



TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE FOURTH REGULAR SESSION

2-7 October 2008
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

CATCH RETENTION PLANS (CRPs)

**WCPFC-TCC4-2008/23
3 September 2008**

Paper prepared by the Secretariat

Introduction

1. The Commission first considered the issue of catch retention at its third session in 2006 in the form of CMM-2006-01, paragraph 9 of which states:

“Prior to the 2007 session of the Technical and Compliance Committee, each CCM with purse seine vessels fishing in the Convention Area shall develop and provide to the Executive Director plans to require all purse seine fishing vessels to retain on board and then land all skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye tuna, except for fish unfit for human consumption for reasons other than size, including provisions outlining how such requirement would be implemented and enforced. The TCC will review such plans and make a recommendation to the Commission with respect to the adoption of such a measure at WCPFC4.”

2. Assisted by some CCMs, the Secretariat prepared a set of guidelines to facilitate the development of CRPs (WCPFC-TCC3-2007/24, Attachment 1). Since then the Secretariat has received CRPs from three CCMs with comments from two other CCMs on the desirable elements of a CRP.

3. In its review of the issue of CRPs, TCC3 raised two points: 1) the establishment of enforceable technical and compliance aspects to support CRPs and 2) whether consideration of this issue is currently a matter of priority. TCC3 directed the Secretariat to liaise with the IATTC to develop a report on this issue for future consideration.

Review of the IATTC Catch Retention Program

4. In June 2000 the IATTC adopted a Resolution on Bycatch, to begin in January 2001, which included a one-year pilot program to require all purse-seine vessels to first retain on board and then land all bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin tuna caught, except fish considered unfit for human consumption for reasons other than size, in order to provide a disincentive to the capture of these small fish. The full retention requirement was extended on an annual basis in June 2001. In June 2002 the IATTC extended the program until 1 January 2005.

5. In June 2006 the Resolution on Bycatch was replaced by C-04-05 (Rev.2), “Consolidated Resolution on Bycatch”, the catch retention provisions of which expired on 1 January 2008.
6. Under these various Resolutions, data has been reported both from observers and captains, and evaluation on the effectiveness of the program has been reviewed at annual sessions of the IATTC Permanent Working Group on Compliance.
7. Procedures for the implementation of full retention requirements include:
 - 1) No bigeye, skipjack, and/or yellowfin tuna (“tuna”) caught by purse-seine vessels may be discarded after the point in the set when the net is fully pursed and more than one half of the net has been retrieved. The tuna may be retained beyond the point when more than one half of the net has been retrieved, provided it is subsequently released alive pursuant to a process or mechanism previously agreed by the Director. If equipment malfunctions affect the process of pursing and retrieving the net in such a way that this rule cannot be complied with, the crew must make efforts to release the tuna as soon as possible.
 - 2) The following two exceptions to the above rule shall apply:
 - a. Tuna considered unfit for human consumption for reasons other than size. For each occasion in which tuna that have been caught are discarded for this reason, the following procedures shall apply:
 - i. The captain and chief engineer of the vessel must jointly decide that the tuna is unfit for human consumption for reasons other than size and sign a document to that effect, which shall include an explanation of the basis for their decision.
 - ii. The document shall also contain other relevant information regarding the tuna caught, *e.g.* how long it was in the net and/or on deck, and the water temperature at the time of capture.
 - iii. Any tuna that is to be discarded by a vessel with an observer on board must, if possible, be retained on deck long enough to allow the observer to record the quantity and sizes of the fish and take samples, if required.
 - b. Tuna caught during the final set of a trip may be discarded if there is insufficient well space remaining to load all the tuna caught in that set.
 - 3) The disposition of the catch of tuna upon unloading, and in particular the quantity, size, and disposition of the tuna in any portion of the catch which is not unloaded to a cannery or transshipped, shall be recorded on a form signed by the captain of the vessel; this form shall be provided to the national authority of the state in which the tuna was unloaded, and a copy shall be provided to the Director.
 - 4) Governments will document the disposition of the catch of tuna upon unloading, in particular the portion of catches not unloaded to canneries or transshipped. This information shall be recorded on a form, a copy of which shall be provided to the Director.
8. The staff of the Commission’s field offices assist in monitoring the disposition of unloadings to the extent possible. The field offices and governments are provided with forms for the certification of tuna discarded at sea pursuant to paragraph 2, as well as for the documentation of the disposition of the catch of tuna upon unloading. The forms are provided to vessels by the pertinent government or field office.

