



ICCAT Press Release

After extended discussions ICCAT agreed on a new management measure for tropical tunas, and two Candidate Management Procedures (CMPs) for northern Atlantic swordfish and western skipjack

Closure of the 24th Special Meeting of the Commission

18 November 2024 – The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) met in Limassol (Cyprus) to take important decisions on the regulation of ICCAT fisheries including: adopting a new management measure for tropical tunas, implementing two new Candidate Management Procedures (CMPs) for northern Atlantic swordfish and western skipjack, and also planning a new Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process for southern Atlantic albacore and Atlantic blue shark.

Limassol (Cyprus) - the birthplace of Aphrodite, the ancient Greek Goddess of love, and a city of celebration since ancient times - welcomed the 2024 Annual Meeting of ICCAT. It was within such mythical spirit that, for the first time in its history, the Commission met in Cyprus to evaluate the results of the 2024 workplan, together with the current status of application of the regulatory measures in force and to establish the conservation and management measures for the future. In 2024, full scientific stock assessments were carried out for three species: **yellowfin tuna** (*Thunnus albacares*); **blue marlin** (*Makaira nigricans*), a common billfish in artisanal and commercial fisheries; and **Mediterranean albacore** (*Thunnus alalunga*). In total, 15 new Recommendations and 2 Resolutions were adopted covering relevant issues on Atlantic tuna and tuna-like species conservation and fisheries management.

After five years of extensive discussions regarding the multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas, a new measure was approved. An agreement was reached for a new TAC of 73,011 t for bigeye tuna, with a new Catch limits allocation table that reserved 6,100 t for the small harvesters, while the TAC for yellowfin tuna remains at 110,000 t. In addition, a 45-day fishing closure (from 17 March to 30 April) was also agreed, as well as the limitation on the use of FADs (288 per fishing vessel starting in 2026).

ICCAT has for the first time in its history adopted two new CMPs for: western skipjack aiming to set the TAC for 2026 and beyond, and for northern Atlantic swordfish, setting a TAC of 14,769 t for the period 2025-2027. These novel measures, which are the result of extensive collaboration among scientists, managers and stakeholders, should ensure long-term, sustainable and profitable fisheries of these stocks. In addition, the Commission agreed on Operational Management Objectives for southern Atlantic albacore. The ICCAT roadmap for MSE was updated, which now includes the new MSE processes to start in 2025 for southern Atlantic albacore and northern and southern Atlantic blue shark.



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS

ICCAT confirmed the full entry into force of the *Recommendation by ICCAT for the conservation of whale sharks (Rhincodon typus) caught in association with ICCAT fisheries (Rec. 23-12)* no later than 1 January 2025, and the full entry into force of the *Recommendation by ICCAT on mobulid rays (family Mobulidae) caught in association with ICCAT fisheries (Rec. 23-14)* no later than 1 July 2025, which prohibit these species being retained on board, transhipped, or landed, in whole or in part.

The Commission agreed to amend the Multi-annual Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, namely on aspects regarding bluefin tuna farming as well as the management and control measures for bluefin tuna produced through aquaculture using artificially hatched fries. In addition, it also agreed to an amendment to the rebuilding plan for Mediterranean albacore, that accommodates Algeria and Tunisia fisheries needs.

The Commission also took some solid steps to reinforce and ensure the effective implementation of conservation and management measures. In particular, ICCAT adopted Recommendations on protecting the health and safety of observers in CPC observer programmes, on transshipment operations and for aquaculture of bluefin tuna.

The Compliance Committee (COC) reviewed the implementation of ICCAT requirements by the Contracting Parties and Cooperators (CPCs) and gathered input from CPCs to identify longer-term priorities for inclusion in the COC strategic plan. The Commission also agreed to seek to reduce the current data reporting burden and streamline Compliance Committee documents where feasible.

The Commission has also consolidated the process for electing its representatives, clarifying it further to take greater account of the concerns of its members and to ensure fair and balanced representation of all interests: developed and developing States, geographical balance and gender balance.

For further information please visit the [ICCAT website](#) and/or contact the [ICCAT Secretariat](#) or the ICCAT Executive Secretary, [Mr Camille Jean Pierre Manel](#).

Limassol, 18 November 2024



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT on continuing to enhance the dialogue between fisheries scientists and managers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT on the application of the Integrated Online Management System (IOMS) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 22-16 amending Recommendation 21-18 on the application of the eBCD system |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT on aquaculture bluefin tuna |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT on protecting the health and safety of observers in CPC observer programs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 21-15 on transshipment |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 22-01 on a multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution by ICCAT on interim operational management objectives for Atlantic bigeye tuna, yellowfin tuna, and the eastern stock of skipjack tuna |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT to replace Recommendation 23-02 on Brazil's bigeye tuna payback plan |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT on a candidate management procedure for western Atlantic skipjack tuna |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 22-08 establishing a multi-annual management plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 23-08 for a pilot project for farming bluefin tuna (<i>Thunnus thynnus</i>) in the Cantabrian Sea |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT to amend the Recommendation 22-05 to establish a rebuilding plan for Mediterranean albacore |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution by ICCAT on development of initial operational management objectives for southern Atlantic albacore |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT on conservation and management measures, including a management procedure, for North Atlantic swordfish |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT for catch limits for Mediterranean swordfish |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 23-14 on mobulid rays (family Mobulidae) caught in association with ICCAT fisheries |