

IPNLF POSITION STATEMENT

25th Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas Marrakesh, Morocco 14-22 November 2017

The International Pole & Line Foundation ([IPNLF](#)) is an international charity working to support the one-by-one tuna fisheries and the communities around them. Our role is two-fold: To promote the benefits of one-by-one tuna fisheries; and to improve their viability and sustainability. We work across science, policy and the seafood sector to improve the wellbeing of coastal communities who are committed to environmentally and socially responsible fishing methods, such as baitboat, troll, and handline.

An important part of our work involves connecting people and organisations that want to support sustainable and socially responsible one-by-one tuna fisheries. Our [membership](#) – which currently stands at 50 – includes a broad range of fishing associations and businesses involved in the one-by-one tuna supply chain. They have proven to be active collaborators, and together we have accomplished several meaningful improvements in data collection, traceability, and fisheries management in many ocean areas.

The ICCAT Convention Area is home to a number of one-by-one fisheries, including many baitboat fisheries for temperate and tropical Atlantic tunas (Azores, Brazil, Madeira, Senegal, South Africa, Saint Helena, Northern Spain, Canary Islands, Ghana, Namibia and others). The success and future of these fishing communities relies heavily on the responsible management by ICCAT as the stocks are highly migratory.

At this year's Regular Meeting, IPNLF encourages ICCAT Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (CPCs

collectively) to adopt management measures to strengthen the framework for sustainable and equitable tuna fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean. Specifically, we urge action in the following areas:

- **Fix the tropical tuna measure (2016-01)** to reduce catches of yellowfin and bigeye to sustainable levels. At current catch rates, the bigeye tuna rebuilding target has a **62% chance of failure**.
- **Improve data collection and regulation** of supply vessels and other undermanaged fishing gears that contribute to overall fishing effort, including drifting fish aggregating devices (dFADs).
- **Adopt an interim Harvest Control Rule for North Atlantic Albacore**, and advance the development of harvest strategies for other species as a matter of priority to avoid adverse impacts on stocks, thereby also recognizing the social and economic dependence of coastal communities that rely on the fisheries for food security and livelihoods.
- **Adopt measures to reduce bycatch and protect endangered, threatened, or protected species**, including sharks, seabirds, cetaceans, and turtles.



Donovan O'Bey catches tuna with pole-and-line on MFV Sword Fish, St Helena © St Helena Marine Conservation Section

The current tropical tuna measure (2016-01) is not working, threatening the future of coastal fisheries highly dependent on the yellowfin and bigeye catches in communities across the Convention Area. According to SCRS, the established catch limits for bigeye and yellowfin were exceeded in 2016 by 11% and 16%, respectively. The SCRS has identified purse seine fisheries using drifting FADs to be a critical driver, and continues to recommend that the Commission adopt measures to reduce FAD-driven mortality of juvenile yellowfin and bigeye. Waiting another year to take action would ignore the scientific advice, lead to further overfishing, and discriminate against the fisheries operating within the bounds of sustainability.

To complement stricter limits on FAD fishing, CPCs should also address the largely unregulated use of supply vessels in the Atlantic Ocean, which contributes to increased fishing efficiency and effort (effort creep), bigeye overfishing, marine litter, and bycatch of vulnerable marine species. The primary function of supply vessels is to deploy and maintain drifting FADs, to build drifting FADs, to check the quantities of tunas under FADs, to search for drifting FADs belonging to other vessels and to search for free-schools of tuna. All of these activities facilitate higher catches of target, non-target, and bycatch species. In recognition of this unmanaged fishing effort and conservation challenges, supply vessels have been prohibited in the eastern Pacific Ocean since 1999 (IATTC Resolution C-99-07). In the Indian Ocean it has been recognized that “supply vessels contribute to the increase in effort and capacity of purse seiners and that the number of supply vessels has increased significantly over the years” and IOTC Resolution 17/01 addresses this through time-bound limits and reductions of their numbers. We therefore encourage ICCAT delegates to pursue a similar course of action to the approach followed at IATTC and IOTC by controlling and limiting the use of supply vessels, thereby enhancing the management of Atlantic Ocean tuna stocks.

We are pleased with the progress ICCAT has made towards the evaluation and development of harvest strategies. We encourage CPCs to continue on this path

for all species, and specifically to adopt a harvest control rule this year for North Atlantic Albacore. If adopted, more sustainable management frameworks will benefit every CPC, bring positive long-term returns to fishing communities, and minimize the risk of future fisheries collapses.

The Atlantic Ocean is home to an array of one-by-one fisheries and fishing communities. IPNLF would like to see management measures adopted that safeguard tuna stocks and ecosystems so that one-by-one fisheries, and the social benefits they provide to the communities that depend on them, can flourish. We will continue to work with our Members to strive for the highest environmental and social standards, which will reinforce the good work of the Commission.

We look forward to working with all delegations at the 2017 Regular Meeting in Marrakesh, and we are hopeful that the CPCs will find common ground in supporting management improvements.



Pole-and-line tuna fishing in South Africa © South African Tuna Association



ABOUT IPNLF

The International Pole & Line Foundation (IPNLF) works to develop, support and promote socially and environmentally responsible pole-and-line and handline tuna fisheries around the world. IPNLF's ambition is to contribute to thriving coastal fisheries, including the people, communities, businesses and seas connected with them. As a hub for sustainably-minded organisations, we use the influence of the market to forge change through practical fishery projects and stakeholder cooperation. IPNLF membership is open to organisations involved in the one-by-one tuna supply chain. Allied with our Members, IPNLF demonstrates the value of one-by-one caught tuna to consumers, policymakers and throughout the supply chain. We work across science, policy and the seafood sector, using an evidence-based, solutions-focused approach with guidance from our Scientific & Technical Advisory Committee and Board of Trustees.

IPNLF was officially registered in the United Kingdom in 2012 (Charity 1145586), with branch offices in London and the Maldives, and a staff presence in the US, South Africa, France, and Indonesia.

Contact: [Adam Baske](#), IPNLF Director, Policy and Outreach, adam.baske@ipnlf.org

Keep informed about the latest developments in one-by-one tuna fisheries through our website and by connecting with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).