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**COMMON
OCEANS**
PROGRAM


Tuna project

PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND BIODIVERSITY
IN THE OCEAN AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION

PARTNER UPDATE:

Sustainable management of tuna fisheries and biodiversity conservation in the areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ)



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INVESTING IN OUR PLANET



Tuna Stocks Lead in Global Sustainability: Highlights from [FAO's Review of the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture \(SOFIA\) 2024](#)

The **FAO's Review of the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture- 2024**, launched at **UNOC3** on 11 June 2025, delivers the most comprehensive assessment of marine fish stocks to date. A standout success: **tuna and tuna-like species**, now among the **most sustainably managed fish stocks globally**.

 **87% of assessed tuna stocks are sustainable**, and **99% of global tuna landings** come from those healthy stocks—thanks to **science-based fisheries management** and collaboration through **regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs)**.

Tuna RFMOs manage 23 major stocks across **seven key commercial species**: albacore, bigeye, bluefin (Atlantic, Pacific, Southern), skipjack, and yellowfin. These accounted for **4.95 million tons of catch in 2021**, down 10% from 2019—mostly due to conservation efforts. Skipjack made up **57%** of the total, followed by yellowfin (31%), bigeye (7%), albacore (4%), and bluefin (1%).

Global exports of tunas, bonitos, and billfishes reached **USD 17 billion in 2022**, making up **9% of aquatic animal product exports**. Canned tuna dominated, with **Thailand, Ecuador, and China** among top exporters. Demand surged in the **US, EU**, and increasingly the **Near East**. Fresh tuna, though lower in volume, commands **three times the price** of canned and has rebounded since the COVID pandemic.

Challenges Remain

Despite progress, only **57% of assessed shark stocks**, frequently caught as bycatch in tuna fisheries, are sustainable. Additionally, many **tuna-like species** targeted by small-scale fisheries remain unassessed, though they may represent **15% of global small-scale fisheries catch**.

To maintain and expand sustainability, FAO emphasizes:

- Stronger data collection and transparency
- Broader adoption of harvest control rules
- Continued use of management strategy evaluations
- Targeted rebuilding of overfished and unassessed stocks

Call for Papers for the Fisheries Research special issue: “Bycatch in the World’s Tuna Fisheries”

We are pleased to announce the Call for Papers for the Fisheries Research special issue: “Bycatch in the World’s Tuna Fisheries”.

This special issue will showcase cutting-edge research on bycatch challenges, mitigation strategies, and management solutions in global tuna fisheries. It will feature contributions from the [Common Oceans Tuna Project Workshop on Bycatch](#) as well as other relevant studies.

Key Topics include data collection and quality in bycatch monitoring, methodologies and analytical approaches, mitigation measures, management aspects, socio-economic aspects of bycatch mitigation, future directions and research needs.

Submission Deadline: 26 December 2025

Submission Link: [Bycatch in the World’s Tuna Fisheries – Call for Papers](#)

We invite researchers, fisheries managers, policymakers, and conservation experts from across the tuna fisheries community to contribute with their work to this important special issue. Contributions from the recent Common Oceans Tuna Project Workshop on bycatch are especially encouraged.

For questions or more information, please contact Dr. Nathan G. Taylor, leading guest editor (nathan.taylor@iccat.int).





Stay organized with our Tuna Calendar, a comprehensive resource featuring a consolidated list of all Tuna RFMO meetings.

[Dgroups Tuna Calendar](#)



Access Tuna Project resources, knowledge products, and publications.

[Dgroups Tuna Library](#)



Explore the Common Oceans website for the latest insights, news, and resources on sustainable tuna fisheries.

[Tuna Project | Common Oceans Website](#)

Are you producing a Common Ocean Tuna Project Publication?

Read on.

Partners are encouraged to use the following guidelines to ensure consistent Common Oceans branding. Should you have any questions or requests, please do not hesitate to contact the PMU.

1. [Publish guide-FAQ - Tuna project knowledge management and communication guide](#)
Outlines the publication plan, brand book, visual tools, and Dgroup guidelines.
2. [Writing guide - FAQ - Tuna project knowledge management and communication guide](#)
Provides guidance on adhering to FAO's publishing policies and resolving common writing issues in FAO style.
3. [FAQ - Tuna project knowledge management and communication guide](#)
Addresses frequently asked questions from partners based on previous exchanges

On the horizon



15-17 July 2025

Common Oceans Tuna Project steering committee

FAO HQ Rome, Italy

Contact: Joe Zelasney, FAO

22 July 2025

Webinar on what management procedures mean to the seafood supply chain

Contact: Shana Miller, The Ocean Foundation (TOF)

18-29 August

2025 BBNJ Preparatory

Commission UNHQ, New York

1-5 September 2025

Skipper workshop for long line and purse seine fleets

Busan, ROK

Contact: Hilario Murua, ISSF

14-16 October 2025

Workshop: Management strategy evaluation for global blue shark stocks

Contact: Shana Miller, The Ocean Foundation (TOF)

November 2025

International biodegradable FAD workshop

Contact: Hilario Murua, ISSF

End of 2025

Biodegradable FAD workshop with the US fleet

Contact: Hilario Murua, ISSF

TBD 2025/2026

2nd Workshop on EM implementation in tRFMOs

Contact: Hilario Murua, ISSF

TBD 2026

4th Joint tuna RFMO workshop on operationalizing EAFM

Contact: Hilario Murua, ISSF

Dates TBC

Purse seiner skipper workshop on sustainable fishing best practices and biodegradable FADs

Seychelles

Contact: Hilario Murua, ISSF

TBD January 2026

Common Oceans meeting on management strategy evaluation in tuna RFMOs

Contact: Nathan Taylor, ICCAT

23-27 February 2026

COFI subcommittee on fisheries management

Iceland

Contact: Carlos Montero, FAO

11-15 May 2026

ICES-FAO symposium on fishing technology

Cairns, Australia

Contact: Jon Lansley, FAO

TBD 2026

Global fisheries enforcement training workshop

Contact: Sarah Lenel, IMCS Network

TBD 2026

Global longline CPUE workshop

Yokohama, Japan

Key RFMO upcoming meetings

May 26 - May 27

3rd meeting of IATTC Ecosystem and
Bycatch Working Group
La Jolla CA, USA

June 17 - June 20

ICCAT, Electronic Monitoring Systems
Working Group Meeting (EMS WG)
Brussels (Belgium), Hybrid

August 13 - August 21

WCPFC, 21st Regular Session of the
Scientific Committee
Tonga

1-5 September 2025

103rd Regular Session of the IATTC
Commission

September 29 - October 3

ICCAT_SCRS Plenary Meeting
Madrid (Spain), Hybrid

October 6 - October 9

32nd Annual Meeting of the CCSBT
Bali, Indonesia

November 17 - November 24

ICCAT, 29th Regular Meeting of the
Commission
Sevilla, Spain

December 1 - December 5

IOTC_28th Session of the Scientific
Committee (SC28)
China

December 1 - December 5

WCPFC, 22nd Regular Session of the
Commission
Manila, Philippines





Improve Tuna Fisheries Management

The Ocean Foundation (TOF)

The following outreach materials were developed by The Ocean Foundation in support of capacity building to implement Harvest Strategies (HS) / Management Strategy Evaluation (HS/MSE) in tuna RFMOs:

-Factsheet: “Management procedures versus traditional fisheries management: How do the approaches differ, and why are global fisheries transitioning to MPs?” was published in August 2024 in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [French](#).

