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y la
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COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

Nineteenth Session

Nouméa, New Caledonia, 10-13 July 2001

AGENCY REPORT

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**Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
Fishery Statistics Program**

1 STATISTICS COMPILED AND PRINCIPAL USES

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), with headquarters in La Jolla, California, USA, was established in 1950. Since inception it has obtained and compiled statistics on fisheries in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) that can harvest tunas and tuna-like species, and the various species taken by these fisheries, as required to meet mandates for monitoring and management of fisheries. These statistics include data on vessel and gear configuration, skipper and navigator identification and performance, catches, landings, imports/exports, biological data, and various other statistics for ad hoc studies as required.

Sources of information include fishing vessels, canners and fish processors, transshipping agencies, import/export companies, customs agencies, and various other government and fisheries agencies. To obtain these data, the IATTC maintains a series of field stations at major tuna fishing ports along the Pacific coast of the Americas, as well as in Puerto Rico, USA. In addition to daily monitoring of the activities at its field station locations, the staff travel frequently to obtain information on fisheries at ports with lower levels of activity and landings. In addition, the IATTC obtains data from its scientific observer program, and it has assisted in the design and implementation of national observer programs of various countries participating in fisheries under the purview of the IATTC, from which it also obtains data.

The IATTC developed and maintains logbook programs for purse seine, pole and line, longline and more recently, gillnet vessels. Some nations participating in the fisheries of the EPO have over time adopted national logbook programs, and when data obtained by those programs are sufficient, the IATTC obtains information directly from those logbooks rather than requesting that vessels maintain two or more fishing logbooks.

In some instances, information from national logbook and statistics programs has been obtained in requested formats. This has been the case for summarized longline fishing catch and effort data (one degree latitude by one degree longitude by month by gear configuration) for longline fisheries of Japan and the United States of America.

2 MODIFICATIONS TO DATA HANDLING SYSTEMS

Since CWP 18 the IATTC has undertaken a complete restructuring of its major database and information systems. This has involved moving from a mainframe data processing system to a PC-based system using SQL as the principal database engine.

The principal intent of this major undertaking was to integrate the information from the various scientific and information systems used to monitor and develop recommendations for management action into a single system in such a way as to simplify identification and use of the best available data and analysis techniques. The initial design phase was completed in 1999.

Data tables and supporting programs have been developed for information collected by on-board scientific observers. The tables for biological, logbook and landing data have been developed, and supporting programs are expected to be completed by about September 2001. Integration is expected to be complete shortly thereafter. Remaining to be accomplished will be modification and/or development of application programs for standard reporting of fisheries statistics.

3 RESOLUTIONS OF THE IATTC AND ACTIONS MODIFYING STATISTICS ACQUISITION AND COMPILATION

- Vessel Register

At its annual meeting in June, 2000, the IATTC established a vessel registry. Parties to the IATTC are to provide information on those vessels under their jurisdiction that are authorized to fish in the Convention Area for species under the purview of the IATTC. Information included for each vessel include: name, previous name (if known), registration number, port of registry, photograph showing registration number, previous flag (if any), international radio call sign, name and address of registered owner(s), when and where built, length, depth, beam, fish hold capacity in cubic meters, and carrying capacity in metric tons, name and address of operator(s)/manager(s), type of fishing method or methods, gross tonnage, power of main engines. Mechanisms have been established to validate the information provided by the Parties as required. Parties are required to notify the IATTC of any changes in the list of authorized vessels.

In addition to the registry, the IATTC maintains a list of vessels found to be operating in the Convention Area but which are not authorized to fish therein (i.e. are not on the registry).

- IUU Fishing

There are in place regulations concerning the taking of tunas in association with dolphins in the EPO. The IATTC and other Parties to the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) have requested the IATTC Secretariat compile a list of purse seine vessels, based on observer reports and other available sources, that are identified to be operating in the Convention Area but not under the jurisdiction of one of the parties or not under the jurisdiction of a non-Party that is cooperating by carrying on board an observer from the On-Board Observer Program. Action is taken by the Secretariat following identification of such vessels, beginning with contacting the flag state regarding the vessel, and in particular requesting that the flag state provide information regarding whether the vessel is authorized by the flag state to engage in fishing activities in the Agreement Area and, if so, whether the flag state is prepared and able to apply the relevant provisions of the Agreement with respect to the operation of the vessel in question, including the placement of an observer from the On-Board Observer Program.

