IPNLF
INTERNATIONAL POLE & LINE FOUNDATION

IPNLF POSITION STATEMENT

26th Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) Palma de Mallorca, Spain, 18-25 November 2019

The International Pole & Line Foundation (IPNLF) is an international charity working across science, policy and seafood trade sectors to improve the wellbeing of coastal communities committed to environmentally and socially responsible one-by-one fishing methods. The ICCAT Convention Area is home to many one-by-one tuna fisheries, including pole-and-line (baitboat), troll, and handline fisheries harvesting temperate and tropical Atlantic tunas in at least sixteen Atlantic coastal States. All require sustainable management of internationally shared fish stocks by ICCAT to support their fisheries and reliant communities.

During this year's Regular Meeting, IPNLF strongly encourages ICCAT Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (CPCs collectively) to agree on management measures that will secure sustainable and equitable tuna fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean. The impasse of the 2018 negotiation to strengthen and replace Recommendation 16-01 should be resolved as a matter of priority.

Specifically, we urge action in the following areas:

- **Rebuild bigeye tuna** (BET) and **reduce yellowfin tuna (YFT) catches** to end years of unsustainable fishing. ICCAT's scientific body (SCRS) has determined that **current catch rates provide only a 1% probability of BET recovery by 2033**.
  - Reduce the bigeye total allowable catch (TAC), in line with SCRS advice, to rebuild the stock within a reasonable timeframe, and also reduce yellowfin catches to align with the conclusions in the 2019 SCRS report, in which ICCAT scientists express a strong concern that **catches above 120,000 t are expected to further degrade the condition of the yellowfin stock**.
  - **Enhance compliance and accountability** by including more CPCs in the allocation table, **increasing observer coverage** (100% for purse seine and 20% for longline), and **eliminating the carry-over of "unused" catch limits**.
  - **Protect special requirements and rights of developing coastal States** by duly considering and applying the ICCAT allocation criteria (Resolution 15-13).
- Implement **stricter limits on the use of drifting fish aggregating devices** (DFADs), **supply vessels and a suitable time-area closure** to lower catch rates of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tunas to within sustainable limits. These measures must be science-based and accompanied by

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effective monitoring and control. **Transparent, independent and harmonized control of operational (DFAD)** buoy[1] numbers is also required to verify compliance.

- Cap the capacity of industrial longline and purse seine fleets.
- Advance the development and implementation of harvest strategies for key species as a matter of priority.
- Adopt measures to reduce bycatch and protect endangered, threatened, or protected species.

IN DEPTH: Crafting a Sustainable and Equitable Tropical Tuna Management Measure

Comply with the TAC

A critical shortcoming in the current CMM is the ***lack of accountability****. Only eight CPCs are on the bigeye allocation table and there are no compliance ensuring mechanisms in place for the yellowfin TAC. In 2018, the bigeye and yellowfin TACs were exceeded by as much as 13 and 23 percent respectively. To increase accountability,* ***additional CPCs should be added to the table by reducing the minor harvester threshold and including all CPCs with large purse seine vessels.*** *Additionally,* ***observer coverage in purse seine and longline fisheries targeting tropical tunas should be increased to 100 percent and 20 percent respectively.***

Reduce harvest of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin

The use of FADs amplifies overfishing concerns and the Standing Committee of Research and Statistics (SCRS) recommends the adoption of measures to reduce FAD-driven mortality of juvenile yellowfin and bigeye. ***This can be achieved through limitations on associated fleet capacity and stricter operational FAD limits which may include an Atlantic-wide FAD closure****. Activation of operational buoys should always occur before they are deployed and activation after deployment shall not be allowed to avoid "ghost" or "unregistered" buoys undermining the intent of operational buoy limits. To increase transparency in dFAD operations buoy owners should provide instrumental buoy data, on a weekly basis, in compliance with the minimum best-practice standards of daily reporting, to an independent service provider contracted by the ICCAT Secretariat. To complement such actions,* ***CPCs should also eliminate or reduce the use of supply vessels which further enable excessive*** *fishing effort on juvenile tunas, marine litter, and the bycatch of vulnerable marine species.* ***The use of any aerial means, including aircraft, drones, helicopters or any other types of unmanned aerial vehicles to search for tropical tunas should also be prohibited****.*

Fair access to the resource for the coastal developing States

New measures must fully recognize the legitimate development aspirations of coastal developing State CPCs, in line with ICCAT Resolution 15-13, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and various other international instruments. The ICCAT bigeye tuna allocation key has historically awarded around 90 percent of the total TAC among only eight of the 52 CPCs, with only two allocations to coastal States. ***Balancing the legitimate rights and development aspirations of developing coastal States with meaningful, science-based conservation is a difficult undertaking, but it is of utmost importance.***

[1] Used definition for "operational buoy": buoy that has been activated, switched on and deployed on a drifting FOB. Activation of the buoy should imperatively occur before the deployment. Otherwise, the buoy is categorized as "ghost" or "unregistered" (the purse seiner and/or the support seiner may wait for sufficient tuna aggregation before starting the transmission of the buoy, however, during this period, the buoy contributes to fishing effort and habitat modification. Obviously, there is no risk of deployment of an activated buoy without switching on, as this operation cannot be done remotely."