

THREE TAKEAWAYS FROM ICCAT 2023

Background

- The 24th Special Session of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) took place between the 13th and 20th of November 2023.
- Ahead of the meeting, the Global Tuna Alliance **published a position statement** featuring a priority ask of implementing a robust, long-term conservation measure to secure the long-term health of tropical tuna stocks in the Atlantic.
- This measure was needed to address the unacceptable exceeding of total allowable catches (TACs) of bigeye and yellowfin stocks, and enforce compliance.
- An interim measure, first adopted in 2021 was rolled over in 2022. However, the market was looking for a long-term plan to rebuild bigeye stocks within 15 years and maintain yellowfin catches at a sustainable level.
- Further asks focused on the development of harvest strategies, and improving the transparency of the sector by outlining and adopting minimum standards for Port State Measures and Electronic Monitoring.

Electronic Monitoring

APPROVED

- Establishes minimum programme requirements and technical standards and specifications for EMS used in ICCAT longline and purse seine fisheries to meet ICCAT requirements for scientific data collection and/or compliance monitoring and ensure that when EMS is used it is effective in achieving its intended purpose.
- The implementation of EMS is optional, and this recommendation does not create any independent obligation for CPCs to implement EMS on board their fishing vessels.
- CPCs that implement EMS in their fisheries pursuant to such ICCAT recommendations shall ensure that their EMS domestic programmes meet the minimum programme requirements and standards and specifications set out in this Recommendation.
- To implement EMS in accordance with this Recommendation for scientific purposes, it shall be used to complement the required level of human observer coverage and the required tasks to be performed by these human observers.

Tropical Tuna Conservation Measures Proposal

ROLLED OVER

- Recommendation 21-01 was not supported during the meeting, due to a focus just on allocation and TAC rather than improving the conservation measures as a whole.
- Therefore, the recommendation was rolled over to 2024 with the agreement to have an inter-sessional meeting to discuss all the pending issues.
- The GTA will continue advocating for more robust management measures for tropical tunas that guarantee the bigeye stock rebuilding with a high probability (>60%) of success within 15 years.

Conservation of North Atlantic Swordfish

ROLLED OVER

- (CPCs) agreed on a rollover proposal, intending to extend the existing management measures into 2024, giving more time to develop a robust MSE to be approved in the next Commission meeting.
- The MSE results updated after the close of the 2023 SCRS Meeting be reviewed by the SCRS in 2024, in keeping with the established scientific process, prior to final consideration of CMPs by the Commission in 2024, with a view to the adoption of a management procedure to set total allowable catches for 2025-2027 and onward.