

TUNA CONVENTIONS ACT OF 1950

[Chapter 907 of the 81st Congress, Approved Sept. 7, 1950, 64 Stat. 777]

[As Amended Through P.L. 117–286, Enacted December 27, 2022]

【Currency: This publication is a compilation of the text of Chapter 907 of the 81st Congress. It was last amended by the public law listed in the As Amended Through note above and below at the bottom of each page of the pdf version and reflects current law through the date of the enactment of the public law listed at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/comps/>】

【Note: While this publication does not represent an official version of any Federal statute, substantial efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of its contents. The official version of Federal law is found in the United States Statutes at Large and in the United States Code. The legal effect to be given to the Statutes at Large and the United States Code is established by statute (1 U.S.C. 112, 204).】

AN ACT To give effect to the Convention for the Establishment of an International Commission for the Scientific Investigation of Tuna, signed at Mexico City January 25, 1949, by the United States of America and the United Mexican States, and the Convention for the Establishment of an Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, signed at Washington May 31, 1949, by the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That 【16 U.S.C. 951 note】 this Act may be cited as the “Tuna Conventions Act of 1950”.

SEC. 2. [16 U.S.C. 951] DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ANTIGUA CONVENTION.—The term “Antigua Convention” means the Convention for the Strengthening of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Established by the 1949 Convention Between the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica, signed at Washington, November 14, 2003.

(2) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission” means the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission provided for by the Convention.

(3) CONVENTION.—The term “Convention” means—

(A) the Convention for the Establishment of an Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, signed at Washington, May 31, 1949, by the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica;

(B) the Antigua Convention, upon its entry into force for the United States, and any amendments thereto that are in force for the United States; or

(C) both such Conventions, as the context requires.

(4) PERSON.—The term “person” means an individual, partnership, corporation, or association subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

(5) UNITED STATES.—The term “United States” includes all areas under the sovereignty of the United States.

(6) UNITED STATES COMMISSIONERS.—The term “United States commissioners” means the individuals appointed in accordance with section 3(a).

SEC. 3. [16 U.S.C. 952] COMMISSIONERS.

(a) COMMISSIONERS.—The United States shall be represented on the Commission by four United States Commissioners. The President shall appoint individuals to serve on the Commission. The United States Commissioners shall be subject to supervision and removal by the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary. In making the appointments, the President shall select United States Commissioners from among individuals who are knowledgeable or experienced concerning highly migratory fish stocks in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, one of whom shall be an officer or employee of the Department of Commerce. Not more than two United States Commissioners may be appointed who reside in a State other than a State whose vessels maintain a substantial fishery in the area of the Convention.

(b) ALTERNATE COMMISSIONERS.—The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary, may designate from time to time and for periods of time deemed appropriate Alternate United States Commissioners to the Commission. Any Alternate United States Commissioner may exercise, at any meeting of the Commission or of the General Advisory Committee or Scientific Advisory Subcommittee established pursuant to section 4(b), all powers and duties of a United States Commissioner in the absence of any United States Commissioner appointed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section for whatever reason. The number of such Alternate United States Commissioners that may be designated for any such meeting shall be limited to the number of United States Commissioners appointed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section who will not be present at such meeting.

(c) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS.—

(1) EMPLOYMENT STATUS.—Individuals serving as United States Commissioners, other than officers or employees of the United States Government, shall not be considered Federal employees except for the purposes of injury compensation or tort claims liability as provided in chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code, and chapter 171 of title 28, United States Code.

(2) COMPENSATION.—The United States Commissioners or Alternate Commissioners, although officers of the United States while so serving, shall receive no compensation for their services as United States Commissioners or Alternate Commissioners.

(3) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—

(A) The Secretary of State shall pay the necessary travel expenses of United States Commissioners and Alternate United States Commissioners to meetings of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and other

meetings the Secretary of State deems necessary to fulfill their duties, in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations and sections 5701, 5702, 5704 through 5708, and 5731 of title 5, United States Code.

