

Pacific Ocean tropical tuna - purse seine (US Pacific Tuna Group) FIP update

A new workplan was created by the new FIP lead, Key Traceability, to take into account the MSC certification, the UoAs that didn't enter assessment, the P3 scope extension and the conditions raised at the assessment.

Please see the latest MSC Certification documents available here:

<https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/us-pacific-tuna-group-purse-seine-fsc-and-fad-set-fishery/@@view>

1.1 - Stock Status – EPO Yellowfin	
<p>Task: Support further review of Stock Status, HCRs and Interim Reference Points through advocacy efforts including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of position statements and letters to IATTC, USG, other national governments and flag state delegations. Position statements to be aligned with ISSF, WWF and over-lapping FIP's with similar UoA's. Joint position statements may be submitted in some cases. • Other lobbying efforts aligned with others including the USG and overlapping FIP's. 	
<p>June 2022 Evidence/ Update</p>	<p>June 2022 Evidence Further to the upcoming IATTC Annual meeting in July 2022, the FIP is submitting the position statement to the RFMO and flag states with our groups asks and needs.</p> <p>KT will be present at the upcoming meeting as an observer.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IATTC Position Statement

1.2 - Harvest Strategies - Western Pacific yellowfin, skipjack and bigeye and Eastern Pacific yellowfin, skipjack and bigeye	
<p>Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USPTG support and advocacy will largely be through active participation in WCPFC meetings as part of the US delegations. Such participation will include communicating specific desired policies to support meeting this condition. Other lobbying efforts aligned with others including the USG and overlapping FIP's. • USPTG through NOAA/NFMS delegation will also advocate and support these conditions being met through active participation in PNA, FFA and WCPFC initiatives/proposals regarding the harvest strategies. • USPTG will seek opportunities to co-sign joint letters to WCPFC that advocate for a robust harvest strategy for skipjack, yellowfin, and bigeye tuna. For example, those organized in the past by the NGO Tuna Forum. • USPTG through NOAA/NFMS to work with the other PNA parties, FFA parties to have the sub-regional and regional workplan progressed. • UPSTG to meet during WCPFC Regular Sessions and other relevant meetings with MSC representatives and overlapping fisheries sharing the same conditions to discuss opportunities to a harmonised approach to activities to address Principle 1 conditions, for example as had been organized previously by the WCPO Tuna MSC Alignment Group. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NFMS/NOAA to inform of its country level workplan to Scientific Committee (SC) and Technical Compliance Committee (TCC). And work with the sub-regional groups to make recommendations. Progress of these actions to meet the condition will be shown to the CAB during the year 1 surveillance audit. Evidence/minutes of meetings attended, and their expected March 2022 outcomes will be collected, as will any advocacy work completed through ministry or NGO routes during the year. These will be presented by USPTG to the CAB during the audit. Actions are expected to improve the performance of the UoA by achieving a responsive harvest strategy to ensure cohesive management of the stock around MSY. 	
<p>June 2022 Evidence/ Update</p>	<p>June 2022 Evidence</p> <p>Further to the upcoming IATTC Annual meeting in July 2022, the FIP is submitting the position statement to the RFMO and flag states with our groups asks and needs. KT will be present at the upcoming meeting as an observer.</p> <p>In response to the IATTCs new interim stock assessment of skipjack, KT has drafted an assessment against this new scoring and it now meets the Harvest strategy PI, therefore closing out this action for EPO Skipjack.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IATTC Position Statement P1 update to the pre-assessment and scoping document of EPO skipjack tuna against the Marine Stewardship Council Fisheries Standard

