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ICCAT adopts stronger measures for tuna and swordfish fisheries management

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

New measures enhance responsible fisheries management of tuna and swordfish, emphasizing science-based strategies, conservation and small-scale fisheries

At the annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) in Cyprus, the European Union led the adoption of key measures to strengthen the responsible management of tropical tuna stocks.

The agreement includes an increase in the total allowable catch (TAC) for bigeye tuna, benefiting developing coastal states while slightly enhancing fishing opportunities for the European fleet. A notable milestone is the commitment to mandatory biodegradable and non-entangling fish aggregation devices (FADs), a step toward reducing the environmental impact of tuna fishing.

In a win for the EU fleet, the FAD fishery closure period was reduced to 45 days. The agreement emphasizes enhanced scientific research to inform future FAD closure policies.



ICCAT adopts new measures to enhance responsible fisheries management of tuna and swordfish, emphasizing science-based strategies, conservation and small-scale fisheries. Photo by [Isaac Mijangos](https://www.pexels.com/photo/underwater-photography-of-a-swimming-bluefin-12829694/) (<https://www.pexels.com/photo/underwater-photography-of-a-swimming-bluefin-12829694/>).

ICCAT also adopted a recommendation for a management strategy evaluation for tropical tunas. This approach will create a long-term, science-based framework for managing bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin tuna stocks to maintain their health and abundance.

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ICCAT approved stricter controls for bluefin tuna to enhance efficiency and support small-scale fleets in the Gulf of Lion. ICCAT established its first framework for bluefin tuna aquaculture, focusing on traceability and sustainable development of the sector.

To support swordfish stocks, ICCAT introduced a management procedure for North Atlantic swordfish, setting a TAC and ensuring catch limits align with it. This includes a 1,569-ton increase in the EU's annual catch allocation. Additional conservation efforts include EU-led proposals to enhance shark protections and initiate a Management Strategy Evaluation for blue sharks.

ICCAT, the Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) responsible for conserving tuna and related species in the Atlantic and adjacent seas, includes 52 contracting parties, with the EU representing the interests of its member states.

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