

Fisheries Information Notice 8-2015

Prohibitions and Restrictions on Fishing for Bluefin Tuna



The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority has issued Fisheries Information Notice No. 8 of 2015 entitled: **Prohibitions and Restrictions on Fishing for Bluefin Tuna**, this FIN is issued to clarify earlier advice in FIN 7-2015, based on advice of interpretation of ICAAT/EU rules.

Legislation

Reference:

- EU 302/09 Multi Annual Plan Bluefin Tuna (BFT) in the Eastern Atlantic (EA) and Mediterranean (MED)
- EU 640/2010 Catch documentation BFT
- EU 1380/2013 CFP
- EU 544/14 Amending 302/2009
- EU 98/2015 Implementing (Landing Obligation) TUNA fisheries.
- SI 135/2013 Sea Fisheries (CFP)(Bluefin Tuna) Regulation 2015
- Specific Authorisations Albacore Tuna.

Introduction

This FIN presents a summarise the current regulations in relation to catches of Bluefin Tuna (BFT), as they occur as a by-catch of the Albacore fishery or in recreational and sports fisheries.

Summary

Can I target BFT?

No, it is prohibited to target BFT during any fishing trip, including commercial, recreational and sports fisheries.

What if I catch BFT when fishing in some other commercial fishery?

If you catch BFT accidentally and it is still alive then you should return the fish to the sea alive. If you are authorised to fish for other Tuna species such as Albacore –you may retain a by-catch of up to 5% of BFT. Dead catches of BFT under 5% by-catch must be retained and cannot be discarded, but you must discard dead BFT over 5% by-catch. All discards must be recorded. Special rules apply to these vessels to move away from areas where they catch more than 1% of BFT. If engaged in some other fishery then you must discard all dead BFT. All discards must be recorded.

All by-catches of BFT caught and landed must be set against the available EU by-catch quota of 32.97 tonnes for 2015. Should the available EU by-catch quota be reached, any fishery where a by-catch of BFT could be taken will be required to close.

It is therefore essential that vessel masters specifically avoid any by-catch of BFT in the Albacore tuna fishery or any other fishery so that a premature closure of the Albacore fishery is not required.

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By-Catch avoidance measures including moving on provisions when BFT catch onboard exceeds 1% of Albacore in any haul are therefore introduced.

Landing obligation

EU 1380-2013 Art 15(1) All catches of Pelagic TAC Species this includes Albacore and BFT caught by Community vessels, wherever they may be, shall be brought and retained onboard with effect from 1st January 2015.

EU 98-2015 directs that BFT below the minimum size shall not be targeted, retained onboard, transhipped, landed, transported, stored, sold, displayed or offered for sale. Where unwanted catches are caught alive they shall be returned to the sea.

This regulation further directs that fishing vessels shall not retain on board BFT exceeding 5 % of the total catch on board by weight or number of pieces of Tuna like species.

It is also required by this regulation that any by-catches of BFT shall be avoided and specifically that any BFT caught alive as by-catch shall be released.

Fishing season

Bluefin tuna fishing in the eastern Atlantic during the period from 16 June to 14 October 2015

Recreational and Sport Fisheries

It is prohibited to target Bluefin tuna on any fishing trip.

Any BFT caught alive in recreational or sport fisheries shall be released.

Recreational and sport fishing for BFT is provided for in EU regulation where a Member State issues an Authorisation. Any BFT landed must come from the national quota. Ireland does not have a national quota of BFT therefore cannot issue Authorisations for Recreational or Sport fishing for BFT.

Technical measures

Fishing for BFT with all kinds of driftnets is prohibited.

Minimum size for BFT

In the Eastern Atlantic the minimum size for BFT is set at 30kg or 115cm

Rules for Vessel Authorised in the Albacore Fishery.

Specific authorisations are issued for the prosecution of the Albacore fishery. The rules of these authorisations require:

Moving on provisions:

As BFT acts as a trigger species for the Albacore Fishery, exceeding the national by-catch of BFT will trigger a closure of the Albacore Fishery, for this reason active avoidance of by-catch of BFT including "moving on provisions" are to be observed in the interests of all fishers.

Where the catch of BFT exceeds 1% of Albacore tuna in the haul, the master shall move fishing grounds.

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Where the catch of BFT exceeds **1%** of Albacore tuna on return to port, the master shall not fish in the Statistical Rectangles or any contiguous Statistical Rectangle in which the vessel fished during the trip in which the by catch of BFT exceeded 1%. This requirement applies for 5 days from the start of the next trip.