The IATTC promulgates management actions restricting fishing activities in the EPO for conservation of fisheries resources. These restrictions generally apply to vessels operating purse seine gear. In response to these, or any other, restrictions the IATTC provides analyses of fishing activities of vessels to the Parties for their consideration and action when potential violations of restrictions have been identified. Results of ensuing investigations and any actions taken by the Parties are reported to the IATTC.

There are currently no restrictions adopted by the IATTC on fishing by longline or pole and line gear in the EPO.

- Market and Trade Statistics

- Tuna Tracking System and the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Label

Restrictions placed on purse seine fisheries under the AIDCP created a need to monitor the disposition of tuna from its capture to its retail sale. To achieve this

the Tuna Tracking system was established. The sole purpose of this system is to enable dolphin safe tuna to be distinguished from non-dolphin safe tuna from the time it is caught to the time it is ready for retail sale. This system is based on the premise that dolphin safe tuna shall, from the time of capture, during unloading, storage, transfer, and processing, be kept separate from non-dolphin safe tuna. To this end the system is based on a Tuna Tracking Form (TTF) and additional verification procedures described in the *AIDCP Revised System for Tracking and Verifying Tuna* (June 2000) or developed by individual Parties for use within their respective territories. AIDCP Dolphin Safe Certificates may be issued in accordance with the guidelines in the *Resolution to Establish Procedures for AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification*.

The IATTC will be required to maintain a TTF and Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification data and support system and to provide oversight and review of the Tuna Tracking Program through its International Review Panel.

- Import/Export Data

The current and proposed funding mechanisms for the IATTC require information on the location of final processing (e.g. canning, or gilled and gutted for fresh fish market) for retail sale of catches from the EPO of species under the purview of the IATTC. Recent changes in the membership of the IATTC, ongoing work of the committee to develop a new Convention which would provide a mechanism for adherence by non-States which have regulatory responsibility for fisheries (e.g. the European Union), changes in marketing and delivery systems of processing companies, and the requirement for transparency in statistics has recently made the acquisition of detailed trade statistics of increased importance.

In addition, the development of artisanal fisheries that may make significant catches of some species and that generally provide fish to the global fresh fish market has led to a need for detailed trade statistics for use in estimation of total catch by species. This is particularly true for billfishes and other species which are generally marketed through these fresh/frozen fish markets.

The IATTC has identified problems obtaining from some national statistical programs the detailed data required to estimate total catches and to track catches from origin (Convention areas of the regional bodies, or even ocean) to processing location. In some cases, detailed statistics are not compiled by government bodies, in some, previously detailed statistics on catches are no longer available due to reductions in funding or changes in priorities or personnel. In other cases it appears that only a fraction of the total catches made by these fisheries are being captured in the trade statistics readily available to fisheries management agencies, and the sources for these are generally private companies compiling information for industry.

4 BIOLOGICAL DATA COLLECTION AND ESTIMATION OF TOTAL CATCH BY SPECIES

During the recent three to four years there has been an increase in fishing of purse seine gear around fish aggregating devices, with a resulting increase in the captures of small bigeye tunas and non-target species. This development resulted in a need for the IATTC to develop a system to estimate the species composition of these fish in mixed species landings. As well, regulations adopted to limit the catch of small bigeye resulted in an additional requirement to monitor

unloadings of small purse seine vessels, those operating without on-board observers, and to sample their catches. While these vessels are normally monitored and sampled at major ports as required to meet the sample design for estimation of catches by area and time, this requirement caused the IATTC to send staff on short notice to ports throughout the region to monitor unloadings which normally would not have been sampled.

