

**WWF****Statement to Panel 2  
November 2020**

WWF recognizes the constraints that the ICCAT CPCs and Secretariat must face with the global pandemic that made it impossible to run a physical meeting of the Commission and determined the cancellation or postponement of several other important meetings in agenda, including the SCRS annual meeting this year. Despite the unprecedented conditions, we urge CPCs to address the following urgent issues with no further delay in 2020.

**Atlantic bluefin tuna**

The 2020 stock assessment showed that recent recruitments of the **western stock** of bluefin tuna are lower than those estimated in 2017. The biomass is estimated to have unexpectedly declined by 11,7% in three years (2018-2020). A roll-over of Recommendation 17-06, maintaining the same level of catches of 2,350 t is therefore expected to maintain the status of overfishing, heading to a dangerous situation of decline for this stock.

WWF strongly recommends members of PA2 to agree on urgent measures to end overfishing and reverse the declining trend of the western stock of Atlantic bluefin tuna. According to scientific advice **TAC should be decreased at least to 1,785 t to deliver a probability to end overfishing with nearly 60% of probabilities by 2021.**

Proposals to improve control and traceability measures for the trade of live **East Atlantic and Mediterranean stock of bluefin tuna** were delayed due to the impact that the Pandemic had on the ICCAT agenda. WWF urges the members of Panel 2 to agree intersessionally on a set of ambitious amendments of ICCAT Rec. 19-04 to be presented to the ICCAT Commission in 2021.

The update of the stock assessment in 2020 did not provide reliable information on which the SCRS could base TAC advice for 2021. Uncertainties around the model used to estimate biomass were considered even higher than in 2017. Although the stock size indices confirmed an increase in the biomass and the stock not being overfished, considering the high uncertainties and the unknown magnitude of IUU catches that the SCRS recognized to be still happening and both affecting the assessment, WWF supports the Chair proposal and urges CPCs to **follow scientific advice and not increase the current Total Allowable Catches (36,000 t) for 2021 and 2022.**