

RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT FOR A PILOT PROJECT FOR FARMING BLUEFIN TUNA (*THUNNUS THYNNUS*) AND YELLOWFIN TUNA (*THUNNUS ALBACARES*) IN WATERS OF THE CANARY ISLANDS

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that ICCAT has adopted the *Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 22-08 establishing a Multi-annual Management Plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean* (Rec. 24-05), the *Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 22-16 amending Recommendation 21-18 on the application of the eBCD system* (Rec. 24-16) and the *Recommendation by ICCAT amending and replacing Recommendation 18-13 on an ICCAT bluefin tuna catch documentation programme* (Rec. 23-21);

RECALLING that in its 23rd Special Meeting, the Commission adopted a bluefin tuna management procedure (MP) (*Recommendation by ICCAT establishing a management procedure for Atlantic bluefin tuna to be used for both the western Atlantic and eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean management areas* (Rec. 22-09)) intended to secure sustainable management of the bluefin tuna fishery, and provide stability and predictability for the bluefin tuna fishing activity, including for the farming sector;

NOTING an interest in exploring ways to: a) farm bluefin tuna in areas other than in the Mediterranean, b) explore technological innovation for caging and farming bluefin tuna, and c) assess the feasibility of implementing the current provision on monitoring farming operation when the farm is operating in open ocean conditions;

NOTING the limited studies and experience currently available in relation to yellowfin tuna fattening, as well as the interest this has from the perspective of research, fostering innovation, enhancing the availability of higher-quality products and enabling fishing communities to derive greater benefits from the sustainable use of the same resources;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the results of research to be undertaken could indicate the need for adjustments to relevant ICCAT measures, or the development of new ones, including the need to include additional rules to the fishing season accordingly, and/or adding or revisiting current provisions related to the monitoring and control measures of the farming activities outside the Mediterranean Sea;

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:**

1. The objective of the pilot project is to assess the conditions for fishing and farming bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) (BFT) and yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) (YFT) in the Atlantic Ocean, specifically in FAO zone 34.1, to inform the potential future development of such activities.
2. Research conducted as part of the pilot project should aim to provide answers to key questions related to fishing and farming of BFT and YFT in the Macaronesia area of the Atlantic Ocean including, but not limited to, the following, assessing:
 - the functioning of technological developments of the submersible cages under extreme weather conditions;
 - the availability of bluefin tuna (medium-large fish) for purse seine fishing between the months of March and May, in FAO zone 34;
 - the growth and fattening of BFT and YFT in this area and exploring the potential added value of the activity, including in terms of direct fisher profits and economic potential for local fishing communities;
 - whether the monitoring and control of fishing, transfer and farming activities laid down by Rec. 24-05 are adequate and feasible to implement.

3. The pilot project shall be carried out with quantities not exceeding 250 t of YFT and 250 t of BFT.
4. The fishing season for YFT shall be between 1 July and 30 November. For BFT, notwithstanding paragraph 28 of Rec. 24-05, the fishing season under this pilot project shall take place between 15 March and 30 May.
5. The precise details of the pilot project for BFT shall be included in the 2026 annual fishing, farming and inspection plans established in accordance with paragraph 10 of Rec. 24-05. The allocation from the CPC's national quota and the input farming capacity to the pilot project shall be specified in the annual fishing plan.
6. This plan shall include details of the control measures to be put in place to ensure that the activity is carried out in compliance with ICCAT rules and with this Recommendation. The plan shall also include the control and inspection measures that will be implemented to ensure that the two species are not mixed in the same cage and that the traceability of all fish caught and caged is ensured until the moment of harvesting.
7. The plan shall be analysed, and as appropriate, endorsed by Panel 2 at its intersessional meeting in 2026, in line with Rec. 24-05, paragraph 11.
8. Upon completion of the pilot project, the CPC participating therein shall submit a comprehensive report on the results of the project for review by the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) and the subsequent consideration by the Commission no later than the end of 2027.
9. The report shall provide detailed information on the key questions mentioned in paragraph 2 above, as well as relevant statistical data, including the final number of BFT caught/caged and the length and weight of those fish at the time of capture and at the time of harvest. The report shall also identify the challenges or difficulties encountered, including any possible issues regarding monitoring and control, and the suitability of the current ICCAT provisions for this activity.
10. Notwithstanding the provisions of Art. VIII, paragraph 2 of the Convention, all CPCs are strongly encouraged to implement the present Recommendation on a voluntary basis as of 1 January 2026.