



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Region
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, California 90802-4213

MAY 26 2005

F/SWR2: JAR

**TO: U.S. PURSE SEINE TUNA FLEET
U.S. BIGEYE TUNA LONGLINE FLEET**

SUBJECT: IATTC FISHERY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS FOR 2004

At the June 2004 Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) meeting, the Parties adopted a Resolution for the conservation and management of tunas in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO). The June 2004 resolution is a *Multi-Annual Program on the Conservation of Tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean for 2004, 2005, and 2006*. This resolution offers a choice of a six-week purse seine fishery closure either beginning August 1, 2004, or beginning November 20, 2004. In addition, the resolution also requires the closure of each country's longline fishery for bigeye tuna in the EPO if and when the 2005 catch reaches the estimated level of catch in 2001. A copy of the resolution can be found on the IATTC home page at www.IATTC.org. The Department of State (DOS) has approved the IATTC recommendation. This is to notify you of the conservation measures for 2005.

For 2004, comments were received during the proposed rule comment period with respect to the timing of the closure. Most comments received noted that a closure later in the fishing year gave better public notice, minimized the disruption of planned fishery operations, and was in keeping with the historic timing of closures for this purse seine fishery and the ability for the industry to prepare for and plan the closure. The United States has chosen the six-week period beginning November 20, 2005, for purse seine vessels fishing for yellowfin, bigeye, and skipjack tunas in the Convention Area. For the purposes of this Resolution, the Convention Area is defined as the area bounded by the coastline of the Americas, the 40° N parallel, the 150° W meridian, and the 40° S parallel.

Comments were also received regarding the selection of 2001 as the base year for setting an EPO bigeye longline fishery quota for U.S. vessels and the method used to compute the United States catch of longlined bigeye in 2001. The U.S. 2001 ETP catch of longlined bigeye tuna was recomputed at 150 metric tons.

In addition to this direct notice to the tuna fishing industry, the National Marine Fisheries Service will announce the conservation and management measures as a proposed rule in the Federal Register. The longline fishery closure will be announced separately if the 2005 bigeye tuna catch reaches the 150 metric ton level. However, under procedures in the regulations authorizing implementation of approved IATTC recommendations, the purse seine closure described above



is effective on the date specified, as the owners and operators of U.S. vessels have received this direct.

I appreciate your cooperation in observing the six-week, time/area closure beginning November 20, 2005, for the purse seine fishery and the closure of the longline fishery for bigeye tuna if the 2005 catch reaches the 150 metric ton level.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rodney R. McInnis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

Rodney R. McInnis
Regional Administrator