

Original: French

**STATEMENT BY FRANCE (ON BEHALF OF SAINT-PIERRE-ET-MIQUELON) TO PANEL 2  
ON WESTERN BLUEFIN TUNA (ROUND 3)**

**Western bluefin tuna**

France (in respect of Saint Pierre & Miquelon) thanked the Chair of Panel 2 and the Chair of the SCRS for their efforts and availability which have enabled detailed discussion on the very important issue of western bluefin tuna management.

*New stock assessment in 2021*

As regards a new stock assessment being held in 2021, France (in respect of Saint Pierre & Miquelon) recalls that a stock assessment is a complex activity which involves moving back and forth between data collection, processing and analysis. For it to be useful to decision-making, this process, and in particular the time necessary for its completion, must be respected.

A new assessment also calls for greater commitment of the scientists involved, and even if the general schedule can be adapted accordingly, this would impact their work schedule. It is essential that this does not affect the management strategy evaluation (MSE) process.

Moreover, the holding of this assessment must not set a precedent.

*TAC level*

France (in respect of Saint Pierre & Miquelon) supported, throughout the consultation process, the original proposal of the Chair of Panel 2, i.e. a TAC of 1,785 t for 2021, based on the best scientific advice available and to avoid overfishing of this stock.

France (in respect of Saint Pierre & Miquelon) regrets that these positions have not been heeded but will not oppose a consensus on the proposal of the Chair contained in PA2\_608C, given that for stock management, a recommendation taken on this basis is preferable to the absence of a decision.