(B) The Secretary may reimburse the Secretary of State for amounts expended by the Secretary of State under this subsection.

SEC. 4. [16 U.S.C. 953] GENERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE.

(a) GENERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—

(1) APPOINTMENTS; PUBLIC PARTICIPATION; COMPENSATION.—

(A) The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall appoint a General Advisory Committee which shall consist of not more than 25 individuals who shall be representative of the various groups concerned with the fisheries covered by the Convention, including nongovernmental conservation organizations, providing to the maximum extent practicable an equitable balance among such groups. Members of the General Advisory Committee will be eligible to participate as members of the United States delegation to the Commission and its working groups to the extent the Commission rules and space for delegations allow.

(B) The chair of the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Advisory Subpanel for Highly Migratory Fisheries and the chair of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council's Advisory Committee shall be ex-officio members of the General Advisory Committee by virtue of their positions in those Councils.

(C) Each member of the General Advisory Committee appointed under subparagraph (A) shall serve for a term of 3 years and is eligible for reappointment.

(D) The General Advisory Committee shall be invited to attend all non-executive meetings of the United States delegation and at such meetings shall be given opportunity to examine and to be heard on all proposed programs of investigation, reports, recommendations, and regulations of the Commission.

(E) The General Advisory Committee shall determine its organization, and prescribe its practices and procedures for carrying out its functions under this title, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), and the Convention. The General Advisory Committee shall publish and make available to the public a statement of its organization, practices, and procedures. Meetings of the General Advisory Committee, except when in executive session, shall be open to the public, and prior notice of meetings shall be made public in

timely fashion. The General Advisory Committee shall not be subject to chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code.¹

(2) INFORMATION SHARING.—The Secretary and the Secretary of State shall furnish the General Advisory Committee with relevant information concerning fisheries and international fishery agreements.

(3) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS.—

(A) The Secretary shall provide to the General Advisory Committee in a timely manner such administrative and technical support services as are necessary for its effective functioning.

(B) Individuals appointed to serve as a member of the General Advisory Committee—

(i) shall serve without pay, but while away from their homes or regular places of business to attend meetings of the General Advisory Committee shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in the Government service are allowed expenses under section 5703 of title 5, United States Code; and

(ii) shall not be considered Federal employees except for the purposes of injury compensation or tort claims liability as provided in chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code, and chapter 171 of title 28, United States Code.

(b) SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE.—(1) The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall appoint a Scientific Advisory Subcommittee of not less than 5 nor more than 15 qualified scientists with balanced representation from the public and private sectors, including nongovernmental conservation organizations.

(2) SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE.—

(A) ADVICE.—The Scientific Advisory Subcommittee shall advise the General Advisory Committee and the Commissioners on matters including—

(i) the conservation of ecosystems;

(ii) the sustainable uses of living marine resources related to the tuna fishery in the eastern Pacific Ocean; and

(iii) the long-term conservation and management of stocks of living marine resources in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.

(B) OTHER FUNCTIONS AND ASSISTANCE.—The Scientific Advisory Subcommittee shall, as requested by the General Advisory Committee, the United States Commissioners, or the Secretary, perform functions and provide assistance required by formal agreements entered into by the United States for this fishery, including the International Dolphin Conservation Program. These functions may include—

¹ Fishery management functions of the Secretary of the Interior under this Act were transferred to the Secretary of Commerce by Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(i) the review of data from the Program, including data received from the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission;

(ii) recommendations on research needs, including ecosystems, fishing practices, and gear technology research, including the development and use of selective, environmentally safe and cost-effective fishing gear, and on the coordination and facilitation of such research;

(iii) recommendations concerning scientific reviews and assessments required under the Program and engaging, as appropriate, in such reviews and assessments;

(iv) consulting with other experts as needed; and

(v) recommending measures to assure the regular and timely full exchange of data among the parties to the Program and each nation's National Scientific Advisory Committee (or its equivalent).

