



ORGANISATION DES PRODUCTEURS DE THON CONGELÉ ET SURGELÉ

ORTHONGEL
ASSOCIATION LOI DE 1901

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5 rue des Sardiniers – 29900 CONCARNEAU – FRANCE
Tél. : +33 (0)2 98 97 19 57 – Email : orthongel@orthongel.fr
www.orthongel.fr

ORTHONGEL statement related to Tropical Tunas

29th ICCAT Ordinary Meeting (November 17-24, 2025, Sevilla, Spain)

As confirmed by the SCRS report, the three tropical tuna stocks are now in the green quadrant of the Kobe Matrix, making it possible to consider a lessening of recovery measures and rather focus on management measures that will ensure the sustainability of tropical tuna fishing.

FAD moratorium (Rec. 24-01, §31) :

The SCRS notes that the expected effects of the temporary closure of FAD fishing on spawning stock biomass are not fully reflected in the impact assessment, as there is a time lag between the reduction in catches of younger bigeye tuna under floating objects and its impact on the spawning stock biomass. However, the Committee concluded that absolute exploitation levels (F) generally decreased between 2017 and 2023 for all ages, with exploitation rates for younger ages (caught under floating object) decreasing more than for older ages. This trend suggests that recent management measures and fishing trends have had a measurable effect on reducing juvenile bigeye tuna catches.

We also observe that the moratorium has had, and continues to have, negative effects on the industry. On the one hand, the moratorium leads to a significant decrease in activity and production during the closure months, both for vessels and for canneries, which are not supplied during the moratorium period and the following weeks (until the vessels catch enough fish to return to port). The socio-economic consequences of this decrease are evident: some European fishing companies ceased operations in 2024, two canneries have announced the cessation of their operations, and one has reported significant supply difficulties.

Furthermore, taking advantage of the absence of purse seine landings during the moratorium months in recent years, other fleets have supplied canneries (these fleets are not subject to the moratorium or do not comply with it, since, apart from local coastal fisheries, only purse seine or pole-and-line fleets subject to the moratorium are likely to produce skipjack tuna). This situation has therefore opened the door to unfair competition potentially based on IUU fishing.

We therefore request that the Panel 1 submits an amendment to Recommendation 24-01 aimed at removing the temporary closure of fishing under FADs or, at least, at significantly reducing its duration.

Yellowfin TAC (Rec. 24-01, §19) :

Recalling that for yellowfin, a TAC of 110,000 t has been set by ICCAT since 2012 and that total catches have consistently exceeded this TAC for several years (140,000 t in 2024), **we believe that the 29th ICCAT Ordinary Meeting should be an opportunity for the CPCs to propose an allocation of the yellowfin TAC among the CPCs. Acceptance of this allocation could be facilitated by increasing the TAC to 121,600 t, corresponding to the MSY level.**

Level playing field :

Keeping in mind that the EU must defend the interests of the sector and guarantee its independence and food security as much as possible:

- we expect ICCAT to take more proportionate and equitable management measures for tropical tuna, in particular by specifically targeting fleets that have drastically increased their catches despite the moratorium;
- we expect the Compliance Committee to apply appropriate sanctions following notified violations of Recommendation 24-01 and to implement corrective measures quickly to ensure a level playing field and the complete impermeability of the European market to any product from IUU fishing (including through the use of electronic catch documentation systems, such as eCDS).

ICCAT Monitoring, Control, and Compliance Framework :

Orthongel supports all proposed recommendations aimed at:

- improving the ICCAT compliance system, especially by including a sanctions regime and requiring CPCs to submit action plans to address identified deficiencies;
- taking action against CPCs that regularly fail to meet their obligations while not making the necessary efforts to address their compliance issues (particularly regarding the provision of fisheries statistics);
- establishing a proper fleet register of all vessels actively fishing under ICCAT, including the IMO number of all eligible vessels (recalling that currently, the exact number of vessels over 24 m in operation is unknown);
- implementing a regional monitoring system (SSN) ;
- establishing a High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) system, as required by the United Nations Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks;
- prohibiting transshipments at sea;
- establishing a High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) system, as required by the United Nations Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks;
- increasing observer coverage to a minimum of 30% for all fleets of vessels over 24 m, emphasizing that this can be facilitated by implementing a regional observer program—integrating existing programs—and utilizing electronic observation, the minimum standards for which have been adopted (Recommendation 23-18).