

Recommendation n° 40

Equitable management of tuna quotas in the Atlantic

The management of tropical tuna stocks in the Atlantic Ocean has been an important topic in the last few years, due to the recovery of bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) and to the importance of tropical tunas to the large and small-scale fisheries, and to the economies of associated communities, throughout the Ocean.

It is vital that the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) reach consensus on management measures for tropical tunas this year, and adopts a preventive approach, adequate to ensure that the changes made can be sustained over the coming years, continuing to recover the stocks.

Additionally, the Advisory Council for the Outermost Regions (CCRUP) considers important to highlight that the European Commission (EC) represents both industrial and artisanal fisheries practiced in the outermost regions (ORs) of ICCAT, so the information from the fishing communities must be key on the EC's agenda in ICCAT.

Considering the above mentioned, **the CCRUP recommends to the European Commission to recommend to ICCAT:**

1. An increase of the total allowable catch (TAC) of bigeye tuna to 75.000 tons, ensuring the recovery of the stocks within the deadline stipulated by the EC. Both, the recent catch trends, as well as the state of stocks, seems to confirm that exists a sufficient margin for this increase of the TAC, and for a recovery of the stock before the deadline set by the EC;
2. An increase of fishing opportunities allocated to the artisanal fishing fleets of the ORs, based on the proposal presented by the European Union (EU) last year (5% of the TAC). This should be an essential aspect of the quota for the EU fleet and should be accompanied by a clear mechanism for the identification of vessels eligible to receive these subsidies due to their status of artisanal fleet;
3. The application, by ICCAT, of the existing mechanisms for sanctioning cases of repeated non-compliance;

4. The adoption of measures to strengthen the knowledge of the fleets that operate in our waters and their activities, and that these measures be controllable and applicable, recognizing that is essential to develop the collection of the necessary data about fisheries;

5. Initiate evaluation processes for illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities, leading to the application of cards, in countries whose fleets are presumably involved in IUU fishing activities in the waters of the EU Outermost Regions, and that is given priority to inspection for the attribution of cards to countries that fish in our waters;

Opinion of *Sciaena* and International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF):

Since bigeye tuna continues to show signs of recovery, but the uncertainties around stock assessment still exist, as highlighted at the last inter-sessional meeting by the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), we recommend that the EU don't support the setting of the TAC beyond 72.500 tonnes, to increase the probability of the stocks not being overfished in the future years.

The President of the Executive Committee of the CCRUP,

(David Pavón González)