



East Atlantic Sustainable Tuna Initiative (EASTI)

A Fishery Improvement Project for the Eastern Atlantic Ocean Purse Seine Tuna Fishery
<https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/eastern-atlantic-tuna-purse-seine>

FIP Position Statement for ICCAT, 2020

Drafted with agreement of all EASTI participants – November 2020

ATTN: ICCAT

The participants of **East Atlantic Sustainable Tuna Initiative (EASTI) FIP** submit this paper in support of tuna conservation and management efforts at the ICCAT Commission meeting by correspondence.

It is clear that the impacts of COVID-19 have presented challenges to regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs), like ICCAT, in conducting meetings and addressing important conservation and management issues in 2020. However, we do not believe current circumstances should prevent ICCAT from taking action to ensure the uninterrupted sustainable management of the tuna stocks and marine ecosystems under its purview. Therefore, there are several critical measures and issues that require immediate attention by ICCAT this year, and others that need to be advanced in 2021. We strongly urge ICCAT takes action in November 2020 ensure that Recommendations that are about to partially or fully expires, continue to be effective in 2021. Other priority issues are listed below:

Management measures for tropical tunas

Of importance during this year's work within ICCAT is the adoption of harvest strategies, including reference points, clearly defined Harvest Control Rules (HCRs) and monitoring mechanisms.

Ask 1: Work on the adoption of harvest strategies for tropical tunas consistent with SCRS advice. This includes the adoption of well-defined HCRs rules during 2021 and tools development for managing skipjack, yellowfin, and bigeye tuna, along with harvest strategies which are responsive to the state of the stocks.

Ask 2: Review the MSE roadmap for tropical tunas to ensure that during 2021 the major sources of uncertainty to be considered for the multispecies MSE could be identified. Ensure the adherence to the roadmap to ensure the implementation of effective management measures for tropical tunas for all fishing gear.

Ask 3: ICCAT to develop and implement specific catch limits on tropical tuna stocks. Effort-based limitations such as limits on number of sets, fishing days and total FAD closures can only be made available to CPCs to achieve catch reduction targets to allow the recovery of stocks but are not substitutes for setting catch limits. Opting for an effort management regime rather than a catch-based fisheries management regime with fishing effort measures, ICCAT would incentivise a FAD fishing strategy, since fishing on free-schools is less efficient and more time consuming.



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Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)

Ask 4: With all the many logistical and safety issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially with the crew changes, the past year has been very complicated for many fishing companies. Since the catch reductions remains the same, the Commission should adopt a roll-over of the spatio-temporal measure of Paragraph 28 in Rec. 19-02 in line with the roll-over of the TAC and maintain the fishing prohibition in association with FADs during a two-month period. Especially since SCRS could not provide advice to the Commission, as mentioned in paragraph 28 in Rec. 19-02.

Ask 5: With a view to transitioning to fully non-entangling FADs and biodegradable materials for the construction of FADs, the results of the projects and experimental tests that are currently ongoing shall be regarded, as well as new projects should be supported by ICCAT. Progressive objectives to replace non-biodegradable parts of FADs by biodegradable materials should be more realistic taking into consideration the current lack of solutions. ICCAT to promote capacity building to aid the transition to fully non-entangling FADs and promote use of biodegradable material. ICCAT to clarify the definition of biodegradable FAD to help this process.

Bycatch and Sharks

Ask 6: Adopt a Recommendation to prohibit deliberate purse seine setting around whale sharks and cetaceans, as has been done in WCPFC, IATTC and IOTC.

Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS)

Ask 7: Adopt minimum standards of electronic monitoring (EM) for the different gears operating in the ICCAT Convention Area by end of 2021, so to be able to require 100% observer coverage (human or electronic) for all major ICCAT fisheries. Since observers are not crew members, the COVID-19 pandemic has put additional stress on the capacity to implement human observer programmes and reach 100% observer coverage. Therefore, the adoption of EM standards is urgently needed to guarantee the compliance with paragraph 58. in Rec. 19-02.

Ask 8: Adopt the 100% observer coverage for all fishing gears. The increased coverage to 10% for the longline fleet by 2022, adopted by Rec. 19-02, does not meet the minimum 20% level recommended by the SCRS to obtain the required data for scientific purposes. Therefore, we stress the adoption of the EM minimum standards to require at least 20% coverage on the longline and baitboat fleets.

Ask 9: Adopt a new binding measure to ensure human observer safety, as has been done by IATTC and WCPFC.

Ask 10: Some of the more recent efforts to reduce IUU fishing include a ban on transshipment at-sea. ICCAT should prohibits at-sea transshipment for industrial fleets. If at-sea transshipments are not finally prohibited, 100 % observer coverage should be required. This is to provide greater clarity on catch and bycatch, support effective management, reinforces traceability, and supports ICCAT data collection requirements.



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Compliance

Ask 11: Codify Resolution 16-17 into a binding Recommendation, as soon as possible.

Ask 12: Develop information-exchange mandates and systems between the ICCAT Compliance Committee and the Commission regarding measures with unclear obligations and/or reporting requirements.

For any further information, please contact the FIP lead Kat Collinson at k.collinson@keytraceability.com

Signed on behalf of the EASTI FIP - November 2020



Pierre-Alain CARRE