

Mediterranean bluefin tuna will recover if conservation ambition remains high

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A captive Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), Malta, Mediterranean. Credit: Wild Wonders of Europe /Zankl / WWF

As the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) opens its 19th special meeting in Genoa, Italy on Monday 10 November, WWF calls on delegates to stay cautious regarding the management of Mediterranean bluefin tuna.

Despite recent indications that the stock is recovering, substantial shortcomings still undermine traceability of the fishery, allowing for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) [bluefin tuna](#) to reach global markets.

"Extraordinary efforts have been made in recent years by ICCAT and stakeholders which have led to the beginning of the recovery of Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna. But we need to stay vigilant – without clear and robust traceability, years of efforts to recover the most iconic species of the world's oceans risk being undermined," said Dr Sergi Tudela, Head of Fisheries at WWF Mediterranean.

A recent WWF study concludes that ICCAT's bluefin tuna catch document scheme (BCD), which should support the full traceability of the fishery, is plagued with shortcomings that compromise its ability to keep illegal bluefin products off the market. The study also demonstrates that the current scheme does not meet the minimum standards required under the European Union's IUU Regulation. WWF calls for the BCD's urgent reform.

"The positive measures implemented by ICCAT in recent years and the first indications of East Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna stock recovery have goaded some stakeholders to request the relaxation of management measures, and a biased reading of scientific reports has even led to calls for dramatic increases in fishing possibilities. But lack of caution in the setting of the rules could severely disrupt the current recovery trend," said Tudela.

WWF calls on all ICCAT Contracting Parties and the bluefin tuna industry to maintain a precautionary attitude to the management of bluefin [tuna](#) this year.

Provided by WWF

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