-Factsheet: “Small but mightily important: It's time to improve the management of ecologically and socially important small tunas” was published in March 2025 in [English](#) (Spanish and French translations underway).

-Multiple new and updated pages on www.HarvestStrategies.org, including a [new landings page for the Common Oceans Project](#).

International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)

ISSF produced two reports in November 2024 and March 2025, gathering data on the status of the Tuna catches assessed by RFMO scientific committees as single sources in which uniform information was presented.

[ISSF-2024-07-Status-of-the-World-Fisheries-for-Tuna-November-2024.pdf](#)

[ISSF-2025-01-Status-of-the-World-Fisheries-for-Tuna-March-2025.pdf](#)

Improve Compliance and Tackle IUU Fishing

The International Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Network (IMCS)

[A comparative review of compliance assessment in the Tuna RFMOs](#) was developed to support contracting parties to better meet their obligations and improve the performance of RFMOs.

World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF)

WWF updated its Common Oceans Tuna Project page to better serve general audiences, industry, and governments. The page now includes translated summaries of EM toolkits and reports in English, French and Spanish, with relevant stories and meeting notices linking to the following site: [TUNA II EM Project](#).

A lengthy WWF web story published [here](#) titled- Setting a New Standard: Groundbreaking Move Aims to Safeguard Crew Welfare and Promote Sustainability in Tuna Fisheries. The main purpose of this story was to set the stage for the next steps on Electronic Monitoring (EM) implementation for 2025.

A separate story on EM targeted at government agencies was prepared specifically for WWF's briefing package on West Indian Ocean Maritime Security Solutions for an Africa Center for Security Studies workshop on IUU fishing in Madagascar in February 2025. The story is accessible [here](#).

Improve Environmental Performance

Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)

Project partner, the Secretariat of the Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), provides enhanced education, outreach, and capacity building for the monitoring and implementation of seabird bycatch mitigation measures. An infographic providing at-a-glance visual representations of technical, safety and practical aspects of seabird bycatch mitigation regulations and recommendations was produced for fishers and published in this [link](#).

International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)

Two papers for the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries were presented at the IOTC 20th Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch, Mahe, Seychelles, September 9-13, 2024:

-Juan-Jordá, M.; H. Murua; V. Idárraga-Garcés; E Andonegi. 2024. Ecosystem Fisheries Overviews - A Pilot Product to Assess the General Applicability of IOTC Candidate Ecoregions as a Spatial Framework for developing Ecosystem-Based Advisory Products. [IOTC-2024-WPEB20\(AS\)-24](#).

-Idárraga-Garcés V.; E. Andonegi; H. Murua; M. Juan-Jordá. 2024. Validating IOTC candidate ecoregions through a comparative analysis of main tuna and tuna-like species and fishing fleets. [IOTC-2024-WPEB20\(AS\)-25](#).

The guide on biodegradable Jelly-FAD construction and use was completed and published [here](#).

The Longline Skipper Guidebook is now translated to French, Japanese, and Spanish and available [here](#).

ISSF attended the WCPFC 20th Scientific Committee meeting, Manila, Philippines, August 14-21, 2024 and presented two papers in the Jelly-FAD performance in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) and the current status and future prospects of the Bio-FADs:

-Moreno G., I. Zudaire, J. Uranga, M. Roman, M. Grande, J. Salvador, J. Murua, A. Salgado, J Lopez, H. Murua, J. Santiago, and V. Restrepo. 2024. Final results of the jelly-FAD performance in the EPO with Ugavi fleet. [WCPFC-SC20-2024/EB-IP-14](#).

-Zudaire I., Mariana T. Tolotti, Gala Moreno, Jefferson Murua, Paul Hamer, Hilario Murua, Gorka Merino, Marlon Roman, Martin Hall, Jon Lopez, Maitane Grande, Maria Lourdes Ramos, Lauriane Escalle, Oihane C. Basurko, Manuela Capello, Laurent Dagorn, Santiago Deniz, Francisco J. Abascal, Jose Carlos Baez, Pedro J. Pascual-Alayon, Josu Santiago. 2024. Biodegradable drifting fish aggregating devices: Current status and future prospects. [WCPFC-SC20-2024/EB-IP-16](#).

International Pole & Line Foundation (IPNLF)

An instructional field guide for maintaining the highest quality landed product and maximizing the value of the tuna was developed: [Best practice-handling for handline and rod-and-reel fisheries](#).

Other

[GLOBEFISH | Quarterly Tuna analysis - December 2024](#)

[GLOBEFISH | Quarterly Tuna analysis - February 2025](#)

[FAO | Review of the State of World Marine Fisheries Catches - 2025](#)



In this section we present the diverse activities undertaken by Tuna Project partners from the second half of 2024 until June 2025. These initiatives reflect their commitment to advancing sustainable tuna fisheries management, strengthening compliance and improving environmental conservation across the globe.

CCSBT Advances Compliance and Electronic Monitoring Across Regions

Between July 2024 and April 2025, the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), supported by BirdLife International (BLI), led a comprehensive series of in-person trainings to strengthen compliance and promote the uptake of electronic monitoring (EM) systems.

In collaboration with the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), Skipper and Train-the-Trainer workshops were held in 2024 in Cape Town, South Africa (9 July) and Kaohsiung, Taiwan (16 October). Port Inspector Trainings followed in Kaohsiung (15 October), Port Elizabeth (9 December) and Durban (11 December), focusing on improved inspection protocols and onboard compliance. An EM National Innovation Workshop in Cape Town (9–13 September) helped drive the integration of EM tools into fisheries management. In total, 317 participants, including 83 women, took part across all activities.

In February 2025, an EM workshop in Bali, Indonesia resulted in a draft national EM implementation roadmap, with follow-up support underway. A similar workshop was scheduled in South Korea in March 2025 to sustain regional momentum. A seabird bycatch mitigation workshop was held for skippers in February 2025. The full article is available [here](#).

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC): Shark sampling program

From July to December 2024, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), under the framework of the Common Oceans Tuna Project, conducted a detailed characterization of priority shark landing site locations previously identified during the first half of the year. This work aimed to differentiate between artisanal landing sites where sharks are regularly caught and those primarily targeting other species. These efforts have significantly contributed to the identification of key shark landing sites throughout the Eastern Pacific Ocean, spanning from Mexico to Peru.

In the final quarter of 2024, the Tuna Project team and IATTC staff convened a second follow-up workshop to review the progress of ongoing activities. During this meeting, the most urgent sampling efforts for 2025 were strategically outlined. Additionally, preliminary steps were taken to establish feasibility studies related to catch and effort data collection, biological sampling, and the implementation of Close-Kin Mark-Recapture (CKMR) methodologies. These actions will enable continued progress on key project components, including the design of sampling protocols, evaluation of biological sampling feasibility, and operationalization of the CKMR approach.

