003, with an annual review of the effect and effectiveness of this program so adjustments can be made if appropriate;
2. To urge the Parties to ensure that their respective fleets comply fully with the requirements of these resolutions and the guidelines for implementation prepared by the Commission staff;
3. Regarding the reduction of the incidental mortality of juvenile tunas:
 - a. To pursue the establishment of mechanisms for communicating information on areas of high concentration of juvenile tunas in real time within the fleet or parts of the fleet, taking account of the importance of ensuring confidentiality of such information;
 - b. To support, and seek the necessary funds for, the following future studies and research:
 1. Develop technology for releasing juvenile tunas, particularly sorting grids.
 2. Apply technology for the identification of species and size composition in schools prior to setting, for example acoustic technology.
4. Regarding sea turtles:
 - a. To encourage all the Parties to voluntarily provide the Commission with all data on incidental catches of sea turtles in all fisheries, mainly those for tunas, recognizing that a comprehensive approach is necessary to deal effectively with sea turtle issues;
 - b. To encourage FAO to address the conservation and management of sea turtles, including the issue of bycatches of sea turtles as part of such a comprehensive approach;
 - c. To fully enforce the requirements of the resolutions regarding releasing captured sea turtles;
 - d. That all cases of non-compliance be addressed by the Permanent Working Group on Compliance, and that the Parties apply suitably severe sanctions in such cases to ensure effective compliance;
 - e. To implement the following actions:

1. Publicize the requirement to release turtles and the other provisions of the Resolutions.
 2. Train crews of tuna purse-seine vessels, particularly those without observers, in techniques for handling turtles to improve survival after release, and encourage States to take similar actions for other tuna fisheries.
 3. To study and formulate recommendations regarding modifications of the design of FADs to eliminate entanglement of sea turtles, particularly the use of webbing hanging below FADs.
 4. To prohibit tuna-fishing vessels disposing of salt bags or any other type of plastic trash at sea.
 5. To encourage the release, when practicable, of sea turtles entangled in FADs.
 6. To foster the recovery of FADs when they are not being used in the fishery.
5. To implement the following actions regarding billfish, sharks and rays to further the objectives of the resolution on bycatch of June 2000:
1. Publicize the requirement to release sharks, billfishes and rays, and develop techniques and/or equipment to facilitate the release of these species from the deck or from the net.
 2. Seek the necessary funds to carry out experiments to determine the survival rates of released billfish, sharks and rays.
 3. Define areas and periods in which any of these species are most likely to be caught.
 4. Encourage all Parties, as well as States and fishing entities with vessels fishing for tunas and tuna-like species in the eastern Pacific Ocean, to adopt similar measures, as appropriate.
6. Regarding other species of large pelagic fish of interest to the artisanal fishery, particularly mahi mahi, to identify areas of high bycatches of these species, and verify the stability in time and space of any such areas.
7. Regarding bycatches by vessels not already covered by programs to obtain information on such by-catches implemented in accordance with the resolution of June 2000, to pursue actions to obtain such information.
8. For longline vessels, to urge those governments with such vessels operating in the region to provide the required bycatch information as soon as possible.