



INTERNATIONAL SEAFOOD
SUSTAINABILITY FOUNDATION

SUMMARY OF POSITIONS

Greenpeace Demand: *40% of the world's oceans made marine reserves*

Our Position: *ISSF supports marine protected areas.*

We agree with the concept that sometimes it is necessary to close off an area of ocean to fishing in order to protect the environment¹. However, ISSF does not endorse an arbitrary percentage of the oceans being closed for tuna, highly migratory species that are distributed globally.

First, closures must have clear objectives and must be supported by scientific reasoning. Closed areas can help preserve biodiversity, avoid overfishing and prevent conflicts among different users but, they cannot achieve all of these equally. Secondly, it must also be considered that marine protected areas or closures, even those based on scientific advice, will have a limited impact on tuna stocks. Tuna are highly migratory and do not remain in the same area for long. That means that fishing vessels will simply continue to catch fish outside of the closed area. This has been proven in the western and central Pacific Ocean where closures of certain areas did not lead to a reduction in catch, merely a shift in *where* tuna was caught². Sometimes, stopping all fishing during a period of time can have a more substantive impact on conservation, and is more easily enforced, than a permanent reserve – especially when there is no scientific support for such a reserve.

Greenpeace Demand: *Demand more pole and line caught tuna*

Our Position: *ISSF supports pole and line fishing for tuna*

Currently, about 10% of the world's tuna fishing is done utilizing the pole and line method³. This method is generally utilized by artisanal fisheries in smaller,

¹ ISSF. "STATEMENT OF CONCERN: Marine Protected Areas – International Seafood Sustainability Foundation." International Seafood Sustainability Foundation. 28 Apr. 2009. Web. 11 Mar. 2011. <<http://iss-foundation.org/2009/04/28/statement-of-concern-marine-protected-areas/>>.

² WCPFC. Review of the Implementation and Effectiveness of CMM 2008-01. Rep. no. WCPFC7 -2010/15.rev 1. Honolulu: WCPFC, 2010. Print.

³ ISSF. Status of the World Fisheries for Tuna. Rep. Washington, D.C.: ISSF, 2010. International Seafood Sustainability Foundation. Web. 11 Mar. 2011. <<http://iss-foundation.org/science/reports/status-of-the-world-fisheries-for-tuna/2010-report/>>

developing coastal nations. The catch is split among several important markets – fresh/ frozen, local consumption and processed – making roughly half of what is caught currently available for canned tuna processing. Based upon a rough calculation, this means that only about 3% of the world's canned tuna market is supported by this form of fishing

Pole and line fishing can be a sustainable source for tuna. One of the most attractive features of these fisheries is that they do not land many non-tuna species. However, they do require large amounts of "baitfish" (different species of small pelagic fishes) that are used to attract the tuna schools. Thus, it is misleading to think that pole-and-line fishing is free of bycatch concerns. The amount of baitfish populations available to pole and line fishing is limited and bait fisheries need to be managed with the same diligence as tuna stocks. Based on the scientific evidence available, it would not be possible to significantly increase pole and line fishing without severely impacting the health of the various bait fisheries⁴.

These fisheries can also have a significant level of bycatch of other tuna species, which may or may not be as healthy as the targeted stock. As an example, about 10% of the catch in the Maldives, a pole and line fishery that targets skipjack, is comprised of yellowfin and bigeye, most of it small⁵.

It should also be kept in mind that if the demand for pole and line caught tuna increases, more vessels would be needed to catch the fish (assuming that there will be sufficient baitfish resources available). With near universal consensus that there is already excess capacity in tuna fisheries⁶ – meaning more vessels than the resource can support – any growth in pole and line fleets must be met with a reduction in the capacity of other fishing gear types (i.e., purse seining and long line). Without that, any growth in pole and line fishing could negatively impact the health of global tuna stocks.

Finally, the pole and line method is extremely labor intensive and is far less efficient than purse seining. Accordingly, an increase in pole and line fishing could have an extremely negative carbon footprint and would require substantially greater use of fossil fuels.