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT): Improving compliance and bycatch reduction

ICCAT held a *workshop on Statistics and Compliance* from July 1 to 5, 2024, in São Tomé. This event, with 11 participants and 6 facilitators, supports improved data and monitoring capacity within the organization's mission and strengthens conservation efforts for Atlantic tuna species.

Additionally, ICCAT organized the *first working group meeting focused on bycatch* from 27-29 January 2025 at FAO headquarters in Rome to address challenges and explore solutions for reducing bycatch in tuna fisheries. Read article here: [Reducing bycatch in tuna fisheries](#).



International Monitoring, Compliance and Surveillance Network (IMCSN) & Tuna Compliance Network (TCN)

From 19–22 June 2024, IMCSN held the fifth meeting of the *Tuna Compliance Network Workshop* in Seychelles to review monitoring processes for compliance in tuna RFMOs and to identify drivers of compliance rates and measures to improve compliance, and an *International MCS Network side event* on 4 September 2024 in Panama City, “Navigating the Common Oceans” event, engaging 209 participants, including 70 women.

The IMCS Network enhanced the Combined Regional Authorised Vessels Tool (CRAVT), a platform supporting vessel data verification across RFMOs. SPRFMO data was added in April, with ICCAT data integration expected by August.

The Tuna Compliance Network (TCN) and Pan-Pacific Compliance Network (PPFCN) meet jointly in mid-June in Tokyo.

The TCN and PPFCN are advancing the IUU Vessel List Hub, a secure, centralized tool for RFMO secretariats to access and manage IUU-listed vessel data. Hosted by the IMCS Network, the Hub will facilitate automatic updates, data sharing, and inter-secretariat communication. The design documentation has been finalized, with development underway and testing scheduled to begin in late May.

To provide technical assistance and capacity development, the IMCS Network, with input from TCN, PPFCN, and several RFMO secretariats, launched work to improve coordination and sharing around technical assistance. A virtual session was held in May, and a generic “implementation sheet” template is being piloted with CCSBT and NPFC, to support technical assistance efforts.

International Pole & Line Foundation (IPNLF) building capacity to increase tuna value

In 2024, the International Pole & Line Foundation (IPNLF) organized several in-person and online *handline quality training* sessions across various locations to increase the value of catch. In

January, a training was held in Pemba with 15 participants, including 6 women. In March, a similar session took place in Kawa, involving 60 participants. Another session occurred in Ambon-Kawa in June, with 88 participants. In August 2024, IPNLF delivered training workshops on quality tuna handling in Kenya targeting more than 100 fishers from Lamu town and Kiwayu Island. The workshop was followed by an at-sea trial aboard two local boats.

International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) advancing traceability systems and ecosystem conservation

ISSF hosted a FAD retrieval side-event during major tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organization (tRFMO) meetings, on 2 September 2024 in Panama City, Panama, during the IATTC meeting (100 participants, including 30 women). In parallel, ISSF supported efforts to improve fisheries traceability, contributing to the adoption of interim electronic monitoring (EM) standards in IATTC (Resolution C-24-09) and WCPFC (Appendix 17 of the 21st Commission Report), and held the first EM harmonization workshop in San Sebastián, Spain, from 10–13 December 2024 (24 participants, including 7 women).

ISSF also organized multiple skipper training workshops to improve best practices in purse seine and longline fisheries: in Madeira, Portugal (2 July 2024, 8 participants), General Santos, Philippines (9 August 2024, 34 participants), and Mauritius (21 September 2024, 19 participants).

In support of ecosystem-based fisheries management, ISSF hosted the 3rd Joint tRFMOs Working Group on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) at FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 21–23 January 2025, presenting a finalized roadmap for EAFM implementation (The web story is available in this [link](#)).



Significant progress was made on biodegradable FAD innovation. Workshops were held in Busturia, Spain (9 December 2024), San Sebastián, Spain (16–17 December 2024), and Ghana (8–10 April 2025), where local fishers built and evaluated various Jelly-FAD designs. Field trials with lighter, naturally buoyant Jelly-FADs were launched in the Mediterranean Sea, and data is currently being collected from over 400 deployed units. A field mission to Colombia (8–18 October 2024) explored regional suppliers of biodegradable materials.

ISSF advanced two new technologies to reduce bycatch interactions by improving acoustic species discrimination tools. Meetings were held with manufacturers of echo-sounder buoys (Satlink, Zunibal, Marine Instruments) and sonar systems (Simrad, Konsberg) to plan trials aimed

at distinguishing between tropical tuna species. A new sonar simulation application for fishers, [SN90 simulator](#), was launched to demonstrate sonar bias under different settings. Training sessions were also delivered to Spanish fleet operators: Atunera Dularra (23 October 2024), Inpesca (8 November 2024), and Ugavi (18 December 2024). Additionally, a workshop on acoustic discrimination was held in the Basque Country on 18 February 2025 with 45 participants, followed by a virtual session on 27 February 2025 with 30 participants. Both aimed to present recent advances and assess the relevance of the training curriculum for improving bycatch mitigation technologies.

IW:Learn promoting international cooperation and sustainable management of marine ecosystems

Between June and September 2024, IW:Learn organized several key international events to strengthen global partnerships and ensure sustainable management of marine ecosystems. From 3–5 June 2024, the *Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) Conference* was held in Paris with 56 participants, including 29 women. This event focused on the consultation of large marine ecosystems (More details can be found [here](#)). Later in the year, the *10th International Waters Conference* took place in Punta del Este, Uruguay from 23–26 September 2024, gathering 400 participants, including 200 women. On 23 September 2024, IW:Learn hosted the workshop "*Cross-sectoral ABNJ Management and BBNJ Agreement Ratification: An Ocean of Opportunities*" in Punta del Este, with 40 participants, including 17 women.

International Whaling Commission (IWC) improving biodiversity conservation

From 22–27 September 2024, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) held its *Biennial Commission Meeting (IWC69)* in Lima, Peru, with 313 participants, including 180 women. The meeting brought together stakeholders from Indian and Western Central Pacific countries to discuss key conservation issues.

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) advancing sustainable certification standards within tuna fisheries

On 9 July 2024, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) held its *2nd Advisory Council meeting* in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, with 10 participants. The event was part of the MSC's ongoing activity under the project.

The Ocean Foundation (TOF) promoting harvest strategies (HS) and management strategies evaluation (MSE)

The Ocean Foundation (TOF) hosted two webinars in the second half of 2024 on tuna harvest strategies. On 25 July, TOF presented "*Management Procedures in a Changing Climate*" (Click [here](#) to access the full webinar). It was followed by another webinar on 24 October titled "*Management Procedures for Small Tunas*" (The recording is available in this [link](#)).

In *February 4, 2025*, the Common Oceans Tuna Project and The Ocean Foundation (TOF) hosted a webinar on "*How to Involve Stakeholders and Local Communities in MP and MSE Development*" (The full recording is available [here](#)) and another webinar on "*Expanding the reach: Management procedures at General RFMOs*" in April 29, 2025 (Access recording [here](#)).