The revised program for obtaining size data from catches and for estimating total catch by species requires monitoring of complete unloadings of wells of seiners, identifying all fish to species, as well as obtaining length measurements on sub-samples of the unloadings.

5 BYCATCH AND DISCARDS OF NON-TARGET AND PROTECTED SPECIES

The IATTC has adopted by resolution steps to monitor and reduce the catch and mortality of non-target and protected species. As part of this action, for the year beginning on January 1, 2001, there is in place a requirement to retain all catches on board and to monitor their disposition on return to port. Vessels are required to take steps to release non-target species, including billfishes, sharks, turtles, mahi-mahi, etc, to the extent possible. Investigations in new technologies to reduce catch of non-target species are also being undertaken.

Data on discards are regularly published in various reports and scientific publications.

6 SATELLITE BASED VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM FOR IATTC AND AIDCP PARTIES

The IATTC Permanent Working Group on Compliance has proposed consideration of a requirement for vessels fishing in the Convention Area for species under the purview of the IATTC to operate under a VMS system. A plan for evaluation of various types of available systems and an implementation plan have been developed.

7 DATA RELEASE AND ACCESS, ARRANGEMENTS, AND POLICIES

The IATTC considers public domain data to be that data from which the operations of individual companies and/or vessels may not be identified. For purposes of providing catch and effort data in a format which reveals the intellectual property of those providing detailed fishing data to the IATTC, these data are considered in the public domain at the resolution of 5 degree latitude by 5 degree longitude by quarter. It is the practice of the IATTC to consider providing data at finer resolution to scientists and investigators for research purposes on application to the Director of the IATTC including in the request information on such as the exact nature of the data requested, the purposes to which it will be put, and any other relevant information. Data has generally been provided on condition that it not be transmitted to others or retained after completion of any analyses for which the use of the data was authorized by the IATTC, and with a consideration that the IATTC have the opportunity to review any reports or articles developed so that it may be ensured that the data were used appropriately and adequate to the purposes for which its use was intended.

On completion of the restructuring and transfer of data to the new system, and on completion of a detailed review of extant application programs for developing the statistics disseminated by IATTC, revised statistics in the public domain will be made available for the period beginning in the 1950s to the present. Catch and landings statistics will be provided in FishStatPlus data file format, as will copies of regular reports (e.g. annual and quarterly), data reports, and scientific bulletins.

Previously it has not been the practice of the IATTC to raise catch and effort statistics by region to total catch. Agreement has been reached with the SPC that the IATTC and the SPC will provide raised statistics by area for the Pacific Ocean for data in the public domain. The IATTC has yet to determine the best method for estimating such statistics, but until that determination has been made, the logged catch and effort data for purse seine and pole and line vessels which is currently available in the public domain will be made available on line.

By resolution of the Parties in 2001, all data collected by the IATTC from the On-Board Observer Program or in connection with the *AIDCP Dolphin Safe* Certification procedures, shall be made available to the government under whose jurisdiction the vessel operates.

Considering the requirements for States to maintain records of activities of vessels under their jurisdiction on the high seas, the IATTC is considering means to make the confidential logbook data obtained from vessels available to the governments under whose jurisdiction the vessels operate. Current requirements under the Rules of Procedure for the IATTC make dissemination of these data possible only on the authorization of the party(ies) providing the data to the IATTC.

The IATTC, in agreement with the IOTC, ICCAT and SPC will request that those desiring data from its programs access the information directly from IATTC sources, including but not limited to its website distribution when available. It will ask that other agencies and interested parties post links to the IATTC website to direct those interested to the data source. The IATTC in turn will post links to the websites of ICCAT, IOTC, SPC and FAO to direct interested parties to the original sources of data for other regions.

The IATTC has established a website (<http://www.iattc.org>) with English and Spanish versions. The site provides direct access to such as the annual background reports for Commission meetings, reports on the fishery and statistics, stock assessments, and the resolutions of the IATTC and the AIDCP. The vessel registry will be posted, but at this time access is available only to the Parties.