

Proposal for amendments to ICCAT PA2_605/2024 – “Draft Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 22-08 establishing a Multi-annual Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean”

(Submitted by the EU)

Given the current process to amend Recommendation 22-08, which aims to consolidate all provisions into a single document, update outdated elements, and address legacy provisions, the EU takes this opportunity to propose a few amendments. These amendments intend to include revised provisions, correct any elements that were inadvertently excluded or removed, and delete additional outdated provisions. The proposed amendments are as follows:

New inclusions

- Ongoing discussions with Iceland and the EU aim to reinstate the footnote from Rec. 02-08, which states: "Underages in the Icelandic fishery in any given year shall be transferred to the European Union." This amendment is proposed in brackets, pending the conclusion of ongoing talks.
- Inclusion of Paragraph 95bis to allow towing vessels to achieve 100% coverage through the use of Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS).
- Modification of Paragraph 161 to remove the secondary deadline, which is only applicable in cases of force majeure.
- Inclusion of Paragraph 164bis to permit control caging outside farm premises in cases of water turbidity, subject to authorization from the competent authority.
- Inclusion of Paragraph 198bis to allow a 5% tolerance for intra-farm transfers, similar to provisions for inter-farm transfers.
- Addition of a new Paragraph 5 to Annex 9 to expedite fish harvesting after stereoscopic camera footage has been obtained and prior to the final assessment of the entire Joint Fishing Operation, which can take several months and may disrupt the smooth and economically efficient operation of harvesting.

Removing outdated provisions

- Deletion of Paragraph 237 – "Transitional period for the implementation of sealing of bluefin tuna cages," as this provision is now outdated.

Introducing amendments

- Amendment to Paragraph 156 to allow a towing vessel to remain near the farming facility at a distance of 0.1 mile while awaiting the presence of authorities at the farming premises. This modification aims to reduce operation time while maintaining the same level of control.
- Amendment to Annex 10, Paragraph 5, which specifies requirements for monitoring and recording the release of bluefin tuna from transport or farm cages into the sea.

Proposal

4. The total allowable catches (TACs), inclusive of dead discards, for 2023 to 2025 shall be set at 40,570 t, in accordance with the MP. The TACs for 2026 and thereafter shall be decided at the 2025 Commission Annual Meeting in accordance with the MP.

40,570 t shall be allocated in 2023 to 2025 in accordance with the following scheme:

CPC	Annual Quota in 2023-2025 (t)
Albania	264
Algeria	2,023
China	112
Egypt	513
European Union	21,503
Iceland ⁽¹⁾	224
Japan	3,114
Korea	221
Libya	2,548
Morocco	3,700
Namibia	50
Norway	368
Syria	129
Tunisia	3,000
Türkiye	2,600
United Kingdom	63
Chinese Taipei	101
Subtotal	40,533
Unallocated reserves	37
TOTAL	40,570

⁽¹⁾ [Underages in the Icelandic fishery in any given year shall be transferred to the European Union.]

CPC Observer Programme

95bis. By way of derogation from paragraph 95, ident 4, CPCs with towing vessels may opt to achieve 100% observer coverage through an Electronic Monitoring System (EMS) that meets the relevant requirements of ICCAT Recommendation 23-18.

Caging operations

156. At arrival of the towing vessel in the vicinity of the farm, the farm CPC competent authority shall ensure that:

- a) the towing vessel and cage concerned ~~is~~ are maintained at a distance of minimum 0.1 nautical mile from any facility of the farm at least until the farm CPC competent physically present; and
- b) the position and activity of the relevant towing vessels is monitored at all times.

161. All the caging operations shall be completed before 22 August of each year, unless the farm CPC receiving the fish provides valid reasons, including *force majeure*. Those reasons shall be documented and reported in the caging report referred to in paragraph 186. ~~In any case, no bluefin tuna shall be caged after 7 September.~~ The above deadlines do not apply in case of inter-farm transfers.

Recording of the caging operation by control cameras

164bis. In the event of persistent turbidity conditions in the farm area, the farm CPC competent authority may authorise the control caging to take place outside the farm, in an adjacent area where there is sufficient visibility. CPCs shall document the measurement of the turbidity according to standard methods.

Intra-farm transfers

196. Intra-farm transfer shall not take place without the authorization ~~and the presence~~ of the farm CPC competent authority. Each transfer shall be recorded by control cameras to confirm the number of bluefin tuna individuals transferred. The video footage shall comply with the minimum standards as laid down in **Annex 8**. The farm CPC competent authority shall monitor ~~and control~~ those transfers, including by verifying the video footage and ensuring that each intra-farm transfer is recorded in the eBCD system.

198bis. A difference by number of bluefin tuna individuals between the number resulting from the intra-farm transfer and the expected number shall be duly investigated by the farm CPC competent authority and recorded in the eBCD system. In the case of excess number, the farm CPC competent authority shall order the release of the corresponding number of fish. The release operation shall be conducted in accordance with Annex 10. Compensation for differences between different cages on the farm shall not be allowed. A margin of error of up to 5% between the number of individuals resulting from the intra-farm transfer and the expected number in the cage, may be allowed by the CPC competent authority.

~~Transitional period for the implementation of sealing of bluefin tuna cages~~

~~237. For the implementation of the measures related to the sealing of bluefin tuna cages set out in paragraphs 128, 159, 164, 217, **Annex 4**, **Annex 6** and **Annex 14**, a transitional period until 2023 may be granted to those CPCs that indicate in their fishing plans such need to ensure proper implementation of the measures. An assessment of the implementation of this measure during the 2022 fishing season will be carried out by the affected CPCs, with a view to discuss their implementation and possible revision or update, at the March 2023 Intersessional Meeting of Panel 2 and, if agreed by the Commission, the 16th Meeting of the IMM Working Group in 2023.~~

Annex 9

5. Provisions applicable to JFO and traps

5. CPC farm authorities may authorize the harvesting of fish from some of the cages, after analysing the videos of those cages and before the completion of the verification of all cages from that JFO. To proceed, the eBCD of the cage to be harvested shall be adjusted within the lower range of the results of the stereoscopic camera system. Any discrepancy from the initially declared quantity will be taken into account when analysing all data from that JFO.

Annex 10

Record of the release operation by video camera

5. The release of bluefin tuna from transport or farm cages into the sea shall be recorded by control camera. All release operations into the sea shall be observed by a national observer in case of releases from a transport cage before caging, or an ICCAT regional observer in case of releases after caging.