World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) and the promotion of Electronic Monitoring (EM)

WWF hosted a significant event focused on *Advances in Electronic Monitoring (EM) for industrial tuna fisheries* in 2024. This event took place on 3 September 2024 during the IATTC commission meeting in Panama City, marking the ongoing efforts to advance electronic monitoring technologies in tuna fisheries.

Tuna RFMO Round Up



31st Annual Meeting of the Commission (CCSBT)

7 - 10 October 2024

Taipei, Taiwan

At its 31st Annual Meeting, the CCSBT adopted new rules to tighten transshipment controls and align environmental protections with other tuna RFMOs. These measures aim to reduce IUU fishing and improve seabird protection.

Improve compliance and tackle IUU fishing

Resolution on Establishing a Program for Transshipment by Large-Scale Fishing Vessels

- Replaces previous resolutions on large-scale vessel transshipment; Enters into force 1 April 2024, with a review scheduled in 2025.
- Aims to prevent IUU fishing and tuna laundering by regulating transshipment of Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) and applies to large-scale tuna longline vessels (LSTLVs) and Carrier Vessels, requiring port-based transshipments unless authorized for monitored at-sea operations.
- Flag States must authorize Carrier Vessels, excluding IUU-listed or unauthorized vessels, and ensure Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) are operational on all relevant vessels.
- At-sea transshipment requires prior flag State approval, 24-hour notice, and CCSBT observer presence; requires cooperation between coastal and flag States for transshipment in coastal waters; allows a two-year trial for Indonesian wooden Carrier Vessels, reviewed independently by 2025.
- Implements strict port inspection, cargo handling, and reporting procedures, including verification against logbooks and the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS).
- Mandates timely reporting to CCSBT Secretariat and prohibits transshipment without observers onboard except in emergencies.

Improve Environmental Performance

Resolution to Align CCSBT's Ecologically Related Species Measures with those of other Tuna RFMOs

- Harmonizes CCSBT's Ecologically Related Species (ERS) measures with those of IOTC, WCPFC, and ICCAT to ensure consistency and avoid duplication.
- Applies to all CCSBT-authorized vessels fishing Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) in the defined

Areas of Competence, requiring compliance with the ERS measures in force, regardless of CCSBT membership in those RFMOs.

-Outside these Areas, mandates use of Tori lines (bird-scaring devices) on longline SBT fisheries south of 30°S to protect seabirds.

-Where Areas of Competence overlap, flag States select which RFMO's ERS measures to follow.

-Flag States must enforce compliance, act on violations, and report enforcement to the CCSBT Compliance Committee, unless managed by the relevant RFMO.

-CCSBT Secretariat updates the list of applicable ERS measures annually before Extended Commission meetings.

-Members formally objecting to ERS measures in other RFMOs are exempt from applying them in those Areas, including during WCPFC's review process.

-The Secretariat reports annually to the Compliance Committee on ERS implementation for Member information.

24th Special Commission Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

11-18 Nov 2024

Limassol (Cyprus)

The 24th Special Meeting of the Commission, held in hybrid format from 11-18 November 2024, saw the participation of around 436 delegates in person and 176 online, representing 49 Contracting Parties, 3 Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, 6 intergovernmental organizations, 3 Non-Contracting Parties, and 25 Non-Governmental Organizations. During the meeting, ICCAT adopted 15 Recommendations and 2 Resolutions.

Improve tuna fisheries management

Recommendation on a Multi-annual Conservation and Management Programme for Tropical Tuna (Rec. 24-01 replacing Rec. 22-01, TRO)

-Noting that the stock assessment for bigeye tuna (BET) in 2021 indicated that the stock is overfished but no longer subject to overfishing, CPCs shall continue to implement a 15-year rebuilding programme for bigeye tuna started in 2020 and continuing through 2034, with the goal of achieving B_{MSY} with a probability of more than 50%. It sets the TAC at 73,011t for 2025 (with adjustments for 2026–2027 based on stock projections) with a new catch limits allocation table that reserved 6,100t for small harvesters. It allows annual quota transfers (223t from Korea to Chinese Taipei and 350t from Japan to China from 2026 to 2027) and mandates stricter reporting once 80% of catch limits are reached, with overharvests penalized (100% reduction for one year, 125% for two consecutive years).

-For yellowfin tuna, a 110,000t annual TAC is set from 2025, subject to revision in 2027 based on scientific advice and including additional conservation measures. ICCAT Secretariat will alert CPCs once 80% of the TAC is reached.

-In 2025, a 45-day FAD closure (March 17–April 30) will reduce juvenile bigeye and yellowfin catches, with a ban on drifting FADs' deployment 15 days prior. Vessels can deploy up to 300

FADs in 2025, dropping to 288 in 2026 and 2027. CPCs must submit 2019-2023 catch data by July 15, 2025, and annual FAD plans by February 15. All FADs must be non-entangling by 2025 and biodegradable by 2026, with non-biodegradable FADs phased out by 2028. CPCs must report FAD data annually and continue biodegradable trials. The Commission will assist developing CPCs.

-ICCAT requires CPCs to authorize and report vessels $\geq 20\text{m}$ targeting tropical tunas, with strict rules on bycatch (up to 5% bycatch per species per trip for non-authorized vessels $\geq 20\text{m}$), transshipment, and catch recording. Observer coverage is mandatory (10% for longliners, 100% for purse seiners).

-SCRS will evaluate full fishery closures to reduce juvenile tuna catches, while the ICCAT Secretariat will estimate regional fishing capacity. This recommendation replaces prior ones and is scheduled for review in 2027. CPCs are encouraged to begin voluntary implementation from 1 January 2025.

Resolution on Interim Operational Management Objectives for Atlantic Bigeye Tuna, Yellowfin Tuna, and the Eastern Stock of Skipjack Tuna (Res. 24-02)

-In anticipation of adopting Management Procedures (MPs) by 2026, ICCAT establishes interim operational objectives for Atlantic bigeye, yellowfin, and eastern skipjack tuna to guide the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process. These objectives align with the Convention's aim to maintain stocks at or above Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) levels and support the development of harvest control rules under Rec. 15-07.

-The interim limit reference point (LRP) is set at $0.4 \cdot B_{\text{MSY}}$ for all three stocks, with the SCRS tasked to advise on final LRPs. MPs will be evaluated against four performance metrics: (1) a $\geq 50\%$ probability that stocks remain in the Kobe plot's green quadrant (not overfished, no overfishing); (2) $\leq 15\%$ probability of falling below the LRP during projections; (3) maximize catches across short-, medium-, and long-term timeframes; and (4) limit TAC changes between management periods to no more than $\pm 25\%$ for catch stability.

-The SCRS will develop operating models for the multi-stock tropical tunas MSE reflecting different fishing gears (purse seine, longline, baitboat), with attention to juvenile mortality, yield at MSY, bycatch, ecosystem, and socio-economic impacts, as outlined under Rec. 24-01.

-These interim objectives will be reviewed by the SCRS through the MSE process. Panel 1 will recommend any adjustments and advise whether a unified or stock-specific approach is appropriate, with final management objectives to be adopted by the Commission in its 2026 Annual Meeting or as soon as possible thereafter.

-This resolution will be repealed once management procedures are adopted for the three stocks.