(3) ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS.—The Scientific Advisory Subcommittee shall be invited to have representatives attend all nonexecutive meetings of the United States sections and the General Advisory Committee and shall be given full opportunity to examine and to be heard on all proposed programs of scientific investigation, scientific reports, and scientific recommendations of the commission. Representatives of the Scientific Advisory Subcommittee may attend meetings of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission in accordance with the rules of such Commission.

【Section 5 was repealed by section 203(b) of Public Law 92-471, 86 Stat. 787.】

SEC. 6. [16 U.S.C. 955] RULEMAKING.

(a) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of State and, with respect to enforcement measures, the Secretary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating, may promulgate such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the United States international obligations under the Convention and this Act, including recommendations and decisions adopted by the Commission. In cases where the Secretary has discretion in the implementation of one or more measures adopted by the Commission that would govern fisheries under the authority of a Regional Fishery Management Council, the Secretary may, to the extent practicable within the implementation schedule of the Convention and any recommendations and decisions adopted by the Commission, promulgate such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the United States international obligations under the Convention and this Act, in accordance with the procedures established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.).

(b) JURISDICTION.—The Secretary may promulgate regulations as may be necessary to carry out the United States international obligations under the Convention and this Act, applicable to all vessels and persons subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, including vessels documented under chapter 121 of title 46, United

States Code, wherever they may be operating, on such date as the Secretary shall prescribe.

SEC. 7. [16 U.S.C. 956] Any person authorized to carry out enforcement activities under this Act and any person authorized by the commissions shall have power without warrant or other process, to inspect, at any reasonable time, catch returns, statistical records, or other reports as are required by regulations adopted pursuant to this Act to be made, kept, or furnished.

SEC. 8. [16 U.S.C. 957] (a) It shall be unlawful for any master or other person in charge of a fishing vessel of the United States to engage in fishing in violation of any regulation adopted pursuant to section 6, or for any person knowingly to ship, transport, purchase, sell, offer for sale, import, export, or have in custody, possession, or control any fish taken or retained in violation of such regulations.

(b) It shall be unlawful for the master or any person in charge of any fishing vessel of the United States or any person on board such vessel to fail to make, keep, or furnish any catch returns, statistical records, or other reports as are required by regulations adopted pursuant to this Act to be made, kept, or furnished; or to fail to stop upon being hailed by a duly authorized official of the United States; or to refuse to permit the duly authorized officials of the United States or authorized officials of the commissions to board such vessel or inspect its catch, equipment, books, documents, records, or other articles or question the persons on board in accordance with the provisions of this Act, or the convention, as the case may be.

(c) It shall be unlawful for any person to import, in violation of any regulation adopted pursuant to section 6, from any country, any fish in any form of those species subject to regulation pursuant to a recommendation of the commission, or any tuna in any form not under regulation but under investigation by the commission, during the period such fish have been denied entry in accordance with the provisions of section 6. In the case of any fish as described in this subsection offered for entry into the United States, the Secretary of the Interior⁶ shall require proof satisfactory to him that such fish is not ineligible for such entry under the terms of section 6.

(d) Any person violating any provision of subsection (a) of this section shall be fined not more than \$25,000, and for a subsequent violation of any provisions of said subsection (a) shall be fined not more than \$50,000.

(e) Any person violating any provision of subsection (b) of this section shall be fined not more than \$1,000, and for a subsequent violation of any provision of subsection (b) shall be fined not more than \$5,000.

(f) Any person violating any provision of subsection (c) of this section shall be fined not more than \$100,000.

(g) All fish taken or retained in violation of subsection (a) of this section, or the monetary value thereof, may be forfeited.

