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WCPFC Position Statement

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IPNLF

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19th Regular Meeting of the Commission

*Da Nang, Vietnam, 28th November - 3rd
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The 19th Regular Session of the WCPFC offers an opportunity to further develop fisheries policies which continue to protect tuna stocks and other species in the Pacific Ocean. It's important that these are developed with increasing awareness of small-scale fisheries and developing states, whilst incorporating an ecosystem approach to fisheries management.



HARVEST CONTROL RULES

The Issue:

Key challenges for tuna fisheries management policy adjustments relate to the complexity of improving current policies in line with scientific advice updates, while equitably meeting the needs of developing states and all fisheries simultaneously. All major tuna stocks in the Pacific Ocean are not currently overfished, nor experiencing overfishing. It is nonetheless important that Harvest Control Rules and Management Procedures are put in place to ensure that sustainable fisheries management can be maintained following previously agreed adjustments that deal with changing stock conditions over time.

What is the Solution?

- Adopt and implement a management procedure for skipjack tuna, without a trial period as proposed in DP-04.
- Establish precautionary Target Reference Points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas in 2023.
- Continue developing and implementing Limit reference points and Target reference points for all stocks.

MONITORING CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE (MCS)

The Issue:

Some aspects of comprehensive monitoring, control and surveillance are currently lacking in the WCPFC. For example, human observer coverage in some fleets was compromised due the COVID-19 Pandemic. Reduced observer coverage means that there is less independent catch data available to help accurately inform stock assessments and effective conservation management measures. Electronic monitoring systems do provide some benefits, but they should not be seen as a flawless replacement of human observers.

What is the Solution?

- Develop and adopt a Conservation Management Measure to implement a standardized Electronic Monitoring Program which also equitably accounts for the needs of small-scale fisheries and developing states.
- Adopt minimum standards for electronic monitoring among the diverse fisheries operating within the WCPFC area.



LABOUR STANDARDS

The Issue:

The WCPFC has a unique opportunity to lead other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) by example through ensuring this measure provides additional protection for the most vulnerable in the sector, and guaranteeing adequate safeguards are put in place that protect the human rights of fishers.

What is the Solution

IPNLF recognise and support the importance and urgency of this work. Consequently, alongside aligned partners, we have proposed the following enhancements are made to the measure in development;

- Explicitly align with international human and labour rights conventions
- Adequately address responsible recruitment issues and the regulation of crew recruitment agencies
- Provide additional clarification in clauses relating to the investigation of accidents and fatalities at-sea
- Give more specificity regarding minimum requirements for acceptable working agreements for crew
- Increase the scope for crew to file complaints or report grievances

SHARK PROTECTION

The Issue:

Recent scientific advice from the WCPFC Scientific Committee states that both the oceanic whitetip shark and the silky shark are experiencing overfishing. Longline gears with wire leaders or specific "shark lines" are a significant contributor or shark bycatch among Pacific fisheries.

The Solution

- Adopt the proposal submitted by the United States and Canada to revise the comprehensive shark measure (CMM- 2019-04). This calls for the prohibition of the use of wire leaders and shark lines in the longline fishery to recover shark populations.
- Adopt a fins naturally attached policy, without exceptions.

