

## IPNLF STATEMENT TO PANEL 1

The sustainable management of Atlantic Ocean tuna stocks and ecosystems cannot be further delayed despite ongoing COVID-19 disruptions; responsible and decisive action by ICCAT is needed this year.

Even though the 2021 **bigeye tuna (BET) stock assessment** suggests a more positive stock status than in 2018, the SCRS warns that results should be interpreted with caution and highlights the need for BET recovery with **a high probability**. It also states that it is too early to know if the measures in Rec. 19-02 have reduced mortality of juvenile BET, and that the *“estimated total numbers of FADs released yearly has increased since the beginning of the FAD fishery, especially in recent years”*. We therefore urge the following:

- Maintain a **TAC of 61,500 t**, following the SCRS advice.
- Maintain the **three-month FAD closure**.
- Develop a **FAD recovery system**, driving accountability and including incentives for recovery.
- Improve the **monitoring and control of FADs**, noting the following legal concerns:
  - [Just a Harmless Fishing Fad—or Does the Use of FADs Contravene International Marine Pollution Law?](#)
  - [The IUU Nature of FADs: Implications for Tuna Management and Markets](#)
- As discussed intersessionally, implement a regional **FAD registry**.
- While addressing FAD transparency issues, implement precautionary limits on the **total number of FADs** allowed to be deployed.
- All dFADs deployed **must be non-entangling** (prohibiting netting or other meshed materials), and constructed from **biodegradable** materials.
- Noting with concern Japan’s proposal (PA1\_507) to delay progress another year, achieve a minimum of **10% observer coverage** of longline fishing effort by 2022.
- An **equitable BET allocation mechanism** that reflects Res. 15-13, whereby “one-by-one” tuna fisheries (baitboat, handline) are not subjected to an unfair conservation burden despite being characterised by high selectivity (virtually no bycatch), relatively low impact on SSB, employing the most fishers per tonne of tuna caught, and primarily benefiting coastal communities in isolated regions. This could be achieved by allocating the TAC by both CPC and gear type, thereby recognising the benefits of low impact fishing methods. Please note SDG target 14.b: *“provide access of small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets”*.

Further, we are highly concerned about the 2020 **yellowfin tuna (YFT) catch** (148,894 t), which was 35% higher than the TAC (110,000 t) and the highest since 2016. While YFT was not considered overfished in 2019, the TAC was overshoot by 20%. The SCRS states that catches above 120,000 t are expected to further degrade the condition of the stock. An equitable process for catch limit allocation for YFT needs to be urgently initiated.

Lastly, **accelerate and prioritize the development of MSE** for all tropical tuna stocks and include South Atlantic albacore (Panel 3) on the MSE Roadmap.