



GTA Response to the ICCAT 23rd Session Proposals

2022

GLOBAL TUNA ALLIANCE

Introduction

The 23rd Special Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) takes place from 14-21 November 2022 in Val do Lobo, Portugal.

The agenda includes proposals for improved management measures for tropical tunas and rebuilding Mediterranean albacore, among other proposals.

These are all areas on which the Global Tuna Alliance is seeking action. All the proposals are available on the ICCAT website.

The GTA applauds the leadership shown by the Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (CPCs) who have submitted proposals.

HARVEST STRATEGIES

WESTERN ATLANTIC SKIPJACK

- The conclusions of the 2022 Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) stock assessment are that the western Atlantic skipjack stock is most likely located in the green area of the Kobe plot. As a result, the stock is not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring.
- The preliminary performance indicators agreed to by the Commission for tropical tunas, as outlined in the Recommendation by ICCAT on a Multi-annual Conservation and Management Programme for Tropical Tunas (Rec. 16-01), included four categories of management objectives, namely status, safety, yield, and stability.
- The Commission intends to complete a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for western Atlantic skipjack by 2023.

The Brazil and South Africa Proposal

- Management objectives should be established for western Atlantic skipjack tuna consistent with the Convention's objective: to maintain populations at or above levels that will support maximum sustainable catch (usually referred to as MSY).
- The [interim] operational management objectives for western Atlantic skipjack are:
 - a. Stock Status - The stock should have a greater than [70]% probability of occurring in the green quadrant of the Kobe matrix over the next 30 years;
 - b. Safety - There should be a less than [5]% probability of the stock falling below the biomass limit reference point (BLIM, which is 40%*BMSY) over the next 30 years;
 - c. Yield - Maximize overall catch levels in the medium (4-10 years) and long (15-30 years) terms; and
 - d. Stability - Any changes in Total Allowable Catch (TAC) between management periods should be less than [20]%.
- Panel 1 will provide its recommendations for initial management procedures for the western Atlantic skipjack tuna, considering the SCRS input, to the Commission for consideration at its 2022 Annual Meeting.
- **The GTA supports this effort to adopt management objectives for the Western Atlantic skipjack.**



HARVEST STRATEGIES

MEDITERRANEAN ALBACORE

- The 2021 stock assessment of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) concluded that the Mediterranean albacore stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring and recommended a catch level of 2,500 t to meet the Convention management objective to allow the biomass to recover to the BMSY level with 60% probability by 2034.
- Following the 2021 stock assessment for the Mediterranean albacore, the SCRS noted in its advice that there is high uncertainty regarding the characterisation of stock status, in particular for fishing mortality. According to the latest scientific advice and consistent with the precautionary approach, the SCRS recommends preventing an increase of catches.

Proposal submitted by the Chair of Panel 2

- CPCs whose vessels have been actively fishing for albacore tuna in the Mediterranean shall implement a 15-year rebuilding plan starting in 2022 and continuing through 2036 to achieve BMSY with at least 60% probability.
- For 2022 and 2023, a TAC shall be set at 2,500 t for albacore tuna in the Mediterranean.
- Each CPC shall limit the number of their fishing vessels authorised to fish for Mediterranean albacore to the number of vessels that were authorised to fish for Mediterranean albacore in 2017; alternatively, in 2018 for CPCs which started to issue licenses for their fishing vessels in 2018.
- CPCs shall supply the ICCAT Secretariat with the list of all sport and recreational vessels authorised to catch albacore in the Mediterranean Sea, at least 15 days before the exercise of the activities. Vessels not introduced on this list shall not be authorised to catch Mediterranean albacore.
- In 2023, the SCRS shall provide an updated assessment of the state of the stock on the basis of the most recent data available. It shall assess this rebuilding plan's effectiveness and advise on possible amendments to the various measures within it. The SCRS shall advise the Commission on the appropriate characteristics of the fishing gear, the closure period, and the minimum size to be implemented for the Mediterranean albacore.
- **The GTA welcomes this effort to rebuild the Mediterranean albacore stock.**



TROPICAL TUNA CONSERVATION MEASURES

YELLOWFIN, BIGEYE AND SKIPJACK

- The current multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas for which the last assessments of yellowfin, bigeye and the two skipjack stocks were conducted respectively in 2019, 2020 and 2021.
- The current management measures were a rollover from measures from 2020, and were set just for 2022.
- The latest SCRS advice (year 2019) indicates that yellowfin stock status is not overfished and without overfishing occurring; While the latest SCRS advice (year 2021) indicates that bigeye stock status is overfished but not currently subject to overfishing.
- The bigeye catches in 2020 were 6% below the TAC and the SCRS projection indicated that the bigeye stock will have a significantly better status at the end of 2021 (probability of being in the green zone > 80%) than at the end of the last year (2019) of the assessment.
- The yellowfin tuna TAC was also exceeded by 38% in 2016, 25% in 2017, 24% in 2018, 25% in 2019 and 42% in 2020. The 2022 proposal is still under discussion by CPCs.

The GTA's asks for the current discussion of the new management measures are:

- Revise Recommendation 21-01 to ensure that the bigeye tuna stock is rebuilt, and yellowfin tuna catch is maintained within the TAC by:
- Adopting a bigeye TAC that guarantees stock rebuilding with a high probability (>60%) of success within 15 years.
- Adopting a precautionary yellowfin TAC that is aligned with the existing SCRS advice and allocated between fishing gears or CPCs.
- Maintaining the agreed Atlantic-wide FAD closure and adopting additional measures to monitor and manage the use of FADs.
- Agreeing on management objectives for managing the fishing mortality of juvenile vs. adult tunas, to address concerns related to juvenile catches.
- Developing and adopting procedures to identify and sanction non-compliance with TAC allocations.



Conclusion

The 23rd Special Meeting of ICCAT has a real opportunity to advance tuna fisheries management and sustainability.

All CPCs need to play their part for the greater good of the fisheries.

The market will be watching the outcomes with interest.



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