



2025 ICCAT Position Statement

GLOBAL TUNA ALLIANCE

ABOUT US - GLOBAL TUNA ALLIANCE

The Global Tuna Alliance (GTA) recognises the significant progress made by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) in 2024, particularly the adoption of a new comprehensive conservation and management measure for Atlantic tropical tunas (Rec. 24-01) and a Management Procedure (MP) for North Atlantic swordfish. However, the 2025 Annual Meeting presents a pivotal juncture where implementation and finalisation of long-term sustainable management solutions are paramount.

The GTA, representing leading retailers and seafood companies, advocates for science-based, transparent, and equitable management of Atlantic tuna stocks. Our collective goal is to ensure bigeye tuna recovers to sustainable levels and that yellowfin does not regress, safeguarding both ocean ecosystems and global seafood markets.

OUR CURRENT PARTNERS

The ICCAT Secretariat has requested that we refrain from listing our Partners in this position statement, since Global Tuna Alliance Partners do not hold the Observers status to ICCAT.

We are eager to respect the ICCAT procedures, therefore, you can find a complete list of our current partners at: <https://www.globaltunaalliance.com/partners/>

TOP LEVEL ASKS

I. Strengthen compliance, monitoring, and vessel transparency

- Observer coverage and electronic monitoring (EM): **Achieve 100% observer coverage** (human or electronic) for all industrial tuna fisheries, particularly those involved in at-sea transshipment.
- **Develop transparent audit points** for ICCAT management measures, mirroring the compliance frameworks established for shark management (Rec. 18-06).
- **Advocate for the full implementation of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA)** across all ICCAT parties, ensuring illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fish cannot enter markets.
- The Global Tuna Alliance (GTA) advocates for an **AIS vessel requirement to complement existing VMS obligations**, as AIS improves maritime safety, provides near-real-time positional data, and acts as a VMS backup.

II. Solidify sustainable tropical tuna management

- **Ensure yellowfin tuna sustainability** & support the allocation of the 110,000 t Yellowfin Tuna Total Allowable Catch (TAC) among Contracting Parties (CPCs) and fishing gears to prevent overfishing.
- **Advance the implementation of enhanced Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) management measures**, including acceleration of the transition to fully biodegradable FADs, consistent with best practices from other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs).
- **Accelerate the development and adoption of comprehensive Management Procedures (MPs) for tropical tuna species.**

III. Advance harvest strategies and management procedures

- Ensure strict adherence to the **Management Procedure (MP) for the Atlantic bluefin tuna** and endorse the adoption of the scientifically-derived Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for the 2026-2028 management cycle.
- **Support the adoption of final operational management objectives for Southern Atlantic Albacore**, aligning with the conceptual objectives adopted in 2024 (Res. 24-09).
- **Support the initiation of Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) work for North and South Atlantic Blue Sharks**, following the feasibility study planned for 2025.

STRENGTHEN COMPLIANCE, MONITORING, AND TRANSPARENCY

What is the issue?

Transparency and accountability are the foundation of effective fisheries governance. However, varying levels of compliance, monitoring, and data transparency continue to challenge the effective implementation of ICCAT measures. Limited observer coverage, inconsistent vessel tracking, and gaps in port state measures reduce the reliability of data and oversight needed to ensure sustainable and transparent fisheries management.

What are we calling for?

- **Observer coverage and electronic monitoring (EM):** Achieve 100% observer coverage (human or electronic) for all industrial tuna fisheries, particularly those involved in at-sea transshipment. Urgently increase the minimum observer coverage for pelagic longline vessels to at least 20%, consistent with previous SCRS advice, emphasising that existing lower minimums (5-10% for non-purse seine gears) are often insufficient for reliable bycatch estimates.
- **Advance compliance procedures:** Develop transparent audit points for ICCAT management measures, mirroring the compliance frameworks established for shark management (Rec. 18-06). Implement non-compliance mechanisms to address overfishing and ensure adherence to TAC allocations.
- **Strengthen port state measures:** Advocate for the full implementation of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) across all ICCAT parties, ensuring illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fish cannot enter markets. This includes addressing gaps in the current Recommendation by ICCAT (Rec. 23-17) regarding cooperation, information exchange, and inspector training.
- **Enhance Vessel Tracking and Transparency:** Effective monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) are crucial for compliance and sustainability in ICCAT fisheries. Vessel tracking, through both VMS and AIS, offers vital insights into vessel activity, supporting science-based management, compliance, and safety at sea. Although ICCAT mandates VMS under [Rec. 18-10](#), data collection and sharing among Contracting Parties (CPCs) are inconsistent, hindering compliance and enforcement. Enhanced transparency and interoperability of tracking data would significantly improve oversight and strengthen ICCAT's ability to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The Global Tuna Alliance (GTA) advocates for an AIS requirement to complement existing VMS obligations, as AIS improves maritime safety, provides near-real-time positional data, and acts as a VMS backup. Many ICCAT CPCs, including the EU, UK, Canada, and Korea, already require AIS, demonstrating its practicality. Integrating AIS requirements into ICCAT's monitoring framework would not only enhance compliance but also demonstrate leadership among RFMOs, aligning with growing global expectations for transparent seafood supply chains.

