

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON PROHIBITION ON DISCARDS
OF TROPICAL TUNAS CAUGHT BY PURSE SEINERS**

RECALLING the FAO International Guidelines on by-catch management and reduction of discards that aim to facilitate by-catch management and reduction of discards, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for responsible fishing;

NOTING that the *Recommendation by ICCAT on a multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas* [Rec. 16-01] established a multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas in the ICCAT Convention area;

RECOGNISING that Recommendation 16-01 envisages the adoption of provisions for better by-catch management and reduction of discards in the ICCAT tropical tuna fisheries;

RECALLING that the second meeting of the *Ad Hoc Working Group on FADs* recommended development of an appropriate retention policy for tropical tunas to better manage by-catch and reduce discards in tropical tuna fisheries, in accordance with the FAO guidelines;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the recommendations made by the SCRS in 2017 on tropical tunas;

RECOGNISING that other tuna RFMOs have implemented similar conservation and management measures requiring purse seiners to implement full retention of tunas;

CONCERNED by the loss of data due to discards of tuna and other species in the ICCAT tropical tuna fisheries;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the considerable volume of tunas caught in the purse seine fishery targeting tropical tunas in the Atlantic Ocean;

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:

Objective

The objective of this recommendation is to achieve a substantial reduction in discards of tropical tunas by 2020.

Retention of tuna species

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (CPCs) whose purse seiners are authorised to fish for bigeye and/or yellowfin and/or skipjack tuna in the Convention area, pursuant to paragraph 25 of Recommendation 16-01, must require these vessels to retain on board then land or tranship to port all bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin tunas caught, except in the cases described in paragraph 2b.
2. The procedures for implementation of full retention requirements comprise:
 - a) No bigeye, skipjack and/or yellowfin tuna caught by a purse seiner may be discarded during the set once the net is completely closed and when more than half of the net has been retrieved. If there is a technical problem with the closing or retrieval procedure of the net such that this rule cannot be applied, the crew shall make every effort to release the tunas into the water as quickly as possible.
 - b) The following two exceptions apply to this rule:
 - i. When the vessel master determines that the tunas caught (bigeye, skipjack or yellowfin tuna) are not fit for human consumption, the following definitions shall apply:

- “unfit for human consumption” refers to fish that:
 - are meshed or crushed in the purse seine net; or
 - are damaged due to depredation; or
 - have died and decomposed in the net due to a gear failure that has prevented the normal activities of retrieval of the net and fishing and efforts to release the fish alive;
 - “unfit for human consumption” does not include fish that:
 - are considered undesirable in terms of size, marketability, or species composition; or
 - have decomposed or are contaminated as a result of an act or omission of the crew of the fishing vessel.
- ii. When the vessel master determines that the tunas (bigeye, skipjack or yellowfin tuna) have been caught during the last set of a trip and there is not enough storage capacity to store the tunas (bigeye, skipjack or yellowfin tuna) caught during this set, these fish may only be discarded if:
- the master or the crew attempt to release the tuna alive (bigeye, skipjack or yellowfin tuna) as quickly as possible; and
 - no other fishing operation is conducted following the discarding, until such time as the tunas (bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin tuna) onboard the vessel are landed or transhipped.

The CPC shall report all discards observed.

3. CPCs shall encourage their vessels using other gear types (i.e., longline, baitboat and gillnets) to retain onboard and land or, to the extent possible and in compliance with Recommendation 16-15, tranship at port all bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack tuna caught except in the cases where ICCAT measures in force or national regulations prohibit their retention or encourage their release.

Implementation and review

4. In 2020, the SCRS shall assess the effectiveness of this Recommendation and submit recommendations to the Commission regarding potential improvements.
5. In 2020, the SCRS shall also undertake work to examine the benefits according to the objectives defined above of retaining non-targeted species catches and present its recommendations to the Commission. The work should take into account all species that are usually discarded on all major gears (i.e., purse-seines, longlines and gillnets), and should look at fisheries that take place both on the high seas and in waters under national jurisdiction and the feasibility of both retaining on-board and processing of the associated landings.