Where the catch of BFT exceeds **2%** of Albacore tuna on return to port, the master shall not fish in the Statistical Rectangles or any contiguous Statistical Rectangle in which the vessel fished during the trip in which the by catch of BFT exceeded 1%. This requirement applies for 10 days from the start of the next trip.

Bluefin Tuna By-Catch

By-catches of BFT may occur in commercial fisheries, in particular the Albacore Tuna fishery. Fishing vessels not fishing actively for BFT are permitted to retain 5% BFT by weight or the number of Tuna or Tuna like species. Masters are not permitted to discard dead BFT below 5% by-catch. Any catches of BFT over 5% by-catch, including dead fish are required to be discarded. All discards are to be recorded.

Designated ports

It shall be prohibited to land or tranship from fishing vessels any quantity of Bluefin tuna fished any place other than ports designated ports. The designated port are: Clogherhead, Castletownbere, Unionhall, Baltimore, Dingle, Ros a Mhil, Howth, Killybegs, Dunmore East.

Prior notification

Vessels intending to land shall provide at least 4 hours prior to entry into port notice through ERS or by email to fmc@defenceforces.ie

Documentation & validation

Masters of fishing vessels, exporters, or their authorised representatives shall complete a catch document, if possible electronically, by providing the required information in appropriate sections and shall request its validation on each occasion when they land, transfer, cage, harvest, tranship, domestically trade or export BFT.

Tagging

Masters of fishing vessels shall affix a tag to each bluefin tuna, preferably at the time of kill, but not later than at the time of landing. Tags are available from SFPA port offices. The tag numbers shall be linked to the catch document.

ANNEX I

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DATA TO BE INCLUDED IN THE BLUEFIN TUNA CATCH DOCUMENT**1. ICCAT bluefin tuna catch document number****2. Catch information*****Vessel or trap description***

Catching vessel or trap name

Flag or trap State

ICCAT Record No of vessels or traps (if applicable)

Catch description

Date, area of catch and gear used

Number of fish, total round weight, and average weight [\(1\)](#)

Tag No. (if applicable)

ICCAT Record No of joint fishing operations (if applicable)

Government validation

Name of authority and signatory, title, signature, seal and date

3. Trade information for live fish trade***Product description***

Total live weight, number of fish, area of catch

Exporter/seller information

Point of export or departure

Export company name, address, signature and date

Farm (name and ICCAT No.) and State of destination

Description of transportation (relevant documentation to be attached)

Importer/buyer information

Point of import or destination

Import company name, address, signature and date of signature

Government validation

Name of authority and signatory, title, signature, seal and date

4. Transfer information***Towing vessel description***

ICCAT transfer declaration No.

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Vessel name, flag
ICCAT Record No. and towing cage number (if applicable)
Number of fish dead during transfer, total weight

5. Transshipment information

Carrier vessel description

Name
Flag State
ICCAT Record No.
Date
Port (name and country or position)

Product description

(F/FR; RD/GG/DR/FL/OT)
Total weight (NET)

Government validation

Name of authority and signatory, title, signature, seal and date

6. Farming information

Farming facility description

Name, Farm Member State
ICCAT FFB No. and location of farm
Participation in national sampling programme (yes or no)
Cage description
Date of caging, cage number

Fish description

Estimates of number of fish, total weight, and average weight [\(?\)](#)

ICCAT Regional Observer information

Name, ICCAT number, signature
Estimated size composition (< 8 kg, 8-30 kg, > 30 kg)

Government validation

Name of authority and signatory, title, signature, seal and date

7. Harvesting information

Harvesting description

Date of harvest

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Number of fish, total round weight, and average weight
Tag numbers (if applicable)

ICCAT Regional Observer information

Name, ICCAT number, signature

Government validation

Name of authority and signatory, title, signature, seal and date

8. Trade information

Product description

F/FR; RD/GG/DR/FL/OT (when different type of products are recorded in this section, the weight shall be recorded by each product type)

Total weight (NET)

Exporter/Seller information

Point of export or departure

Export company name, address, signature and date

State of destination

Description of transportation (relevant documentation to be attached)

Government validation

Name of authority and signatory, title, signature, seal and date

Importer/buyer information

Point of import or destination

Import company name, address, signature and date of signature

⁽¹⁾ Weight shall be reported by round weight where available. If round weight is not used, specify the type of product (e.g., GG) in the 'Total Weight' and 'Average Weight' section of the form.

⁽²⁾ Weight shall be reported by round weight where available. If round weight is not used, specify the type of product (e.g., GG) in the 'Total Weight' and 'Average Weight' section of the form.

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