

# NGO Tuna Forum

## ***Global Tuna Sustainability Appeal***

### ***Mid-Cycle RFMO Update***

Dear Signatories of the Global Tuna Sustainability Appeal:

Thank you for your support of the Global Tuna Sustainability Appeal. More than 130 companies, fishing industry associations and non-governmental organizations signed this Appeal, an unprecedented level of support for measures that will positively impact the long-term sustainability of global tuna stocks and the overall health of the marine ecosystem.

Among the important measures we've urged RFMOs to address include:

- Precautionary harvest strategies with specific timeline for all tuna stocks
- A 100% observer coverage requirement for purse seine vessels where it is not already required
- Use of best-available observer safety equipment, communications and procedures
- Increased compliance with mandatory minimum 5% longline observer coverage rates
- A 100% observer coverage requirement – human and/or electronic – within five years for longline fisheries
- A 100% observer coverage requirement for at-sea transshipment activities
- Ensure transshipment activity is transparent and well-managed, and that required data is fully collected and sent to appropriate bodies in a timely manner
- Effective management of fish aggregating devices (FADs), and integration of FAD-based information into stock assessments
- Use of non-entangling FAD designs, and support for research on biodegradable materials and their transition to use
- Compliance with existing RFMO bycatch requirements, and additional actions including improved at-sea monitoring, collecting and sharing data, and adopting stronger compliance measures

Thus far in 2018, we have shared the Appeal with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Association (IATTC) in advance of their annual meetings. The results of those meetings show progress in a few areas, and much work to do in others.

### **Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Meeting – May 2018**

#### **Progress Made**

- **FADs** – Adopted a proposal for a bioFAD experiment – a measure that directly addresses one of our requested actions; adopted a proposal to amend the current FAD management resolution to include support and supply vessels
- **Harvest Strategies** – Advanced its management strategy evaluation (MSE) work for all tuna stocks. MSEs are one of the seven core elements of precautionary harvest strategies as defined by the NGO Tuna Forum, and are an essential component of harvest strategy development

- The commission also made improvements on issues of at-sea transshipment and bycatch mitigation (blue sharks), though much work remains

#### **More Progress Required**

- **Observer Coverage** – The commission lags other RFMOs with its 5% observer coverage requirement for various gear types and falls far short of our coordinated asks. Increased observer coverage must be a primary focus moving forward
- **FADs** – Address data requirements, data analysis and improved compliance
- **Bycatch** – Better address mobula and manta ray bycatch

#### **Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Meeting – August 2018**

##### **Progress Made**

- **FADs** – Built on its 2017 measure requiring the use of non-entangling FADs – a priority noted on our Appeal – by setting a strict definition to avoid loopholes that could undermine the requirement
- **Harvest Strategies** – approved funds for a series of MSE workshops for scientists and managers as well as for a scientist to continue the technical development of the MSE for bigeye tuna
- **Observer Safety** – Joined the WCPFC in adopting a measure to ensure safety of at-sea human observers – a priority highlighted in our Appeal. This measure also extends to observers operating on transshipping vessels

##### **More Progress Required**

- **FADs** – Heed the advice on its own scientific advisory committee to improve data reporting and compliance
- **Observer Coverage** – Advance proposals to increase observer coverage for the longline fleet and for smaller purse seiners
- **Bycatch** – Advance stronger conservation measures for shark and sea turtle bycatch

#### **Assessment and Next Steps**

Progress at RFMOs results from concerted effort over time, something that's reflected in the progress made – and not made – thus far this year. We remain committed to advancing the priorities set forth by the NGO Tuna Forum and supported by more than 130 signatories, including your organization.

We will continue to push for progress at the ICCAT and WCPFC meetings later this year, as well as in 2019 and beyond. To reinforce these efforts, we are exploring additional opportunities to bring the voices of concerned conservation and market partners to bear with RFMO country delegates and national fisheries agencies on key sustainability priorities.

Your continued commitment to supporting improvements at RFMOs that strengthen the long-term sustainability of global tuna stocks is critical, and we thank you for that support.