

IPNLF POSITION STATEMENT

21st Special Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas Dubrovnik, Croatia, 12-19 November 2018

The International Pole & Line Foundation ([IPNLF](#)) is an international charity working to support one-by-one tuna fisheries and the communities around them. We work across science, policy and the seafood sector to improve the wellbeing of coastal communities who are committed to environmentally and socially responsible fishing methods, such as baitboat, troll, and handline.

The ICCAT Convention Area is home to a number of one-by-one tuna fisheries, including many baitboat, troll, and handline fisheries for temperate and tropical Atlantic tunas (Azores, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Canary Islands, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Madeira, Namibia, Nigeria, Northern Spain, Saint Helena, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Venezuela, and others). The success and future of these fishing communities relies heavily on the responsible management by ICCAT as the stocks are highly migratory.

At this year's Special Meeting, IPNLF strongly encourages ICCAT Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (CPCs collectively) to adopt management measures to ensure sustainable and equitable tuna fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean.

Specifically, we urge action in the following areas:

- **Rebuild bigeye tuna and reduce yellowfin catches** to end years of unsustainable fishing. According to ICCAT's scientific body, current catch rates will likely lead to a collapse of the bigeye stock by 2033, and yellowfin catches must also be reduced.
 - **Reduce the bigeye total allowable catch (TAC)**, in line with SCRS advice, to rebuild the stock, and **reduce yellowfin catches, in line with the currently agreed TAC**
 - **Enhance compliance and accountability** through expanding the number of CPCs on the quota table, increasing observer coverage (100% for purse seine and 20% for longline), and eliminating the carry-over of unused quota
 - **Protect rights and aspirations of developing coastal states** in the process, through application of ICCAT allocation criteria
 - **Reduce and regulate the use of supply vessels and drifting fish aggregating devices (dFADs)** which significantly contribute to catches of small bigeye and yellowfin, through stricter FAD limits, FAD set limits, and/or FAD closures.
- **Further advance the development of harvest strategies** for key tuna species as a matter of priority to avoid adverse impacts on stocks, thereby also recognizing the social and economic dependence of coastal communities that rely on the fisheries for food security and livelihoods.
- Adopt measures to **reduce bycatch and protect endangered, threatened, or protected species**, including sharks, seabirds, cetaceans, and turtles.

IN DEPTH: Crafting a Sustainable and Equitable Tropical Tuna Management Measure

Follow Scientific Advice

The current tropical tuna measure (CMM 2016-01) is not working, threatening the future of coastal fisheries highly dependent on the yellowfin and bigeye catches in communities across the Convention Area. According to the SCRS, the TAC for bigeye tuna was exceeded by more than 20 percent in 2017 - a level of catch that reduces the probability of rebuilding by 2033 to less than 1 percent. Going forward, TACs must be reduced and complied with to rebuild the stock. **For bigeye, the TAC must be reduced, in line with the scientific advice, and mechanisms must be adopted to significantly reduce yellowfin catches.**

Comply with catch limits

A major shortcoming in the current CMM is the lack of accountability. Only eight CPCs are on the current bigeye quota table and there are no mechanisms in place to facilitate compliance with the yellowfin TAC. In recent years, the bigeye and yellowfin TACs were exceeded by as much as 21 and 37 percent respectively. To increase accountability, **additional CPCs should be added to the table by reducing the minor harvester threshold and including all CPCs with large purse seine vessels.** Additionally, observer coverage in purse seine and longline fisheries targeting tropical tunas should be increased to 100 percent and 20 percent respectively.

Reduce harvest of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin

The SCRS has identified FAD-associated catches to be a critical driver to overfishing, and continues to recommend that the Commission adopt measures to reduce FAD-driven mortality of juvenile yellowfin and bigeye. **This can be achieved through limitations on FAD fishing, Atlantic-wide FAD closures, and stricter FAD limits.** To complement stricter limits on FAD fishing, **CPCs should also eliminate or reduce the use of supply vessels in the Atlantic Ocean, which contributes to increased fishing effort on juvenile tunas, marine litter, and bycatch of vulnerable marine species.**

Fair access to the resource for the coastal developing states

The new measure must fully recognize the legitimate development aspirations of coastal developing state CPCs in line with the ICCAT Convention as well as multiple international instruments, including the UN Law of the Sea, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and further supported by the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Historically, the ICCAT bigeye allocation key has awarded around 90 percent of the total TAC to eight of the 52 CPCs, only two of which are coastal states. **Balancing the legitimate development aspirations of developing coastal states with meaningful, science-based, conservation is a difficult undertaking, but is of utmost importance.**



One-by-one tuna fishing in St. Helena, © IPNLF

Finding Constructive Solutions

The Atlantic Ocean is home to an array of one-by-one tuna fisheries and fishing communities. IPNLF would like to see management measures adopted that safeguard tuna stocks and ecosystems so that one-by-one fisheries, and the social and economic benefits they provide to the communities that depend on them, can flourish. We will continue to work with our Members to strive for the highest environmental and social standards, which will reinforce the good work of the Commission.

We look forward to working with all delegations at the 2018 Special Meeting in Dubrovnik, and we are hopeful that the CPCs will find common ground in agreeing to urgently needed management improvements.

ABOUT IPNLF

The International Pole & Line Foundation (IPNLF) works to develop, support and promote socially and environmentally responsible pole-and-line and handline tuna fisheries around the world. IPNLF's ambition is to contribute to thriving coastal fisheries, including the people, communities, businesses and seas connected with them. As a hub for sustainably-minded organisations, we use the influence of the market to forge change through practical fishery projects and stakeholder cooperation. IPNLF membership is open to organisations involved in the one-by-one tuna supply chain. Allied with our Members, IPNLF demonstrates the value of one-by-one caught tuna to consumers, policymakers and throughout the supply chain. We work across science, policy and the seafood sector, using an evidence-based, solutions-focused approach with guidance from our Scientific & Technical Advisory Committee and Board of Trustees.

IPNLF was officially registered in the United Kingdom in 2012 (Charity 1145586), with branch offices in London and the Maldives, and a staff presence in the US, South Africa, France, Netherlands and Indonesia.

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Keep informed about the latest developments in one-by-one tuna fisheries through our website and by connecting with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

