**Bigeye tuna**

Atlantic Ocean

**Fishery**

ICCAT  South Africa  Longlines

**IDENTIFICATION**

**SCIENTIFIC NAME**

*Thunnus obesus*

**SPECIES NAMES(S)**

Bigeye tuna

**COMMON NAMES**

Bigeye tuna

**STOCK IDENTIFICATION**

At this point in time it is assumed there is a single Atlantic-wide population of bigeye tuna. This is based on a lack of identified genetic heterogeneity, time/area distribution of fish and movement patterns of tagged fish (ICCAT 2012).

**RELATED LINKS:**

- International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

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**ASSESSMENT**

**Strengths**

There is a total allowable catch (TAC) in place, a limit on the number of longline vessels and a time/area closure for surface gears. The TAC was lowered to 85,000 (ICCB 2009) and 65,000 (ICCB 2015) and total catches have been below TAC levels since 2005. There is a time/area closure in place for the purse seine fishery to protect juvenile bigeye tuna. There is a multi-year conservation and management program in place through ICCAT for bigeye.

**Weaknesses**

Bigeye tuna in the Atlantic are overfished and undergoing overfishing. Due to unreported and mis-identified bigeye tuna, there was a large degree of uncertainty surrounding the assessment results. There is no harvest control rule in place and no limit reference point. There is the need to monitor individual and fleet-wide ratios not included in the total allowable catch (TAC) allocation to ensure that catches do not exceed TAC levels. Mandated observer coverage (5%) is low and there are incidental interactions in both the longline and purse seine fisheries with protected, endangered and threatened species and sharks.

**SCORES**

**Management Quality:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Strategy</th>
<th>Managers Compliance</th>
<th>Fishers Compliance</th>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 6</td>
<td>≥ 8</td>
<td>10</td>
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**Stock Health:**

Current Health  6.7  7.2

**FIPS**

No related FIPs

**MSC**

No related MSC fisheries

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**CATCHERS & REGULATORS**

1. Comply with all of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)’s conservation and management measures (CMAs), including measures aimed at both target and incidental market and non-market species, and all other obligations. Through your delegation to ICCAT, encourage the compliance committee to make information on non-compliance by individual members and cooperating non-members publicly available in order to increase the incentive for compliance by all ICCAT members and cooperating non-members.

2. Promote the adoption by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and member countries of precautionary and ecosystem-based management measures, including biological reference points, harvest control rules, national management measures and monitoring efforts adequate to ensure harvest strategy objectives are being met. Adopt domestic laws and regulations to implement ICCAT measures and provide monitoring and surveillance adequate for compliance. Encourage ICCAT and parties to comply with current requested onboard observer coverage rates.

3. Encourage the ICCAT to monitor catches to ensure they do not go over the total allowable catch limit (TAC) and re-structure the TAC in a way that does not allow for permissible overages by countries not included in the TAC allocation. Encourage ICCAT to continue monitoring bigeye weight as an indicator of the effects of surface gear closures. Improve data collection and reporting to ensure complete data sets (e.g., catches, effort, size), which are needed for robust stock assessments. Encourage ICCAT to expand the current data collection system to investigate whether significant catches have been under-reported. Conduct studies, increase monitoring and publish information to assess longline and purse seine interactions with protected, endangered and threatened (PET) species and other bycatch species. Identify and mandate best practices bycatch mitigation techniques for both gear types. Comply with ICCAT management measures prohibiting the retention of silky, hammerhead, oceanic whitetip and thresher sharks and promote the use of non-entangling fish aggregating devices (FADs).

**RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN**

1. Ask the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and individual member countries to adopt precautionary and
ecosystem-based management measures including formal reference points, harvest control rules and increased observer coverage.

2. Require that your suppliers source only from fisheries that comply with all ICCAT’s Conservation and Management Measures, and request that ICCAT make information on compliance by members and cooperating non-members publicly available. An example of how this might be achieved is a control document that ensures recording and reporting interactions, and prohibition on retaining thresher, silky, hammerhead and oceanic whitetip sharks.

3. Source from vessels registered on the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) Proactive Vessel Register (PVR) and in full compliance with all measures relevant to their gear type as demonstrated by annual independent audit reports that are made publicly available.

Fishery Profile
https://www.fishsource.org/fishery_page/2139