



CENTER FOR
FOOD SAFETY



Ecology Action Centre



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Dear Under Secretary Sullivan and Deputy Assistant Secretary Smith,

We, the undersigned 13 organizations, join with 22,123 individuals to urge the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to support and advocate for a two-year international moratorium on commercial fishing for Pacific bluefin tuna. Our organizations represent a diverse mix of environmental advocates, fishermen, chefs, and citizens who are concerned about the current state and management of the Pacific bluefin population.

It is abundantly clear that Pacific bluefin need further immediate action to protect and rebuild the species. Unfortunately, international fishery managers have continued to disregard the perilous state of this valuable species, failing to pass measures that would allow the population to begin to recover. The United States, as a member of the two international management bodies that regulate fishing for Pacific bluefin tuna, has both the opportunity and the responsibility to act now to protect the species. Although U.S. fishermen have a low impact on the stock, catch from other areas in the Pacific Ocean continue to deplete the population, negatively impacting stock recovery and the potential catch of U.S. fishermen.

The latest international scientific stock assessment shows that the population has been depleted to just 2.6 percent of its historic, unfished size. Projections show that under current regulations and conditions, the population has almost no chance of reaching healthy levels within the next decade. Juvenile catch remains extremely high, with most fish taken before they are a year old, weighing less than 2 pounds, and recruitment, a measure of new fish entering the population, remains at the lowest levels ever recorded.

A two-year international moratorium on commercial fishing for Pacific bluefin would protect the species and allow managers to implement rules that end overfishing and set up a management framework to rebuild the stock to healthy levels. Please act immediately to implement and advocate for the necessary measures that would provide the protection this iconic species desperately needs.

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