Recommendation by ICCAT to Replace Recommendation 23-02 on Brazil's Bigeye Tuna Payback Plan (Rec. 24-03 replacing Rec. 22-02, BET)

-Recognizing the overharvest of 1,587.34t from 2022 and 922.03t from 2023, Brazil is addressing it by paying back 355.34t in 2024 from the 2022 overharvest.

-ICCAT recommends that the remaining overharvest of 1,232t from 2022, along with the 922.03t overharvest from 2023, be paid back over a period of 4 years, from 2025 to 2028, with an annual payback of 538.5t each year.

Recommendation by ICCAT on a Candidate Management Procedure for Western Atlantic Skipjack Tuna (Rec.24-04, TRO)

-ICCAT recalls its commitment to adopting management procedures (MPs) for priority stocks, including western Atlantic skipjack tuna, in line with Rec. 15-07 and Res. 15-12. The 2022 SCRS assessment confirmed the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

-The management objectives target at least a 60% probability of stock being in the green quadrant of the Kobe matrix over the medium term (4–10 years) using a 30-year projection period, less than 10% probability of falling below B_{LIM} ($0.4 \cdot B_{MSY}$), maximizing catch, and limiting TAC changes to $\pm 25\%$ between management periods.

-A constant TAC for 2026, 2027 and 2028 will be calculated using the selected MP, which will operate on a three-year cycle. The SCRS will run the MP and advise the Commission, which will adopt the TAC unless exceptional circumstances arise.

-In 2025, the SCRS will finalize MP tuning, while Panel 1 will develop protocols for TAC compliance and exceptional circumstances. These elements are scheduled for review and adoption at the 2025 Annual Commission Meeting.

-A full review of the MP's performance will occur in 2031 and every six years thereafter to assess effectiveness and determine if adjustments or alternative approaches are necessary. This recommendation repeals Res. 22-02 on development of initial conceptual management objectives for western Atlantic skipjack.

Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 22-08 Establishing a Multi-annual Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean (Rec.24-04 amending Rec.22-08, BFT)

-ICCAT transitions to a long-term management plan for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna, moving from an emergency recovery plan. A Management Procedure (MP) was established in Rec. 23-07. The annual TAC for 2023–2025 is set at 40,570t, with CPCs managing quotas and fishing efforts, including a small unallocated reserve. Transfers are allowed under mutual agreement, but no chartering or automatic carry-over is permitted. Any overharvest must be repaid under ICCAT compliance provisions.

-CPCs must submit annual fishing, capacity, inspection, and farming plans by February 15. These plans must align with quotas and be reviewed by Panel 2. Fishing seasons for purse seine vessels are May 26–July 1, and for pelagic longliners, January 1–May 31. Minimum bluefin tuna size is 30 kg or 115 cm, with bycatch limited to 5% and one fish per recreational vessel. Aerial means for locating tuna are prohibited.

-CPCs must maintain records of vessels, traps, and farms, ensuring they are listed in the ICCAT Record. Fishing authorizations and detailed catch reports are required, including for joint fishing operations. Vessels must submit daily reports with location, weight, and discards, and landings must undergo inspection with prior notice. Transshipments require prior authorization.

-Observer coverage is required for 20% of active vessels and 100% for towing vessels and harvesting operations. The ICCAT Regional Observer Programme ensures full coverage for key activities. Transfer operations must include prior notification and video monitoring. Farms must maintain detailed cage plans and monitor transfers, with discrepancies over 10% triggering investigations.

-Transfer Declarations (ITD) and eBCD must reflect accurate data, and discrepancies over 10% will trigger investigations and potential corrective actions. Farms must ensure caging operations

are properly authorized, with the eBCD and ITD used for traceability. Discrepancies above 10% in these documents will require adjustments or potential release orders.

-ICCAT will issue a biennial compliance report on CPCs' adherence to management measures. CPCs must submit relevant regulations and documents, and Panel 2 will annually review and approve plans for fishing, capacity, farming, and aquaculture plans. Data will be provided to the SCRS, ensuring confidentiality. CPCs with pre-2013 domestic legislation requiring the landing of dead or dying bluefin tuna will be exempt from certain restrictions, but excess quantities will be deducted from their quotas in the following year. This recommendation replaces Rec. 21-08 and Rec. 23-06.

Recommendation to Amend the Rebuilding Plan for Mediterranean Albacore (Rec. 24-08, ALB)

-Considering that the 2021 stock assessment of the SCRS concluded that the Mediterranean albacore stock is overfished, and overfishing is occurring, ICCAT has implemented a 15-year rebuilding plan starting in 2022, continuing through 2036, aiming to achieve B_{MSY} by 2036 with at least 60% probability. The plan sets a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) at 2,500 tons for 2025 and 2026, with the following quotas: EU (2,089.93t), Egypt (150.27t), Libya (23t), Morocco (10t), Syria (1.8t), and Türkiye (225t, with unused quota transferable to the EU).

-CPCs are required to limit the number of fishing vessels authorized for Mediterranean albacore fishing to those authorized in 2017 or 2018. They must report annually to ICCAT, providing a list of vessels authorized to fish and submit catch data.

-A seasonal closure period will be enforced from October 1 to November 30, with an additional month (February 15 to March 31), or alternatively from January 1 to March 31, to protect juvenile stocks.

-Bycatch from non-quota CPCs such as Tunisia and Algeria must not exceed 10% of total catches per vessel. The SCRS will review the stock status in 2026, assess the effectiveness of the plan, and provide recommendations for future amendments to the management framework.

-This recommendation replaces Rec. 22-05 and is scheduled for review in 2026, with voluntary implementation encouraged by January 1, 2025.

Resolution on Southern Atlantic Albacore Management Objectives (Res. 24-09, ALB)

-Acknowledging the 2020 SCRS stock assessment, which indicated that the southern Atlantic albacore stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, ICCAT set out a framework for sustainable management of the southern Atlantic albacore stock, aiming for the adoption of management procedures (MPs) by 2029. These procedures will be developed using Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) to address uncertainties and ensure stock sustainability, in line with ICCAT's objective of maintaining tuna populations at levels that support maximum sustainable yield (MSY).

-Key operational management objectives include maintaining a 60% or higher probability of the stock being in the green zone of the Kobe plot over a 30-year projection. There should also be no more than a 15% probability of the stock falling below the BLIM threshold during this period. The plan seeks to maximize catch levels while ensuring stability by limiting annual changes in the total allowable catch (TAC) to 20%.

-A 3-year management cycle will guide the MSE development. Initial objectives may be adjusted by Panel 3, with SCRS input, before final recommendations are made to the Commission by the 2029 Annual Meeting.