<p>1.3 Harvest Control Rules - Western Pacific yellowfin, skipjack and bigeye, Eastern Pacific yellowfin, skipjack and bigeye</p>	
<p>Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advocate that the WCPFC staff: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain a SKJ stock assessment to help adopt SKJ Harvest Control Rules that includes management action responses for changes in stock status aimed at maintaining the stock. Reference points in place that trigger management actions. Establish a better understanding of the effect of controlling exploitation in order to establish well-defined robust HCRs for Yellowfin and Bigeye and define the appropriate YF exploitation levels. The UoA fishery supports the timely adoption by the WCPFC of Harvest Control Rules that are consistent with the MSC requirements. Coordinate position and advocacy letters with TUNACONS and OPAGAC FIPs 	
<p>June 2022 Evidence/ Update</p>	<p>June 2022 Evidence</p> <p>Further to the upcoming IATTC Annual meeting in July 2022, the FIP is submitting the position statement to the RFMO and flag states with our groups asks and needs. KT will be present at the upcoming meeting as an observer.</p> <p>In response to the IATTCs new interim stock assessment of skipjack, KT has drafted an assessment against this new scoring and it now meets the Harvest strategy PI, therefore closing out this action for EPO Skipjack.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IATTC Position Statement P1 update to the pre-assessment and scoping document of EPO skipjack tuna against the Marine Stewardship Council Fisheries Standard

2.1 Primary Species Outcome – Bigeye Tuna

Task:

- USPTG will consult with NFMS/NOAA to formulate a plan to ensure that EPO bigeye tuna is highly likely to be above the PRI, or if bigeye tuna is below the PRI.
- Refer to available stock assessments to determine whether main and minor primary species are above the PRI and the degree of confidence in this.
- Put in place appropriate management measures to ensure that the fishery (and other MSC fisheries where applicable) do not hinder the recovery of any species below the PRI (whether main or minor). This could include reduced exploitation levels (through licensing, quota or effort restrictions), gear modifications, seasonal or area closures to limit operations in the EPO to bring the total catch of EPO BET to <5% of the total EPO UoA catch?
- Introduce a system of on-going periodic recording of catch profiling, plus any other data gathering as required.

June 2022 Evidence/ Update

June 2022 Evidence

Further to the upcoming IATTC Annual meeting in July 2022, the FIP is submitting the position statement to the RFMO and flag states with our groups asks and needs.

KT will be present at the upcoming meeting as an observer.

These tasks are new based on the conditions the fishery received in the MSC assessment (8 June 2022) and the group will now work on these tasks.

Evidence:

- **IATTC Position Statement**
- **MSC Certification -**
<https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/us-pacific-tuna-group-purse-seine-fsc-and-fad-set-fishery/@@view>

Action 2.2 - ETP species outcome, management, and information for WCPO and EPO Regions

Task:

- ~~Develop a comprehensive list of ETP species' DPSs and/or stocks that have interactions with the UoA, other MSC UoAs, and overlapping fisheries.~~
- ~~Disaggregate species interactions data to clarify the types of encounters (sightings vs interactions, onboard or in net), fate, including live release, and species mortalities.~~
- Conduct training for skippers and crew members about the importance of data collection and the proper procedures for data recording. ISSF best practice handling for ETP species should also be taught and adhered to ensure the survival of bycatch. Training on CMM 2019-05 and C-19-01 and C-15-04 requirements for WCPO and EPO, respectively.
- Support and advocate for new and updated stock assessments of relevant ETP species with fishery interactions.
- Develop a list and summary of relevant ETP species with national or international limits, protection, or management strategies.
- Support and advocate for the development and implementation of robust bycatch and FAD management strategies that contribute to the recovery of ETP stocks. Implement procedures and protocols following the regulations of the CMM 2019-05 for WCPO and C-19-01 and C-15-04 for EPO.
- Develop, adopt, and implement a comprehensive ETP bycatch policy and best practices based on the best available science and ISSF guidance, including further mitigation efforts for Silky and Oceanic White Tip sharks.
- Identify and describe any changes in ETP species catches and interactions by the UoA fishery due to changes in fishing. operation and fishing locations (for example high seas fishing and fishing on the 150-degree line of EPO).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a review of the results after a year of the new management methods (CMM 2019-05, C-15-04, and C-19-01) have been implemented to understand if they are effective at reducing the number of interactions with ETP species. • Update the regulations and measures, if necessary, where they are deemed to be ineffective during the annual review. • Provide evidence that some quantitative information is adequate to assess the UoA related mortality and impact to determine if the UoA will provide a mortal threat to the protection and recovery of ETP species. 	
<p>June 2022 Evidence/ Update</p>	<p>June 2022 Evidence</p> <p>A comprehensive list of ETP species the fishery interacts with is collated through the MSC assessment, this is split up by categorisation.</p> <p>The skippers were planning on attending the postponed ISSF Skipper Training in July 2022 and will attend a rescheduled event hosted in the Pacific Islands in 2022.</p> <p>To address the ETP noted issues, the group is working on adopting the ETP Strategy after consultation with fishers and stakeholders. The ETP Policy has been agreed and will be adhered to on board vessels.</p> <p>These tasks are new based on the conditions the fishery received in the MSC assessment (8 June 2022) and the group will now work on these tasks.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSC Certification - https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/us-pacific-tuna-group-purse-seine-fsc-and-fad-set-fishery/@@view • ISSF Skipper Training – Postponed • ETP Policy • Draft ETP Mangement Strategy

