

Position Statement for WCPFC 2023 PACIFIC OCEAN TROPICAL TUNA - PURSE SEINE (US PACIFIC TUNA GROUP)

Drafted with agreement from all FIP and MSC Participants – November 2023

ATTN: WCPFC and delegates

This FIP and MSC certified fishery 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.

As part of this FIP and MSC certified fishery maintain certification there are various actions that need to be undertaken that involve a range of different stakeholders. To ensure the FIP meets these objectives we need the support of the WCPFC and urge action at the WCPFC meeting this year on multiple topics laid out in this position statement.

The vessel owners and industry participants of the FIP submit this letter to request additional support from CCMs for the measures that will further tuna conservation at the Commission meeting beginning 4 December 2023. There are several critical measures and issues that require immediate attention by the WCPFC this year, and others that need to be advanced in 2024. We strongly urge WCPFC acts in December 2023 to ensure that Recommendations that are about to partially or fully expire, continue to be effective in 2024. Other priority issues are listed below:

Tuna stock conservation

- Adopt a new conservation measure for tropical tunas that:
 - i. Implements the outputs of the 2023 skipjack Management Procedure;
 - ii. Limits fishing mortality for bigeye and yellowfin to the interim Target Reference Points;
 - iii. Removes ambiguities and exemptions, while giving recognition of the special needs of Small Island Developing States and Territories; and
 - iv. Sets catch limits for fisheries that do not have them.
- Adopt a harvest control rule for North Pacific albacore to implement the harvest strategy for North Pacific albacore fishery adopted by the Commission in 2022.

Management measures for tropical tunas

- Continue to support and endorse further implementation of *CMM 2021-01* in an effort to improve the harvest strategies for tropical tuna species.
- Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack.
- Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority.

- Adopt a full harvest control rule (HRC)/management procedure (MP) for the skipjack purse seine fishery.

FAD management best practices

- Establish an interim timeline, to be reviewed in 2024, for transitioning to 100% biodegradable FADs consistent with the timeline agreed by the IATTC.
- Adopt a requirement for provision of near-real-time FAD position and acoustic biomass records data for scientific use with appropriate time-lags to protect confidentiality.
- Task the FAD Working Group (FADMO-IWG) with developing in 2024:
 - i. A "FAD logbook" similar to what is used by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement;
 - ii. Explore options for the FAD recovery working with interested parties

Electronic monitoring and reporting & observer coverage

- Task the Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Intersessional Working Group (ERandEM IWG) with finalizing Electronic Monitoring (EM) standards, specifications and procedures for adoption in 2024.

Transshipment regulation

- Adopt revisions to CMM 2009-06 to strengthen the regulation of at-sea transshipment in line with including best practice standards, requiring:
 - Near real-time electronic reporting (not longer than 24 hours after the event) for all transshipment activity, using minimum standard data fields
 - Use of AIS and that VMS data are reported for all transshipments of WCPFC-covered species
 - Provision of observer data to the WCPFC, as well as the national program; and
 - Establishing criteria for authorization of at-sea transshipment and a review process

Effective management procedures (Harvest Strategies)

- Adopt Target Reference Points and continue to develop Management Procedures for bigeye and yellowfin tuna.
- Ensure that the skipjack Management Procedure adopted last year is effectively implemented in the revised tropical tuna measure and adopt a monitoring strategy consistent with scientific advice.

Bycatch mitigation and shark protections

- Task the SC and the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) with reviewing CMM 2018-03 for seabirds and CMM 2018-04 for sea turtles in 2024 and provide advice on updated best practice mitigation options.
- Task the SC and TCC to provide recommendations in 2024 on CMM 2022-04, including with respect to the provisions for retained sharks to be landed with fins naturally attached, to support the Commission's review of its implementation and effectiveness as called for in the CMM.

Compliance Processes

- Direct the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) Intersessional Working Group to develop guidelines for the participation of accredited observers and a scheme of responses to non-compliance to present to the Commission for adoption in 2024.

For any further information, please contact the FIP and MSC manager Charles Horsnell at: c.horsnell@keytraceability.com

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

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