Progress Made by Tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs)

Background
Following the first joint meeting of the five tuna regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) in January 2007, WWF prepared a briefing, “Tuna in Trouble,” to highlight the challenges of managing tuna and provide recommendations for more sustainable tuna fisheries. Over the next several pages is a snapshot of progress made on recommendations related to a) Tuna conservation & management, b) recommendations related to eliminating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing for tuna, and c) recommendations related to reducing bycatch in Tuna fishing operations.

Tuna Conservation and Management
This is a snapshot of progress made on recommendations related to Tuna conservation and management.

Issues
WWF believes that conservation and management strategies based on a precautionary, ecosystem approach and the best available scientific advice are central to sustainable fisheries. The widespread failure of tuna RFMOs to develop such strategies is a key reason behind the unsustainably high catch levels for many tuna stocks.

Recommendations
Tuna RFMOs must adopt the ecosystem and precautionary approaches to management to consider the impacts of fishing activities on the marine environment and adopt measures to minimize these impacts even when the best scientific advice is uncertain. Whether uncertain or quite clear, RFMOs must do a better job of following the science. Finally, too many boats are chasing fewer fish, and RFMOs need to reduce fishing capacity.

Review of Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RFMO</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>RFMO Measures</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSBT</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>The wider impacts of fishing on the living marine resources and marine ecosystems have not been considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IATTC</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>As of August 2010, an objective will be to adopt measures to prevent fishing activities from adversely affecting non-target species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCAT</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>ICCAT is far behind clear modern trends that enshrine the ecosystem approach in recent RFMO conventions (performance review).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOTC</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>The absence of an ecosystem based approach to fisheries management is a major weakness (performance review).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCPFC</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>An objective is to assess the impacts of fishing and other human activities on species belonging to the same ecosystem or associated with the target stocks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ecosystem Approach
Do conservation and management strategies take into account the impacts of a fishery on the wider ecosystem beyond the target species, as well as addressing human concerns such as food security and livelihoods?
Precautionary Approach
In the absence of adequate scientific information, are conservation and management measures adopted to minimize the risk of overfishing and negative impacts on the ecosystem?

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<tr>
<td>CCSBT</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>CCSBT incorporates some elements of the precautionary approach in its management of SBT (independent review).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IATTC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>As of August 2010, the Convention lays out steps to apply the precautionary approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCAT</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>ICCAT has not adopted the precautionary approach as such, though various measures it has adopted are precautionary (performance review).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOTC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>The IOTC Agreement needs to be amended or replaced to incorporate modern fisheries management principles, such as the precautionary approach (performance review).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCPFC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>The Convention defines precautionary approach and provides implementation guidelines. WCPFC failed to act “without delay” to restore bigeye tuna.</td>
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Scientific Advice
When the RFMO is provided with clear and reasonably precautionary advice, does it follow this advice?

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<td>CCSBT</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>CCSBT has not yet resolved the issue of compromised catch data, making it impossible to determine exact trends in stock status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IATTC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>In 2009, after three years of failure to follow the science to rebuild bigeye tuna, IATTC adopted a measure that incorporates most of the recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCAT</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>In 2008, ICCAT scientists recommended a TAC for Mediterranean bluefin tuna between 8,000 and 15,000 tons to rebuild the stock. ICCAT adopted a TAC of 22,000 tons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOTC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>The IOTC has adopted relatively few management measures on the basis of the advice provided by its Scientific Committee (performance review).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCPFC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Despite warnings since 2004 that bigeye tuna were likely overfished, no action was taken until 2008 with a complicated measure to reduce purse seine fishing effort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Fishing Capacity
Has the RFMO adopted binding measures to cap purse seine and longline fishing capacity?

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<td>CCSBT</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>CCSBT self-assessment: “management measures associated with capacity reduction are best left to members’ domestic arrangements.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IATTC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>No binding measures to reduce capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCAT</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>ICCAT has failed to follow the advice of its Working Group on Capacity and adopt a recommendation to reduce capacity in all ICCAT fisheries where over-capacity is a problem (performance review).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOTC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Limited controls on fishing effort; capacity development plans due 31 December 2009 (performance review).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCPFC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Limits on purse-seine vessel fishing days.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abbreviations
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IATTC: Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
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IOTC: Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
WCPFC: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing

This is a snapshot of progress made on recommendations related to eliminating IUU fishing for tuna.

Issues
Tuna are subject to intense IUU fishing, which can account for one-third of the total catch. IUU fishing contributes to overfishing, undermines efforts to conserve and manage tuna stocks, and has broad ecosystem impacts through the bycatch of non-target species. The tuna RFMOs have a wide range of existing tools to reduce IUU fishing and have a responsibility to adopt and implement them.

Recommendations
RFMOs must include all states that fish within their area as well as the states that trade and consume the fish from their area in order to shut down trade in IUU fish and prevent IUU in the first place. Centralized monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) of fishing vessels is critical to ensure that only authorized vessels are fishing and following the rules. MCS measures include satellite vessel monitoring systems (VMS), and observers on fishing vessels. Finally, RFMOs must be able to enforce their measures through trade and market-related measures to prevent IUU fish from reaching the market.

Review of Progress

Membership includes all coastal, fishing, port, and market states
Does RFMO membership include states involved in the tuna trade all along the supply chain?

