

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
COMISIÓN INTERAMERICANA DEL ATÚN TROPICAL

70^a REUNION - 70TH MEETING

ANTIGUA (GUATEMALA)
26-28 JUN 2003

RECOMMENDATION C-03-10

RECOMMENDATION ON SEA TURTLES

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), meeting in Antigua, Guatemala, on the occasion of its 70th Meeting:

Recalling the Resolutions on bycatch adopted at the 66th, 68th and 69th Meetings of the Commission;

Noting the need to improve the collection of scientific data regarding all causes of mortality of sea turtles, including but not limited to, data from fisheries in the eastern Pacific Ocean;

Being aware that the 25th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries agreed to hold a Technical Consultation on conservation of sea turtles in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2004;

In order to further the objectives and provisions of the IATTC Resolution on Bycatch;

Recommends that:

1. The IATTC should encourage Contracting Parties, as well as States, fishing entities and regional economic integration organizations operating fishing activities in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) to collect, and provide to the IATTC, all available information on interactions with sea turtles in the EPO, including both incidental and direct catches and other impacts on sea turtle populations.
2. The IATTC should develop measures to require the release of sea turtles that are incidentally caught alive by all gear types, and share all available information such as technical measures to reduce the incidental catch of sea turtles and to ensure the safe handling of all turtles that are captured, in order to improve their survivability.
3. The IATTC should review the available information on the current status of sea turtle conservation including both incidental and direct catches, their impact on the population and other factors affecting the mortality of sea turtles.
4. Taking due account of the relation with sea turtle conservation efforts undertaken in other international organizations and agreements, the IATTC should explore the development of a three-year program that could include mitigation of sea turtle bycatch, biological research on sea turtles, improvement of fishing gears, industry education and other techniques to improve sea turtle conservation.
5. The IATTC should convene a meeting of the Bycatch Working Group to begin development of the three-year program contemplated in paragraph 4, as well as to identify, to the extent possible, the measures for improved fishing gears and techniques that may be implemented in the short term to mitigate sea turtle bycatch.