



**Press Release**

**Issued by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority's Press Office**

**21<sup>st</sup> June 2024**

**SFPA Publishes New Fisheries Information Notice**

**Morphological Differences Between Atlantic Bluefin Tuna and Bigeye Tuna**

The Sea-Fisheries protection Authority (SFPA) recently published a new Fisheries Information Notice (FIN) on the Morphological differences between Atlantic Bluefin Tuna and Bigeye Tuna. \* Bigeye Tuna and Atlantic Bluefin Tuna are similar in appearance. The purpose of this FIN is to assist masters of fishing vessels to identify both species.

Bigeye Tuna and Atlantic Bluefin Tuna are potential by-catches within the Atlantic Albacore Tuna fishery. Irish registered fishing vessels have a by-catch allowance for Atlantic Bluefin Tuna, applicable where capture is accidental by-catch. \*\*

Ireland does not have a by-catch allowance for Bigeye Tuna. In accordance with EU Regulation (Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/98 and Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013), vessels 20m and over shall not target, retain on board, tranship, transport, transfer, process, or land Bigeye tuna in the Atlantic Ocean.

Masters of fishing vessels 20m and over that catch Bigeye Tuna must comply with the following requirements:

- It is prohibited to retain, tranship, or land Bigeye Tuna.
- Bigeye Tuna must be promptly returned to the sea in a way that does not harm the individual.
- All catches of Bigeye Tuna must be recorded in the fishing logbook and discarded. Discards must be recorded in the fishing logbook. Discards of Bigeye tuna must be recorded with the discard exemption code RFO in the fishing logbook (ieCatch).

Vessels under 20m shall not target Bigeye tuna. Any incidental capture of Bigeye tuna by vessels 20m and under must retain these catches under the landing obligation Article 15(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.

For further details on this FIN, please email [sfpafood&fisheriessupport@sfpa.ie](mailto:sfpafood&fisheriessupport@sfpa.ie)

Ends

## **Note to Editor**

### **Image Caption**

Pictured: Morphological differences between Atlantic Bigeye Tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) and Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) – photo source NOAA Fisheries

\*The FIN can be accessed on the SFPA website under 'Fishery Information Notices' and 'Fishing Specific Information Notices', or by following this link:

<https://www.sfpa.ie/Search/resource/2955>

\*\*Further details can be accessed on the FIN on the Prohibitions and Restrictions of Bluefin Tuna in Irish EEZ:

<https://www.sfpa.ie/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=lzwwl77xWtE%3d&portalid=0&resourceView=1Ireland>

## **Further Information**

### **About the SFPA**

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) is the independent statutory body responsible for the regulation of the sea-fisheries and the sea-food production sectors. It promotes compliance with the EU Common Fisheries Policy, sea-fisheries law and food safety law relating to fish and fish products, verifies compliance and, where necessary, enforces it. Its mandate covers all fishing vessels operating within Ireland's 200-mile limit, over 2,000 Irish registered fishing vessels wherever they operate, and all seafood produced in Ireland's seafood processing companies. The SFPA operates through a network of regional port offices situated at Ireland's main fishery harbours. For further information visit: [www.sfpa.ie](http://www.sfpa.ie)