



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE



**For Immediate Release
Office of the Director
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Statement from the Director

Subject: European Community Bluefin Tuna plan is inadequate to recover species

The European Community has not taken strong enough steps this week to insure the future of the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna stock—despite EC assertions to the contrary.

On Monday, the EC finally agreed to implement the 2007 catch levels for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna. The catch levels will not stop the sharp decline of bluefin tuna. A panel of international scientists has been clear about this. For the EC to be championing this measure as a “recovery plan” is ludicrous.

The United States has been critical of the plan since it was first proposed by the EC at the 2006 ICCAT annual meeting. For 2007, the total quota for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna is 29,500 metric tons—nearly twice the level necessary, according to ICCAT’s scientific committee, to stop the dramatic decline in the stock. Moreover, the plan doesn’t close key areas to fishing during spawning season.

The failure of the EC and others fishing on the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna stock to take meaningful and timely conservation action may soon spell disaster for this fish.

The United States has shown its firm commitment to restoring bluefin tuna stocks with our recovery plan, which is consistent with scientific advice. However, the future of one of the world’s most magnificent fish depends on cooperation across the Atlantic, and much stronger measures by Europe and other nations that fish in the Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic Ocean stock.

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