

# Stock recovery plan for Pacific Bluefin tuna urgently needed

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Pacific bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*). Credit: naturepl.com / Visuals Unlimited / WWF

Members of the Northern Committee (NC) of the Western and Central Pacific Fishery Commission (WCPFC) meeting on Monday next week urgently need to commit to a rigorous recovery plan to address the collapse of Pacific Bluefin tuna stocks. They should also agree on catch limits for tuna weighing less than 30kg, warns WWF.

Pacific Bluefin tuna is one of the most valuable fisheries in the Northern Pacific Ocean, supporting a billion dollar industry that sustains the livelihoods of tens of thousands of people and contributes to [economic growth](#) and [social development](#) in the region.

"We are deeply concerned about the fact that Pacific Bluefin tuna breeding stock have declined from their unfished levels by more than 96 percent," said Dr Aiko Yamauchi, WWF-Japan Head of Fishery and Seafood Project. "Around 90% of the fishing take is now young fish that have not yet reproduced. It is clear that Pacific Bluefin tuna management in the Pacific is totally inadequate to preserve the tuna stock."

In September last year, the nine member countries who participated in the Northern Committee (NC) of the WCPFC took some first steps to protect Pacific Bluefin, in accepting scientific advice to halve the fishing catch of juvenile tuna, a prized but beleaguered [fish](#). The NC further agreed that fishing nations must establish a catch documentation system.

WWF strongly supports catch reduction for juvenile tuna under 30kg but the real urgency is for the WCPFC and its sister body IATTC to adopt a rigorous, long-term Pacific-wide recovery plan for Pacific Bluefin Tuna with robust harvest control rules and effective mechanisms to cut fishing effort when limits and reference points are being approached.

Japan, the United States and South Korea are the major countries fishing Pacific Bluefin, while the main, dominating consumption market is Japan.

"In case NC fails to agree on robust long-term recovery plan, which should include at least a 20% recovery target for the spawning stock biomass (SSB) size before fishing can take place, fishing Pacific Bluefin [tuna](#) should be suspended until precautionary, science-based measures are put in place, " said Yamauchi.

Provided by WWF

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