

# Time 'running out' to save tuna stocks

August 26 2013

---



A sushi chef slices up tuna at a restaurant in Tokyo on July 16. Time is running out to save some species of tuna from overfishing, environmental groups warned Monday, calling for Japan to take the lead in reducing the global catch.

Time is running out to save some species of tuna from overfishing, environmental groups warned Monday, calling for Japan to take the lead in reducing the global catch.

Industrial-scale fishing that takes large amounts of young [tuna](#) from the ocean before they are old enough to breed is destroying the population of

a fish highly-prized in Japan's sushi restaurants, campaigners said.

"Time is running out to rescue Pacific bigeye tuna stock and (we urge) fishing nations to jointly reduce catches before it's too late," Greenpeace said in a statement released at a press conference in Tokyo with the World Wide Fund for Nature and environmental research group the Pew Charitable Trusts.

The call came as Japan readies to host a four-day meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) from Tuesday to discuss measures aimed at curbing the catch of the giant fish.

Campaigners want the 25-member body, which includes Japan, China, the European Union and United States, to agree to reduce the take of Pacific bigeye tuna, because they say it is "experiencing overfishing and in need of urgent management action".

In particular, they are calling for strict rules on the use of so-called fish-aggregation devices (FADs), which are made of buoys tethered to the [ocean floor](#).

They can attract huge numbers of fish, allowing boats to haul them in quickly, rather than spending time and fuel searching for schools of tuna.

Critics say fishing with FADs means [juvenile fish](#) are snared, along with a bycatch that includes threatened species of shark, ray and [sea turtles](#).

According to the groups, the catch of [bigeye tuna](#) actually rose by two percent to 161,679 tonnes in 2012, instead of falling by 30 percent, as the WCPFC had previously agreed.

"Current management is failing," they said in a statement.

The groups called on Japan—the world's biggest consumer of tuna—to take the lead in adopting effective measures at the upcoming meeting.

"We hope Japan will take the initiative so that future resources of bigeye and yellowfin tuna can be preserved," said WWF researcher Aiko Yamauchi.

The WCPFC was formed in 2004 based on a UN treaty to conserve and manage tuna and other highly migratory fish stocks across the western and central areas of the Pacific.

© 2013 AFP

Citation: Time 'running out' to save tuna stocks (2013, August 26) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-08-tuna-stocks.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.