



Atlantic Ocean Purse Seine Tuna FIP Position Statement for ICCAT 2021

On behalf of all Atlantic Ocean tuna - purse seine (Capsen & Grand Bleu) FIP Participants -
October 2021

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 (Capsen & Grand Bleu) 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](#).

It is clear that the impacts of COVID-19 have presented challenges to regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs), like ICCAT, in conducting meetings and addressing important conservation and management issues in 2021. However, we do not believe current circumstances should prevent ICCAT from taking action to ensure the uninterrupted sustainable management of the tuna stocks and marine ecosystems under its purview. Therefore, there are several critical measures and issues that require immediate attention by ICCAT this year, and others that need to be advanced in 2022. We strongly urge ICCAT acts in November 2021 to ensure that Recommendations that are about to partially or fully expire, continue to be effective in 2022. 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 2022 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 2022 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 on tropical tuna stocks. Effort-based limitations such as limits, fishing days and total FAD closures can only be made available to CPCs to achieve catch reduction targets to allow the recovery of stocks but are not substitutes for



setting catch limits. Particularly noting for bigeye that in the 2021 SCRS report¹ that “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.” Opting for an effort management regime rather than a catch-based fisheries management regime with fishing effort measures, ICCAT would incentivise a FAD fishing strategy.

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 2022.

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: The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in some difficulties to implement human observer programmes such as the policy of preventing distance from COVID 19. Adopting minimum standards of electronic monitoring (EM) for the different gears operating in the ICCAT Convention Area by the end of 2021, so to be able to require 100% observer coverage (human or electronic) for all major ICCAT fisheries. Therefore, the adoption of EM should be considered as alternative of human observer for the compliance with paragraph 58 in Rec. 19-02.

Ask 10: Adopt a new binding measure to ensure human observer safety, as has been done by IATTC and WCPFC.

Ask 11: Some of the more recent efforts to reduce IUU fishing include a ban on transshipment at-sea. ICCAT should prohibit at-sea transshipment for industrial fleets. If at-sea transshipments are not

¹ https://www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2021/REPORTS/2021_SCRS_ENG.pdf
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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 12: 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 13: 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 Charles Horsnell at c.horsnell@keytraceability.com

Signed on behalf of the Atlantic Ocean tuna - purse seine (Capsen & Grand Bleu) FIP, October 2021