

NGO Tuna Forum

Global Tuna Sustainability Appeal 2018 End-of Year RFMO Update

Dear Signatories of the Global Tuna Sustainability Appeal:

Thank you for your support of the 2018 Global Tuna Sustainability Appeal. You are one of nearly 140 companies, fishing industry associations and non-governmental organizations that signed this Appeal, an unprecedented level of support for measures that will positively impact the long-term sustainability of global tuna stocks and the overall health of the marine ecosystem.

As you'll recall, the important measures we've urged RFMOs to address in 2018 include:

- Precautionary harvest strategies with specific timeline for all tuna stocks
- A 100% observer coverage requirement for purse seine vessels where it is not already required
- Use of best-available observer safety equipment, communications and procedures
- Increased compliance with mandatory minimum 5% longline observer coverage rates
- A 100% observer coverage requirement – human and/or electronic – within five years for longline fisheries
- A 100% observer coverage requirement for at-sea transshipment activities
- Ensure transshipment activity is transparent and well-managed, and that required data is fully collected and sent to appropriate bodies in a timely manner
- Effective management of fish aggregating devices (FADs), and integration of FAD-based information into stock assessments
- Use of non-entangling FAD designs, and support for research on biodegradable materials and their transition to use
- Compliance with existing RFMO bycatch requirements, and additional actions including improved at-sea monitoring, collecting and sharing data, and adopting stronger compliance measures

Our Appeal was shared with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Association (IATTC), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) in advance of their annual meetings.

The results of those meetings show progress in a few areas, and much work to do in others.

Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission – December 2018

Progress Made

- **FADs** – Adopted a binding requirement for the use of lower-entangling FAD designs beginning in 2020. ***With this move, all four tuna RFMOs now have such a requirement – an important step forward.*** This success reflects the work and advocacy of many stakeholders, including the signatories of this Appeal
- **At-Sea Transshipment** – Established a working group for 2019 to improve and strengthen its at-sea transshipment measures, another important step endorsed in our Appeal
- Agreed to implement new International Maritime Organization (IMO) regulations requiring IMO numbers for all fishing vessels greater than 12 meters. This is a step forward for transparency that, in turn, supports traceability

More Progress Required

- **Longline Observer Coverage** – While the WCPFC requires 100% observer coverage of large-scale purse seine vessels, it must also increase observer coverage requirements for longline vessels. The current requirement of 5% human observer coverage for longline vessels is woefully inadequate for both conservation and compliance needs

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas – November 2018

Progress Made

- **IUU/Monitoring** – Agreed to modernize its vessel monitoring systems (VMS) requirement to increase the frequency of data collection and transmission, a change that will help to combat IUU fishing activities. The Commission also adopted improvements to its IUU vessel listing measure

More Progress Needed

- **Stock Status** – The Commission failed to strengthen conservation measures for bigeye and yellowfin tuna stocks, both of which are likely being overfished
- **FADs** – Stronger FAD management measures are needed to help address overfishing
- **Observer Coverage** – Unlike the WCPFC and IATTC, the Commission does not require 100% observer coverage of large-scale purse seine vessels. Further, its current requirement of 5% human observer coverage for longline vessels is woefully inadequate for both conservation and compliance needs. The Commission must address both in 2019

PREVIOUSLY COMMUNICATED

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Meeting – May 2018

Progress Made

- **FADs** – Adopted a proposal for a bioFAD experiment – a measure that directly addresses one of our requested actions; adopted a proposal to amend the current FAD management resolution to include support and supply vessels
- **Harvest Strategies** – Advanced its management strategy evaluation (MSE) work for all tuna stocks. MSEs are one of the seven core elements of precautionary harvest strategies as defined by the NGO Tuna Forum, and are an essential component of harvest strategy development
- The Commission also made improvements on issues of at-sea transshipment and bycatch mitigation (blue sharks), though much work remains

More Progress Required

- **Observer Coverage** – The Commission lags other RFMOs with its 5% observer coverage requirement for various gear types and falls far short of our coordinated asks. Increased observer coverage must be a primary focus moving forward
- **FADs** – Address data requirements, data analysis and improved compliance
- **Bycatch** – Better address mobula and manta ray bycatch
- **Harvest Strategies** – Implement measures to improve the stock status of Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna, including comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategies

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Meeting – August 2018

Progress Made

- **FADs** – Built on its 2017 measure requiring the use of non-entangling FADs – a priority noted on our Appeal – by setting a strict definition to avoid loopholes that could undermine the requirement
- **Harvest Strategies** – Approved funds for a series of MSE workshops for scientists and managers as well as for a scientist to continue the technical development of the MSE for bigeye tuna
- **Observer Safety** – Joined the WCPFC in adopting a measure to ensure safety of at-sea human observers – a priority highlighted in our Appeal. This measure also extends to observers operating on transshipping vessels

More Progress Required

- **FADs** – Heed the advice on its own scientific advisory committee to improve data reporting and compliance
- **Observer Coverage** – Advance proposals to increase observer coverage for the longline fleet and for smaller purse seiners
- **Bycatch** – Advance stronger conservation measures for shark and sea turtle bycatch

Assessment and Next Steps

Progress at RFMOs results from concerted effort over time, something that's reflected in the progress made – and not made – this year. We remain committed to advancing the priorities set forth by the NGO Tuna Forum and supported by nearly 140 signatories, including your organization.

We will continue to push for progress across our priority issues in 2019 with all four tuna RFMOs. A new advocacy appeal letter is now being prepared, which we hope you'll consider supporting once again.

To deepen and strengthen our efforts, we are developing opportunities to bring the voices of concerned conservation and market partners to bear directly with RFMO country delegates and national fisheries agencies on key sustainability priorities. We'll be communicating more on these opportunities for deeper engagement in the coming months.

Your continued commitment to supporting improvements at RFMOs that strengthen the long-term sustainability of global tuna stocks is critical, and we thank you for that support.