



## Atlantic Ocean Tuna Longline (StarKist) FIP Position Statement for ICCAT 2020

Drafted with agreement from all FIP Participants - September 2020

The submission of this position statement is regarding the Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) currently being undertaken by the Atlantic Ocean Tuna Longline (StarKist) Fishery. The fishery targets albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), bigeye (*T. obesus*) and yellowfin (*T. albacares*) tunas. The pelagic longline vessels are flagged to Taiwan, St Vincent, Senegal, Panama and Belize and fish on the high seas (and occasionally in the national EEZs) in the Atlantic. The fishery is managed regionally by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) in the Atlantic Ocean.

To find more information on the present FIP, [please view the public Fishery Progress profile here.](#)

This FIP aims to meet the rising global demand for tuna in a sustainable manner by assuring catches do not exceed sustainable levels, promoting the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and strengthening policy and governance systems in the region. The end goal is to achieve certification under the [Marine Stewardship Council](#) Fisheries Standard by 2025.

As part of this FIP reaching MSC certification there are various actions which need to be undertaken which involve a range of different stakeholders. To ensure the FIP meets these objectives we need the support of ICCAT and urge action within ICCAT this year on multiple topics laid out in this position statement.

### Harvest Strategies

Of importance during this year's work within ICCAT is the adoption of harvest strategies, including reference points, clearly defined Harvest Control Rules (HCRs) and monitoring mechanisms. The adoption of HCRs and strategies are key to meeting the MSC Standard Principle 1. Addressing these Principle 1 concerns is extremely important to this FIP, as we look to receive MSC certification in the near future.

- **Ask 1:** Adopt stock-specific management measures for yellowfin and bigeye consistent with SCRS advice. This includes robust HCRs rules and tools development for managing skipjack, yellowfin, and bigeye tuna, along with a well-managed harvest strategy.

### Bycatch and Sharks

Protect shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) by heeding scientists' warnings about North Atlantic depletion and South Atlantic imminent risk. Specifically:

- **Ask 2:** Adopt a new recommendation for shortfin mako sharks that immediately (in 2020) prohibits all shortfin mako retentions and, ensures specific scientific advice for minimising incidental mortality is developed and implemented in 2021.
- **Ask 3:** Adopt a Recommendation to prohibit deliberate purse seine setting around whale sharks and cetaceans, as has been done in WCPFC, IATTC and IOTC.



## Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS)

MCS tools are essential for sustainable fisheries management. For example, satellite Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) strengthen vessel compliance on the water, combat IUU fishing, and improve fisheries management by reducing uncertainty. Port state measures combat IUU fishing and ensure IUU fishing products do not enter the market.

- **Ask 4:** The Commission should ensure that the SCRS prioritises the development in 2021 of standards for electronic monitoring, as well as a workplan and timeline for implementation of a comprehensive electronic monitoring programme.
- **Ask 5 :** Identify and sanction through the ICCAT Compliance Committee non-compliance with the current 5% longline coverage requirement. Within four years, require 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) for longline.
- **Ask 6:** Adopt a new binding measure to ensure human observer safety, including on carrier vessels, as has been done by IATTC and WCPFC.
- **Ask 7:** Best practice for transshipment. This is to provide greater clarity on catch and bycatch, support effective management, reinforces traceability already in place, and supports ICCAT data collection requirements.

## Compliance

ICCAT has one of the best designed and most transparent compliance assessment processes of the five tuna RFMOs, but it can be strengthened. A strong compliance process improves fisheries management. ICCAT has enhanced its compliance assessment process, but procedural and policy improvements are still needed.

- **Ask 8:** Codify Resolution 16-17 into a binding Recommendation, as soon as possible.
- **Ask 9:** Develop audit points or performance metrics for ICCAT measures to clarify members' obligations and reporting requirements for the Compliance Committee, such as been developed for sharks in Rec. 18-06.
- **Ask 10:** Develop information-exchange mandates and systems between the ICCAT Compliance Committee and the Commission regarding measures with unclear obligations and/or reporting requirements.

If the above mentioned are addressed effectively it will have positive long-term sustainability implications and improve overall health of the Atlantic marine ecosystem to allow for fisheries like our current FIPs to achieve sustainability targets, particularly in line with MSC certification.

For any further information, please contact the FIP manager, Tom Evans at [t.evans@keytraceability.com](mailto:t.evans@keytraceability.com)

*Signed on behalf of the Atlantic Ocean Tuna Longline (StarKist) FIP – September 2020*



*Annex 1: Vessels and companies in support of the above statement – Redacted for this version*