

Western and Central Pacific Ocean tuna - purse seine (Thai Union) FIP Position Statement for WCPFC 2021

Drafted with agreement from all FIP Participants - November 2021

I am writing on behalf of the members of the [Western and Central Pacific Ocean tuna - purse seine \(Thai Union\) FIP](#) in support of urgently needed tuna management measures in the Pacific Ocean, a region which is under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's (WCPFC) governance. The FIP fishery is part of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean tuna - purse seine fishery targeting the three tropical tuna species via purse seine vessels flagged to USA, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Nauru or the Federated States of Micronesia in the WCPO. They deploy FADs, and fish on FADs and other floating objects, as well as setting on free schools. 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.

The FIP works closely with the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), a coalition of leading scientists, tuna processors and NGOs including The Nature Conservancy. Its collective mission is to undertake science-based initiatives for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of tuna stocks, reducing bycatch and promoting ecosystem health, through advocacy, applied science and direct action.

The FIP has grown increasingly concerned with the management of tuna resources in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. The companies involved in the FIP rely on these resources from this region and we are aware of the impacts poor management can have on not only the health of the target tuna stocks but also the health of the overall marine environment.

We recognize that the impacts of COVID-19 continue to present challenges to regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) like the WCPFC. However, we do not believe these circumstances should prevent the WCPFC from taking action in 2021 to adopt science-based management measures to ensure the sustainable management of the tuna stocks and marine ecosystems under its purview.

We strongly urge you to ensure the WCPFC takes action in December 2021 at its virtual Commission Meeting, and advance work in 2022, including through supporting the adoption of proposals, on the following priority issues:

- 1. Adopt an enforceable tropical tuna conservation and management measure (CMM) for all fleets that limits fishing mortality for bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack that removes ambiguities and exemptions.**
- 2. Adopt a work plan for FADs with a timeframe to transition to fully non-entangling FADs without netting and made primarily with biodegradable materials; develop recovery policies, a marking scheme and ownership rules; and require FAD position and acoustic data.**
- 3. In order to meet the June 2023 MSC deadline for harvest strategy conditions, adopt target reference points for bigeye and yellowfin; a list of candidate management procedures for skipjack & albacore; and establish a scientist/manager dialogue group.**

- 4. Adopt a CMM for an Electronic Monitoring Program and Minimum Standards for the use of electronic monitoring in WCPFC fisheries**
- 5. Require 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) for longline vessels, and all vessels engaged in at-sea transshipment, within four years to ensure effective enforcement.**
- 6. Accelerate the remaining work to reform the at-sea transshipment CMM and the Compliance Monitoring Scheme.**
- 7. Improve existing ETP species, including birds, sharks, turtles and marine mammals, CMs especially regarding data collection and the implementation of the required mitigation measures**

As a member of a FIP engaging in proactive tuna fisheries improvement activities in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, we urge you to ensure you fully supports action on the above issues at the Virtual Meeting of WCPFC Commission in 2021, and in 2022, and that your positions will testify to your support for addressing these issues.

The FIP looks forward to the continued leadership in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, a region rich in tuna resources that are in need of continued science-based conservation and management.

For any further information, please contact the FIP manager, Tom Evans at t.evans@keytraceability.com

Signed on behalf of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean tuna - purse seine (Thai Union) FIP – November 2021