**Bigeye tuna Eastern Pacific**

**Fishery**  
Eastern-Pacific  
**IATTC**  
Ecuador  
**Drifting-longlines**

### IDENTIFICATION

**SCIENTIFIC NAME**  
Thunnus obesus

**SPECIES NAME(S)**  
Bigeye tuna

**COMMON NAMES**  
Bigeye tuna

**STOCK IDENTIFICATION**

It is likely there is one stock of bigeye tuna across the Pacific Ocean. The assessment in the EPO is conducted assuming there is a single population for management purposes (Aires-da-Silve and Maunder 2014).

### ASSESSMENT

**Strengths**

- The biomass is considered healthy.
- There is a catch limit for bigeye tuna caught in the longline fisheries for some countries (China, Japan, Korea, Chinese Taipei).
- There is a multi-year conservation plan in place, which has just been extended, for bigeye tuna (and other tuna species).
- There is 100% observer coverage on large purse seine vessels operating on the high seas.

- There is a catch limit set by the IATTC for the bigeye tuna captured by the longline fisheries of some countries (China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the United States). There is a compromise from the rest of the IATTC's member countries to ensure that their annual catch won't overlap an established level by the organization.
- There is a multi-year management plan set in place by the IATTC.
- Independently from the IATTC, Ecuador is capable of developing its own control and surveillance measures within their EEZ and at port.
- There are measures established by the Ecuadorian government in order to prevent negative impacts of this fishery on vulnerable species such as whales and dolphins.

**Weaknesses**

- Fishing mortality rates are above sustainable levels.
- Formal reference points and harvest control rules (only interim) have not been adopted.
- There are time/area closures in place for the purse seine fleet but these measures are not sufficient to manage the fish aggregating device (FAD) fishery.
- Observer coverage (required) in the longline fishery is too low (5%).
- There continues to be uncertainty surrounding the stock assessment results.
- The longline and purse seine fisheries can interact with ETP species.
- There is a lack of catch data coming from the Ecuadorian artisinal longline fleet. The observer program does not cover a significant sample of longline vessels and it is mainly implemented for purse-seine vessels.
- Scientific information regarding the effects of longlines on the species and its interaction within the eastern Pacific Ocean ecosystem is scarce.
- Longlines may have negative interactions with endangered, threatened or protected (ETP) species, and information on these interactions and its current impact is scarce in Ecuador.

### Options

- To enforce the monitoring, control and surveillance system for the longline fleet, implementing the observer program and taking in situ accurate data regarding the fleet operation as fishing effort, grounds, discards and ETP-species interaction.
- To benefit the biological assessments within Ecuadorian boundaries and to develop independently targeted reference points for this species with a comprehensive control.

### SCORES

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<th>Management Quality</th>
<th>Management Strategy</th>
<th>Managers Compliance</th>
<th>Fishers Compliance</th>
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**FIPS**

- Eastern-Pacific Ocean tuna - longline (Thunnus obesus):  
Stage 3, Progress Rating C, Type: Fip, Evaluation Start Date: 28 Nov 2017

**MSC**

- No related MSC fisheries

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**Related Links**

- Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)
RECOMMENDATIONS

RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN

- Work with IATTC Members and Cooperating Firm-Members to:
  - Develop and implement comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategies with specific timelines for all tuna stocks, including the adoption and implementation of limit and target reference points, harvest control rules, monitoring strategies, operational objectives, performance indicators, and management strategy evaluation.
  - Strengthen compliance processes and make information on non-compliance public and continue to provide evidence of compliance with all IATTC Conservation and Management Measures in a timely manner.
  - Implement a 100% observer coverage requirement for at-sea transshipment activities, as well as other measures that ensure transshipment activity is transparent and well-managed, and that all required data are collected and transmitted to the appropriate bodies in a timely manner.
  - Increase compliance with the mandatory minimum 5% longline observer coverage rates by identifying and correcting non-compliance.
  - Implement a 100% observer coverage requirement – human and/or electronic – within five years for longline fisheries. Adopt a 100% observer coverage requirement for purse seine vessels where it is not already required and require the use of the best-available observer safety equipment, communications and procedures.
  - Adopt effective measures for the use of non-entangling FAD designs as a precautionary measure to minimize the entanglement of sharks and other non-target species, and support research on biodegradable materials and transition to their use to mitigate marine debris.
  - Allow effectively implement, and ensure compliance with, existing RFMO bycatch requirements and take additional mitigation action, such as improving monitoring at sea, collecting and sharing operational-level, species-specific data, and adopting stronger compliance measures, including consequences for non-compliance for all gear types.
  - Monitor IATTC progress on assessing alternative indicators and improving the stock assessment model to determine the status of bigeye tuna in the EPO and to develop management advice.
  - Ensure all products are traceable back to legal sources. Verify source information and full chain traceability through traceability desk audits or third party traceability certification. For fisheries without robust traceability systems in place, invest in meaningful improvements to bring the fisheries and supply chain in compliance with best practices.