



Developing Best Handling & Release Practices (BHRP) for Sharks in IATTC Fisheries

SC21-EB-WP-11

Melanie Hutchinson et al.

Background

- SC21 will consider any information concerning the review of safe release and bycatch mitigation measures (paras 20–23) during the upcoming review of CMM-2024-05



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

**THE COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF HIGHLY
MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC OCEAN**

and

THE INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

NOW THEREFORE the WCPFC and the IATTC record the following understandings:

1. AREAS OF COOPERATION

The WCPFC and the IATTC agree to establish and maintain consultation, cooperation and collaboration in respect of matters of common interest to the two organizations, including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- exchange of data and information, in a manner consistent with the information-sharing policies of each Commission;
- collaboration on research efforts relating to stocks and species of mutual interest, including Pacific-wide stock assessments;
- conservation and management measures for stocks and species of mutual interest.

2. MANNER OF COOPERATION

2.1. Cooperation between the Secretariats of the WCPFC and the IATTC shall include:

- reciprocal participation in relevant meetings of each organization, including those of each organization's subsidiary bodies;
- information-sharing about stocks and species of mutual interest;
- development of processes to promote harmonization and compatibility of conservation and management measures, including measures relating to monitoring, control and surveillance; and
- active and regular exchange of relevant meeting reports, information, research data and results, project plans, documents, and publications regarding matters of mutual interest.

BHRP reduce mortality to incidental species

- No bycatch mitigation measure is perfectly effective
- Post interaction the most effective method for reducing impacts and mortality are through careful handling and release
- Relatively simple behavioral / procedural changes with measurable impacts on survival
- Several IATTC Resolutions for vulnerable species call for the use of BHRP
- IATTC Strategic Science Plan included the development of BHRP for all vulnerable species

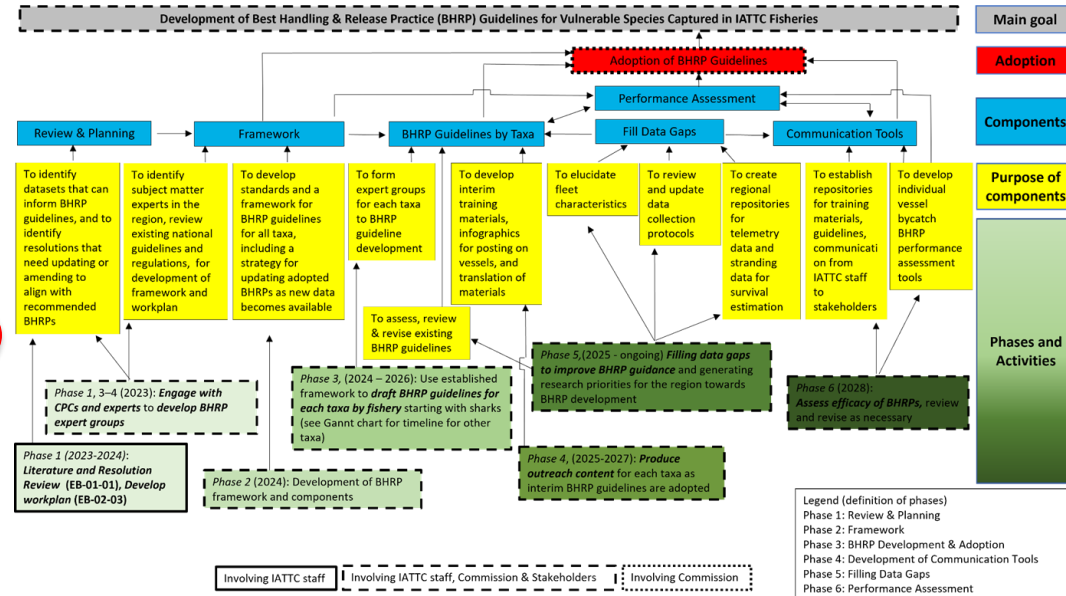


BHRP are the 'low hanging fruit' of conservation strategies

Workplan for BHRP guideline development (IATTC-SAC15 | EB-02-03)

6 Components:

1. Review & planning (SAC14-EB-01-01)
2. BHRP Framework (SAC15-EB-02-03)
3. Guideline development for each taxa by fishery
4. Development of training & education materials
5. Filling data & research gaps
6. Performance assessment



Timeline: Shark BHRP

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

101st MEETING

Victoria, B.C., Canada
7-11 August 2023

RESOLUTION C-23-07¹

CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Victoria, B.C., Canada, at the occasion of its 101st meeting:

Res. C-
23-07

12. The IATTC scientific staff, in collaboration with the IATTC SAC and EBWG, shall develop and recommend to the Commission a set of best handling guidelines for the safe release of sharks for inclusion in this measure in 2024. In the meantime, CPCs may elect to, as appropriate, use the safe handling and release guidelines for purse seine vessels described in Annex 3.

