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Global Tuna Alliance Position Statement to WCPFC21

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Submitted by Global Tuna Alliance



2024 WCPFC Position Statement

GLOBAL TUNA ALLIANCE

ABOUT US - GLOBAL TUNA ALLIANCE

Global Tuna Alliance (GTA) partners are an inclusive constituency of pre-competitive supply-chain companies and retailers with a substantial interest in improving the sustainability of the tuna sector and are actively committed to supporting GTA campaigns.

As the voice of the tuna market, the Global Tuna Alliance exists to hold decision-makers accountable to businesses, their customers, and all those whose livelihoods depend on a sustainable tuna industry.

OUR CURRENT PARTNERS



TOP LEVEL ASKS

Labour Standards for Crew on Fishing Vessels

Support the proposed CMM on Labor Standards to ensure decent conditions for all crew on fishing vessels, in alignment with GTA Partners' objectives to enhance socially responsible seafood supply chains and protect fishers' rights

Electronic Monitoring Standards & Observer Coverage

Adopt a CMM for an Electronic Monitoring (EM) Program with associated Minimum Standards. To support transparency and compliance across tuna supply chains, GTA urges WCPFC to:

- Adopt interim EM program standards
- Set a progressive target to increase observer coverage (human and/or electronic) in non-purse seine industrial fleets, working towards 100% observer coverage in all industrial tuna fisheries
- Require real-time reporting of EM data, with standards harmonized across RFMOs to ensure integration for vessels operating across regions

Harvest Strategies

- Accelerate the development and adoption of binding harvest strategies for bigeye, yellowfin, and South Pacific albacore tuna to maintain sustainable stock levels, supporting GTA Partners' commitments to sourcing from stocks managed under effective harvest strategies
- Coordinate with other RFMOs to establish consistent standards

At-Sea Transshipment Regulation

Strengthen CMM 2009-06 to align with best practices, including those in the NGO Tuna Forum's "Aligned Guidance on At-Sea Transshipment". This should include:

- Real-Time Reporting: Require near real-time electronic reporting of all transshipment activities within 24 hours, including data on vessel identities, catch, and transshipment locations
- AIS and VMS Data Integration: Mandate AIS and VMS data for all transshipments to improve traceability and enable better monitoring across RFMO jurisdictions
- Observer Coverage: Expand observer coverage requirements on both catching and transshipment vessels to ensure independent verification of all activities, reducing IUU fishing risks

Bycatch & FAD Management

- Improve bycatch mitigation by adopting science-based limits on Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), transitioning to 100% biodegradable FADs, and establishing a FAD marking scheme
- Implement measures for seabird conservation and shark protection, aligning with GTA's commitment and our Partners' dedication to reducing environmental impacts and promoting biodiversity

CREW WELFARE STANDARDS

What is the issue?

Fishers are the cornerstone of our industry. The seafood supply chain and its customers are increasingly concerned about reports of poor labour conditions and human rights abuses on fishing vessels. Such nefarious acts are intolerable. GTA's strategic priority in Social Responsibility targets a fully socially responsible tuna supply chain and the implementation of decent working conditions in line with the spirit of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Work in Fishing Convention (no. 188).

What are we calling for?

- Transition to WCPFC Resolution 2018-01 on Labour Standards into a binding Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) that ensures rights and safety for all crew, supporting our strategy's goal to respect human rights and enhance crew welfare.



ELECTRONIC MONITORING (EM) & OBSERVER COVERAGE STANDARDS

What is the issue?

Observer coverage is crucial for effective fisheries management. Limited observer coverage impacts data accuracy and the effectiveness of conservation measures. GTA's strategic objective prioritizes achieving 100% observer coverage, recognizing its role in improving transparency and compliance.

What are we calling for?

- Adopt interim EM standards for all vessel types.
- Set progressive targets to increase observer coverage on longline vessels beyond the minimum 5% requirement, working towards 100% coverage across all industrial tuna fisheries. This aligns with best practices and supports independent verification of catch and compliance.
- Require timely reporting and sharing of EM data across RFMOs, allowing greater integration and oversight for vessels operating in multiple regions, promoting collaboration with other RFMOs.



HARVEST STRATEGIES

What is the issue?

