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118 ORGANIZATIONS MAKE SUSTAINABILITY APPEAL FOR CRITICAL IMPROVEMENTS IN GLOBAL TUNA FISHERIES

Global tuna buyers, NGOs, fishing industry associations co-sign letter to RFMOs requesting they address harvest strategies, FADs, bycatch, monitoring, control & surveillance

A diverse, global group of 118 commercial and non-profit organizations have joined together to call for immediate action by tuna RFMOs to address critical tuna sustainability priorities. In a letter dated 7 May 2018, the signatories call for accelerated action on the following global tuna fishery priorities:

- The development and implementation of comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategies
- Effective monitoring and management of fish aggregating devices (FADs)
- Strengthened monitoring, control and surveillance tools, including increased observer coverage in purse seine and longline fisheries, and of at-sea transshipment activity, through human observers and/or electronic monitoring
- Greater focus on the implementation of bycatch mitigation best practices broadly, with an emphasis on longline fisheries

Tuna fisheries represent not only a high-value protein source but also an important economic driver for countries and communities around the globe. As a highly migratory, global species, the health of tuna stocks is of global concern – as witnessed by the breadth of signatories to this appeal.

The letter and outreach effort are being coordinated by leading NGOs working on tuna sustainability globally through the NGO Tuna Forum. The letter has been shared with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission in advance of its annual meeting later this month; it will also be sent to Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) in advance of their 2018 general meetings.

While the signatories recognize that RFMOs have made progress to-date on some these priorities, accelerated action is required on all fronts to ensure the long-term sustainability of tuna fisheries.

Specific actions that IOTC, IATTC, ICCAT and WCPFC are being asked to address in 2018 include:

1. Develop and implement comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategies with specific timelines for all tuna stocks, including the adoption and implementation of target and limit reference points, harvest control rules, monitoring strategies, operational objectives, performance indicators, and management strategy evaluation;
2. Adopt a 100% observer coverage requirement for purse seine vessels where it is not already required, and require the use of the best-available observer safety equipment, communications and procedures;
3. Increase compliance with mandatory minimum 5% longline observer coverage rates by identifying and sanctioning non-compliance, and adopt and implement a 100% observer coverage requirement – human and/or electronic – within five years for longline fisheries;
4. Adopt and implement a 100% observer coverage requirement for at-sea transshipment activities, as well as other measures that ensure transshipment activity is transparent and well-managed, and that all required data is fully collected and sent to the appropriate bodies in a timely manner;
5. Develop and implement science-based recommendations for the effective management of FADs, and integrate FAD-based information into stock assessments to reduce uncertainties;
6. Adopt effective measures for the use of non-entangling FAD designs as a precautionary measure to minimize the entanglement of sharks and other non-target species, and support research on biodegradable materials and transition to their use to mitigate marine debris;
7. More effectively implement, and ensure compliance with, existing RFMO bycatch requirements and take additional mitigation action, such as improving monitoring at sea, collecting and sharing operational-level, species-specific data, and adopting stronger compliance measures, including consequences for non-compliance for all gear types.

The organizations believe these measures are needed to positively impact the long-term sustainability of tuna stocks and the overall health of the marine ecosystem.

The letter's 118 signatories are:

Afritex Ventures	Lovering Foods
Ahold Delhaize	Mareblu
Albertsons Companies	Marks and Spencer
Albion Farms and Fisheries	Mars Petcare
ALDI North	MDPI
ALDI South Group	Mercadona
American Albacore Tuna Fisherman's Association	Metro
American Bird Conservancy	MiCal Seafoods

American Tuna
 Anabac
 Anova Food
 AP2HI
 ASDA
 Auchan Retail
 Beaver Street Fisheries
 BirdLife
 Bolton Alimentari
 Bumble Bee Seafoods
 Calvo
 Carrefour
 Casino Group
 Caterer's Choice
 Chef's Trading
 Chicken of the Sea
 ClientEarth
 Clover Leaf Seafoods
 Conservas Emperatriz
 Coop Italia
 Coop Trading
 Coral Sea Fishing
 Culinary Collaborations
 D&E Import
 Davigel
 Ecology Action Centre
 Edeka
 Elix France
 Euclid Fish Company
 FishTales
 FishWise
 Food JSC Vietnam
 Fortune Fish
 Frinsa
 General Tuna Corporation
 Giant Eagle
 Global Sea Foods
 Gomes de Costa
 Greenpeace
 Hawesta
 Hilo Fish Company
 Horizon Fisheries
 Hy-Vee
 IncredibleFish
 IPNLF
 Ipswich Shellfish Group
 International Seafood Sustainability Foundation
 Jana Worldwide
 Jealsa
 J.J. McDonnell & Co., Inc.
 John West
 Large Pelagic SMME Association
 Migros
 Monterey Bay Aquarium
 Morrisons
 New England Seafood
 NORPAC Fisheries Export
 North Atlantic Seafood
 Nostromo
 Ocean Brands
 Ocean Canning Corporation
 Opagac
 Orca Bay Seafoods
 Orthongel
 Petit Navire
 Pick n Pay
 Princes
 Salica
 Santa Monica Seafood
 Seacore Seafood Inc.
 Sea Delight
 Seafarers Inc.
 Seafood Imports
 Sealect
 Sea Pact
 Seattle Fish Company
 Shark Advocates International
 Societé d'Exploitation des Ressources Thonières
 Sodexo
 South African Tuna Association
 Spar Austria
 Spar South Africa
 Starkist
 Stavis Seafoods, Inc.
 Subway
 Sustainable Fish Cities
 Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
 Tesco
 TFT
 Thai Union
 Thai Union International
 The Nature Conservancy
 The Ocean Foundation
 The Pew Charitable Trusts
 Thunnus Overseas Group
 Tonnino
 Tri Marine
 Tuna Solutions
 Waren-Verein
 Whole Foods
 Woolworths
 WWF-US
 World Wise Foods

About the NGO Tuna Forum

The NGO Tuna Forum brings together organizations that work comprehensively on tuna sustainability issues globally. The Forum works to elevate inter-NGO engagement and increase market partner engagement where possible on issues and opportunities that fall within one or more of the following core focus areas: RFMO management & advocacy; market-based mechanisms for improving sustainability; and on-water research, activities and improvements.

The NGO Tuna Forum seeks to build on, enhance and elevate the work already being done through coordination and collaboration, and to generate greater impact through the power of consistency among NGOs, that in turn improves engagement from the value chain.