2.3 - Habitats and Ecosystem Outcome, Management, and Information WCPO and EPO regions

Task:

- The two RFMOs support and advocate for the continued collection of data to better understand and detect any increase in risk levels from FADs on VMEs and sensitive habitats.
- Design a logbook and data collection system to quantify the number of lost or abandoned FADs, their fate, and location. Data should also include an estimate of the number of FADs that are transferred or retrieved. The data should also record the materials used in the FAD construction and highlight where there are entangling/plastic-based materials.
- Participate in voluntary programs to track FAD status and to retrieve lost, abandoned, or derelict FADs, at sea or on land. Initiate a database of onshore landings of derelict FADs, damaged gears, and plastic materials.
- Support and advocate for research on FAD impacts and the effectiveness of existing partial strategies including limits on the number of active FADs deployed or FAD sets. Existing and proposed limits are arbitrary and should be based on the best available science.
- Hold a meeting with all interested parties and stakeholders to discuss and establish a plan for investigating the impact of lost FADs on the structure and function of VMEs. Develop a work plan using the information discussed in the meeting to highlight the specific areas that need to be addressed. Collaborate with other FIPs and FAD fisheries seeking MSC certification to produce broader surveys and studies on the impacts of FADs on VMEs and sensitive habitats.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct and coordinate research on the use of non-entangling and biodegradable materials in the construction of FADs • Summarise the activities and analyses since the implementation of the FAD management plan to highlight the information collected from the FAD tracking task • Encourage the progress and priority of WCPFC’s current five-year strategic research plan and data collection to monitor and assess the WCPO’s pelagic ecosystems, and the evaluation of potential management options. • Support and advocate for IATTC developing a five-year strategic research plan to incorporate and prioritize several ecosystem components and improve the integration of existing research programs and catch trophic levels for three purse-seine fishing methods that are being monitored as a proxy of ecosystem integrity. • Using the information collated from the RFMOs, write a report about its adequacy in identifying the main impacts of the UoA on the main habitats, ensuring it is reliable. • Collaborate and share information on best practices for FAD management with overlapping FIPs and other FAD fisheries seeking MSC certification and ensure it is being adhered to within the fishery. • Develop and adopt a comprehensive and auditable FAD management plan and code of best practices for the UoA based on the best available science and guidance, including a formal FAD recovery, transfer, and sharing strategy for the UoA fleet and other FAD fisheries in the Pacific. 	
<p>June 2022 Evidence/ Update</p>	<p>June 2022 Evidence</p> <p>This updated action, based on the conditions the fishery received in the MSC assessment (8 June 2022), builds on existing actions and the group will now work on these.</p> <p>The group has joined the WCPFC Non-entangling and Biodegradable FAD trial (WCPFC project 110), led by SPC, but for which ISSF is a partner (and co-founder with EU and the US). The project is starting now and should run until end of 2024.</p> <p>The group is working alongside ISSF to reduce the impact the fishery has on mobulid species by being able to safely and quickly remove any bycaught on the deck.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email from SPC regarding FAD project • ISSF Mobulids project • MSC Certification - https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/us-pacific-tuna-group-purse-seine-fsc-and-fad-set-fishery/@@view

