

ATTN: Heads of Delegation to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

20 Environmental Organizations Call on ICCAT to Improve and Extend its Tropical Tuna Measure to Improve the Long-Term health of Atlantic Ocean Tuna Fisheries by Enhancing and Extending Conservation Measures

Effective fisheries management is the most critical component to ensuring the long-term health of Atlantic tuna and their ecosystems. The 23rd special session of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) on 14-21 November 2022 brings an important opportunity to enhance conservation of key species, particularly by **improving and extending measures for tropical tunas adopted in 2021**.

Specifically, in 2022, we urge the Commission to:

- Ensure that the bigeye and yellowfin stocks are maintained at sustainable levels by following ICCAT SCRS management advice,
- Fully allocate the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) limits, and
- Adopt procedures to identify and address non-compliance with TAC allocations.

In addition, we urge ICCAT to take the following actions to improve the health of all Atlantic tuna stocks and their ecosystems, including:

- **Accelerate the adoption and implementation of comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategies.** Specifically in 2022:
 - Accelerate the development of management strategy evaluation (MSE) for all tropical tuna stocks,
 - Adopt harvest strategy precautionary management objectives for western Atlantic skipjack,
 - Adopt a harvest strategy for western and eastern bluefin tuna.
- **Accelerate the development of Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) and increase Observer Coverage:**
 - Through the EMS Working Group, **advance the development of minimum standards**, including those recommended by the SCRS in 2022, for an electronic monitoring program and a timeline for the implementation by 2023 of an ICCAT EM Program, and
 - **Require 100% observer coverage** (human and/or electronic) for all industrial ICCAT fisheries, including support vessels and all those engaged in at sea transshipment.
- **Strengthen ICCAT protections for sharks:**
 - Extend the retention ban for North Atlantic shortfin makos to cover the South Atlantic with a complementary prohibition, and
 - Improve ICCAT's finning ban by requiring that fins remain naturally attached for all sharks without exceptions (the globally acknowledged best practice for monitoring finning ban compliance).

- **Strengthen Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) management provisions** in line with the NGO Tuna Forum's Aligned Guidance on FAD Management. Specifically in 2022:
 - Require only fully non-entangling FAD designs without netting or other meshed materials,
 - Establish a timeline for transitioning to 100% biodegradable FADs,
 - Require the timely provision of all FAD data necessary to confirm/validate the implementation, and
 - Assess the efficacy of the FAD closure in advance of the next ICCAT Annual Session.
- In 2023:
- Require the provision of near real-time FAD position and acoustic records data for broad scientific use, and
 - Develop a fully transparent FAD-recovery policy, a FAD marking scheme, clearer rules for FAD ownership and stronger rules for activation and deactivation of FAD buoys

We the undersigned agree that these critical issues can and must be addressed during the Commission's November 2022 meetings. We urge your government's delegation to ICCAT to support the adoption of the proposals and other actions outlined above.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kind regards,

