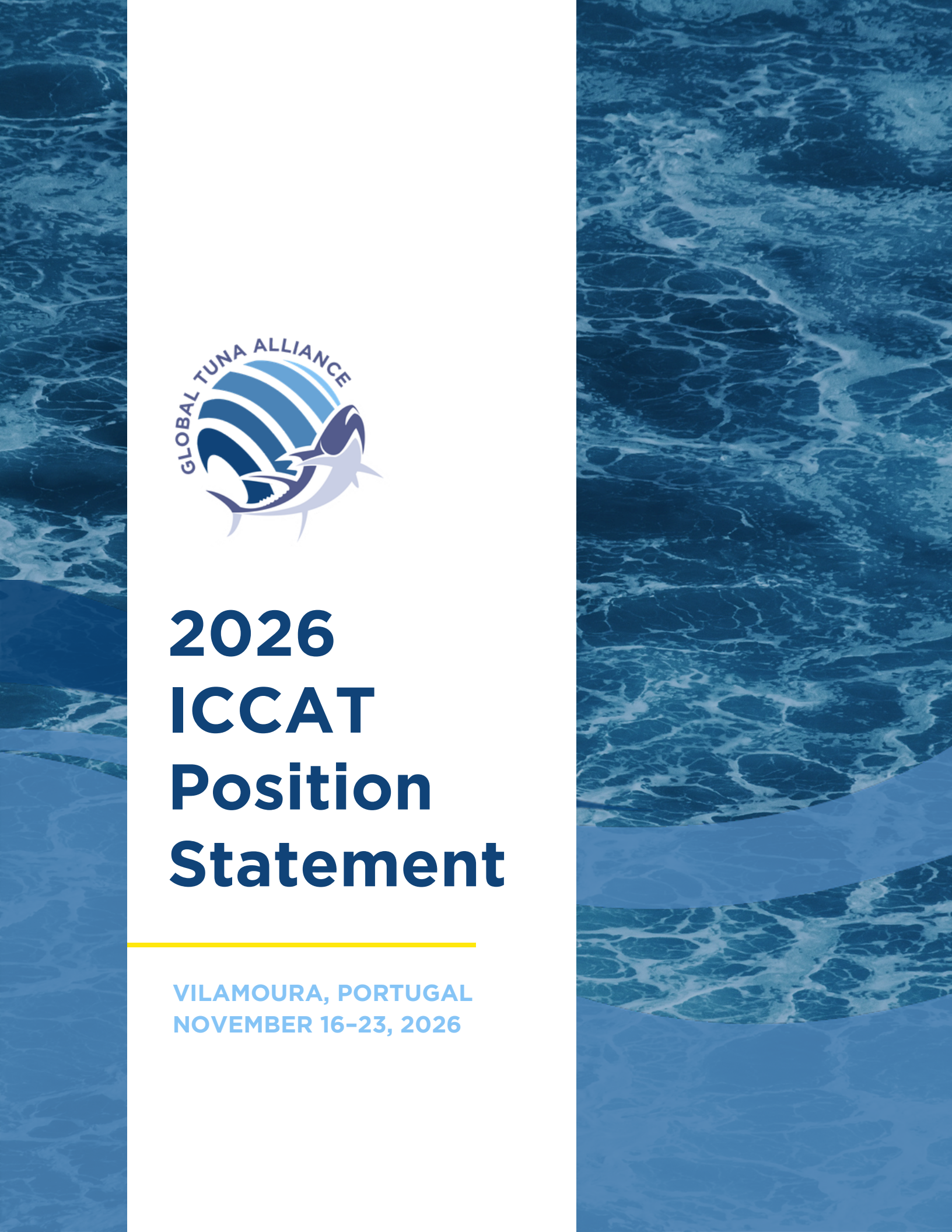


2026 ICCAT Position Statement

VILAMOURA, PORTUGAL
NOVEMBER 16–23, 2026

STATEMENT TO THE 25TH SPECIAL MEETING OF ICCAT

The **Global Tuna Alliance (GTA)** is an independent coalition of of 40 processors, distributors and retailers representing a significant share of the global tuna trade, respectfully submits this position statement to the Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Entities, or Fishing Entities (CPCs) ahead of the 25th Special Meeting of the Commission.

While we commend ICCAT for the progress achieved at the 2025 annual meeting, most notably the adoption of the western Atlantic skipjack management procedure and updates to Port State Measures, several critical reforms regarding tropical tuna harvest strategies, electronic monitoring and bycatch mitigation were deferred.

To meet scientific advice and market expectations for sustainable seafood supply chains, ICCAT must translate last year's momentum into meaningful conservation, compliance and labour measures this year.

OUR PARTNERS

KEY ISSUES AND GTA'S POSITION

Drawing upon our overarching market requirements, the GTA urges the Commission to **prioritise the following six actions** during the 2026 annual session.

1. Tropical Tuna Conservation and Management Procedures

Markets require predictable, science-based management to support informed sourcing decisions and maintain confidence in tuna fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean.

