



October 31, 2023

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 24th special session of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) on 13-20 November 2023 brings an important opportunity to enhance conservation of key species, particularly by **improving and extending measures for tropical tunas adopted in 2022**.

Specifically, in 2023, we urge the Commission to:

- **Ensure that the bigeye and yellowfin catches are maintained at sustainable levels** by fully allocating the TACs for bigeye and yellowfin and **adopt procedures to identify and address non-compliance with TAC allocations**.
- **Accelerate the development of management strategy evaluation (MSE)** for all tropical tuna stocks and adopt a management procedure for western Atlantic skipjack.
- **Adopt electronic monitoring program standards** and a timeline for implementation by 2025.
- **Adopt North and South Atlantic management measures and robust harvest control rules** in line with advice from the 2023 blue shark stock assessment and **allocate the South Atlantic blue shark TAC among CPCs**.

The undersigned also encourage the Commission to address several issues that impact the health of all tuna stocks and their ecosystems in the Atlantic Ocean, including:

- **Requiring 100% observer coverage** (human and/or electronic) in industrial tuna fisheries, including all those vessels engaged in at sea transshipment, by 2024.
- **Adopting and/or strengthening at-sea transshipment measures** in line with best practices, such as those recommended in the [NGO Tuna Forum's Aligned Guidance on At-Sea Transshipment](#).
- **Strengthening FAD management provisions** in line with the [NGO Tuna Forum's Aligned Guidance on FAD Management](#).
- **Strengthening compliance mechanisms to ensure processes are transparent and robust so that members are held accountable** for the implementation of all conservation management measures and data reporting requirements and there are clear consequences for non-compliance.
- **Implementing precautionary, science-based regulations, best practices and guidelines for avoidance, handling, release and, where appropriate, science-based catch or retention limits**, for all tuna fishing fleets to proactively minimize their impacts upon all non-target and non-retained bycatch species.
- **Requiring fins naturally attached for ALL (i.e., fresh and frozen) sharks without exceptions**, adopting the globally acknowledged best practice to prevent finning.
- **Establishing recommendations for labor and safety standards for crew and observers** on fishing vessels based on relevant international labor conventions.

We the undersigned agree that these critical issues can and must be addressed during the Commission's annual meeting.

As a delegate to the ICCAT, we urge your government to support efforts to adopt proposals or take other actions to address the important issues noted above this year.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kind regards,

