

ATTN: Heads of Delegation to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

18 leading tuna NGOs call on the WCPFC to adopt a management procedure for North Pacific albacore tuna and maintain all current timelines in the harvest strategy workplan

The upcoming WCPFC Commission, scheduled for 4 December - 8 December 2023 provides an important opportunity for the WCPFC to demonstrate its ongoing leadership and progressive management to preserve the health of tuna fisheries that are a vital source of economic development and food security for the region.

As organizations focused on the sustainability of tuna stocks and their ecosystems, we urge the WCPFC to adopt a management procedure for North Pacific albacore tuna and maintain all current timelines in the harvest strategy workplan without further extensions or delays. Further, we urge the adoption of a new CMM for tuna conservation that limits fishing mortality for bigeye and yellowfin to the interim Target Reference Points and includes the outputs of the skipjack Management Procedure adopted in 2022, and which also removes all ambiguities and exemptions. In addition, we urge the WCPFC in 2023 to:

- Adopt and/or strengthen at-sea transshipment measures in line with best practices, such as those recommended in the NGO Tuna Forum's Aligned Guidance on At-Sea Transshipment.
- Adopt electronic monitoring program standards and a timeline for implementation by 2025.

Additionally, our organizations urge the WCPFC to adopt the following critical measures to ensure uninterrupted management of tuna stocks and strengthened monitoring of tuna fisheries:

- Require 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) in industrial tuna fisheries, including all those vessels engaged in at sea transshipment, by 2024.
- Strengthen FAD management provisions in line with the NGO Tuna Forum's Aligned Guidance on FAD Management.
- Strengthen compliance mechanisms to ensure processes are transparent and robust so that members are held accountable for the implementation of all conservation management measures and data reporting requirements and there are clear consequences for non-compliance.
- Implement precautionary, science-based regulations, best practices and guidelines for avoidance, handling, release and, where appropriate, science-based catch or retention limits, for all tuna fishing fleets to proactively minimize their impacts upon all non-target and non-retained bycatch species.
- Require fins naturally attached for ALL (i.e., fresh and frozen) sharks without exceptions, adopting the globally acknowledged best practice to prevent finning.
- Establish recommendations for labor and safety standards for crew and observers on fishing vessels based on relevant international labor conventions.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