Although tuna stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean are currently stable, proactive management is necessary to maintain these levels. GTA's strategy emphasizes the need for precautionary harvest strategies, which are essential to sustainable sourcing.

What are we calling for?

- Adopt binding Target Reference Points and management procedures for bigeye and yellowfin tuna, supporting GTA's environmental sustainability goals.
- Establish a binding management procedure for skipjack tuna that automatically applies the outcomes of the harvest control rule.
- Accelerate the adoption of an interim management procedure for South Pacific albacore, ensuring these stocks remain viable and ecologically balanced.
- Coordinate with other RFMOs to establish consistent harvest standards across regions.



HARVEST STRATEGIES

Infographic Key

-  Not adopted
-  Adopted, but not implemented
-  Adopted and implemented where applicable

Skipjack

- Precautionary Target Reference Points 
- Precautionary Limit Reference Points 
- Acceptable Levels of Risk 
- Management/Operational Objectives 
- Management Strategy Evaluation 
- Performance Indicators 
- Harvest Control Rules 
- Monitoring Strategies 
- Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels 

Northern Albacore

- Precautionary Target Reference Points 
- Precautionary Limit Reference Points 
- Acceptable Levels of Risk 
- Management/Operational Objectives 
- Management Strategy Evaluation 
- Performance Indicators 
- Harvest Control Rules 
- Monitoring Strategies 
- Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels 

Southern Albacore

- Precautionary Target Reference Points 
- Precautionary Limit Reference Points 
- Acceptable Levels of Risk 
- Management/Operational Objectives 
- Management Strategy Evaluation 
- Performance Indicators 
- Harvest Control Rules 
- Monitoring Strategies 
- Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels 

Bigeye and Yellowfin

- Precautionary Target Reference Points 
- Precautionary Limit Reference Points 
- Acceptable Levels of Risk 
- Management/Operational Objectives 
- Management Strategy Evaluation 
- Performance Indicators 
- Harvest Control Rules 
- Monitoring Strategies 
- Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels 

Pacific Bluefin

- Precautionary Target Reference Points 
- Precautionary Limit Reference Points 
- Acceptable Levels of Risk 
- Management/Operational Objectives 
- Management Strategy Evaluation 
- Performance Indicators 
- Harvest Control Rules 
- Monitoring Strategies 
- Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels 

AT-SEA TRANSSHIPMENT REGULATION

What is the issue?

Transshipment at sea can enable illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing if not closely monitored. Enhanced transshipment controls are necessary to improve traceability and accountability in tuna fisheries, a key objective within GTA's transparency-focused goals.

What are we calling for?

- Strengthen CMM 2009-006 to incorporate best practices outlined in the NGO Tuna Forum's "Aligned Guidance on At-Sea Transshipment", supporting standardized, rigorous oversight across transshipment operations.
 - **Real-Time Reporting:** Require near real-time reporting of transshipment activities, including vessel details, location, and catch specifics.
 - **AIS and VMS:** Ensure that transshipment activities are tracked using AIS and VMS, enhancing traceability across regions.
 - **Observer Coverage:** Mandate observer coverage on transshipment vessels to independently verify transshipment activities, aligning with GTA's broader goal of 100% observer coverage to prevent IUU fishing.



BYCATCH & FAD MANAGEMENT

What is the issue?

The use of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) contributes to bycatch risks and marine litter, affecting marine biodiversity and local ecosystems. Effective management of FADs and bycatch is necessary to limit ecosystem impacts and ensure sustainable tuna fishing practices that directly benefit local communities and marine habitats. This aligns with GTA's objectives under Environmental Sustainability to manage FAD use and mitigate biodiversity risks.

What are we calling for?

- Implement science-based limits on FAD deployments and a transition timeline for 100% biodegradable and non-entangling FADs to minimize environmental impacts.
- Require comprehensive tracking, data reporting, and publication on FAD use, including an annual summary of lost/recovered FADs, tracking of support vessel activities, and FAD ownership accountability.
- Mandate best practices for FAD deactivation to prevent marine debris and establish robust recover protocols.
- Enhance bycatch mitigation with safe handling measures for sharks, rays, and marine turtles, aligning with best practices.





CONTACT

Dr. Wetjens Dimmlich
Advocacy Lead
wetjens@globaltunaalliance.com

Daniel Sudabby
Executive Director
daniel@globaltunaalliance.com
