

ATTN: Heads of Delegation to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

Leading tuna NGOs call on the WCPFC to urgently implement Harvest Strategies, Stronger Protections for tuna Stocks, and Enhanced Monitoring Tools

The upcoming WCPFC Commission, scheduled for 29 November - 7 December 2021 provides an important opportunity for the WCPFC to demonstrate its ongoing leadership and progressive management to preserve the health of tuna fisheries that are a vital source of economic development and food security for the region.

As organizations focused on the sustainability of tuna stocks and their ecosystems, we urge the WCPFC to make significant progress this year and next in establishing robust and precautionary harvest strategies, including harvest control rules, so that these harvest strategies are adopted at the WCPFC Commission meeting in December 2022. In particular, we strongly urge the WCPFC in 2021 to:

- Adopt Target Reference Points for bigeye and yellowfin;
- Adopt a list of candidate management procedures for skipjack & South Pacific albacore;
- Establish a scientist/manager dialogue group for consideration of harvest strategy issues and hold its first meeting in 2022.

Meeting the deadlines in the WCPFC Harvest Strategy Work Plan for skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye and South Pacific albacore tuna stocks are necessary for MSC-certified fisheries to resolve existing conditions to maintain certification.

Additionally, our organizations urge the WCPFC to adopt the following critical measures to ensure uninterrupted management of tuna stocks and strengthened monitoring of tuna fisheries, which has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic:

- A conservation and management measure that limits fishing mortality for bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack to the target reference points adopted by the Commission in 2021 and removes ambiguities and exemptions;
- A conservation and management measure for an electronic monitoring program as well as associated minimum standards; and
- A conservation and management measure that requires 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) in industrial tuna fisheries, including all those engaged in at sea transshipment, by 2024.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