(h) All provisions of law relating to the seizure, judicial forfeiture, and condemnation of a cargo for violation of the customs

⁶See footnote to section 4(a).

laws, the disposition of such cargo or the proceeds from the sale thereof, and the remission or mitigation of such forfeitures shall apply to seizures and forfeitures incurred, or alleged to have been incurred, under the provisions of this Act, insofar as such provisions of law are applicable and not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act.

(i) **ADDITIONAL PROHIBITIONS AND ENFORCEMENT.**—For prohibitions relating to this Act and enforcement of this Act, see section 606 of the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1826g).

SEC. 9. [16 U.S.C. 958] (a) In order to provide coordination between the general annual programs of the commissions and programs of other agencies, relating to the exploration, development, and conservation of fishery resources, the Secretary of State may recommend to the United States Commissioners that they consider the relationship of the commissions' programs to those of such agencies and when necessary arrange, with the concurrence of such agencies, for mutual cooperation between the commissions and such agencies for carrying out their respective programs.

(b) All agencies of the Federal Government are authorized on request of the commissions to cooperate in the conduct of scientific and other programs, or to furnish facilities and personnel for the purpose of assisting the commissions in the performance of their duties.

(c) The commissions are authorized and empowered to supply facilities and personnel to existing non-Federal agencies to expedite research work which in the judgment of the commissions is contributing or will contribute directly to the purposes of the conventions.

SEC. 10. [16 U.S.C. 959] ENFORCEMENT.

For enforcement of this Act, see section 606 of the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1826g).

SEC. 11. [16 U.S.C. 960] None of the prohibitions contained in this Act or in the laws and regulations of the States shall prevent the commissions from conducting or authorizing the conduct of fishing operations and biological experiments at any time for the purpose of scientific investigations as authorized by the conventions, or shall prevent the commissions from discharging any of its or their functions or duties prescribed by the conventions.

SEC. 12. [16 U.S.C. 961] There is hereby authorized to be appropriated from time to time, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of each convention and of this Act, including—

(a) contributions to each commission for the United States share of any joint expenses of the commission and the expenses of the United States Commissioners and their staff, including personal services in the District of Columbia and elsewhere;

(b) travel expenses without regard to the Standardized Government Travel Regulations, as amended, the Travel Expense Act of 1949, or section 10 of the Act of March 3, 1933 (U. S. C., title 5, sec. 73b);

(c) printing and binding without regard to section 11 of the Act of March 1, 1919 (U. S. C., title 44, sec. 111), or section 3709 of the Revised Statutes (U. S. C., title 41, sec. 5);

(d) stenographic and other services by contract, if deemed necessary, without regard to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes (U. S. C., title 41, sec. 5); and

(e) purchase, hire, operation, maintenance, and repair of aircraft, motor vehicles (including passenger-carrying vehicles), boats and research vessels.

SEC. 13. [16 U.S.C. 951 note] If any provision of this Act or the application of such provision to any circumstances or persons shall be held invalid, the validity of the remainder of the Act and the applicability of such provision to other circumstances or persons shall not be affected thereby.

SEC. 14. [16 U.S.C. 951 note] This Act shall take effect with respect to each of the conventions upon the entry into force of that convention, unless such entry into force shall be prior to the date of approval of this Act in which case this Act shall take effect immediately.

SEC. 15. [16 U.S.C. 962] REDUCTION OF BYCATCH IN THE EASTERN TROPICAL PACIFIC OCEAN.

The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce and acting through the United States Commissioners, shall seek, in cooperation with other nations whose vessels fish for tuna in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, to establish standards and measures for a bycatch reduction program for vessels fishing for yellowfin tuna in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. The bycatch reduction program shall include measures—

(1) to require, to the maximum extent practicable, that sea turtles and other threatened species and endangered species are released alive;

(2) to reduce, to the maximum extent practicable, the harvest of nontarget species;

(3) to reduce, to the maximum extent practicable, the mortality of nontarget species; and

(4) to reduce, to the maximum extent practicable, the mortality of juveniles of the target species.