

Original: English

**STATEMENT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM REGARDING A REQUEST
FOR A BLUEFIN TUNA QUOTA INCREASE**

There are historical records of Atlantic bluefin tuna in UK waters from at least the 19th century. By the 1930s, recreational bluefin fishing with rod and reel was a popular sport in the UK. We have records of consistent catches in that period.

But the UK has witnessed the changing fortunes of Atlantic bluefin tuna first hand. By the mid-1960s the species was seemingly absent from our waters. However, since 2014 bluefin tuna have been increasingly sighted in UK waters and our successful tagging programmes indicate that the species is increasingly abundant in our waters. This may be due to both oceanographic and ecosystem changes, but also the efforts put into stock recovery.

As a coastal State for the eastern Atlantic bluefin stock, the UK asks the Panel to consider our request for a quota increase.

We have evidence which indicates increased presence and abundance of bluefin tuna in UK waters. This also demonstrates the contribution we are making to research.

Firstly, since 2018 we have been delivering our own Thunnus UK programme. This has been delivered through collaboration between the UK Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and the University of Exeter. Around one hundred fish have been tagged with PSAT tags, mainly in the waters off Southwest England.

Secondly, we have delivered a further 'Catch and Release Tagging' programme in the last two years. Through this collaboration between government scientists and recreational anglers, a further 700 bluefin tuna were tagged in 2021. In 2022 [we have already tagged over 1,000 fish](#).

However, the UK currently has just 0.13% of the available TAC. This is the lowest of all ICCAT CPCs. This means we only have around 50 t of quota. We are requesting a further 350 t and consider this to be a very reasonable request.

This would allow us to develop our fisheries and bring benefits to coastal communities in the UK where economic opportunities are limited.

We acknowledge the requests of other CPCs and hope that all reasonable requests can be met.

References

Phillips, S., Ford, J., Murphy, S., McMaster, J., Thomas, S., Duffy, M., Davis, S., Arris, M. and Righton, D. (2022) Summary of the 2021 pilot year catch and release tagging (CHART) programme in southwest England. ICCAT SCRS/2022/173.

Horton, T.W, Hawkes, L.A., Witt, M.J., van der Kooij, J. and Righton, D. (in prep.) Thunnus UK Defra Policy Report.

<https://www.thunnusuk.org/projects>
[Cefas on Twitter – 1000 fish tagged](#)