

November, 2025

## Sciaena's Position Statement

### *29th Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)*

Sciaena is pleased to participate in the 29th Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). We believe this is a great opportunity for this Commission to take significant steps in advancing the conservation and management efforts for the stocks under its mandate, further tackle IUU activities and collectively work for a healthier and more resilient ocean. We consider the following topics as the most urgent for ICCAT to take decisive steps towards:

#### Management of tropical tunas:

- Regarding **Bigeye tuna**, Sciaena supports the adoption of a precautionary TAC which would give the stock the best probabilities of staying in the green quadrant of the Kobe matrix, and provide a solid basis for the upcoming years;
- The Commission should agree on an allocation table for the **Yellowfin tuna** TAC to prevent the continuous overshoot of the TAC and a potential overexploitation of the stock;
- The development of MSE processes within ICCAT's work is paramount for a stronger fisheries management framework. ICCAT must take this year's opportunity to adopt a Management Procedure (MP) for the **Western Atlantic skipjack** and hence allow for the tropical tuna MSE work to further develop, with the objective of adopting an MP in 2026;
- With regards to **Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)**, its management within ICCAT's scope needs to be improved to ensure the impacts are minimized both to the target populations and the ecosystems they interact with. Sciaena urges therefore the Commission to improve the management of FADs by 1) adopting a requirement for near real-time FAD position and biomass data; 2) developing and adopting a FAD marking scheme (for both the structure and the buoy) and a rules for their ownership, activation and deactivation; and 3) establishing a timeline to develop a FAD register. Regarding potential discussions on the duration of the FAD closure, Sciaena asks the Commission to wait for the SCRS' full



evaluation on the effects of the FAD closure, as its impacts are slow to appear due to the lag in the spawning stock biomass's response.

## Future of Bluefin tuna management:

- With the end of the first management cycle through an MP for **Bluefin tuna**, it is now crucial for the Commission to continue this work by using an MP to set a new TAC for the next cycle, which will ensure higher chances of not overfishing and further strengthening the MSE work performed by ICCAT.

## Enhanced protection and management measures for sharks:

- Sciaena urges the Commission to maintain the plan to initiate the work regarding the MSE process for **Blue shark** in 2026, with precautionary management objectives;
- Regarding **Shortfin mako sharks**, it is crucial to adopt measures to reduce mortality in both stocks, such as gear modifications (banning wire traces, for example) and spatial-temporal closures. Additionally, for the Southern population, the Commission must adopt catch limits which allow for a fast recovery (10-15 years) with a probability not lower than 60%.
- We ask the Commission to not further delay the adoption of a "**fins naturally attached**" policy and agree on it in this year's meeting.

## Management and monitoring of fisheries

- Comprehensive **electronic monitoring** and **observer coverage** are essential to ensure responsible fisheries management, and the size and complexity of the fleets requires more progressive measures than the ones currently implemented. Sciaena therefore asks the Commission to work on and adopt a timeline to reach 100% monitoring coverage (human and/or electronic) for all the industrial tuna fleet, including vessels used for at-sea transshipment.



## Improving Port State Measures:

- Sciaena urges the Commission to improve ICCAT's **Port State Measures** by amending Recommendation 23-17, which will strengthen the fight against IUU fishing and hence reduce its impacts on target species and associated biodiversity and habitats.

## Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

- Regarding the **BBNJ**'s upcoming entry into force, ICCAT should take the opportunity of this year's meeting to discuss ways to effectively coordinate with other fisheries management organizations, and the ways it can engage with the BBNJ implementation.

## Support towards a MSE Coordinator position

- Sciaena fully supports the inclusion of an **MSE Coordinator** position in the budget proposal for financial years 2026-2027 (STF-203), as requested by the SCRS. Considering the importance of the position in continuing and enhancing ICCAT's leadership role in developing and adopting management procedures based on MSEs, and taking into account that this will present no additional financial constraint, since it will be funded by other sources, we encourage the Commission to adopt it.