The bottom line is that tuna fishing will not be sustainable based upon a shift to one method. Sustainable tuna fishing will be comprised of several methods conducted responsibly.

⁴ Gillett, Robert. Replacing Purse Seining with Pole-and Line Fishing in the Western Pacific. Rep. ISSF, 2010. Web. 11 Mar. 2011. <<http://iss-foundation.org/science/reports/bait-fish/>>

⁵ Moody International LTD. MSC Assessment Report for Pole and Line Skipjack Fishery in the Maldives. Rep. no. Ref: 82105/v. Derby: Moody International, 2010. MSC Assessment Report for Pole and Line Skipjack Fishery in the Maldives. MSC, 17 Sept. 2010. Web. 11 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/in-assessment/Indian-ocean/Maldives-pole-and-line-skipjack-tuna/?searchterm=maldives>>

⁶ ISSF. Bellagio Framework for Sustainable Tuna Fisheries. Rep. Washington, D.C.: ISSF, 2010. Bellagio Framework for Sustainable Tuna Fisheries. ISSF. Web. 11 Mar. 2011. <<http://iss-foundation.org/science/reports/bellagio-report/>>

Greenpeace Demand: *End use of fish aggregating devices (FADs)*

Our Position: *ISSF is working to reduce the environmental impact of purse seine fishing for tuna with FADs*

Tunas are attracted to floating objects and humans have taken advantage of this for centuries. Today, many modern vessels use sophisticated FADs that they 'plant' at sea and which transmit to the fishing vessel information about the amount of fish available under the FAD along with the FAD's position. This makes this fishing method very efficient, with a relatively small amount of fuel and other resources used to catch the tuna. But with efficiency comes a trade off – FADs also attract small tuna that is not being targeted, as well as other fish species and some species of sharks. Not all bycatch is killed; some of it is released alive at sea⁷.

There is a higher rate of bycatch in purse seine FAD fisheries than there is in purse seine fisheries that do not use the floating objects. Statistics collected by the regional fishery management organizations that manage the tuna fisheries show that FAD fishing results in a bycatch level of about 5% compared to about 1% when FADs are not being utilized. This bycatch level is well below many other fisheries and this fish is generally retained by the fishing vessels and sold for alternative uses (fish meal, pet food, etc.)

In addition, FAD fishing results in a higher catch of small tunas, including some sensitive species like Bigeye, which are not being targeted by the vessels. This can make up 15 to 20% of the total tuna catch. While this fish is used for tuna processing, it has a lower value and the ideal situation would be to reduce the amount of small fish being caught.

We believe that the level of bycatch can be reduced substantially through utilization of best practices, modifications in fishing gear / nets and new technology. This is the approach being supported by ISSF through a three-year research program including both skipper training and at-sea research. It is contrary to the position taken by Greenpeace that FAD fishing should be eliminated. Eliminating the use of FADs could lead to new, unknown practices that may have more serious implications for the marine environment. So instead of calling for a ban, we're working to fix what's wrong with FAD fishing while keeping what works.

ISSF is facilitating a globally coordinated at-sea research project to identify best practices, new techniques and enhanced technologies that will allow fishers to minimize the amount of non-targeted fish and other marine life captured as a result of fishing for tuna. This research is being shared with vessel crewmembers through workshops hosted in communities around the world fostering a direct dialogue that can have an immediate impact on the practices of fishers who supply the world's processors with tuna.

⁷ ISSF. Status of the World Fisheries for Tuna. Rep. Washington, D.C.: ISSF, 2010. International Seafood Sustainability Foundation. Web. 11 Mar. 2011. <<http://iss-foundation.org/science/reports/status-of-the-world-fisheries-for-tuna/2010-report/>>

ABOUT ISSF

The International Seafood Sustainability Foundation is a global coalition of scientists, the tuna industry and WWF, the world's leading conservation organization, promoting science-based initiatives for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of tuna stocks, reducing bycatch and promoting ecosystem health.