3.1 Legal and customary framework for Ecuador	
<p>Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1a: Conduct a review of the fishery dispute mechanisms of Ecuador with input from relevant stakeholders and produce a report of findings. Any new information found will be used to update this workplan, as necessary. • 3.1b: Conduct a review of customary fishery rights of Ecuador with input from relevant stakeholders and produce a report of findings. Any new information found will be used to update this workplan, as necessary. • 3.1c: Hold regular stakeholder meetings to develop dispute mechanisms where absent. Minutes should be kept of each meeting, topics discussed, outcomes, and appropriate timelines for implementation. • 3.1d: Hold regular stakeholder meetings to develop a mechanism to integrate and observe customary rights into the management system where absent. Minutes should be kept of each meeting, topics discussed, outcomes, and appropriate timelines for implementation. • 3.1e: Ensure appropriate transparent and effective dispute resolution is enshrined in legislation • 3.1f: Ensure appropriate dispute resolution and respect for rights is enshrined in legislation 	
<p>June 2022 Evidence/ Update</p>	<p>June 2022 Evidence</p> <p>In December 2021, a scope extension for the FIP was carried out to include two new management authorities. Ecuador and Nicaragua. These states came with their own Principle 3 issues and new actions were created.</p> <p>Introduction letters were drafted by the FIP to be sent to these authorities, with a hope of increasing engagement and transparency to hopefully improve the scoring.</p> <p>Additionally, the FIP has sent the IATTC position statement to these new flag states to help push their needs across all PIs.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IATTC Position Statement • Introduction letters to new flag states

3.2 Fishery-specific objectives for Ecuador and Nicaragua	
<p>Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.2a: Conduct a review of fishery-specific objectives of Ecuador and Nicaragua with input from relevant stakeholders and produce a report of findings. Any new information found will be used to update this workplan, as necessary. • 3.2b: Hold regular stakeholder meetings to develop fishery-specific objectives where absent. Minutes should be kept of each meeting, topics discussed, outcomes, and appropriate timelines for implementation. • 3.2c: Ensure appropriate transparent and effective fishery-specific objectives are enshrined in legislation through the development, agreement, and implementation of a fishery-specific management plan. • 3.2d: Periodically review the appropriateness of objectives to ensure that they are achieving the management aims. 	
<p>June 2022 Evidence/ Update</p>	<p>June 2022 Evidence</p> <p>In December 2021, a scope extension for the FIP was carried out to include two new management authorities. Ecuador and Nicaragua. These states came with their own Principle 3 issues and new actions were created.</p> <p>Introduction letters were drafted by the FIP to be sent to these authorities, with a hope of increasing engagement and transparency to hopefully improve the scoring.</p>

	<p>Additionally, the FIP has sent the IATTC position statement to these new flag states to help push their needs across all PIs.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IATTC Position Statement • Introduction letters to new flag states
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3.3 Decision-making processes for Ecuador and Nicaragua

Task:

- 3.3a: Conduct a review of the decision-making processes in Ecuador and Nicaragua to fully understand gaps identified in the pre-assessment.
- 3.3b: Define decision-making processes in the management plan.
- 3.3c: Hold consultations with relevant stakeholders to incorporate the above into decision-making processes. Multiple consultations may need to be held.
- 3.3d: Implement the decision-making process, ensuring stakeholders are consulted and informed (for example via email, website, formal report, etc.) best-available information (from RFMOs, research, etc.) and the precautionary approach are included.
- 3.3e: Review the efficacy of the decision-making process.

June 2022 Evidence/ Update

June 2022 Evidence

In December 2021, a scope extension for the FIP was carried out to include two new management authorities. Ecuador and Nicaragua. These states came with their own Principle 3 issues and new actions were created.

Introduction letters were drafted by the FIP to be sent to these authorities, with a hope of increasing engagement and transparency to hopefully improve the scoring.

Additionally, the FIP has sent the IATTC position statement to these new flag states to help push their needs across all PIs.

Evidence:

- **IATTC Position Statement**
- **Introduction letters to new flag states**

3.4 Compliance and enforcement for Ecuador and Nicaragua

Task:

- 3.4a: Review MCS systems in place in the fisheries.
- 3.4b: Develop a plan to combat the gaps identified in the national MCS systems based on the findings of the report.
- 3.4c: USPTG to meet with NFMS/NOAA to discuss this issue and formally request action to address this milestone.
- 3.4d: Hold consultations with relevant stakeholders to discuss implementation and potential adjustments to the plan. Meeting minutes should be produced after each consultation to allow topics, actions, opinions, difficulties, and progress to be recorded and monitored for all affected parties.
- 3.4d: Summary of activities undertaken by NFMS/NOAA on effecting this change in management to be documented and presented by NFMS/NOAA to the WCPFC TCC or Regular Session depending on appropriateness.
- 3.4e: Implement finalized plan where necessary, allocating the necessary resources to ensure successful employment of improved MCS system.
- 3.4f: Records of enforcement measures taken by NFMS/NOAA to be presented to the CAB and WCPFC TCC or Regular Session depending on appropriateness.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.4g: Review effectiveness of MCS system implemented and adjust where necessary. A report should be produced and supplied to stakeholders and consultations re-opened if necessary. 	
<p>June 2022 Evidence/ Update</p>	<p>June 2022 Evidence</p> <p>In December 2021, a scope extension for the FIP was carried out to include two new management authorities. Ecuador and Nicaragua. These states came with their own Principle 3 issues and new actions were created.</p> <p>Introduction letters were drafted by the FIP to be sent to these authorities, with a hope of increasing engagement and transparency to hopefully improve the scoring.</p> <p>Additionally, the FIP has sent the IATTC position statement to these new flag states to help push their needs across all PIs.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IATTC Position Statement Introduction letters to new flag states

3.5 Monitoring and management performance evaluation for Nicaragua

<p>Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5a: Review fishery-specific management processes currently in place. Ascertain whether these systems are subject to external review, the format, the areas already reviewed (tuna management plan, performance, decision-making, MCS, compliance to RFMO/international regulations, etc.), and the frequency to which these occur. 3.5b: Develop a plan to combat the gaps identified in the national fishery-specific systems based on the findings of the report. 3.5c: Hold consultations with relevant stakeholders to discuss implementation and potential adjustments to the plan. Meeting minutes should be produced after each consultation to allow topics, actions, opinions, difficulties, and progress to be recorded and monitored for all affected parties. 3.5d: Implement the finalized plan with binding commitment and requirements to undertake reviews where necessary, allocating the necessary resources to ensure regular external reviews from relevant bodies. 3.5e: Review effectiveness of review system implemented and adjust where necessary. A report should be produced and supplied to stakeholders and consultations re-opened if necessary. 	
<p>June 2022 Evidence/ Update</p>	<p>June 2022 Evidence</p> <p>In December 2021, a scope extension for the FIP was carried out to include two new management authorities. Ecuador and Nicaragua. These states came with their own Principle 3 issues and new actions were created.</p> <p>Introduction letters were drafted by the FIP to be sent to these authorities, with a hope of increasing engagement and transparency to hopefully improve the scoring.</p> <p>Additionally, the FIP has sent the IATTC position statement to these new flag states to help push their needs across all PIs.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IATTC Position Statement Introduction letters to new flag states

Historic Actions

Action 1. Healthy Stock Status - EPO Yellowfin	
<p>Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and advocate for the further review of stock status, HCRs, and interim reference points by the IATTC scientific staff. June 2020 Update: Position statement to be provide to IATTC prior to the annual general meeting in August 2021 	
<p>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</p>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the IATTC Commission meeting beginning August 23rd, 2021. The position statement advocated precautionary harvest strategies for all tuna species under IATTC jurisdiction:</p> <p>“We encourage IATTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) to expedite the process of adopting precautionary and ecosystem-based management measures, including biological reference points, harvest control rules, increased observer coverage, national management measures and monitoring efforts adequate to ensure harvest strategy objectives are being met for all tuna species under IATTC jurisdiction. As such, adopting a multi-year conservation measures and effective plan to reduce the fishing mortality of bigeye and yellowfin tunas is of high priority.”</p> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR’s.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IATTC Position Statement Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program

Note, the FIP coordinator has changed from Cary Gann to Tom Evans at Key Traceability. Additionally, a scope extension is has been included with new Principle 3 Management Authorities and to streamline the existing workplan.

