



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

UN  
environment  
programme



# COMMON OCEANS PROGRAM



PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND BIODIVERSITY  
IN THE OCEAN AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION

## Tuna fisheries

**Strong demand for tuna brings economic benefits**, food and jobs to millions of people, but also puts a lot of pressure on tuna stocks. The **Common Oceans Tuna project** aims to ensure that tunas are fished more sustainably by mobilizing a global partnership in support of responsible tuna fisheries management and the conservation of biodiversity in the ocean areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ).



© FAO / Giulio Napolitano

### WHAT WE DO

#### Improve tuna fisheries management

Ensure all major tuna stocks are fished at sustainable levels using harvest strategies. Promote ecosystem approach to fisheries management in regional fisheries management organisations.

Promote sustainable fishing practices.

#### Tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

Training in monitoring, control and surveillance for more efficient enforcement of regulations.

Improve compliance by promoting national implementation of regulations and adoption of innovative systems for monitoring.

#### Reduce impact on the environment

Decrease bycatch with better monitoring and promoting best practices in bycatch mitigation and alternative gear.

Lower environmental impacts by advocating for ocean-friendly fishing devices.



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

Every year, millions of tonnes of tuna are landed at ports worldwide, providing food and supporting the livelihoods of millions of people. However, strong demand, combined with overcapacity of fishing fleets, creates growing pressure on tuna, leading to a decrease of tuna stocks fished at sustainable levels.

The Tuna project aims to reverse this trend by promoting more responsible and sustainable tuna fishing. It works to ensure that all major tuna stocks are fished at sustainable levels, that compliance with management measures is improved and to preserve biodiversity by reducing negative impacts caused by tuna fisheries on marine ecosystems.

From 2014–2019, it helped reduce the number of major tuna stocks experiencing overfishing in collaboration with the world’s five tuna regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and a large number of partners – including intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the private sector.

In the coming years, the Tuna project will step up efforts to support further reductions in catches from stocks that are subject to overfishing, including tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, while enhancing its contribution to biodiversity conservation.



© FAO / Giulio Napolitano



The Common Oceans Program is a global partnership funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), promoting sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) with a particular focus on tuna and deep-sea fisheries, the Sargasso Sea and cross-sectoral cooperation. Led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Program brings together the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), regional fisheries management organizations, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia.

**COMMON OCEANS | Tuna project**

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
[common-oceans@fao.org](mailto:common-oceans@fao.org)



IN COLLABORATION WITH: Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), BirdLife International (BLI), Conservation International (CI), INFOPESCA, International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF/ISSA), International MCS Network (IMCSN), International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF), International Whaling Commission (IWC), Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), PEW Charitable Trusts, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), The Ocean Foundation (TOF), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).



**FACTS & FIGURES**

**5.3**  
million tonnes of tuna catches landed in 2019

**724 000**  
tonnes of catches from stocks that are subject to overfishing

**6**  
out of 23 major commercial tuna stocks experience overfishing

**96**  
countries in five tuna RFMOs involved in the conservation and management of tuna species

Source: Status of the World Fisheries for Tuna (International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), 2021)

© FAO 2023  
 CC/4043EN/1/02.23



[FAO.ORG/IN-ACTION/COMMONOCEANS](https://www.fao.org/in-action/commonoceans) | #COMMONOCEANS



Some rights reserved. This work is available under a CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence

© FAO / Giulio Napolitano