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<tr>
<td>CCSBT</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Not all coastal and fishing states are members, though many have acceded in recent years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IATTC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Chile, a coastal state, and a number of fishing states fish are not members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCAT</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>New membership discouraged by reluctance to allocate quota. Some previously non-cooperating parties have become members, others continue unregulated fishing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOTC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Membership access unusually restricted for an RFMO; many fishing and coastal states are not members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCPFC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Major coastal and fishing nations are not members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Centralized monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS)
Has the RFMO adopted MCS measures including centralized, real-time vessel monitoring systems, the presence of observers on vessels, and authorized and IUU vessel lists?

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<tr>
<td>CCSBT</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Limited, not-centralized VMS; no regional observer program; authorized vessels list, all others are considered unauthorized/IUU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IATTC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Limited VMS for large fishing vessels; limited observer program for fishing vessels; authorized and IUU vessel lists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCAT</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Limited VMS for large fishing vessels; limited observer coverage for fishing vessels; authorized and IUU vessel lists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOTC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Limited VMS for large fishing VESSELS; no fishing vessel observer scheme; authorized and IUU vessel lists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCPFC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Centralized real-time VMS on some vessels; limited observer coverage for fishing vessels; authorized and IUU vessel lists.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comprehensive trade and market-related measures
Has the RFMO adopted and implemented trade and market-related measures such as comprehensive catch documentation schemes (CDS), prohibitions on landings and transshipments, and trade measures such as import bans?

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<tr>
<td>CCSBT</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>CDS as of January 2010; only authorized vessels with observers may transship; port-related measures authorized against vessels not on the authorized list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IATTC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Statistical document program for bigeye tuna, and voluntary dolphin-safe tracking scheme; at-sea transshipment allowed under strict conditions; port and trade-related measures authorized against vessels on IUU list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCAT</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>CDS for bluefin tuna, statistical documentation programs for bluefin and bigeye tunas, and swordfish; transshipment only with observers; the Commission may recommend trade-restrictive measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOTC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>Limited bigeye statistical document program; transshipment only with an observer; non-binding recommendation to identify bad states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCPFC</td>
<td>☹</td>
<td>No CDS; no conservation measure to regulate transshipment; port and trade-related measures authorized against vessels on IUU list.</td>
</tr>
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**Bycatch**
This is a snapshot of progress made on recommendations related to reducing bycatch in tuna fishing operations.

**Issues**
The incidental capture of non-target species and juvenile tuna in tuna fisheries — on longlines and in purse seines, in particular — is a major problem linked with population declines of many species and threatens the survival of several endangered species. The tuna RFMOs have an important role to play in reducing interactions with endangered species and juvenile tuna.

**Recommendations**
Data on bycatch of non-target species are vital for any effort to mitigate and reduce bycatch. Tuna RFMOs must require systematic data collection and reporting on bycatch of these species. Marine turtles, sharks and other wildlife are often alive when brought on board fishing vessels, so RFMOs must require fishing vessels to release live animals. Mitigation measures such as gear modifications and time and area closures are required to avoid bycatch in the first place. Finally, tuna RFMOs must develop comprehensive management plans for fish aggregating devices (FADs – floating objects that attract fish and other wildlife) to avoid bycatch.

**Review of Progress**

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<tr>
<td>CCSBT</td>
<td>🙁</td>
<td>Limited seabird data collection requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IATTC</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>Turtle data collection is required as of 2008; shark data collection is required; seabird data collection is voluntary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCAT</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>Shark data collection is required, but compliance and reporting is poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOTC</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>Shark data collection is required, but compliance is poor. Data collection is required for turtles and seabirds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCPFC</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>Seabird, shark and turtle data collection is required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Release captured animals alive**
Marine turtles, small cetaceans, and sharks are often still alive when brought on board. Does the RFMO require fishing vessels to release live animals?

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<td>CCSBT</td>
<td>🙁</td>
<td>No measures requiring or recommending live release, but educational pamphlets on shark and seabirds are available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IATTC</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>Live release of turtles required; live release of sharks encouraged; live release of dolphins required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCAT</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>Release of blue and white marlin and bigeye thresher sharks is required. Release of turtles is encouraged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOTC</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>Turtle resuscitation and release is required, guidelines pending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCPFC</td>
<td>😐</td>
<td>Live release of sharks and seabirds is encouraged. Live release of turtles is required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bycatch mitigation measures

Does the RFMO require the use of more selective fishing gear and/or spatial-temporal measures that avoid capturing non-target species altogether?

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<tr>
<td>CCSBT</td>
<td>🕷️</td>
<td>Outdated seabird mitigation measure requiring Tori lines on longline vessels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IATTC</td>
<td>🕷️</td>
<td>No gear or spatial-temporal requirements for turtles, sharks, or seabirds; conducting circle hook trials; extensive measures to mitigate dolphin bycatch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCAT</td>
<td>🕷️</td>
<td>Limited gear measure for seabirds; non-binding gear measure for turtles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOTC</td>
<td>🕷️</td>
<td>Binding gear measures for seabirds; non-binding bycatch mitigation measures for turtles; no measures for sharks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCPFC</td>
<td>🕷️</td>
<td>Binding gear measures for seabirds; binding gear measures for turtles in the swordfish longline fishery; no binding shark mitigation measures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)

Has the RFMO developed a comprehensive management plan for FADs to prevent bycatch of juvenile tuna and other marine wildlife?

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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IATTC</td>
<td>🕷️</td>
<td>Provisional time and area closures for fishing on FADs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCAT</td>
<td>🕷️</td>
<td>Limited time and area closures for fishing on FADs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOTC</td>
<td>🕷️</td>
<td>Limited measures that require marking of FADs and data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCPFC</td>
<td>🕷️</td>
<td>Limited time and area closures for fishing on FADs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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