

FCF Atlantic Ocean longline tuna FIP Position Statement for the ICCAT virtual meeting 13-20 November 2023

Drafted with agreement from all FCF longline tuna FIP Participants – October 2023

This FIP aims to meet the rising global demand for tuna in a sustainable manner by assuring catches do not exceed sustainable levels, promoting the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and strengthening policy and governance systems in the region. The end goal is to achieve certification under the [Marine Stewardship Council](#) Fisheries Standard by 2025.

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 FCF Atlantic Ocean longline FIP strongly urges the ICCAT and its member states to ensure the ICCAT acts in November at the ICCAT virtual meeting to:

1. Adopt a workplan for the Compliance Committee to develop audit points for ICCAT management measures, such as those developed for sharks in Rec. 18-06.
2. Use the schedule of compliance issues and corresponding actions, adopted in 2022, for the 2023 review of CPC compliance.
3. Adopt procedures to identify and address non-compliance with TAC allocations.
4. Adopt a new recommendation for tropical tuna conservation and management that ensures bigeye and yellowfin stocks are maintained at sustainable levels in accordance with the ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) advice and fully allocates the total allowable catch (TAC) between CPCs, especially for yellowfin.
5. Request the SCRS to carry out a yellowfin assessment in 2024.
6. Clarify that fish aggregating devices (FADs) must be fully non-entangling, i.e., without any netting or meshed materials.
7. Adopt the definition of “biodegradable” categories consistent with those of IATTC and WCPFC and establish a timeline for transition to biodegradable FADs similar to what was agreed in the IATTC.
8. Adopt the Electronic Monitoring (EM) Minimum Standards developed by the Electronic Monitoring Systems Working Group in consultation with SCRS.
9. Direct the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures to develop an ICCAT Regional Observer Program (per Rec. 22-01) for recommendation to the Commission in 2024.

10. Adopt revisions to Rec. 21-15 to strengthen the regulation of at-sea transshipment in line with best practice standards, including requiring:
 - a. Near real-time electronic reporting (not longer than 24 hours after the event) for all transshipment activity;
 - b. That carrier vessels only to be flagged to CPCs; and
 - c. That AIS data are reported in addition to required VMS data.
11. Adopt the harvest strategy for western Atlantic skipjack recommended by SCRS
12. Require all sharks be landed with fins naturally attached without exceptions.
13. Reduce the TACs for both blue shark stocks to levels that will ensure a high probability that the stocks will remain in a healthy state in line with SCRS advice, and allocate the TACs by CPC.
14. Implement the SCRS advice on catch limits for shortfin mako stocks.
15. Request the SCRS to review science-based mitigation techniques for seabird bycatch so as to align Rec. [11- 09] to best practice in 2024.

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.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. For more information, please do not hesitate in contacting the FIP coordinator Tom Evans at t.evans@keytraceability.com.