

# IPNLF Position Statement 2023

## Fourth Intersessional meeting of ICCAT Panel 1

*23 October, 2023, Online*

IPNLF believes that ICCAT will have to be more ambitious and determined in its objectives to ensure the sustainability of tuna fishing, achieve greater equity of benefit distribution between fleets and to preserve resources of the Atlantic Ocean for future generations. The need for a fourth intersessional meeting on ICCAT Panel 1, Tropical Tunas, is concerning but IPNLF hopes that this will allow the Commission the time it needs to converge positions ahead of the Annual Session next month. IPNLF would like to reiterate its positions on tropical tuna issues and urge the Commission to do the following:

### SUSTAINABLE, ROBUST MANAGEMENT

- Adopt **precautionary Total Allowable Catch (TAC) limits** for Atlantic bigeye (overfished) and yellowfin (awaiting assessment after consistent overages) tuna stocks in line with the SCRS advice. This TAC must provide a **high likelihood of stock recovery** within the next 2 generations (15 years for BET, 14 years for YFT).
- Prepare and implement **Harvest Control Rules (HCR) for both the bigeye and yellowfin stocks based on the latest scientific advice**, and encourage the Commission to adopt HCRs for other tropical tunas as established in [Rec. 15-07](#).
- Implement **stronger monitoring, conservation and management measures to prevent catches beyond the TAC**.

### SUPPORT VESSELS

- As a minimum, **limit the number of support vessels as a proportion of the number of active purse seine vessels**, as has been done at the IOTC, or consider **banning supply vessels altogether** as WCPFC and IATTC have done to mitigate the effect supply vessels have in increasing the capacity of their supported fleets to damage stocks and ecosystems.

### EQUITABLE ALLOCATION

- Adopt an **equitable approach to distributing precautionary TACs for each species**, which primarily and critically supports the rights, needs and aspirations of developing coastal States through achieving a more equitable allocation of fishing opportunities irrespective of the overarching TAC limit. We **suggest that allocations be done as percentages of the precautionary TACs across all states** to ensure the maintenance of equity regardless of TAC adjustments.

- Consider developing, with the rest of the Commission, an updated **allocation criterion from Resolution 15/13** in which socio-economic dependance, coastal state livelihood requirements, as well as the relative stock and ecosystem impacts of each fishing gear are prioritised above historical claims within the modern allocations of TAC proportions.
- The updated allocation criteria must **prioritise the needs of coastal state livelihoods and clear consequences for catch overages must be clearly defined.**

## EFFECTIVE FAD MANAGEMENT

- **Maintain or extend the oceanwide 72-day FAD Closure (with maintenance of the 15-day deployment ban beforehand)**, which is an important component of the suite of measures supporting BET stock recovery in particular. There is no scientific evidence to suggest shortening or reducing the scope of the current FAD Closure is timely or would provide any stock or ecosystem benefits, so **IPNLF believe it should be maintained as a key precautionary measure that is currently benefitting multiple stocks.**
- Consider **extending the current FAD Closure period within key nursery areas**, as is done elsewhere to further protect juvenile tunas and thereby promote the productivity and recovery capacities of multiple stocks.
- **Make all dFAD data transparent and available within a public dFAD Registry that would enable broad scientific analysis, monitoring and compliance tracking**, as suggested by South Africa, Japan and Brazil in PA1\_OCT\_04.
- **Implement an independent dFAD Monitoring System** that will track drifting FAD movements, support compliance monitoring, determine the ultimate fate of all deployed dFADs and inform efforts to recover dFADs before they illegally fish in waters where they are not permitted or damage sensitive coastal ecosystems.
- **Further investigate and react to multiple warnings from scientists** that high proportions, and resultant volumes, of juvenile BET and YFT in dFAD catches reduce the potential sustainable Maximum Sustainable Yields (MSY) for these stocks that currently require a larger spawning stock biomass to compensate for current juvenile harvest impacts upon their productivity and recovery potential. Excessive juvenile harvests, driven most by dFAD use, are amplifying the need for precaution in fisheries management decision making while, clearly, ongoing efforts to dilute dFAD regulations and simultaneously increase TACs contradict these warnings.
- Mandate that all dFADs deployed **must be of completely non-entangling** (prohibiting netting or other meshed materials) and constructed from **biodegradable** materials (except for the satellite buoy).
- Require observers to assess compliance with dFAD construction regulations prior to each deployment while also requiring vessels to **retrieve and suitably dispose of any dFADs that do not meet these requirements.**
- Develop and implement a **Polluter Pays Mechanism** to help address dFAD pollution and ecosystem impacts.