

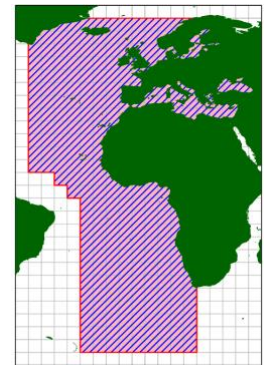
EAST ATLANTIC & MEDITERRANEAN BLUEFIN TUNA



East Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea

ADVICE FOR 2024

In 2023 ICCAT concluded that fishery indicators did not provide a reason to alter current management advice of 40,570 t. A new management procedure has been selected, which uses aggregated abundance indices for the East and the West areas this will likely be used to set the TAC from 2025.



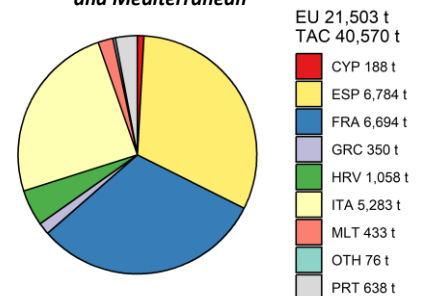
KEY POINTS

ICCAT advice basis	Management Plan	
Management Plan	ICCAT Management Strategy Evaluation (Rec. 22-08) Catch = 40,570 t	
ICCAT MSY	MSY lower	Not available
	MSY	Not available
	MSY upper	Not available
Landing Obligation	From 2015	No derogations or exemptions

MANAGEMENT IN 2023

- The TAC covers the entire North Atlantic Ocean east of 45°W and the also the Mediterranean Sea.
- Ireland has no target commercial fisheries but operates a recreational tag and release fishery.
- Bycatches in any fishery are subject to an unallocated bycatch quota for EU vessels (75.65 t in 2023). This restrictive bycatch allowance may make blue fin a potential choke species in other pelagic fisheries especially as the stock rebuilds.
- In 2023, 22 charter angling vessels have been authorised to participate in the Irish catch, tag and release programme. Any accidental mortalities must be deducted from available bycatch quotas.

2023 Quota Allocations
Atlantic Ocean, east of 45° W,
and Mediterranean



KEY STOCK CONSIDERATIONS

- In December 2022, the ICCAT Commission adopted a Management Procedure (MP) for both the western Atlantic and eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean management areas (Rec. 22-09). The adoption of the MP represents a foundational change in how bluefin tuna (BFT) will be managed. This approach links eastern and western area Total Allowable Catch (TACs) under one management framework, providing joint management advice. The MP frees the assessment process from having to provide annual TAC advice and allows the stock assessment process to return to providing determination of relative stock status. According to the adopted MP, stock assessments will continue to be conducted but on a more reduced frequency. The final remaining task for full adoption of the MP is to define the exceptional circumstances (EC) protocols.
- The next assessment will be held in 2026 or 2027. Until such time as a new assessment occurs, ICCAT retains the stock status determination from the most recent assessments (West 2021) and East Atlantic and Mediterranean (2022).

- The Marine Institute commenced a research programme on bluefin tuna in 2016 in partnership with Stanford University USA, University of Acadia Canada, Trinity College Dublin and ICCAT. A total of 130 Bluefin Tuna were tagged with pop off satellite tags (119) and accelerometer tags (11) from the Donegal and south coast during years 2016-2023. Results suggest a very high survival rate of tagged fish. Tags recovered to date show that fish tend to migrate to the mid-Atlantic for overwintering with some passing through the Bay of Biscay. Several fish have been observed in the Mediterranean at spawning time before subsequently returning to Irish waters a year later. The Marine Institute and partners plan to continue the research programme in 2024.
- Since 2019 Inland Fisheries Ireland, the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority and the Marine Institute have been running the Irish catch and release programme for bluefin tuna caught on charter angling vessels in Irish waters. To date approximately 1,500 bluefin tuna have been tagged using conventional floy tags.