

## POSITION STATEMENT

ATTN: ICCAT Heads of Delegation

I am writing on behalf of OPAGAC-AGAC in support of urgently needed tuna management measures in the Atlantic Ocean, a region for which your government serves as an important leader as a member of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

OPAGAC-AGAC works closely with the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), a coalition of leading scientists, tuna processors from every region of the world and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the world's leading conservation organization. Its collective mission is to undertake science-based initiatives for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of tuna stocks, reducing bycatch and promoting ecosystem health, through advocacy, applied science and direct action.

OPAGAC-AGAC has grown increasingly concerned with the management of tuna resources in the Atlantic Ocean. Our company operates in this region and the sustainability of these stocks is integral to not only our business, but also to the overall marine environment.

We recognize that the impacts of COVID-19 continue to present challenges to regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) like ICCAT. However, we do not believe these circumstances should prevent ICCAT from taking action in 2021 to adopt science-based management measures to ensure the sustainable management of the tuna stocks and marine ecosystems under its purview.

We strongly urge ICCAT CPCs to ensure ICCAT takes action in November at its virtual Commission Meeting, and advances work in 2022, including through supporting the adoption of proposals, on the following priority issues:

1. **Revise Rec. 19-02 to ensure that the bigeye and yellowfin tuna stocks are maintained at sustainable levels and catches are maintained within the agreed TACs.**
2. **Adopt a work plan for FADs with a timeframe to transition to FADs without nets and made primarily with biodegradable materials; evaluate the feasibility of adopting FAD ownership rules and a FAD marking scheme; and require FAD position and acoustic data.**
3. **Accelerate the adoption of harvest strategies for tropical tunas.**
4. **Adopt minimum standards for electronic monitoring and require 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) for all major ICCAT fisheries, and all vessels engaged in at-sea transshipment by 2024.**
5. **Develop a Regional Observer Program for tropical tuna fisheries.**
6. **Request the Compliance Committee to:**
  - a. **develop audit points for ICCAT measures;**
  - b. **address non-compliance with data reporting requirements;**
  - c. **and adopt a plan to resolve non-compliance with harvest limits.**

As a fisheries association engaging in proactive tuna fisheries improvement activities in the Atlantic Ocean, we urge you to ensure that the governments of all ICCAT parties fully support action on the above issues at the virtual ICCAT Commission Meeting in 2021, and in 2022.

OPAGAC-AGAC looks forward to the continued leadership of all ICCAT parties in the Atlantic Ocean, a region rich in tuna resources that are in need of continued science-based conservation and management.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,



Julio Morón  
Managing Director  
OPAGAC-AGAC