



Panel 1
International Commission for the
Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
October 2020



IPNLF POSITION STATEMENT

Despite unusual circumstances and the cancellation of this year's Commission meeting, IPNLF urges ICCAT Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (CPCs collectively) to continue addressing key challenges facing the conservation and responsible management of tropical tunas and lay the groundwork for holistic action in 2021. Through this year's correspondence procedure, there is a need to progress the following areas:

- Reduce bigeye and yellowfin tuna catches to comply with the agreed total allowable catches (TACs) in Rec. 19-02. In 2019, the TAC of overfished bigeye tuna was overshoot for the fourth year in a row, this time by 14%. In 2016 - 2017 catches exceeded the TAC by 20% and in 2018 by 13%. In 2019, the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) determined that those catch rates provided only a 1% probability of BET recovery by 2033. While IPNLF applauds that ICCAT adopted a rebuilding programme for overfished bigeye tuna in 2019, the ICCAT Secretariat calculated that **the current interim catch limit measure has the potential to allow for an overharvest of the TAC by almost 40% (PA1_502/2020). We urge that this issue will be resolved as a matter of priority**, albeit by correspondence. While yellowfin tuna was not considered overfished in 2019, the TAC of this stock was overshoot by 20% in 2019 and the SCRS expressed that such catch levels are expected to further degrade the condition of the stock. Although addressing of the overharvest of the bigeye tuna TAC this year might indirectly also reduce yellowfin tuna catches, yellowfin specific action should be taken in 2021.
- Ensure a roll-over of all expiring measures in Rec. 19-02 and prioritize an intersessional meeting of Panel 1 in 2021 to strengthen Rec. 19-02, especially:
 - An **equitable bigeye tuna allocation mechanism that respects Res. 15-13**, with an increased number of CPCs represented on the allocation table to improve accountability (as compared to those listed in 16-01), thereby addressing the interim nature of the catch limit measure adopted in Rec. 19-02 (para 4).
 - At least **20% longline observer coverage** by 2022.
 - Assess if the **FAD closure** has been effective and adjust as needed to meaningfully reduce juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna fishing mortality.
 - **Reduce and regulate the use of supply/support vessels** - these enable overcapacity.



- **Reduce the number of drifting FADs** (dFADs) deployed and **improve their monitoring and control** to ensure compliance with FAD limits that can be meaningfully verified.
 - The excessive and non-transparent use of dFADs continues to drive high catches of juvenile yellowfin and bigeye tuna, representing a major contributor to the overfished state of the bigeye tuna stock. Also, deliberate abandonment of dFADs likely constitutes infringements of MARPOL Annex V, the London Convention, London Protocol and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and should be prohibited. dFAD components should be marked according to the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear while independent verification of FAD designs and construction materials should also be required prior to each deployment. FAD ownership must be assigned at the time of deployment and should not be allowed to change hands until the FAD is recovered and returned to port for responsible disposal.
- Ensure the intent of para 40 of Rec. 19-02 on **non-entangling and biodegradable FADs** is fully respected.
- **Reduce the capacity of industrial longline and purse seine fleets** while not undermining the legitimate rights of developing coastal States.
- In addition to flag state associated catch data, ICCAT should transparently share data on **catches by EEZ**.
- Further **advance the development and implementation of harvest control rules** (HCRs) for key tuna species as a matter of priority.
- Adopt measures to **reduce bycatch and protect endangered, threatened, or protected species**, including sharks, seabirds, cetaceans, and turtles.





BACKGROUND

The ICCAT Convention Area is home to many one-by-one tuna fisheries, including pole-and-line (baitboat), troll, and handline fisheries harvesting temperate and tropical Atlantic tunas in at least sixteen Atlantic coastal States. All require sustainable management of internationally shared fish stocks by ICCAT to support their fisheries and reliant communities.

The International Pole & Line Foundation (IPNLF) works across science, policy and seafood trade sectors to improve the wellbeing of coastal communities committed to environmentally and socially responsible one-by-one fishing methods. IPNLF was officially registered in the United Kingdom in 2012 (Charity 1145586), with branch offices in the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, The Maldives, Indonesia, and South Africa.

Contact: Yaiza Dronkers Londoño – IPNLF Atlantic Region Manager - yaiza.dronkers@ipnlf.org

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

