



The Pew Charitable Trusts'
Opening Statement to Panel 2 - Northern temperate tunas
November 2023

The Pew Charitable Trusts welcomes this opportunity to comment on important work being considered by Panel 2 at the 28th Regular Meeting of the ICCAT Commission. This year, there are two clear decision points for Panel 2 to progress based on successful deliberations throughout the year. **Pew commends the Panel on the development of the Atlantic bluefin tuna exceptional circumstances protocol, which should be adopted at the Commission meeting. In addition, the Panel should agree to a higher Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for North Atlantic albacore, in accordance with the current management procedure (MP).**

Pew was among the many groups to congratulate ICCAT on the monumental achievement of adopting an MP for Atlantic bluefin tuna in 2022. Now, ICCAT must finalize that work by adopting an exceptional circumstances protocol (ECP) for this iconic species. Building off the ECP already agreed for North Atlantic albacore, Panel 2 has worked closely with the SCRS to develop a plan for how to identify and respond to rare or unforeseen events that may warrant reconsideration of the MP. Pew urges members to finalize and adopt the draft ECP for Atlantic bluefin submitted by the Chair ([PA2 611](#)).

ICCAT should also agree to a new TAC for North Atlantic albacore based on the current MP, which this time allows for a substantial increase of 25%. The 2023 stock assessment showed continued growth of the stock, evidence that the MP is working. As a result, the MP calls for an increase to 47,251 t per year for 2024-2026. We are encouraged that the two proposals up for Panel 2's consideration ([PA2 612](#) and [PA2 614](#)) mirror one another in calling for adoption of this TAC. This is a clear example of how MPs can streamline science-based fisheries management.

Finally, Pew strongly opposes lifting capacity restrictions on bluefin tuna ranching operations, as proposed in [PA2 607](#). Farming operations continue to pose compliance challenges, noting the

unresolved Tarantelo case and new allegations of illegal activity involving farms in Croatia, and it would be unwise to remove capacity restrictions until proven monitoring and control measures are in place at all bluefin tuna farms. The Panel should reject this proposal.

This year, Panel 2 has only a few of key decision points to progress, and that is the result of good work over the past 5 years to ensure that the three primary stocks the Panel is responsible for are managed by MPs. Pew encourages other Panels to follow this path.