Timeline: Shark BHRP

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The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Victoria, B.C. Canada, at the occasion of its 101st meeting:

COMISION INTERAMERICANA DEL ATUN TROPICAL (CIAT) INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION (IATTC)

MEMORANDUM

26 September 2023
Ref.: 0473-410

To: Commissioners and Heads of Delegation
c.c.: Bolivia, Chile, Honduras, Indonesia, Liberia
From: Arnulfo Franco, Director
Re: Guidelines for best handling and release practices (BHRP)

- A. As you may recall, the Permanent Working Group on Ecosystem and Bycatch (EBWG) at its first meeting and the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) at its 14th meeting (IATTC-101-03), both recognized the need to develop best handling and release practice (BHRP) guidelines for vulnerable bycatch species (seabirds, sea turtles, marine mammals, sharks and rays). Accordingly, the SAC endorsed the EBWG recommendation that CPCs and other relevant stakeholders support the IATTC staff in a survey to gather details of national efforts or programs that can help elucidate post-release survival rates of vulnerable species captured in the various fisheries under the purview of the IATTC.
- B. In accordance with the above, all CPCs are invited to:

Res. C-
23-07

Memo.
0473-
410

1. Provide existing BHRP guidelines
2. Provide existing PRS data
3. Identify/designate subject matter experts (SME)
4. Identify/designate industry representatives

Timeline: Shark BHRP

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

101st MEETING

Victoria, B.C., Canada
7-11 August 2023

RESOLUTION C-23-07¹

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SAC-
15-11

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

15TH MEETING

La Jolla, California (USA)
10-14 June 2024

SAC-15-11 Corr.

BEST HANDLING AND RELEASE PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR SHARKS IN IATTC FISHERIES

Melanie Hutchinson, Jon Lopez and Alexandre Aires-da-Silva

Timeline: Shark BHRP

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

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RESOLUTION C-23-07¹

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Memo.
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Res. C-
24-05

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- B. In accordance with the above, all CPCs are invited to:

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

102nd MEETING

Panama City, Panama
2-6 September 2024

RESOLUTION C-24-05¹

CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Panama City, Panama, at the occasion of its 102nd meeting:

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

15TH MEETING

La Jolla, California (USA)
10-14 June 2024

SAC-15-11 Corr.

BEST HANDLING AND RELEASE PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR SHARKS IN IATTC FISHERIES

Melanie Hutchinson, Jon Lopez and Alexandre Aires-da-Silva

12. The IATTC Scientific Staff, in collaboration with the IATTC SAC and EBWG, shall continue to develop, taking into account the practicability for fishing vessels, and recommend to the Commission a comprehensive set of best handling and release practices for the safe release of sharks for inclusion in this measure in 2025.



Timeline: Shark BHRP

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COM

101st MEETING

Victoria, B.C., Canada
7-11 August 2023

RESOLUTION C-23-07¹

CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE PROTECⁿ SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SHARK

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Victoria, B.C., of its 101st meeting:

Res. C-
23-07

Memo.
0473-
410

SAC-
15-11

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24-05

Memo.
0610-
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B. In accordance with the above, all CPCs are invited to:

COMISION INTERAMERICANA DEL ATUN TROPICAL (CIAT)
INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION (IATTC)

MEMORANDUM

20 November 2024
Ref.: 0601-410

To: Commissioners and Heads of Delegation

c.c.: Bolivia, Chile, Honduras, Indonesia and Liberia

From: Arnulfo Franco, Director

Re: Guidelines for best handling and release practices (BHRP) of seabirds, sea turtles, sharks and rays

A. As a follow-up to memorandum ref. 0473-410, dated 26 September 2023, all CPCs are invited to:

1. **Provide the Secretariat** with their existing guidelines and or regulations on best handling and release practices for seabirds, sea turtles, sharks and rays for fisheries under the purview of the IATTC.



