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**The Pew Charitable Trusts'**  
**Statement to Panel 2 of the 24<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of ICCAT**  
**11 November 2015**

This year, Panel 2 has a clear opportunity and responsibility to focus on formulating a vision for the future of ICCAT-managed fisheries through the development of stock-specific harvest strategies. When designed appropriately, pre-agreed harvest strategies increase the predictability, transparency and efficiency of management; contribute to the sustainability and profitability of fisheries; and greatly strengthen management at the Commission.

In June, the Second Meeting of the ICCAT Working Group to Enhance the Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers (SWGSM) recommended that “the Panels commence discussion to identify management objectives, as well as, relevant parameters for HCR and performance indicators on a stock by stock basis.” An overarching Recommendation to advance these tools is being discussed in Plenary here in Malta. We urge the members of Panel 2 in Malta to follow the SWGSM’s recommendation in the spirit of the newly proposed Recommendation by:

1. Adopting a pilot harvest strategy for northern albacore; and
2. Setting management objectives for Atlantic bluefin tuna.

To ensure robust and effective harvest strategies that are consistent with relevant international and domestic agreements to which ICCAT members have committed, both efforts should include the following elements:

- A requirement to immediately end overfishing;
- A requirement that rebuilding plans be designed to have at least a 75% chance of success;
- Agreement that if the biomass-based limit reference point is breached, the management action would include immediate fishery suspension and the initiation of scientific monitoring;
- Precautionary biomass-based target and/or threshold reference point(s) that will drastically reduce the likelihood (e.g., to less than 10%) of breaching the limit reference point;
- A target fishing mortality rate of  $0.8F_{MSY}$  to maximize the likelihood that the stock remains in the green quadrant of the Kobe plot.
- A request to the SCRS to present the projected results of a suite of candidate harvest control rules for bluefin tuna to the Commission in 2016.

The albacore pilot harvest strategy and bluefin management objectives adopted by the Commission this year should be evaluated by the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) using management strategy evaluation (MSE). The results of the MSE should be presented to the Commission in 2016 and 2017, respectively, in order to adopt final harvest strategies for the stocks in 2017. It is imperative that ICCAT go down the path toward harvest strategy-based management to help to fully rebuild bluefin and northern albacore stocks and protect them from future declines.