9. Observers make an estimate of the tonnage of tuna, by species, discarded at sea, and code the reason for discarding it. Codes include:

Code	
1	Unmarketable tuna size
2	Unmarketable tuna condition
4	All vessel wells are full
5	No wells are ready to retrieve tuna
6	Other reason / Reason unknown

10. Discards coded 2, 4 or 5 are considered exemptions, while discards coded 1 and 6 only are considered to contravene the full retention requirement. Table 1 records statistics collected by a 100 per cent observer program representing the number of sets with discards coded 1 and 6, and their tonnage. There were significant reductions of sets with discards and tonnage discarded compared with the rate of reduction of successful sets in 2006.

Table 1	Discard information relative to sets (Source: Report to the 9 th meeting of the IATTC Permanent Working Group on Compliance)
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Year	Successful sets	Sets with discards (code 1 and 6)	% Sets with discards	Tonnage discarded
2003	21,164	2,583	12	17,199
2004	18,379	1,571	9	14,465
2005	21,664	1,578	7	13,802
2006	19,329	1,098	6	6,297
2007	18,062	694	4	4,476

11. Since 2001, IATTC has requested that the captain write the reason for discards in the Tuna Discard Records (TDR). Table 2 presents the total number of sets with discards, as recorded by observers for any reason and the number of sets recorded in the TDRs reported by captains. During 2001-2006, the total number of sets with discards for any reason was 16,038, of which 15% (2,415 sets) were reported by captains, where half of them (1,225 sets) have reasons such as “fish too small” or “no commercial value for size/species”, the other half (1,190 sets, 7%), have been properly documented (i.e., considered unfit for human consumption for reasons other than size) by the captain.

Table 2	The total number of sets with discards recorded by observers and the number reported in TDRs by captains (Source: IATTC Secretariat)
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Year	Sets observed with discards (any reason for discard applies)	Sets included in TDRs by captains	Sets recorded in TDRs with illegal discards	Sets on TDRs properly documented
2001	3,406	396	123	273
2002	2,855	453	159	294
2003	3,751	631	425	206
2004	2,193	309	210	99
2005	2,644	412	214	198

2006	1,189	241	94	147
2007	669	156	102	54
Total	16,707	2,571	1,327	1,244

12. The effectiveness of the catch retention measure in the EPO has been questioned because there is reportedly poor compliance with the measure by flag States and vessel captains. However, Table 1 demonstrates a significant reduction in non-compliance (from 12 per cent to 4 per cent) between 2003 and 2007.

13. Conversely, Table 2 highlights a very low compliance rate with reporting obligations, vindicating 100 per cent observer coverage in that fishery. These data serve to highlight that any such measure needs to be accompanied by clear guidance to vessel captains and observers, coupled with stringent enforcement action against vessels that do not comply.

Discussion

14. Noting the relevance of this issue to the Commission's request under agenda item 4.8, CCMs may wish to:

- a. share additional experience in relation to the scope and implementation of CRPs, including costs and benefits;
- b. review the provisions of paragraph 9 of CMM-2006-01 in respect of the inclusion of a catch retention component in any conservation and management measure that may be considered at WCPFC5 for reducing fishing mortality on yellowfin and bigeye tuna; and
- c. provide advice and recommendations to WCPFC5 in respect of the development, implementation and monitoring of CRPs in the Convention Area.