

Atlantic Ocean tuna – longline (StarKist) FIP Position Statement for the ICCAT virtual meeting, 14-21 November 2022

Drafted with agreement from all Atlantic Ocean tuna – longline (StarKist) FIP Participants –
November 2022

The submission of this position statement is regarding the Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) currently being undertaken by the StarKist Atlantic Ocean tuna Fishery. The fishery targets albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), bigeye (*T. obesus*) and yellowfin (*T. albacares*) tunas. The pelagic longline vessels are flagged to Taiwan, St Vincent, Senegal, Panama and Belize and fish on the high seas (and occasionally in the national Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)) in the Pacific. Further details can be found here: [Atlantic Ocean tuna - longline \(StarKist\)](#). The fishery is managed regionally by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) in the Atlantic Ocean.

As part of this FIP reaching MSC certification there are various actions that need to be undertaken that involve a range of different stakeholders. To ensure the FIP meets these objectives we need the support of the ICCAT and urge action at the ICCAT virtual meeting this year on multiple topics laid out in this position statement.

The impacts of COVID-19 continue to present challenges to RFMOs. Even under these challenging circumstances, ICCAT must ensure the uninterrupted, sustainable management of the tuna stocks and marine ecosystems under its purview. This Statement focuses on those critical measures and issues on which ICCAT must take action in 2022, which align with the ISSF global priorities for tuna RFMOs.

The Atlantic Ocean tuna – longline (StarKist) FIP strongly urges the ICCAT and its member states to ensure the ICCAT acts in November at the ICCAT virtual meeting to:

1. Ensure that catch limits in the Recommendation that supersedes Rec. 21-01 allow the bigeye and yellowfin tuna stocks to remain at sustainable levels and catches are maintained within the TACs.
2. Review compliance with FAD data reporting and provisions and take corrective measures as needed. Adopt in 2022 a timeframe to transition to FADs without nets and made primarily with biodegradable materials; develop recovery policies, a marking scheme and ownership rules; and require fad position and acoustic data for scientific rules.
3. Adopt harvest strategies for bluefin tuna in 2022 and in 2023 accelerate the development of harvest strategies for all tropical tuna stocks.
4. Adopt minimum standards for electronic monitoring by 2023. Require 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) for all major ICCAT fisheries, and all vessels engaged in at-sea transshipment by 2024.
5. Request the Compliance Committee to address non-compliance with FAD data reporting requirements and develop audit points for ICCAT measures.
6. Extend the retention ban for shortfin mako in the North Atlantic and adopt a complementary prohibition for the South Atlantic stock. Support work by the SCRS and CPCs to identify shark mortality mitigation measures through gear changes. Require all sharks be landed with fins naturally attached without exceptions.
7. Establish limited entry through closed vessel registries, and develop a common currency to measure fishing capacity, such as cubic meters of well volume.



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If the above-mentioned are addressed effectively it will have positive long term-sustainability implications and improve the overall health of the Atlantic marine ecosystem to allow for fisheries like our current FIP to achieve sustainability targets, particularly in line with MSC certification.

For more information, please do not hesitate in contacting the FIP coordinator Tom Evans at t.evans@keytraceability.com

Thank you for your attention in this matter.