SOLIDIFY SUSTAINABLE TROPICAL TUNA MANAGEMENT

What is the issue?

While the adoption of the new tropical tuna measure and interim management objectives represents important progress, effective implementation remains essential. Continued challenges include ensuring that catches, particularly for yellowfin tuna, remain within agreed limits, strengthening FAD management, and advancing the development of harvest strategies and management procedures for tropical tuna stocks. Consistent application of these measures will be key to maintaining sustainable and equitable fisheries across the Atlantic.

What are we calling for?

- **Ensure yellowfin tuna sustainability** : Support the allocation of the 110,000 t Yellowfin Tuna Total Allowable Catch (TAC) among Contracting Parties (CPCs) and fishing gears to prevent overfishing and improve compliance with agreed quotas. The catches in 2023 exceeded the TAC by 27%, threatening long-term sustainability.
- **Strengthen FAD management:** Advance the implementation of enhanced Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) management measures, including acceleration of the transition to fully biodegradable FADs, consistent with best practices from other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). Urge ICCAT to adopt a clear timeline for the transition to meet Partner expectations. Japan stressed the importance of reducing juvenile mortality through stronger FAD management. Urge the Commission to immediately review and implement conservation measures based on the results of the 2025 bigeye tuna stock assessment, particularly concerning the impact of FAD use on juvenile mortality.
- **Implement tropical tuna harvest strategies:** Accelerate the development and adoption of comprehensive Management Procedures (MPs) for tropical tuna species, particularly bigeye and yellowfin. Finalise operational management objectives for the multi-stock tropical tuna MSE and ensure the Western Atlantic Skipjack Management Procedure (MP) is adopted in 2025, given the SCRS has finalised the technical tuning and testing of Candidate Management Procedures (CMPs).



ADVANCE HARVEST STRATEGIES AND MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

What is the issue?

ICCAT's progress toward science-based harvest strategies is threatened by pressure for ad-hoc quota increases and delays in completing key Management Strategy Evaluations (MSEs). For Atlantic bluefin tuna, deviating from the agreed Management Procedure (MP) risks undermining precautionary management. Southern Atlantic albacore and Atlantic blue sharks still lack finalised objectives and MSEs, slowing the transition to long-term, science-driven sustainability.

What are we calling for?

- **Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT):** Ensure strict adherence to the Management Procedure (MP) and endorse the adoption of the scientifically-derived Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for the 2026-2028 management cycle, as provided by the SCRS incorporating Close-Kin Mark Recapture (CKMR) results. Specifically, the GTA supports TACs of 45,191 t for the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea stock and 2,963 t for the Western Atlantic stock. Resist ad-hoc quota increases that fall outside the MP framework. Support the scheduled review and possible reconditioning of the MP in the coming years (no later than 2028).
- **Southern Atlantic albacore:** Support the adoption of final operational management objectives for Southern Atlantic Albacore, aligning with the conceptual objectives adopted in 2024 (Res. 24-09). Initiate the development of the Management strategy evaluation (MSE) for Southern Atlantic Albacore to ensure long-term, precautionary management.
- **Blue shark MSE:** Support the initiation of Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) work for North and South Atlantic Blue Sharks, following the feasibility study planned for 2025.



Infographic Key

-  Not adopted
-  Adopted, but not implemented
-  Adopted and implemented where applicable

Northern Albacore

- Precautionary Target Reference Points 
- Precautionary Limit Reference Points 
- Acceptable Levels of Risk 
- Management/Operational Objectives 
- Management Strategy Evaluation 
- Performance Indicators 
- Harvest Control Rules 
- Monitoring Strategies 
- Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels 

Eastern & Western Bluefin

- Precautionary Target Reference Points 
- Precautionary Limit Reference Points 
- Acceptable Levels of Risk 
- Management/Operational Objectives 
- Management Strategy Evaluation 
- Performance Indicators 
- Harvest Control Rules 
- Monitoring Strategies 
- Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels 

Eastern & Western Skipjack

- Precautionary Target Reference Points 
- Precautionary Limit Reference Points 
- Acceptable Levels of Risk 
- Management/Operational Objectives 
- Management Strategy Evaluation 
- Performance Indicators 
- Harvest Control Rules 
- Monitoring Strategies 
- Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels 

Southern Albacore

- Precautionary Target Reference Points 
- Precautionary Limit Reference Points 
- Acceptable Levels of Risk 
- Management/Operational Objectives 
- Management Strategy Evaluation 
- Performance Indicators 
- Harvest Control Rules 
- Monitoring Strategies 
- Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels 

Bigeye & Yellowfin

- Precautionary Target Reference Points 
- Precautionary Limit Reference Points 
- Acceptable Levels of Risk 
- Management/Operational Objectives 
- Management Strategy Evaluation 
- Performance Indicators 
- Harvest Control Rules 
- Monitoring Strategies 
- Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels 



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