

**28th Regular Meeting of the International Commission
for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
New Cairo, Egypt - November 13-20, 2023**

Statement to the Plenary

Sciaena would like to express its gratitude for the opportunity to participate as an observer at the 2023 Annual Meeting of ICCAT.

Ensure Sustainable Management of Bigeye Tuna

Bigeye tuna (BET) exhibits signs of recovery, but uncertainties persist in the stock assessment. Sciaena hopes that CPCs can agree to a new measure for tropical tunas that gives the BET stock the best probabilities of staying in the green quadrant of the Kobe matrix in the upcoming years, which must include the following elements:

- A TAC cap of 73,000 tons for BET;
- A new BET allocation key for all fleets, considering historical catches, the needs of developing nations, and criteria for reducing negative impacts on the stock and the ecosystem;
- Maintain or enhance measures for FAD management and accountability (including a registry and marking scheme);
- Expanded observer coverage and electronic fleet monitoring.

Adopt an MSE for North Atlantic Swordfish

A key decision in ensuring the sustainability of the pelagic longline fishery is the adoption of an MSE for the North Atlantic Swordfish. We are certain that CPCs won't hesitate to take this decision, in order to culminate the extremely well lead process and to fulfil the SCRS work plan on MSEs.

Define Sustainable Limits for Blue Shark Stocks

ICCAT needs to set sustainable catch limits for the Blue shark, a crucial species for longline fisheries and the Atlantic's pelagic ecosystems. Sciaena proposes a TAC of 20,000 tonnes for the northern Atlantic and 25,000 tonnes for the southern stock to ensure a 60% chance of both being in the green quadrant of the Kobe plot by 2026 and the subsequent



10 years, respectively. Additionally, Sciaena supports further protective measures, including an allocation key for the southern stock.

Continue to take leadership on Control, Monitoring and Compliance

ICCAT's recent decisions have elevated it among the leading Regional Fisheries Management Organizations in combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated fishing. Sciaena encourages ICCAT to persist in this direction by implementing Electronic Monitoring standards, progressing discussions on a High Seas Boarding and Inspection scheme, and enhancing compliance measures.

Taking Steps Towards Ecosystem and Climate Considerations

As the Atlantic faces escalating climate impacts, effective fisheries management that contributes to the resilience of its ecosystems is ever more relevant. Sciaena urges CPCs to adopt a climate action plan that also steers ICCAT towards an ecosystem-based fisheries management approach, where setting ecological objectives and elements in MSEs is a pivotal element.

In conclusion, Sciaena urges the adoption of these proposals, demonstrating a commitment to healthy pelagic ecosystems and sustainable fisheries management.