Action 2. Harvest Strategies - EPO Skipjack	
<p>Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby and advocate for the IATTC to perform a stock assessment for EPO skipjack, establish target reference points and review the HCRs so specific management actions can be triggered as needed 	
<p>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</p>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the IATTC Commission meeting beginning August 23rd, 2021. See attached document. The position statement advocated for an update in the skipjack stock assessment as follows:</p> <p>“We support the IATTC staff and Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) recommendation to establish a triennial cycle of assessment and management for tropical tuna fisheries and call for an update in the skipjack tuna stock assessment to generate adequate information on the state of its condition.”</p> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR’s.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IATTC Position Statement Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program

Action 3. Harvest Strategies - EPO Yellowfin and Bigeye	
<p>Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the setting of science-based catch or effort limits for the purse seine fishery and other gear types. June 2020 update: This will be part of our advocacy efforts at the IATTC annual meetings in November. • Support the adoption by the IATTC of management measures that clearly identify the shares of the catch and/or effort that should go to the different gear types. June 2020 update: This will be part of our advocacy efforts at the IATTC meeting. • Encourage research and analysis by the IATTC scientific staff that can lead to scientifically-sound management and harvest strategy tools, if needed, which may include closure days and limits on the number of FADs deployed and FAD sets. • Support analysis and research by the IATTC staff to support the management objective of reducing the catch of juveniles. • Participate in research that can lead to more selective fishing (lower catches of juvenile yellowfin and bigeye. June 2020 update: Planned for 2021. • Support and advocate that the IATTC conduct a review of the harvest strategy, HCRs and reference points for Yellowfin and Bigeye 	
<p>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</p>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the IATTC Commission meeting beginning August 23rd, 2021. The position statement advocates for precautionary harvest strategies that address many of the Tasks described above including a review of the harvest strategy, HCRs and reference points for Yellowfin and Bigeye.</p> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IATTC Position Statement • Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program

Action 4. Harvest Control Rules - EPO Skipjack, Yellowfin and Bigeye

Task:

- Support the IATTC in their efforts to adopt Skipjack HCRs and to improve and better understand the HCRs for Yellowfin and Bigeye that trigger practical measures.
- Encourage analysis and research by the IATTC staff that will lead to scientifically-sound recommendations for HCRs and tools including closure days, number of FADs deployed, number of FAD sets and area closures.
- Support the adoption of management measures that clearly define the shares of catch and/or effort that should be allocated to different gear types.
- Promote and encourage attendance and participation in harvest strategy capacity building workshops.

January 2022 Evidence/ Update:

The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the IATTC Commission meeting beginning August 23rd, 2021.

The position statement advocates for adopting precautionary and ecosystem-based management measures, including biological reference points, harvest control rules, increased observer coverage, national management measures and monitoring efforts adequate to ensure harvest strategy objectives are being met for all tuna species under IATTC jurisdiction

The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.

Evidence:

- **IATTC Position Statement**
- **Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program**

Action 5. Stock Status Assessment of all EPO Species	
Task:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and advocate for the IATTC scientific staff to develop alternative methods to better assess the EPO tuna stocks, particularly Skipjack due to its uncertainties. 	
January 2022 Evidence/ Update:	<p>See action section for June 2020 update including updated methods to determine stock status for EPO species.</p> <p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the IATTC Commission meeting beginning August 23rd, 2021. The position statement supported the IATTC staff and Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) recommendation to establish a triennial cycle of assessment and management for tropical tuna fisheries, and call for an update in the skipjack tuna stock assessment to generate adequate information on the state of its condition.</p> <p>An updated interim EPO skipjack stock assessment is to be presented at the next IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee meeting in 2022</p> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IATTC Position Statement Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program

Action 6. Harvest Strategies - WCPO Skipjack	
<p>Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby and advocate that the WCPFC adopt a robust Skipjack harvest strategy with reference points that can trigger specific management actions. 	
<p>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</p>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the WCPFC Commission meeting held from December 1 – 7, 2021.</p> <p>The joint statement calls for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and endorse further implementation of CMM 2014-06 to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines. Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas, and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack. Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority. Adopt a harvest control rule (HRC)/management procedure (MP) for the skipjack purse seine fishery. <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCPFC Position Statement Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program

Action 7. Harvest Strategies - WCPO Yellowfin	
<p>Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advocate that the WCPFC adopt a robust Yellowfin Harvest Strategy that includes management actions and triggers when reference points are reached and is responsive to changes in stock status. 	
<p>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</p>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the WCPFC Commission meeting held from December 1 – 7, 2021.</p> <p>The joint statement calls for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and endorse further implementation of CMM 2014-06 to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines. Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas, and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack. Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority. Adopt a harvest control rule (HRC)/management procedure (MP) for the skipjack purse seine fishery. <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCPFC Position Statement Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program

