

**The Pew Charitable Trusts’  
Statement to Plenary of the 20<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting of ICCAT  
14 November 2016**

The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) looks forward to working with ICCAT members this year to advance fisheries management of tunas and tuna-like species in the Convention Area and increase efforts to combat IUU fishing and ensure full transparency and accountability of all members. We have developed overarching [recommendations for the Commission](#), as well as prepared opening statements for consideration by members of Panels 1, 2, and 4, in addition to Plenary, for advancing the Commission’s work on temperate and tropical tunas, as well as sharks.

In October 2016, ICCAT received important guidance in its second [independent performance review](#), as follow up to a heavily critical first review in 2008. While the new analysis suggests that ICCAT management has improved, particularly for eastern bluefin tuna, it highlights several areas that need immediate attention, including management of Atlantic bigeye tuna and sharks. The review also stresses the need for incorporation of the precautionary approach into decision making and for adoption of harvest strategies for priority stocks to ensure that stocks not only recover, but are profitable and sustainable in the long run.

With respect to our objectives specific to the Plenary session, Pew encourages the Commission to take critical steps at this meeting in line with the review’s recommendations in order to:

**1. Advance harvest strategies, including through adoption of a timeline for selection of harvest control rules (HCRs) for priority stocks.**

As concluded by the performance review, ICCAT is “ideally placed to be the pioneer in the rapid introduction of long term management strategies to ensure the sustainability of individual stocks and consistency of management approach across the range of stocks.” The adoption of Recommendation 15-07 last year represented an important step toward development of harvest strategies by the Commission. In its 2016 report, the SCRS proposed a 2017 deadline for the evaluation of candidate HCRs for North Atlantic albacore, 2018 for Atlantic bluefin, 2019 for North Atlantic swordfish, and 2020 for tropical tunas. Pew urges the Commission to adopt a Recommendation this year that requires selection of HCRs in line with the aforementioned deadlines. The Recommendation should include detailed, stock-specific work plans with timelines for harvest strategy development to ensure that ICCAT can meet these deadlines.

**2. Amend the ICCAT Convention text**

In line with advice from the performance review, Pew urges the Commission to resolve all outstanding issues related to amended Convention text and agree to a process for adoption and entry into force of amendments at this year’s meeting. Delays in adopting important aspects of already agreed upon text will continue to impede progress by the Commission on key fisheries management and conservation issues.