Effective management measures are required to ensure tropical tuna catches are maintained at sustainable levels. Despite previous progress, the current framework is insufficient to limit the harvest of vulnerable stocks.

GTA Asks

1. **Yellowfin and bigeye tuna:** Adopt mechanisms to ensure yellowfin tuna catches do not exceed the agreed total allowable catch (TAC), in direct alignment with the 2026 SCRS recommendation. The Commission must establish procedures to identify and strictly address non-compliance with these TAC allocations.

2. **Multi-Stock management procedures:** Accelerate the development of multi-stock management procedures for bigeye, yellowfin and eastern skipjack tuna, maintaining momentum toward adoption in 2028.

3. **Southern albacore:** Adopt a revised TAC for southern albacore that reflects the 2026 SCRS stock assessment indicating reduced stock productivity, bringing the limit down from 28,000 tonnes to closer to recent catch levels (~21,000 tonnes).

2. Observer Coverage and Electronic Monitoring

Comprehensive observer coverage provides the independent verification necessary for robust fisheries management and reliable bycatch estimation.

The current 10% observer minimum for longline vessels remains inadequate to provide the level of independent verification expected by global markets, constraining stock assessments and limiting the ability to verify compliance.

GTA Asks

1. **Increase longline coverage:** Increase observer coverage (human and/or electronic) on large-scale longline vessels to an interim level of 20%, utilising the minimum EM standards adopted in 2023.



3. Crew Labour Rights and Worker Safety

Social responsibility and the protection of human rights are core requirements for responsible tuna sourcing and an expectation of GTA partners.

Seafood retailers and supply chain businesses face growing commercial, legal and reputational exposure from labour risks aboard fishing vessels.

Market expectations and global sourcing standards extend beyond environmental sustainability to encompass human rights, fair labour practices and worker safety across seafood supply chains.

GTA Asks

1. **Binding labour resolution:** Develop and adopt a binding resolution on crew labour rights and safety standards on fishing vessels, aligning ICCAT management with international frameworks for worker rights and human welfare, such as ILO 188.

4. Vessel Tracking, Transparency and Compliance

Transparency is a core pillar of the GTA's sourcing expectations. Companies need credible, independently verified information about what happens at sea to assess sourcing risks and demonstrate the legality and sustainability of their tuna supply.

Strengthening ICCAT's monitoring and vessel tracking framework is essential to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

GTA Asks

1. **Mandatory AIS integration:** Amend Recommendation 18-10 to mandate the continuous transmission of Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) alongside standard Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS). This requirement should apply to authorised fishing vessels 20 meters or longer to enable cross-verification of positions and enhance compliance monitoring.

2. **Beneficial ownership transparency:** Add a dedicated beneficial owner field to the ICCAT IUU Vessel List to give effect to Recommendation 23-16. Furthermore, amend Recommendation 24-15 to require flag States to report the beneficial owners of vessels on the ICCAT Record of Carrier Vessels.

3. **Record of vessels:** Amend Recommendation 21-14 to require an IMO number for all eligible vessels (12 meters or greater in length) and mandate that all vessels targeting ICCAT species be included in the Record of Vessels, regardless of size.



5. FAD Management

Markets increasingly demand measures to reduce the impact of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) on marine ecosystems and minimise unwanted marine debris, supporting responsible and transparent sourcing across tuna supply chains.

GTA Asks

1. **Biodegradable transition:** Enforce the established timeline in Recommendation 24-01 for the transition to fully biodegradable FADs without netting.

2. **FAD tracking & registration:** Establish clear ownership rules, adopt a comprehensive FAD marking scheme and set a timeline for the creation of an ICCAT FAD register.

6. Bycatch Mitigation and Shark Protections

Responsible sourcing commitments require robust protections for vulnerable non-target species.

The 2025 meeting failed to deliver necessary protections for vulnerable bycatch species; it is imperative that ICCAT modernises its approach in 2026 to maintain market confidence.

GTA Asks

1. **Fins naturally attached (FNA):** Require that all sharks be landed with fins naturally attached, without exceptions, to close enforcement loopholes and ensure accurate species-specific data collection.

2. **Shortfin mako protections:** Ensure total removals of the North Atlantic shortfin mako stock do not exceed 1,500 tonnes annually, supporting the 2026 SCRS findings that overfishing has ended and that this catch cap will rebuild the stock to MSY levels.

3. **Seabird mitigation:** Request the SCRS to urgently review and update Recommendation 11-09 to align with the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) scientific best practices for seabird bycatch mitigation, including modern specifications for branch line weighting and hook shielding devices.



CONCLUSION

Commercial decisions across our partnership are increasingly driven by:

- Credible evidence of stock sustainability
- Independent monitoring
- The protection of human rights at sea

Progress across these priority areas is essential to ensuring that Atlantic tuna fisheries remain sustainable, transparent and trusted by global markets.

The **GTA remains ready to support this work** and looks forward to collaborating with CPCs and stakeholders in Vilamoura to ensure these vital reforms are adopted, securing the ecological, social and economic future of Atlantic tuna fisheries.

CONTACT

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