Action 8. Harvest Strategy - WCPO Bigeye	
<p>Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate that the WCPFC adopt a Bigeye Harvest Strategy that includes management actions and triggers when reference points are reached and is responsive to changes in stock status 	
<p>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</p>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the WCPFC Commission meeting held from December 1 – 7, 2021.</p> <p>The joint statement calls for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and endorse further implementation of CMM 2014-06 to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines. Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas, and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack. Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority. Adopt a harvest control rule (HRC)/management procedure (MP) for the skipjack purse seine fishery. <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCPFC Position Statement Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program

Action 9. Harvest Control Rules - WCPO Skipjack	
<p>Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate that the WCPFC staff obtain a stock assessment for skipjack to help adopt Harvest Control Rules that include management action responses for changes in stock status, and with reference points that trigger management actions. 	
<p>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</p>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the WCPFC Commission meeting held from December 1 – 7, 2021.</p> <p>The joint statement calls for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and endorse further implementation of CMM 2014-06 to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines. Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas, and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack. Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority. Adopt a harvest control rule (HRC)/management procedure (MP) for the skipjack purse seine fishery. <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCPFC Position Statement Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program

Action 10. Harvest Control Rules - WCPO Yellowfin	
Task:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advocate that the WCPFC staff establish a better understanding of the effect of controlling exploitation to establish well-defined robust HCRs for Yellowfin and Bigeye and define the appropriate YF exploitation levels. 	
January 2022 Evidence/ Update:	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the WCPFC Commission meeting held from December 1 – 7, 2021.</p> <p>The joint statement calls for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and endorse further implementation of CMM 2014-06 to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines. Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas, and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack. Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority. <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCPFC Position Statement Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program

Action 11. Harvest Control Rules -WCPO Bigeye	
Task:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advocate that the WCPFC establish well defined HCRs for Bigeye with appropriate exploitation levels that address the decline in the biomass. 	
January 2022 Evidence/ Update:	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the WCPFC Commission meeting held from December 1 – 7, 2021.</p> <p>The joint statement calls for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and endorse further implementation of CMM 2014-06 to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines. Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas, and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack. Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority. <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCPFC Position Statement Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program

Action 12. ETP species outcome, management, and information

Task:

- Highlight and document available NMFS and PIRO information on all ETP species interactions and fishing locations for the UoA fleet.
- Disaggregate species interactions data to clarify the types of encounters (sightings vs interactions, on board or in net), live release and species mortalities
- Develop a comprehensive list of ETP species’ DPSs and/or stocks that have interactions with the UoA, other MSC UoA’s and overlapping fisheries
- Identify and describe any changes in ETP species catches and interactions by the UoA fishery due to changes in fishing operation and fishing locations (for example: high seas fishing and fishing on the 150-degree line of EPO)
- Support and advocate for additional research on ETP species interactions by the tuna fishing fleets for all gear types
- Support and advocate for new and updated stock assessments of relevant ETP species with fishery interactions
- Develop a list and summary of relevant ETP species with national or international limits, protection, or management strategies
- Support and advocate for the development and implementation of robust bycatch and FAD management strategies that contribute to the recovery of ETP stocks.
- Develop, adopt, and implement a comprehensive ETP bycatch policy and best practices based on the best available science and ISSF guidance, including further mitigation efforts for Silky and Oceanic White Tip sharks.
- Active cooperation and information sharing on best practices with overlapping FIPs and MSC certified fisheries
- Develop an audit protocol for the ETP bycatch policy

January 2022 Evidence/ Update:

The FIP is adopting the FAD management plan and policy which follows ISSF guidance on best practices to reduce ETP bycatch

The USPTG vessels participated in a FAD Retrieval Feasibility study for the WCPO by releasing 10 years of archived echosounder FAD buoy locational data to the SPC. The study has identified potential “hot spots” for FAD beaching. This data is now being used to develop FAD retrieval strategies. A summary of the study was prepared by SPC and presented to the WCPFC Scientific Committee meetings held from August 11 – 19, 2021.

