

Bluefin Tuna



Bluefin are the largest tuna and can live up to 40 years. They migrate across oceans and can dive more than 4,000 feet. Bluefin tuna are made for speed: built like torpedoes, have retractable fins and their eyes are set flush to their body. They are tremendous predators from the moment they hatch, seeking out schools of fish like herring, mackerel and even eels. They hunt by sight and have the sharpest vision of any bony fish. There are three species of bluefin: Atlantic (the largest and most endangered), Pacific, and Southern. Most catches of the Atlantic bluefin tuna are taken from the Mediterranean Sea, which is the most important bluefin tuna fishery in the world.

Oceans under major threat from illegal fishing

A new WWF report finds more than 85% of global fish stocks in our oceans are at significant risk of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Species affected by illegal fishing varies across the globe – from Bluefin tuna to mackerels, from snow crabs to shrimp, and hundreds of other species.

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Lack of knowledge about the biology and migratory behavior of Atlantic bluefin has hindered successful fishery management plans.

OVERFISHING

Bluefin tuna populations have declined severely from overfishing and illegal fishing over the past few decades –not just Atlantic bluefin tuna, but also Pacific bluefin tuna and Southern bluefin tuna. Population declines have been largely driven by the demand for this fish in high end sushi markets.

PIRATE FISHING

Illegal fishing of Atlantic bluefin is a big problem and the fishery has been plagued by lack of enforcement and control.



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STOPPING OVERFISHING

In the Mediterranean, WWF has been working for over 10 years to protect Atlantic bluefin tuna. We work to stop overfishing and ensure recovery of the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock. WWF has been very influential in most of the decisions made by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the body that regulates the fisheries.

TUNA TAGGING

Since 2008, WWF has been tagging Atlantic bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean Sea to learn more about the species. The data collected so far has helped us learn more about their migratory behaviors and enabled us to advise fisheries managers on how best to protect the species. With more field tagging work, WWF and its partners can continue to fill the gaps on the bluefin's biology and help give this emblematic fish a chance at survival for the long term.