

WCC-2012-Res-031-EN

Precautionary tuna management through target and limit reference points and improved drifting Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) management

ALARMED that two tuna species were listed as Critically Endangered and Endangered in the 2011 *IUCN Red List* assessment: Southern Bluefin (*Thunnus maccoyii*) were assessed as Critically Endangered, Atlantic Bluefin (*T. thynnus*) as Endangered;

CONCERNED that a third species was listed as Vulnerable: Bigeye (*T. obesus*);

RECOGNIZING that two further species were listed as Near Threatened: Yellowfin (*T. albacares*) and Albacore (*T. alalunga*) and two species as Least Concern: Skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) and Pacific Bluefin (*T. orientalis*);

CONCERNED that there are no formally approved harvest control rules for any of the tunas;

NOTING that the five tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) are responsible for the management of tuna species in an area that extends across 91%, or 325 million square miles, of the Earth's ocean surface;

NOTING ALSO that up to 60% of the 23 tuna stocks are more or less fully exploited, and up to 35% are overexploited or depleted, according to *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2010* of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations;

ACKNOWLEDGING Article 6 of the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission convention text, and the Antigua Convention of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, all of which call on States and members to apply the precautionary approach in order to protect living marine resources and preserve the marine environment;

RECOGNIZING that of the two types of precautionary reference points that should be used according to Annex II of the UNFSA, conservation, or limit, reference points set boundaries which are intended to constrain harvesting within safe biological limits within which stocks can produce maximum sustainable yield; that harvest control rules are needed to direct conservation action relative to the reference points; and that a specific harvest management plan is necessary to enumerate and organize the requirement for sustainable precautionary fishery management;

AWARE that approximately half of the global tuna catch comes from fisheries that employ Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), but information on the exact number of FADs deployed and their locations is generally not shared with fisheries scientists and managers;

NOTING WITH CONCERN that the scale of drifting FAD deployment could alter the overall function of the ocean ecosystem and change the natural behaviour of marine species without proper precautionary management in place and that more research is needed;

CONCERNED about the impacts from the unconstrained use of FADs including, *inter alia*, large increases in fishing mortality of juvenile Yellowfin and Bigeye, differences in sizes and ages of target catch compared with free-school caught tuna, increased difficulty of properly assessing the status of individual tuna populations, and high rates of bycatch, including sharks, sea turtles and juvenile tuna; and

FURTHER WELCOMING recommendations from participants at the 2011 International Symposium on Tuna Fisheries and FADs, Tahiti, France, 28 November–2 December 2011;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

1. CALLS on tuna RFMOs to establish harvest control rules including target and limit reference points for managed tuna stocks as a step in implementing precautionary management and beginning to reverse the alarming decline in the status of some tuna stocks;
2. FURTHER CALLS on tuna RFMOs and governments to take steps to improve the traceability of tuna catch, and where appropriate consider the implementation of a catch documentation scheme through the use of electronic reporting, as well as to minimize illegal, unregulated and unreported tuna fishing;
3. URGES RFMOs to take the action below with regards to FAD management;
4. CALLS on IUCN State and government agency Members to take precautionary management actions, such as the implementation of target and limit reference points for tunas in waters under national jurisdiction, in a manner compatible with any measures taken by the relevant tuna RFMO;
5. URGES IUCN State and government agency Members with vessels fishing on drifting FADs to develop appropriate resolutions that establish FAD management plans, through and in conjunction with their respective RFMOs, that require Member States to submit FAD information that is standard across fleets and regions so that RFMO scientific committees have better information on the extent of their use, and potential ecosystem impacts associated with the uncontrolled proliferation of drifting FADs, including:
 - a. requiring vessels to report the number and status (i.e. retrieved or left in water) of deployed and fished drifting FADs per trip;
 - b. recording the use of supply vessels to aid in drifting FAD fisheries;
 - c. inventory and take measures to track all drifting FADs in their respective convention areas to understand the scope of use and enable effective regulation; and
 - d. undertaking research and scientific trials to determine how to reduce catch of non-target species when fishing on drifting FADs;
6. URGES members of tuna RFMOs to implement 100 percent observer coverage on large purse seine vessels for compliance purposes with drifting FAD measures and provide data to RFMOs;
7. ALSO URGES IUCN, particularly Species Survival Commission (SSC) members and relevant Specialist Groups, to engage with RFMO scientific committees as a way of providing scientific advice and expertise; and
8. CALLS ON the Director General to promote and strive to achieve the actions described in paragraphs 1–7 above.