



23rd Special Meeting
International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
Vale do Lobo, Portugal - November 14-21, 2022

Opening Statement to Plenary

Sciaena is grateful for the possibility to attend the 2022 Special Meeting of ICCAT as an observer. We would like to acknowledge the Secretariat, Chairs and CPCs for their efforts during the Covid-19 health crisis. We are particularly glad that this year's meeting is taking place in the region where we are based and we would like to highlight three decisions that we consider crucial for a successful outcome.

Ensure sustainable management of Bigeye tuna

Bigeye tuna (BET) continues to show signs of recovery but the uncertainties around the stock assessment still exist. Therefore, Sciaena recommends that the TAC for BET does not exceed 70.000 tons, in order to give an increased probability of the stock not being overfished or under overfishing in future years.

To help prevent overfishing, we are hopeful that CPCs will be able to define a new allocation key that includes all fleets, taking into account historical catches but also the aspirations of developing countries, as well as criteria such as reduced juvenile mortality and other factors that have negative impacts on the stock and the ecosystem it depends on.

Sciaena also urges the commission to follow the SCRS recommendation to maintain or decrease juvenile BET catches; adopt measures to increase accountability for FAD sets (such as a FAD registry and a FAD marking scheme); and increase observer and remote electronic monitoring coverage of the fleets that catch BET and the other tropical species.

Adopt a Bluefin tuna Management Procedure

Sciaena has followed with great interest the development of the MSE for Atlantic Bluefin tuna (BFT) and believes the Management Procedures to be the future of management of the stocks under ICCAT's remit. While important details remain to be decided, Sciaena strongly encourages all the CPCs to come together and adopt a Management Procedure for Atlantic BFT at this year's ICCAT annual meeting.

Extend the measures for Shortfin Mako Shark to the South Atlantic population

We welcome the proposal tabled by the European Union in order to extend the measures adopted in 2021 for North Atlantic Shortfin Mako to the South Atlantic population, as the two are closely connected and the latest assessments show a similar downward trend in both. We encourage all CPCs to support this proposal.

In conclusion, Sciaena calls on the decision makers gathered in the Algarve during the next days to make this an historical ICCAT meeting, by achieving these and other decisions that ensure sustainable management of pelagic fisheries in the Atlantic, contributing to the health of these ecosystems.

