



Position of the recreational fishing, sport fishing and angling organizations urge changes in the allocation of Bluefin Tuna quotas in member countries

The recreational fishing, sport fishing and angling sector, with a long tradition, is the largest of all the sectors involved in the Bluefin Tuna fishery.

In recent years, ICCAT has established conservation measures and a recovery plan for this species that are bearing fruit. Indeed, both the commercial and recreational sectors are witnessing clear improvements in the number of individuals and an increase in their sizes.

Recreational fishing is seriously involved in recovering the species, and working hard side by side with scientific institutions. Conventional tagging, electronic tagging and sampling of individuals which were determined by scientists from the research centres that collaborate with ICCAT (both in the Mediterranean and Atlantic) have been carried out without receiving or requesting any financial compensation.

Some of the institutions are working with ICCAT, Instituto Español de Oceanografía, AZTI Tecnalia, IFREMER or WWF among others.

All anglers want in return for this voluntary effort is to be treated equally as participants in the tuna fishery.

Many of our members have experienced firsthand the increased controls on the tuna fishery, which we welcome and find very positive.

Our organizations find that they are treated differently by the authorities in different Member States, Tuna allocation to recreational sector often is not enough to cover the basic needs of the sector. Allocation percentages ranging from 0% to 1.5 % have been established. Meanwhile, aware of positive socioeconomic effect it has on the economy, the U.S. allocates 20 % of the tuna quota to recreational fishing (just as an example).

Recreational fishing has quite different objectives than commercial fishing. One of them is the attraction of fighting the strongest fish of the Mediterranean Sea.

For improved and more equitable management of tuna fisheries our organizations request the EU to adopt the following recommendations:

Tuna catch authorization :



Any recreational fishing boats targeting tuna should obtain a specific authorization from the authorities of its country that allows for detailed data monitoring of the fleet.

Fishing season:

Catch and release should be allowed all year round . Landings should be allowed within the period given by ICCAT (currently from June 15 to October 14). During the ICCAT opening season the take of tuna should only be allowed for tuna equal to or bigger than 115 centimetres or 30 kilos. The fishery closure should be established whenever the quota set for the recreational fishing sector is used up. Tuna returned to the sea alive should not be counted against the quota allocated to the recreational sector.

Allowable catch for boat :

Each vessel should be allowed to land a maximum of two legal-sized catches per year. This catches should be properly communicated through a catch statement, a seal or the control system established by the competent authorities.

Specific quota allocated to the recreational fishery sector:

The national recreational sectors access to tuna quota is an issue clearly in need of improvement. Nationally, the recreational sector should be secured a part of the quota, which reflects the sector needs and socio-economic importance.

The recreational quota should be secured and clearly separated from the quotas allocated to other sectors. This to stop the other sectors using the recreational quota, and/or that these sectors' over-use its own quota and then take from the recreational quota as happened again this year in Italy.

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Often the recreational fishing sector is considered inferior to other interests that exploit fish, or is even seen as a threat to them. We consider this a serious mistake in light of the enormous economic contribution and the many jobs created and sustained by the recreational sector.

Socio-economic studies can help to change this mistreatment of a sector that offers more benefits and income from fish caught than any other sector. Decision makers need this information to be able to make informed decisions to achieve sustainable fisheries management and for best use of the resources. Taking this into account we urge the Commission to fund a socio-economic study of the recreational fishing sector for tuna to provide the managers and decision makers with more and better information.

We also urge ICCAT and the EU to only allow Catch & Release in sport fishing competitions as requested by the RAC MED¹.

¹ The RAC MED has already requested the obligation of Catch and Release during sports competitions in the opinion ref. n.245/AV of 24th October 2011 (http://www.racmed.eu/images/stories/avis/TR/254_Parere_TR_2011_ENG.pdf)



Big Game Italia

CEPRR (Confederación Española Pesca Recreativa Responsable)

EFSA (European Federation of Sea Anglers)

EAA (European Anglers Alliance)

FIPS-M (Fédération Internationale de Pêche en Mer)

FIPSAS (Federazione Italiana Pesca Sportiva e Attività Subacquee)

IFSUA (International Forum for Sustainable Underwater Activities)