Recommendation on a Multi-annual Conservation and Management Programme for North Atlantic Swordfish (Rec. 24-10, SWO)

- Recalling the results of the 2022 North Atlantic Swordfish Stock Assessment, which showed the stock being in the green quadrant of the Kobe plot (not overfished and no overfishing was occurring) in 2020 and recognizing the total allocation of fishing opportunities for North Atlantic swordfish is superior to recent annual TAC levels and that catches have been well below these levels for many years;
- The ICCAT recommendation outlines conservation and management measures for North Atlantic swordfish. The TAC for 2025-2027 is set at 14,769t, with allocations for each country involved in the fishery. The TAC will be determined using a management procedure (MP) which will be applied every three years to set future TACs.
- Countries can transfer quotas among themselves, but overharvests cannot be covered by these transfers. There are provisions for catch overages and underages, where overages are deducted from future limits, and underages can be carried over within certain limits.
- To protect young swordfish, minimum size limits are set at 25 kg or 125 cm. CPCs must submit detailed scientific data on catches, discards, and sizes, with a focus on improving discard estimation methods.
- The MP's performance will be reviewed by 2030, with adjustments made as needed based on scientific advice and environmental factors like climate change. The recommendation replaces previous conservation measures and aims to ensure the long-term sustainability of the swordfish population while balancing the needs of the fishing industry.

Recommendation by ICCAT on Catch Limits for Mediterranean Swordfish (Rec. 24-11, SWO)

- Building on the multi-annual recovery plan for Mediterranean swordfish under Rec. 16-05, ICCAT reinforces catch control measures by setting a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 10,500t for 2025. Of this, 9,015.81 t is allocated among CPCs based on prior agreements. The EU receives the largest share (6,363.63t), followed by Morocco (896.47t), Tunisia (865.33t), Algeria (472.33t), Türkiye (378.70t), and other CPCs (39.35t combined). Egypt and Libya are each allocated 125t, without altering the agreed allocation key.
- The SCRS is tasked with evaluating the effectiveness of these catch reductions on the recovery of the Mediterranean swordfish stock.

Recommendation to Continue Enhancing the Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers (Rec. 24-13, GEN)

Noting the successful formation of the Standing Working Group for Enhancing the Dialogue Between Fisheries Scientists and Managers (SWGSM), the Commission recommends making this group a permanent forum with the goal of addressing key issues such as the prioritization of SCRS research, the development of management strategies, climate change considerations, and biodiversity conservation. The SWGSM will focus on understanding management concepts like Reference Points, Harvest Control Rules, and Management Strategy Evaluation.

The group will be co-chaired by a fisheries manager and a scientist, with intersessional meetings open to fisheries managers, SCRS scientists, and observers. It will also review the implementation of ICCAT's Plan of Action on Climate Change and support the development of research priorities.

This Recommendation repeals and replaces the Recommendation by ICCAT amending the

Recommendation by ICCAT for enhancing the dialogue between fisheries scientists and managers (Rec. 14-13).

Improve compliance and tackle IUU fishing

Recommendation to Protect the Health and Safety of Observers in CPC Observer Programmes (Rec. 24-14, GEN)

ICCAT mandates CPCs to ensure observer safety by preventing harm or intimidation from vessel crews. Observers must receive safety training, have communication access, and wear appropriate safety gear, including flotation devices. Vessels must be equipped with life rafts, fire extinguishers, PFDs, and EPIRBs. Observers must inspect vessel safety, report concerns, and have emergency contact procedures. Serious incidents must be reported to the Executive Secretary for review, with CPCs cooperating in search and rescue efforts. The Recommendation will be reviewed in three years, incorporating FAO observer safety guidelines.

Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 21-15 on Transshipment (Rec. 24-15 amending Rec. 21-15, GEN)

-ICCAT updates its transshipment regulations to address IUU fishing by prohibiting all at-sea transshipment of tuna, tuna-like species, and associated species, with exceptions for large-scale pelagic longline vessels (LSPLVs) under a specific programme. All other transshipments must occur in port.

-Carrier vessels involved in transshipment must be listed in the ICCAT Record of Carrier Vessels and equipped with Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS). CPCs are responsible for ensuring compliance and prohibiting transshipment involving vessels on the ICCAT IUU Vessel List. Transshipment declarations, including detailed species, quantities, and locations, must be submitted electronically and verified by ICCAT observers onboard.

-ICCAT calls for enhanced research, capacity-building, and cooperation to improve transshipment monitoring. The SCRS will assess effectiveness and recommend further measures. This Recommendation replaces Rec. 21-15.

Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 22-16 Amending Recommendation 21-18 on the Application of the eBCD System (Rec. 24-16 amending Rec. 22-16, SDP)

In line with the multi-annual recovery plan for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna, ICCAT strengthens implementation of the electronic Bluefin Tuna Catch Document (eBCD) system to improve traceability, combat IUU fishing, and streamline trade verification. Use of the eBCD system is mandatory for all CPCs, which must submit user data for registration. Paper BCDs are permitted only in specific cases, such as system failures, small landings, or Pacific bluefin trade.

The eBCD system replaces paper documentation for Atlantic bluefin tuna, in accordance with Rec. 23-21, with targeted derogations. These include simplified procedures for certain EU internal trades, tagged domestic fisheries, bycatch, and non-authorized vessels. Flexibility is allowed for recording live fish trade, mortalities during farming operations, and bycatch, while sport and recreational catches not intended for sale are exempt.

CPCs are to provide feedback on system functionality, with the Commission considering further improvements and financial support. The ICCAT Secretariat and CDS Working Group will coordinate with system developers to implement required enhancements. This

Recommendation repeals and replaces Rec. 22-16 and clarifies the application of Rec. 23-21.

Recommendation on the Application of the Integrated Online Management System (IOMS) (Rec. 24-17, TOR)

-Building on Rec. 16-19 and Rec. 21-20, ICCAT has deployed IOMS to unify vessel, catch, transshipment, and farm reporting. All CPCs must register at least one “CPC Administrator” by submitting user data to the Secretariat; only registered Administrators can access IOMS and manage user roles.

-From 2023, Section 3 Parts 1 and 2 of Annual Reports must be submitted via IOMS only. Offline submissions require a written exception request detailing technical issues sent at least two weeks before the deadline to the Compliance Committee Chair (with Online Reporting Technology Working Group (WG-ORT) Chair and Secretariat); granted exceptions will be logged and reported to the Commission.

-The WG-ORT and Secretariat will release IOMS modules (Vessel Authorization, Observer Reports, Transshipment Declarations, eBCDs, Farm Caging/Harvest data, etc.). CPCs must implement each new module and import any legacy data. Regular trainings, guides and help-desk support will be provided.

-CPCs are encouraged to report performance issues, feature requests and data-validation problems via the Secretariat and WG-ORT. The Compliance Committee and Commission will review IOMS annually, consider funding for enhancements, and integrate SCRS data-quality feedback. This replaces Rec. 22-17 and supplements ICCAT’s Revised Guidelines for Annual Reports (Ref. 23-24).

-CPCs are encouraged to report system performance issues, desired feature enhancements, and data-validation challenges via the Secretariat and WG-ORT. The Compliance Committee and Commission will review IOMS progress annually, consider funding for enhancements, and integrate SCRS data-quality feedback. This Recommendation supplements ICCAT’s Revised Guidelines for Annual Reports (Ref. 23-24) and replaces Rec. 22-17.

Improve Environmental Performance

Recommendation by ICCAT on Mobulid Rays (Family Mobulidae) Caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries (Rec. 24-12, replacing Rec. 23-14)

-Recognizing the extreme vulnerability of mobulid rays due to low fecundity and slow growth, ICCAT prohibits retention, transshipment, landing, or storage of any mobulid rays caught in association with ICCAT fisheries, effective no later than 1 July 2025. CPCs must ensure vessels release rays promptly and unharmed, following best practices detailed in Annex 1 of the recommendation, with exceptions for vessels operating exclusively north of 47°N or south of 47°S.

