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**NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR COORDINATED GLOBAL ACTION TO
RECOVER PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA**

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Submitted by Monterey Bay Aquarium -

New report highlights the need for coordinated global action to recover Pacific bluefin tuna

Monterey Bay Aquarium calls on Pacific nations to meet their international commitments to recover the species

Statement of [Margaret Spring](#), Vice President of Conservation and Science and Chief Conservation Officer of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, on the opening of the 13th Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) meeting in Nadi, Fiji

"This week, as delegates from around the world come together in Fiji to participate in the [Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission annual meeting](#), I am pleased to announce the release of the [2016 Bluefin Futures Symposium Meeting Report](#) from an international gathering co-hosted by the Monterey Bay Aquarium and Stanford University. We desperately need global cooperation and collaboration—in science and management—for all three species of bluefin tunas. But Pacific bluefin tuna are in the most dire condition, with the population estimated at only 2.6% of historic levels by the most recent international stock assessment.

"The report is being released as Pacific nations confront a critical moment for Pacific bluefin tuna. We urge all member nations at the WCPFC meeting this week to commit to robust science-based management in 2017. That includes setting a meaningful plan to recover the Pacific bluefin tuna population to levels that can achieve maximum sustainable yield, in accordance with Commission's mandate and global sustainability standards.

"With the generous support of many sponsors, including the [Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization \(CSIRO\)](#), the [Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency](#), [the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#), [The Pew Charitable Trusts](#) and [The David and Lucile Packard Foundation](#), we brought together nearly 200 bluefin tuna experts from around the world to participate in the [2016 Bluefin Futures Symposium](#). Participants engaged in serious discussions about what is needed—from research, governments and stakeholders—to ensure a sustainable future for these remarkable fish that are critical to coastal communities, economies and our ocean ecosystem.

"Over the course of three days, a diverse cross-section of symposium participants shared the latest bluefin tuna research and management developments, identified obstacles to species recovery, and outlined new opportunities for international cooperation.

"The report identifies key scientific gaps and uncertainties in our understanding of bluefin tunas, and underscores the importance of supporting robust, transparent science so that managers have the information they need to recover these populations and ensure long-term sustainability. We know there are very clear best practices for providing scientific advice, which all Regional Fisheries Management Organizations will need to fully implement to meet their obligations.

"In particular, the Symposium reinforced the importance of [harvest strategies](#) as part of a precautionary management approach, in line with the global sustainability standards of the [U.N. Fish Stocks Agreement](#). Strong international agreements can only succeed if member nations hold up their end of the bargain and collaborate to find meaningful solutions that will ensure a more sustainable future. Finally, new technologies, markets and climate change are key variables in the future health and viability of bluefin tuna populations. Given the significant uncertainties, we must act now to recover depleted populations, and improve their capacity for resilience.

"The Bluefin Futures Symposium leaves no doubt that Pacific bluefin tuna are in the most desperate situation. Look no further than today's [New York Times](#) to see the international implications and the clear opportunity before us to turn things around in the Pacific.

"Global cooperation is absolutely essential, and we were pleased that in August, members of the Northern Committee of the WCPFC established a joint working group with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission to identify cross-Pacific recovery objectives for Pacific bluefin tuna. [Unfortunately, the talks did not yield significant progress](#) on key management needs, such as a long-term rebuilding target that can achieve maximum sustainable yield, the development of harvest strategies, or a catch documentation scheme. It is time to reaffirm our commitment to Pacific bluefin tuna recovery.

"As delegates gather at this week's WCPFC meeting, we call on all Pacific nations to reflect on what we've learned this year. It's time for meaningful, science-based commitments to recover Pacific bluefin tuna, and to live up to our international commitments and the mandates of this Commission. We welcome opportunities to work with all delegates to continue the dialogue that began in Monterey, and recover this critical species."