



Atlantic Ocean Purse Seine Tuna FIP Position Statement for ICCAT 2020

On behalf of all Atlantic Ocean Purse Seine Tuna FIP Participants - September 2020

The submission of this position statement is regarding the Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) currently being undertaken by the Atlantic Ocean tuna - purse seine fishery. The fishery targets Atlantic bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*), eastern Atlantic skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) and Atlantic yellowfin (*T. albacares*) tunas through free-school and floating objects (FOB)-associated purse seine sets. The fishing vessels are flagged to Senegal and operate in the high seas and the following Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs): Senegal, Mauritania, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, 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](#).

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 which need to be undertaken which involve a range of different stakeholders. To ensure the FIP meets these objectives we need the support of ICCAT and urge action within ICCAT this year on multiple topics laid out in this position statement.

Harvest Strategies

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. The adoption of HCRs and strategies are key to meeting the MSC Fisheries Standard Principle 1. Addressing these Principle 1 concerns is extremely important to this FIP, as we look to receive MSC certification in the near future.

- **Ask 1:** Adopt stock-specific management measures for yellowfin and bigeye consistent with SCRS advice. This includes robust HCRs rules and tools development for managing skipjack, yellowfin, and bigeye tuna, along with a well-managed harvest strategy.
- **Ask 2:** Under reviewed SCRS advice, adopt complementary measures for reducing the mortality of bigeye and yellowfin tuna in the purse seine fishery.

Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)

In the Atlantic, FAD sets account for nearly 50% of tropical tuna catches — including 67% of skipjack catches. Comprehensive data on FAD deployments and usage are required to effectively manage the



tropical tuna purse seine fishery. Ensuring that deployed FADs are fully non-entangling and moving towards biodegradable FADs is critical to mitigating ecosystem impacts. The FIP urges ICCAT to:

- **Ask 3:** Amend Rec 19-02 Annex 5 to transition towards the use of fully non-entangling FADs.
- **Ask 4:** ICCAT to keep to the endeavoured timeframe of January 2021 in Rec. 19-02 for FAD designs, as well as designing mechanisms and incentives for recovering FADs.
- **Ask 5:** Require buoy companies to collect FAD position data and acoustic records from echosounder buoys so that if needed, they can be sent to national research institutes on a time delay basis of six (6) 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 that immediately (in 2020) prohibits all shortfin mako retentions and, ensures specific scientific advice for minimising incidental mortality is developed and implemented in 2021.
- **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)

MCS tools are essential for sustainable fisheries management. For example, satellite Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) strengthen vessel compliance on the water, combat IUU fishing, and improve fisheries management by reducing uncertainty. Port state measures combat IUU fishing and ensure IUU fishing products do not enter the market.

- **Ask 9:** To deal with identified inadequate human-observer coverage in some fisheries, the Commission should ensure that the SCRS prioritises the development in 2021 of comprehensive standards for electronic monitoring (EM), which will help lead to a complementary electronic monitoring programme to the already established human observer programme.
- **Ask 10:** Require CPCs to ensure that 100% observer coverage on purse seine vessels operating in the ICCAT Convention Area is met. Further identify and sanction through the ICCAT Compliance Committee any non-compliance to the observer coverage requirement.
- **Ask 11:** Adopt a new binding measure to ensure human observer safety, including on carrier vessels, as has been done by IATTC and WCPFC.
- **Ask 12:** Best practice for transshipment. This is to provide greater clarity on catch and bycatch, support effective management, reinforces traceability already in place, and supports ICCAT data collection requirements.

Compliance

ICCAT has one of the best designed and most transparent compliance assessment processes of the



five tuna RFMOs, but it can be strengthened. A strong compliance process improves fisheries management. ICCAT has enhanced its compliance assessment process, but procedural and policy improvements are still needed.

- **Ask 13:** Codify Resolution 16-17 into a Recommendation, as soon as possible.
- **Ask 14:** Continuing to develop more transparent mechanisms for coastal states (such as audit points, performance metrics and compliance action plans) through ICCAT measures to clarify members' obligations and reporting requirements for the Compliance Committee, such has been developed for sharks in Rec. 18-06.
- **Ask 15:** Develop information-exchange mandates and systems between the ICCAT Compliance Committee and the Commission regarding measures with unclear obligations and/or reporting requirements.

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

For any further information, please contact the FIP manager Charles Horsnell at c.horsnell@keytraceability.com

Signed on behalf of the Atlantic Ocean purse seine tuna FIP

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