PROTECT BLUEFIN TUNA

Join U.S. Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) and Rob Wittman (R-VA) in urging the Administration to support a ban on the international trade of bluefin tuna.

In March 2010, nations from around the world will gather in Doha, Qatar, for the 15th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The Obama Administration should endorse a proposal by the Principality of Monaco to list Atlantic bluefin tuna on CITES Appendix I, which would prohibit all international trade in the species.

Atlantic bluefin tuna populations are imperiled.

The lucrative market for bluefin tuna, fueled by the Asian demand for sushi, has resulted in rampant and unchecked overfishing (legal and illegal), driving this species toward commercial extinction. The western stock of mature Atlantic bluefin has declined 82 percent since 1970.[1] Only about 41,000 reproductively mature bluefin are left in the Western Atlantic.[2] In 2007, scientists predicted that if the current level of fishing continued, the Eastern Atlantic stock of mature fish would fall to 18 percent of the 1970 level.[3]

International protection is in America's financial interest.
An economic analysis conducted by the Department of Commerce concluded that a CITES Appendix I listing would not negatively affect recreational anglers and that it could create positive economic impacts for the U.S. commercial fishing industry.[4]

Current international fisheries management has failed.
For more than 30 years, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the body responsible for regulating fishing for Atlantic bluefin tuna, has failed to halt the decline of this imperiled species.

An Appendix I listing would be effective.

CITES currently offers protection to more than 30,000 species around the world and has been instrumental in protecting numerous plants and animals such as orchids, tigers and elephants. Because most of the annual catch of Atlantic bluefin is exported internationally, a CITES Appendix I listing is the most effective and enforceable tool available to restore these majestic animals.

Please join Reps. Rob Wittman and Debbie Wasserman Schultz in asking the Obama Administration to take a strong stance on protecting one of the most valuable fish in the world by endorsing a CITES Appendix I listing for Atlantic bluefin tuna.

To sign this letter, please contact Brent Robinson, Senior Legislative Assistant in Rep. Wittman's office at **brent.robinson@mail.house.gov** (202-225-4261), or contact Coby Dolan, Legislative Director in Rep. Wasserman Schultz's office at **coby.dolan@mail.house.gov** (202-225-7931).

The closing date for this letter is Thursday, February 11, 2010.

1 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), "TABLE 4. Spawning Stock Fecundity and Recruitment," *Report of the 2008 Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Stock Assessment* Session (2008), pp. 167-8. <www.iccat.int/en/assess.htm>.

2 *Ibid.*, "TABLE 2. Abundance at the Beginning of the Year," pp. 164-6.

3 ICCAT, *Report of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics*, Section 8.5, "BFT—Atlantic Bluefin Tuna," Subsection BFTE–4, "Outlook" (2009). <www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2009-SCRS_ENG.pdf>.

4 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Potential Economic Effects of a Ban on the Trade of North Atlantic Bluefin Tuna on US Commercial Fishermen," (October 2009). <www.nefmc.org/press/council_discussion_docs/Nov%202009/ICCAT%20Docs%20for%20WEB/Doc%206_NOAA%20Fisheries_Economic%20Analysis%20BFT%20CITES%202009.pdf>.