-Purse seine vessels may surrender unintentionally frozen rays to authorities or discard them at port; these may not be sold or bartered but may be donated for domestic consumption. Observer programs must record mobulid ray discards and releases, including life status where possible, and report to ICCAT.

-CPCs are encouraged to conduct research to identify critical habitats (e.g., mating, pupping, nursery areas) and implement protective spatial or temporal measures. ICCAT and CPCs will pursue capacity-building and cooperation to support implementation.

-The SCRS will review available life history and conservation data in 2024 to assess the

suitability of the retention ban under the precautionary approach, and may advise on additional mitigation and data collection needs.

-This recommendation shall become effective on 1 July 2025.

21st Meeting of Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

28 Nov – 3 Dec 2024

Suva, Fiji

At its 21st annual session in Suva, Fiji, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) adopted a suite of measures to strengthen tuna fisheries management, improve oversight and reduce environmental impacts. Key outcomes include binding crew labour standards to ensure safe and fair working conditions, interim electronic monitoring standards to enhance transparency, and updated conservation measures for Pacific bluefin tuna. The Commission also agreed on protection measures for sharks, cetaceans, and North Pacific striped marlin.

Improve tuna management

Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific Bluefin Tuna (CMM 2024-01)

- Replaces CMM 2023-02 and incorporates the latest 2024 stock assessment by ISC, which confirms rebuilding progress and enables cautious catch limit increases.
- Sets catch limits for Japan, Korea, and Chinese Taipei for Pacific bluefin tuna <30kg and ≥30kg, based on the 2002–2004 baseline, with specified annual limits.
- Permits limited carryover of underages (up to 17%) and requires deduction of overages from subsequent years; New Zealand and Australia have specific bycatch limits (200t and 40t respectively) and may carry forward specified amounts from 2019–2022.
- Authorizes conversion of catch <30kg to ≥30kg using a 0.68 factor, but not vice versa.
- Urges juvenile catch reduction, especially of age-0 fish (<2kg), and limits increase beyond 50% of 2002–2004 levels.
- Japan applies a dual management year system and must report accordingly (calendar year and 1 April–31 March).
- Requires all CCMs to report by 15 June annually on fishing effort, catches (<30kg and ≥30kg), implementation of relevant paragraphs, and international trade monitoring.
- Encourages scientific research for recruitment and adult abundance indices, and allows catch limits dedicated to research, subject to ISC review and Northern Committee (NC) recommendation.
- Mandates strengthened monitoring and data systems for fisheries and farming to improve quality and timeliness.
- Calls for cooperation with IATTC through the Joint Working Group and bilaterally, to harmonize conservation efforts and establish a catch documentation scheme (CDS).

- Ensures special consideration for SIDS and Participating Territories with limited current activity and legitimate interest in developing PBF fisheries, while preventing exploitation by external interests.
- To be reviewed in 2026, based on new ISC assessment, management strategy evaluation, EPO/WCPO fishing opportunity balance, climate change impact, and other relevant factors.

Improve compliance and tackle IUU fishing

Conservation and Management Measure for Crew Labour Standards by WCPFC (CMM 2024-04)

- Recalling WCPFC's commitment to safe, fair, and decent crew conditions, and acknowledging international standards (ILO C188, SDG 8, and WCPFC Convention Article 10).
- Adopted to address forced labour and abuse, this measure applies to vessels fishing on the high seas or in multiple EEZs, but not within a single EEZ or internal waters.
- Flag CCMs must ensure owners/operators provide contracts in a language crew understand, fair conditions, adequate provisions, safety training, regular pay, and protection from abuse, including the right to report mistreatment without retaliation.
- Use of external recruiters must be reported. Owners/operators remain responsible for crew welfare.
- In serious incidents (e.g., death, injury, disappearance, abuse), Flag CCMs must respond, notify relevant bodies, preserve evidence, inform the RCC, and conduct a minimum 72-hour search.
- Port CCMs receiving credible reports must inform the flag State and Secretariat, allow safe entry, and support crew access to care and justice where possible.
- CCMs must designate contact points within 30 days and submit annual reports. Developed CCMs are encouraged to assist developing CCMs and SIDS.
- Enters into force on 1 January 2028; early implementation encouraged.

Conservation and Management Measure for the Monitoring, Controlling, and Surveillance of Pacific Bluefin Tuna (CMM 2024-02)

- Supplements CMM 2024-01 by establishing a monitoring and control regime for Pacific bluefin tuna fisheries and farming operations in the WCPO.
- Requires CCMs with Pacific bluefin fisheries and/or farming to report annually by 15 June on implementation of monitoring and control measures taken in the previous calendar year, including.
 - Fisheries: vessel/set net registration, catch allocation, reporting (target, incidental, discards), catch/landing monitoring (e.g., inspections, observers), port state measures, and domestic transaction controls.
 - Farming: farm and cage registration, caging and harvest reporting, and monitoring farming operations.
- CCMs without Pacific bluefin tuna fisheries/farming must annually report any bycatch in accordance with paragraph 9 of CMM 2024-01.
- Mandates a joint review of CCM-reported monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) measures by TCC and Northern Committee by 2026, with recommendations to the Commission.

- Urges coordination with IATTC via the Joint IATTC–WCPFC NC Working Group on future MCS measures.
- Calls on WCPFC to consider establishment of a Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) for Pacific bluefin tuna compatible with existing CDS frameworks by 31 December 2026.

Interim Electronic Monitoring Minimum Standards – Technical, Data, And Reporting Requirements

- Establishes interim minimum standards for electronic monitoring (EM) in WCPFC fisheries, covering technical specifications, data requirements, and reporting processes.
- Adopted the ER and EM Working Group (EREM IWG) Workplan to advance EM program development and implementation.
- Tasks the EREM IWG in 2025 to:
 - Work with the ROP IWG to review EM data needs linked to CMMs not yet reflected in ROP minimum data fields.
 - Develop advice to improve harmonization of EM standards across RFMOs, informed by the Dec 2024 ABNJ Tuna II Workshop on EM harmonization.
 - Propose an assurance/audit process for EM implementation, modelled on the existing ROP audit system.
 - Begin work on EM standards for longline transshipment activities by carrier vessels.
 - Draft amendments to CMM 2022-05 to support EM system integration with the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV).
- Instructs SC22 and TCC22 in 2026 to review outcomes of this work and recommend any changes to interim EM Standards for consideration at WCPFC23 (2026).

Conservation and Management Measure for Charter Notification Scheme (CMM 2024-03)

- Replaces CMM 2021-04 and establishes updated procedures for notification and oversight of charter arrangements within the WCPFC Convention Area.
- Requires that Members and Participating Territories notify the Executive Director and relevant flag State and Scientific Service Provider (SSP) within 15 days or 72 hours prior to the start of fishing operations of any vessel chartered as part of their domestic fleet.
- Notification must include: vessel name, WIN, owner and charterer details, flag State, charter duration, and area of operations (EEZ and/or high seas).
- Additional notification required for: new charters, changes in vessel information, or charter terminations.
- Limits eligibility to vessels on the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels and not listed on the WCPFC or other RFMOs' IUU lists.
- Information shared with all CCMs; annual summary presented by the Executive Director for Commission review.
- Catches and effort by chartered vessels are attributed to the chartering Member or Participating Territory, unless otherwise specified in other CMMs.
- Measure set to expire 28 February 2028, unless renewed by the Commission.

