



# International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

## Annual Meeting, November 17–24, 2025

This Position Statement outlines issues that we urge the ICCAT Commission to act on at its upcoming meeting.

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## COMPLIANCE PROCESSES

### 2025 Asks

- Adopt a workplan for the Compliance Committee to develop audit points for ICCAT management measures, such as those developed for sharks in Rec.18-06.
- Adopt procedures to identify and address non-compliance with TAC allocations.

### Background

A strong and transparent compliance process improves fisheries management by holding regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) members accountable. ICCAT has one of the most well designed and transparent compliance assessment processes of the five tuna RFMOs, but it can continue to be strengthened. ISSF and Pew Charitable Trusts have recommendations to improve RFMO compliance processes in workshop reports: [2020 report](#), [2021 report](#), [2022 report](#).

### Priorities to Progress

Undertake a focused review of data reported by ICCAT Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (CPCs), including any information provided to the Secretariat by CPCs from their national observer programs, of live and dead discards of sharks, particularly shortfin mako, and take corrective actions as needed.

[RFMO Compliance Information & Resources](#)

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## TUNA STOCK CONSERVATION

### 2025 Asks

- Continue to implement the tropical tuna conservation measure Rec. 24-01. If the total allowable catch (TACs) for either bigeye or yellowfin is increased, it should be done in accordance with SCRS advice, ensuring that the two stocks are maintained at sustainable levels.
- Fully allocate the TAC for yellowfin tuna or adopt an alternative mechanism to ensure compliance with the agreed TAC.

### Background

The SCRS re-assessed the status of Atlantic bigeye tuna using a number of improvements in modeling and data. The results indicate that the stock is not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring. The SCRS concluded that the absolute levels of exploitation generally declined from 2017 to 2023 for all ages, suggesting that recent management measures adopted by

ICCAT have been effective. Assuming that catches remain at the current total allowable catch (TAC) of 73,011 t, projections indicate that the stock will stay healthy. Other projections indicate that there is some room for increasing the TAC.

For yellowfin tuna, the SCRS warned that current catch levels (around 140,000 t) are unsustainable and will lead to overfishing if continued. Since the TAC has been consistently exceeded, the SCRS recommended that the Commission adopt a robust mechanism to ensure compliance with agreed limits. Projections made in 2024 suggest that catch levels of 125,000 or less can be sustained.

## Priorities to Progress

CPCs should review historical catch data for Mediterranean albacore in terms of completeness and accuracy before a new assessment can be attempted.

### [Tuna Conservation Information & Resources](#)



## 2025 Asks

In line with ISSF's established approach to strengthening FAD management:

- Establish a timeline to develop a FAD register.
- Develop and adopt a requirement for provision to ICCAT of near real-time FAD position and acoustic biomass records data for scientific use with a maximum time lag of 90 days to protect confidentiality.
- Develop and adopt an effective FAD marking scheme for both FAD structure and geolocating buoy.
- Develop and adopt clear rules for FAD ownership and for FAD buoy activation and deactivation.

## Background

Rec. 24-01 strengthened FAD management provisions, particularly by requiring the use of fully non-entangling FADs without netting and establishing a timeline for the transition to biodegradable FADs. However, other measures to enhance FAD monitoring and management have not been discussed. It is important for ICCAT to address these issues and, in line with [existing best practice](#), adopt new provisions and improvements for FAD management.

## Priorities to Progress

- Develop and adopt a policy for FAD-recovery.

### [FAD Management Information & Resources](#)



## 2025 Asks

- Enable electronic monitoring to be used to meet some portion of the current ICCAT observer coverage requirements for tropical tuna fisheries and increase observer coverage (human and/or electronic in accordance with the adopted [minimum EM standards](#)) on large-scale longline vessels to an interim level of 20%.

## Background

Comprehensive observer coverage is critical to effective fisheries management, compliance monitoring, and independent verification of catch, effort, species composition and bycatch. 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) for major fisheries is feasible and necessary, as is required for purse seine vessels in most RFMOs. ICCAT's minimum 10% observer coverage requirement for longline vessels fishing for tropical tunas is still too low for bycatch estimates to be reliable and EM can help increase coverage. In 2023, ICCAT adopted [minimum EM standards](#) and program requirements for both purse seine and longline fisheries. CPCs with longline fisheries should embrace this opportunity to improve monitoring.

## Priorities to Progress

- Adopt a timeline to progressively reach 100% observer coverage in industrial tuna fisheries, including all vessels engaged in at-sea transshipment.
- Adopt a workplan and timeline to develop a Regional Observer Program for tropical tuna fisheries.

