

Report on the participation at the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

Ecosystem Based Working Group, Scientific Advisory Committee, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, San Diego

11 May 2023

Overview

On May 11th, Bobbi-Jo Dobush and Jesse van der Grient attended the Ecosystem Based Working Group (EBWG), which is a new working group in the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). During this meeting, Jesse gave a presentation entitled 'Potential interactions between deep-sea mining and tuna fisheries' where she gave a brief overview of what deep-sea mining is, what the potential midwater impacts and effects could be and how that could translate to effects in tuna fisheries, and the potential scale of various impacts generated by one mining contractor. The presentation continued with demonstrating the potential overlap between the two industries via the percentage reported catch data the IATTC derives from the Clarion Clipperton Zone, and potential tuna biomass increases under climate change. The presentation finished on different ways forward for how the IATTC could get involved in the discussion at the International Seabed Authority meetings. The talk was well received, and there were several questions and comments during the Q&A afterwards. What was noticeable was that several people asked the working group to think about recommendations for the Scientific Advisory Committee the following week to move forward with thinking about ways to get more involved in the mining debate. Most people stated that this is a timely issue to engage on. During the breaks there were several follow-up questions on this topic from other interested people.

This presentation was in support of a white paper produced by Diva Amon, Jeffrey Drazen, Douglas McCauley, Neil Nathan, Bobbi-Jo Dobush and Jesse van der Grient with a similar title and focus that was shared amongst the members of the EBWG. Further, this group had prepared a draft recommendation that was ready to be shared at the EBWG meeting to engage with deep-sea mining. After the comments on the talk, this draft recommendation was shared, and in a separate meeting in the following week it was voted on. The recommendation was passed through the Scientific Advisory Committee via an endorsement of all the recommendations from the EBWG. This is a positive development, and we are eager to see whether the IATTC will make further decisions on whether and how to engage with discussions at the ISA in the near future, either directly as an observer or via their members.