Intersessional Process to Develop Voluntary Regional Guides for the Use of Tools in Conducting High Seas Boarding and Inspections

- Recalls WCPFC obligations under CMM 2006-08 to integrate high seas boarding and inspection (HSBI) with other MCS tools, and TCC20's request to develop voluntary regional HSBI guidance.
- Establishes an intersessional process, led by Australia with support from China and interested CCMs, to draft voluntary regional guides for HSBI tools including DNA testing, weight estimation, gear measurement, and evidence collection.
- Objective is to standardize best practices for evidence gathering and inspection procedures, supporting consistent and high-quality HSBI operations without altering existing CMMs.
- Guides will be voluntary, applicable within WCPFC jurisdiction, and will complement CMM 2006-08 and related measures.
- Technical experts working group to be formed at WCPFC21, with initial drafting in early 2025 and virtual meetings planned in Q1 and Q2 of 2025.
- CCMs and observers are invited to contribute existing materials and nominate experts.
- Draft HSBI Guides will be submitted to TCC21 for review, with a view to potential adoption at WCPFC22.

Improve Environmental Performance

Conservation and Management Measure for Sharks (CMM 2024-05)

- Recognizing the ecological, economic, and cultural importance of sharks, and the need for precautionary, ecosystem-based management.
- Applies to all sharks caught in WCPFC-managed fisheries on the high seas and in EEZs, without prejudice to coastal States' sovereign rights.
- Requires full utilization of retained sharks and prohibits finning. From 2025–2027, fins must remain naturally attached, or alternatives (tagging or binding) may be used with enhanced monitoring.
- Mandates reporting on implementation, including monitoring measures and compliance, with review in 2027 to assess effectiveness of alternatives.
- Prohibits retention, transshipment, and landing of oceanic whitetip, silky, and whale sharks. Safe release is required using WCPFC guidelines, with crew safety prioritized.
- Requires mitigation of shark bycatch via gear restrictions and safe handling practices, with further protections for longline fisheries between 20°N and 20°S.
- Calls for data reporting, research, and capacity building to support implementation, particularly for developing States.
- Replaces CMM 2022-04.

Conservation and Management Measure for North Pacific Striped Marlin (CMM 2024-06)

- Recognizing the overfished status of North Pacific striped marlin and WCPFC's interim rebuilding plan targeting 20%SSB₀ by 2034 with at least 60% probability.
- Applies to all WCPFC-managed areas north of the equator, including high seas and EEZs.

- Sets a total annual catch limit of 2,400 mt for 2025–2027, representing a 60% reduction from the 2000–2003 peak. If exceeded, the measure will be reviewed.
- Allocates specific national limits (totaling 2,324.8 mt) to Japan, Chinese Taipei, Korea, the U.S., and China; other CCMs must ensure they do not contribute to exceeding 2,400 mt.
- Establishes a reserve system: unused quota may be carried forward, with up to 165 mt annually available per CCM, prioritizing those facing fishery closures.
- Requires CCMs to adopt national measures (e.g., gear, effort, spatial restrictions) to remain within limits and report implementation annually.
- Obliges CCMs to release live striped marlin after limit is reached, maximizing post-release survival.
- Requires deduction of any overages from future allocations and reporting of catch, effort, and discards to support improved stock assessments, no later than 2027.
- Replaces CMM 2010-01; to be reviewed and amended in 2027 following the next ISC stock assessment.

Conservation and Management Measure for the Protection of Cetaceans from Purse Seine and Longline Fishing Operations (CMM 2024-07)

- Recognizing the ecological and cultural significance of cetaceans in the WCPO, and their vulnerability to interactions with purse seine and longline fisheries.
- Prohibits purse seine sets on tuna schools associated with cetaceans if sighted prior to setting.
- Requires safe release of unintentionally encircled cetaceans in purse seine operations, with reporting of species (if known), number, location, steps taken, and condition upon release.
- Prohibits the harvest, retention, transshipment, or landing of cetaceans (whole or parts) by longline or purse seine vessels, including those under charter.
- Requires prompt and safe release of entangled or caught cetaceans by longline vessels, using best practices where possible and subject to crew safety.
- Mandates vessel masters to follow any Commission-adopted guidelines for safe release of cetaceans.
- Requires CCMs to distribute best practice guidance to all longline and purse seine operators.
- Directs the Secretariat to report on implementation based on observer and other relevant reports.
- Effective July 1, 2025.

WCPFC 21 SIDE EVENTS:

WCPFC 21 Sustainable Fishing Industries

Organizers: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), Conservation International (CI)

Participants: Government representatives from Samoa and Fiji, fishing industry stakeholders, CI staff, Fiji Fishing Industry Association (100 participants, including 40 women)

Summary: The event focused on building a smart and responsible domestic tuna industry in the Pacific through innovative partnerships. It showcased success stories, promoted commitments on harvest strategies and labor standards, and highlighted collaborative efforts to improve environmental, social, and economic outcomes in the tuna sector.

Seabird Side Event

Organizers: New Zealand, BirdLife International

Participants: WCPFC members, cooperating non-members, observers

Summary: This event addressed seabird conservation concerns related to tuna fisheries, raising awareness and encouraging collaborative solutions among WCPFC participants.

FAD Retrieval Issues and Initiatives

Organizers: International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)

Participants: ISSF, WCPFC members, cooperating non-members, observers

Summary: The event provided an overview of challenges and initiatives in Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) retrieval, fostering discussion to improve sustainable practices in FAD management.

Electronic Monitoring

Organizers: World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

Participants: WWF, WCPFC members, cooperating non-members, observers

Summary: This side event highlighted the importance of electronic monitoring in fisheries management and shared updates on progress in adopting electronic monitoring systems within WCPFC fisheries.

Explaining MSC Fisheries Standard v3.1

Organizers: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Participants: MSC, WCPFC members, cooperating non-members, observers

Summary: The event explained the latest MSC Fisheries Standard v3.1 to participants, promoting understanding and uptake of sustainable certification standards within tuna fisheries.



About the Common Oceans Tuna project

The Common Oceans Tuna project brings together a global partnership dedicated to sustainable tuna fisheries aiming to advance responsible tuna fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond nation- al jurisdiction (ABNJ). Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and led by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), it works in collaboration with five regional tuna fisheries management organizations, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, and civil society.

COMMON OCEANS | Tuna project

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) common-oceans@fao.org



Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission



Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels



FFA
PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY



INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION



IPNLF
FOR ONE-BY-ONE FISHERS



INTERNATIONAL SEAFOOD SUSTAINABILITY FOUNDATION



MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL



NOAA
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS



THE OCEAN FOUNDATION



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme



The Nature Conservancy



Pacific Community
Communauté du Pacifique



WWF

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