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**The Pew Charitable Trusts’
 Opening Statement to Panel 1
 November 2021**

The Pew Charitable Trusts welcomes this opportunity to comment on important business that Panel 1 must address under this year’s agenda. We would like to acknowledge reports that bigeye catch is now below the TAC for the first time in several years and appreciate that Recommendation 19-02 – in particular, the changes to FAD management and allocation – likely played a role in this reduction. At the same time, we remain concerned that yellowfin catch continues to significantly exceed the TAC – by nearly 40,000 t in 2020 – reflecting a continued lack of action by the Commission and its CPCs to address yellowfin mortality. To ensure continued progress on bigeye and improve outcomes for tropical tuna management by ICCAT more broadly, we urge Panel 1 to prioritize the following items:

- **Maintain the bigeye TAC at the current level:** While this year’s bigeye stock assessment results were relatively optimistic, the SCRS raised substantial concern regarding uncertainty in the assessment and recommended ICCAT act cautiously when setting the next TAC. As such, Pew joins several other organizations in calling on ICCAT to maintain the TAC at current levels.
- **Address allocation of yellowfin TAC:** The persistent and significant TAC overages underscore the urgent need for a yellowfin allocation key to hold fleets and CPCs accountable for respecting the TAC.
- **Advance management procedures for tropical tunas:** Panel 1 should recommit to developing management procedures (MPs) for the tropical tunas by approving necessary funding and supporting the efforts by any CPCs to develop an MP for western skipjack, the only tropical tuna stock managed by ICCAT that is not currently the subject of mixed purse seine fisheries.
- **Increase observer coverage for longline vessels:** Pew urges the Commission to maintain commitments under Recommendation 19-02 to increase observer coverage for longline vessels to 10% starting in January 2022. This should be considered the minimum step this year, given the SCRS has repeatedly recommended 20% observer coverage as the lowest level needed for scientific purposes. This move would also position ICCAT as a leader, rather than a laggard, on observer coverage rates among tuna RFMOs.