



GTA & WWF Joint Position on Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna

CUT THE CATCH: REBUILD THE FUTURE FOR YELLOWFIN.

WWF and GTA stance is unequivocal:

- **Cut the catch** - Reduce the catch of yellowfin by 30%
- **Restore the stock** - Agree on a recovery plan for yellowfin

We appeal to the 30 Members of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) to intensify efforts to stop the overfishing of yellowfin tuna—an iconic species crucial to Indian Ocean ecosystems, the social fabric of its regions, and a key commodity in Europe's supply chains.

This key species has been classified as overfished for nine consecutive years—a near-decade of oversight. Although the IOTC has made attempts to address this issue, the Commission has ultimately been unsuccessful in ending overfishing. We are increasingly concerned about yellowfin's status and the IOTC's inaction.

Year after year, the Commission has received scientific advice urging catch reductions. We recognize that the overall catch of yellowfin slightly decreased in 2022 to 410,332 tonnes, down from 2021's 416,235 tonnes and the 2017–2021 average of 435,225 tonnes. Yet, this modest reduction is insufficient according to the IOTC's own Scientific Committee and fails to halt overfishing.

The Commission is aware that WWF and GTA have advocated for a 30% reduction in recent years, based on the 2021 stock assessment's advice. The model projected that, based on 2020 levels, reductions between 20% and 30% would rebuild the stock with a greater than 50% probability by 2030. We endorse the upper limit of that recommendation. However, we acknowledge that if the next stock assessment (2024) indicates a more severe decline than in 2021, larger cuts may be necessary.

We commend the IOTC Members who have voluntarily reduced their catches. Nevertheless, we are troubled that these efforts are negated when other Members increase their catch, sometimes significantly.

While it is not our position to specify which fleets or gear types should undergo reductions, we encourage a full consideration of the array of management options available. We do insist that those who have most contributed to overfishing should proportionately partake in the remedy.

Hundreds of millions of dollars of yellowfin tuna are processed through GTA and WWF corporate partners annually. Notwithstanding our serious concerns around the biological status of this stock, the IOTC risks destabilizing this already fragile market should it fail to enforce the necessary reductions. We implore you to find a fair solution promptly—one that aligns with your obligations under international law and heeds the provided scientific counsel.

Our position therefore remains that this year the IOTC must:

- 1. Reduce yellowfin catch by 30%, and**
- 2. Adopt a suitable rebuilding plan, coupled with the establishment of a management procedure to safeguard this stock's future.**

Should the Commission fail to achieve that, it must at the very least and without delay adopt a roadmap detailing the steps to reach such an agreement by May 2025.

Finally, following the successful implementation of electronic monitoring measures last year, WWF and GTA strongly encourage the IOTC to increase the minimum level of scientific observation (human or electronic) on vessels to at least 30% initially, targeting 100% coverage within the next five years.

This measure is vital to secure reliable data and enhance fisheries monitoring across the Indian Ocean, thus preserving these resources for future generations.

Detailed information on the WWF and GTA position can be found at;

- [WWF Position Paper](#)
- [Global Tuna Alliance Position Paper](#)
- [Market Partner Statements](#)



The Global Tuna Alliance (GTA)

The Global Tuna Alliance was set up in 2019 as an independent, pre-competitive collaboration comprised of global retailers and seafood supply chain companies working to ensure that tuna ultimately meets the highest standards of environmental performance and social responsibility. Collectively, \$2.3bn worth of tuna passed through its Partners in 2021-22, representing almost a third of all tuna caught globally. The GTA is recognised as one of the largest networks of seafood businesses worldwide.

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WWF

WWF is the world's most recognised nature conservation organisation, with over 30 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the Earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

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