

## NATIONAL REPORT OF IRELAND 1994 (PRELIMINARY DATA)

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### 1. Fleet

The Irish tuna (*T. alalunga*) fleet during 1994 consisted of 18 vessels which employed gillnets during the season. The vessels ranged in size from 18m to 35m - the average size being approximately 23m. The composition and size of the fleet was very similar to that of 1993.

### 2. Location and Timing of the Fishery

The main catches were taken from ICCAT, quadrant AL31 - i.e. west of the Bay of Biscay. The fishery took place from June to September with the main catches being taken during August.

### 3. Total Catch

The total catch of *T. alalunga* was about 2500t compared to 1946t taken during 1993. Small catches of blue fin tuna, sword fish and ray's bream were taken as by-catch.

### 4. Value and disposal of catch

The landed value of the catch was about £1r3.5 million. Most of the catch was exported fresh to Spain or France or frozen locally and subsequently exported.

### 5. Research and Sampling

A biological sampling programme was undertaken on catches landed at the main ports. Sampling was confined to the collection of data on lengths and weights. A total of 2443 albacore tuna were measured and 443 were weighed. These data will be submitted to ICCAT on the appropriate forms when they have been fully processed. Similar data on the 1993 fishery has already been submitted to ICCAT.

An experimental fishery, involving the use of paired midwater trawls and trolls, as alternatives to gillnets, was conducted during August. The results from the trawl fishery were encouraging and a full report of this experiment will be made available as soon as possible.