The USPTG vessels are also participating in a FAD retrieval pilot for Palmyra Atoll, managed by The Nature Conservancy. The USPTG has authorized FAD buoy service providers to release both locational and echosounder data to the FAD retrieval program manager. This data is being used to track FADs as they drift through the Palmyra MPA and facilitate the retrieval of FADs before they become beached on the atoll. Echosounder data is being used to study aggregation of biomass as the FADs drift through the MPA. The pilot program may serve as a model for other Pacific Island nations in their efforts to reduce the impacts of FADs on sensitive marine ecosystems and habitats. A progress report for the 1st quarter of the program is included as evidence.

The FIP created posters for commonly encountered species to aid in skipper ID to be placed on vessels.

	<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FAD Management Plan• FAD Management Policy• FAD Retrieval Feasibility study• FAD retrieval pilot progress report• Commonly Encountered Species Posters
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Action 13. Habitats and Ecosystem Outcomes, Management, and Information

Task:

- Across the two RFMOs support and advocate for the continued collection of data to better understand and detect any increase in risk level from FADs on VME's and sensitive habitats. USPTG is participating in direct research by providing FAD buoy data.
- Design a logbook and data collection system to quantify the number of lost or abandoned FADs, their fate and location. Data to include an estimate of the number of FADs that are transferred or retrieved. Logbook to be developed by first half of 2021.
- Participate in voluntary programs to track FAD status and to retrieve lost, abandoned, or derelict FADs, at sea or on shore
- Support and advocate for IATTC to develop a 5-year strategic research plan to incorporate and prioritize several ecosystem components and improve the integration of existing research programs and catch trophic levels for the 3 purse-seine fishing methods
- Encourage the progress and priority of WCPFC's current five-year strategic research plan and data collection to monitor and assess the WCPO's pelagic ecosystems, and the evaluation of potential management options.
- Identify any existing quantitative studies on the available FAD management options and strategies to assess effectiveness
- Support and advocate for research on FAD impacts and the effectiveness of existing partial strategies including limits on the number of FADs deployed or FAD sets. Existing and proposed limits are arbitrary and should be based on the best available science
- Collaborate and share information on best practices for FAD management with overlapping FIPs and other FAD fisheries seeking MSC certification
- Develop and adopt a comprehensive and auditable FAD management plan and code of best practices for the UoA based on the best available science and guidance
- Develop and implement a formal FAD recovery, transfer and sharing strategy for the UoA fleet and other FAD fisheries in the Pacific.
- Conduct and coordinate research on the use of non-entangling and biodegradable materials in the construction of FADs

January 2022 Evidence/ Update:

The USPTG vessels participated in a FAD Retrieval Feasibility study for the WCPO by releasing 10 years of archived echosounder FAD buoy locational data to the SPC. The study has identified potential "hot spots" for FAD beaching. This data is now being used to develop FAD retrieval strategies. A summary of the study was prepared by SPC and presented to the WCPFC Scientific Committee meetings held from August 11 – 19, 2021.

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The USPTG developed a FAD logbook to track FAD deployment, retrievals, transfers and deactivations due to the buoys being stolen,

	<p>sunk or lost. The goal of the logbook is to determine the ultimate fate of buoys and quantify the number of buoys left to drift at sea, with the potential to eventually beach. A copy of the logbook is provided. All USPTG vessels will begin using this logbook starting in 2022.</p> <p>The USPTG also participated in a WWF questionnaire on traditional, biodegradable and non-entangling FAD design. See provided evidence for an example of a response to the questionnaire.</p> <p>The USPTG is actively involved in the development of biodegradable FADs and has been awarded funding by the US National Marine Fishery Service to support BioFAD design, construction and testing in 2022. The project is being managed by the ISSF. The NMFS funding will be used for materials with the USPTG supplying the echosounder buoys as their in-kind contribution. The first step of the project to conduct BioFAD workshops with the vessel captains but this has been delayed due to Covid. Therefore, the project is now expected to commence in the 3rd or 4th quarter of 2022. A copy of the BioFAD proposal is provided along with a letter of commitment from the USPTG for their in-kind contribution (echosounder buoys).</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FAD Retrieval Feasibility study• FAD retrieval pilot progress report• FAD Logbook• WWF Questionnaire on FADs• BioFAD proposal
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