IATTC Shark BHRP Guideline Development Process

Responses to Memo 0610-410 (Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, EU, French Polynesia, Mexico, Peru)

Review conducted -> draft guidelines developed

Shark BHRP draft sent to SMEs in March 2025 in English

Version 2 sent to SME in April in English and Spanish -> SAC-16-10

- Draft guidelines are the result of a thorough review & consultation process
- Data driven -> recommendations have measurable impacts on survival
- Draft BHRP guidelines provided by fishery (purse seine, longline, gillnet) in SAC-16-10

Timeline: Shark BHRP

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

101st MEETING

Victoria, B.C., Canada
7-11 August 2023

RESOLUTION C-23-07¹

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The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Victoria, B.C., Canada, at the occasion of its 101st meeting:

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From: Arnulfo Franco, Director

Re: Guidelines for best handling and release practices (BHRP) of seabirds, sea turtles, sharks and rays

A. As a follow-up to memorandum ref. 0473-410, dated 26 September 2023, all CPCs are invited to:

1. **Provide the Secretariat** with their existing guidelines and/or regulations on best handling and release practices for seabirds, sea turtles, sharks and rays for fisheries under the purview of the IATTC.

Res. C-
23-07

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0610-
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SAC-
16-10

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

15TH MEETING

La Jolla, California (USA)
10-14 June 2024

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Melanie Hutchinson, Jon Lopez and Alexandre Aires-da-Silva

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

16TH MEETING

La Jolla, California (USA)
02-06 June 2025

DOCUMENT SAC-16-10 REV

UPDATED BEST HANDLING AND RELEASE PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR SHARKS IN IATTC FISHERIES

Melanie Hutchinson, Jon Lopez, Dan Ovando and Marlon Roman

Key Points: Purse seine fisheries

- Several studies on shark survival in purse seine fisheries across ocean basins demonstrating high at vessel mortality rates, depending on when and how sharks are brought on board
- For sharks that are entangled in the net, ensuring they are not rolled through the power block is imperative to survival



Key points: Purse seine fisheries

- Several studies on shark survival in purse seine fisheries across ocean basins
- High at vessel mortality and depends on when sharks are brought on board
- For sharks that are entangled in the net, ensuring they are not rolled through the power block is imperative to survival
- Survivorship is compromised once confined in the sack
- For sharks that are alive when brought on board, safe handling is very important and getting them back in the water as quickly as possible is key
- Survivorship is further compromised when they end up in the lower well decks



Key Points: Longline fisheries

- Survivorship is species specific
- Correlated to at vessel condition (time on the line)
- Handling
 - whether or not the animal is left in the water or brought on board
 - Identifying and disallowing deleterious practices
- Reducing trailing gear



IATTC Staff Recommendations to IATTC Commission

- *Consider updating Resolution C-24-05 with the inclusion of the BHRP guidelines outlined herein (SAC-16-10) for all IATTC fisheries.*
- *The Commission ensures the necessary funding to support capacity building, the development of training materials and a range of education and outreach activities (unfunded project Q.3a)*

BHRP VULNERABLE SPECIES TIMELINE

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
ECOSYSTEM & BYCATCH WORKING GROUP
3RD MEETING
La Jolla, California (USA)
26-27 May 2025

DOCUMENT EB-03-06

SEABIRD BEST HANDLING AND RELEASE PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Performance Assessment

Components

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH WORKING GROUP
3RD MEETING
La Jolla, California (USA)
26-27 May 2025

EB-03-05

BEST HANDLING AND RELEASE PRACTICES FOR SEA TURTLES CAPTURED IN IATTC FISHERIES

Melanie Hutchinson, Mariluz Parga, Marlon Roman, Jon Lopez

2024



2025



2026



Thank you!



Thank you for the contributions from several CPCs including; Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, European Union, Guatemala, Peru, France (French Polynesia). We appreciate the time and expertise and critical feedback offered by subject matter experts; Bernal Chavarria, Kristen Cote, Nagore Cuevas, Javier Quiñones Davila, Jon Ruiz Gondra, Maitane Grande, David Itano, Antonio Carlos Vasquez Jovel, Yunkai Li, Jefferson Murua, Francois Poisson, Omar Santana, Robynn Smith Laplante, Enzo Acuna Soto, Yonat Swimmer. Muchas gracias to Paulina Llano and Marlon Roman for translation assistance.