Pew

The Pew Charitable Trusts' Opening Statement
to Panel 1 of the 25th Special Meeting of the ICCAT Commission
November 2026

The Pew Charitable Trusts welcomes this opportunity to comment on Panel 1's agenda items for consideration this year. We acknowledge reports that yellowfin catch is now below the TAC for the first time in over a decade, and at the same time, we remain concerned about the lack of progress on the multi-stock tropical tuna management strategy evaluation (MSE). To ensure continued progress and improve outcomes for tropical tuna management by ICCAT more broadly, we urge Panel 1 to prioritize the following items:

- **Adopt a yellowfin tuna allocation table** –This year, members should engage constructively in allocation negotiations noting that the current 110kt TAC has been in place for 15 years (Rec. 2011-01) but has been exceeded in all but 2 years (2013 & 2025), by as much as 40%. Following the latest stock assessment results, the TAC can be increased to 120kt which maintaining a 60 percent chance of remaining in the green quadrant of the kobe plot. Pew supports the replication of the tiered allocation key used for bigeye tuna to be utilized for yellowfin tuna. However, the measure should not allow for catch higher than the TAC - as is possible with bigeye. To help prevent that, we recommend that any minor harvester allowance be no greater than 1kt.
- **Adopt an exceptional circumstances protocol for WSKJ** – At the 2025 Commission meeting, ICCAT adopted an MP to set a constant TAC for western Atlantic skipjack at 30,844 t for the period 2026-2028. Following the practice of other panels, Panel 1 should adopt the exceptional circumstances protocol (ECP) outlined in proposal PA1_510 – which was endorsed by SCRS this year. The proposal defines a streamlined approach to identify and respond to conditions that may warrant reconsideration of the MP.
- **Tee up adoption of the multi-stock tropical tuna management procedure in 2027** - The multi-stock MSE has been underway since 2018, and MP adoption has already been delayed five times. During the two-day session preceding the Commission meeting, Panel 1 should agree to the details of the workplan and provide scientists with feedback, including how the multistock interactions should be considered or if three separate MSEs will advance this effort.

- **Increase observer coverage for longline vessels**: As the Commission looks to negotiate the current tropical tuna measure, Panel 1 should review the implementation of current observer coverage requirements for longliners. 10% was the minimum agreed for implementation in January 2022, which is still only half of the repeatedly recommended observer coverage by the SCRS. Panel 1 should agree to an immediate increase in longline observer coverage to 20%, per the short-term target of Proposal PA1-507, and an incremental increase to 100%, using a combination of human and electronic coverage. This is critical to improving data reporting and ensuring interactions with rare or non-target species are sufficiently observed.
- **FAD management**: Panel 1 should continue its commitment to a comprehensive FAD management program within the tropical tuna measure to minimize juvenile tuna mortality. This includes maintaining the current 45-day FAD closure period as no new advice from SCRS has recommended change.

Pew urges Panel 1 to prioritize these items to turn recent progress into lasting, science-based management of the tropical tunas.