

Eastern Pacific Ocean tuna – purse seine (Marpesca) FIP Position Statement for the 2023 IATTC Annual Meeting

Drafted with agreement from all Eastern Pacific Ocean tuna – purse seine (Marpesca)
FIP Participants – July 2023

The submission of this position statement is regarding the Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) currently being undertaken by the Eastern Pacific purse seine tuna Fishery. The fishery targets bigeye (*T. obesus*), yellowfin (*T. albacares*) and skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*). The pelagic purse seine vessels are flagged to Ecuador, Nicaragua and Panama and fish on the high seas in the Eastern Pacific. The fishery is managed regionally by the Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO). Further details can be found here: [Eastern Pacific Ocean tuna - purse seine \(Marpesca\) | Fishery Progress](#)

This FIP aims to meet the rising global demand for tuna in a sustainable manner by assuring catches do not exceed sustainable levels, promoting the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and strengthening policy and governance systems in the region. The end goal is to achieve certification under the [Marine Stewardship Council](#) Fisheries Standard by 2025.

As part of this FIP reaching MSC certification there are various actions that need to be undertaken that involve a range of different stakeholders. To ensure the FIP meets these objectives we need the support of the IATTC and urge action at the IATTC annual meeting this year on multiple topics laid out in this position statement.

Eastern Pacific Ocean tuna – purse seine (Marpesca) FIP strongly urges the IATTC and its member states to ensure the IATTC acts in August at the Annual Meeting of the IATTC Commission to:

1. Compliance Processes

- Establish a work plan with timelines to further strengthen the Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures' procedures and outcomes, including developing by 2024 a hierarchy of infractions and a scheme of responses to improve compliance.

2. Effective Management Procedures (Harvest Strategies)

- Adopt interim reference points for skipjack tuna.
- Establish and convene a scientist-manager dialogue group to advance management procedures for other tuna stocks.

3. FAD Management

- Require fully non-entangling fish aggregating device (FAD) designs without netting or meshed materials.
- Adopt the definition of "biodegradable" proposed by the FAD Working Group and establish a timeline for transition to 100% biodegradable FADs.

4. Tuna Stock Conservation

- Ensure all CPCs implement Resolution C-21-04 fully so that the fishing mortality for bigeye and yellowfin does not exceed the average fishing mortality during 2017-2019.

5. Bycatch Mitigation & Shark Protections

- Amend Resolution C-05-03 to require that all retained sharks be landed with fins naturally attached without exceptions.
- Amend Resolution C-11-02 to include updated seabird mitigation options (e.g., hook shielding devices), including harmonization with IOTC and WCPFC.

6. Electronic Monitoring and Reporting & Observer Coverage

- Endorse the recommendations of the IATTC Staff on Electronic Monitoring (EM).

- Establish a fleet-wide observer program (human or electronic or a combination) for class 1-5 purse seine vessels.

If the above-mentioned are addressed effectively it will have positive long term-sustainability implications and improve the overall health of the Eastern Pacific marine ecosystem to allow for fisheries like our current FIP to achieve sustainability targets, particularly in line with MSC certification.

Signed on behalf of the Eastern Pacific Ocean tuna – purse seine (Marpesca) FIP

July 2023