### [Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Information & Resources](#)



## PORT STATE MEASURES

### 2025 Asks

- Amend Rec. 23-17 to establish minimum standards for port inspection reports and to require reporting on all port inspections.

### Background

The [FAO Agreement on Port State Measures](#) (PSMA) is a significant achievement for global efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities. Ensuring RFMO port State measures are in line with the principles and standards of the PSMA strengthens global and regional efforts to combat IUU fishing, particularly for tuna and tuna products. ICCAT strengthened its port State measure in 2023 ([Rec. 23-17](#)), but it should be further improved to be aligned with [best practice standards](#).



## EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES (HARVEST STRATEGIES)

### 2025 Asks

- Adopt a management procedure for western Atlantic skipjack.

- Accelerate the development of multi-stock management procedures for bigeye, yellowfin and eastern skipjack, as well as management procedures for southern Atlantic albacore.

## Background

Management Procedures (MPs) provide a modern mechanism for fisheries management that accounts for uncertainty in an explicit and precautionary manner. ICCAT has successfully adopted MPs for northern Atlantic albacore, Atlantic bluefin tuna, and north Atlantic swordfish. The SCRS, with input from Panel 1, has developed candidate MPs for western Atlantic skipjack that are now ready for adoption. Several Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified fisheries that catch southern Atlantic albacore have a deadline of 2028 or 2029 to implement a management procedure. In 2024, ICCAT adopted [Res. 24-09](#) to guide the development of an MSE for this stock. The 2025 SCRS revised MSE Roadmap also includes a multi-species MSE for tropical tunas and initial MSE work for southern Atlantic albacore. MP development involves detailed work by scientists, managers, and stakeholders. As many ICCAT stocks do not have an MP yet, it is important to finalize and adopt those that are well developed and prioritize future MP work for other stocks.

## Priorities to Progress

Advance the development of MPs for ICCAT target species, as well as blue shark.

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## BYCATCH MITIGATION & SHARK PROTECTIONS

### 2025 Asks

- Require all sharks be landed with fins naturally attached without exceptions.
- Request the SCRS to review science-based mitigation techniques for seabird bycatch so the Commission can adopt revisions to Rec.11-09 that reflects up-to-date scientific bycatch mitigation best practices.
- Adopt a non-retention policy without exceptions for North Atlantic shortfin mako to allow its recovery and adopt South Atlantic shortfin mako catch limits that account for total removals, in line with SCRS advice.
- Require vessels to implement the safe-handling and release best practices and bycatch mitigation measures adopted by ICCAT or other tuna RFMOs to reduce the bycatch mortality of sharks, seabirds, and sea turtles.

## Background

ICCAT prohibits shark finning through a provision that the weight of fins landed cannot exceed 5% of the total shark catch on board. The fin-to-carcass ratio can vary considerably depending on the species, the dressing of the carcass, and on the different ways fins are cut, therefore creating difficulties in enforcement and accurate data collection. Requiring sharks to be landed with fins-naturally attached addresses those difficulties. In 2024, a recommendation to require sharks to be landed with fins naturally attached (PA4-06.REV) was co-sponsored by 78% of ICCAT Contracting Parties. Unfortunately, this proposal was not adopted. ICCAT agreed to consider this issue again this year. ICCAT now must join other RFMOs and modernize its measure to require fins-naturally attached.

The SCRS assessed the status of North and South Atlantic shortfin mako in 2025. Both stocks are considered overfished and subject to overfishing. For the North Atlantic stock, the SCRS concluded that any catch retention will not allow the stock to recover. For the South Atlantic shortfin mako, the SCRS indicated that current catches remain below the retention allowance established in Rec. 22-11, and that total removals (including landings, dead discards, and post-release mortalities) within the

current retention allowance of 1,295 t would support stock recovery, while higher total mortality rates would reduce the likelihood of stock recovery.

The current management measure for seabirds (Rec. 11-09) is outdated and no longer aligned with best-practice mitigation techniques, such as those of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP).

## [Bycatch Reduction Information & Resources](#)

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## LABOR AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN TUNA FISHERIES

### 2025 Asks

- Develop and then adopt a binding crew labor and safety resolution.

### Background

Tuna RFMOs must adopt binding measures to protect crew that work in tuna fisheries worldwide that align with relevant international frameworks for worker rights in global fisheries.

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## CAPACITY

### Background

Experts agree that there is overcapacity, too many vessels, in the global tuna fleets. Fishing fleet overcapacity increases pressure to weaken management measures, and eventually it leads to stock overexploitation.

### Priorities to Progress

Establish limited entry through closed vessel registries and develop a common currency to measure fishing capacity, such as cubic meters of well volume.