

Atlantic Ocean Tuna purse seine (GSK Marine S.A.) FIP Position Statement for ICCAT 2022

Drafted with agreement from all FIP Participants – November 2022

ATTN: ICCAT and delegations

The submission of this position statement is regarding the Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) currently being undertaken by the Atlantic Ocean tuna - purse seine (GSK Marine S.A.) fishery. The fishery targets Atlantic bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*), eastern Atlantic skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) and Atlantic yellowfin (*T. albacares*) tunas through purse seine sets. The fishing vessels are flagged to Guinea Senegal (Table 1) and operate in the high seas and the following Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs): Guinea, Senegal, Mauritania, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The fishery is managed regionally by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) in the Atlantic Ocean.

To find more information on the present FIP, please view the public Fishery Progress profile [here](#).

There are several critical measures and issues that require immediate attention by ICCAT this year, and others that need to be advanced in 2023. We strongly urge ICCAT acts in November 2022 to ensure that Recommendations that are about to partially or fully expire, continue to be effective in 2023. Other priority issues are listed below:

Management measures for tropical tunas

Of importance during this year's work within ICCAT is the adoption of harvest strategies, including reference points, clearly defined Harvest Control Rules (HCRs) and monitoring mechanisms.

Ask 1: Work on the adoption of harvest strategies for tropical tunas consistent with SCRS advice. This includes the adoption of well-defined HCRs rules during 2023 and tools development for managing skipjack, yellowfin, and bigeye tuna, along with harvest strategies which are responsive to the state of the stocks.

Ask 2: Review the Monitoring, Strategy, and Evaluation (MSE) roadmap for tropical tunas to ensure that during 2023 the major sources of uncertainty to be considered for the multispecies MSE could be identified. Ensure the adherence to the roadmap to ensure the implementation of effective management measures for tropical tunas for all fishing gear.

Ask 3: ICCAT to develop and implement specific, scientifically based catch limits rather than effort-based limits on tropical tuna stocks, particularly for bigeye tuna. In the 2021 SCRS report, it was stated that for bigeye tuna "The TAC was again reduced to 65,000 t in Recommendation 15-01 which entered into force in 2016 and Rec. 18-01, and in Rec. 19-02 to 62,500 t and 61,500 t for 2020 and 2021 respectively. Catches exceeded the TAC every year from 2016-2019 some years by more than 20%. Note that because TACs do not limit catches of all countries and fleets that can catch bigeye tuna, the total catch removed from the stock can exceed the TAC." Therefore, we ask that the ICCAT considers implementing catch limits across all countries, rather than just a select few. Furthermore, we implore the ICCAT to develop catch limits rather than effort-based limits.

Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)

Ask 4: Keep to the endeavoured timeframe identified in Rec. 19-02 and further updates recovering FADs.

Ask 5: Require buoy companies to submit FAD position data and acoustic records from echosounder buoys to national fisheries departments and national research institutes on a time delay basis of three (3) months, where requested.

Ask 6: Adopt a FAD marking scheme based on the FAO Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear to apply to all FAD deployments, regardless of vessel type.

Bycatch and Sharks

Protect shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) by heeding scientists' warnings about North Atlantic depletion and South Atlantic imminent risk. Specifically:

Ask 7: Adopt a new recommendation for shortfin mako sharks will result in gradual zero retention of shortfin mako and, ensures specific scientific advice for minimising incidental mortality is developed and implemented in 2023.

Ask 8: Adopt a Recommendation to prohibit deliberate purse seine setting around whale sharks and cetaceans, as has been done in WCPFC, IATTC and IOTC.

Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS)

Ask 9: Adopt a new binding measure to ensure human observer safety, as has been done by IATTC and WCPFC.

Ask 10: Some of the more recent efforts to reduce IUU fishing include a ban on transshipment at-sea. ICCAT should prohibits at-sea transshipment for industrial fleets. If at-sea transshipments are not finally prohibited, 100% observer coverage should be required. This is to provide greater clarity on catch and bycatch, support effective management, reinforces traceability, and supports ICCAT data collection requirements.

Compliance

Ask 11: Codify Resolution 16-17 (Establishing an ICCAT schedule of actions to improve compliance and cooperation with ICCAT measures) into a binding Recommendation, as soon as possible.

Ask 12: Develop information-exchange mandates and systems between the ICCAT Compliance Committee and the Commission regarding measures with unclear obligations and/or reporting requirements.

For any further information, please contact the FIP manager Emily Wardrop at:

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Table 1: Vessels and companies in support of the above statement

Vessel Representative	Vessel Name	IMO number	Flag
GSK Marine S.A.	Sea Frontier	8988806	Guinea
GSK Marine S.A.	Pont Saint Louis	8222422	Senegal