



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

November 4, 2009

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
Calle Corazón de María, 8, Sixth Floor
28002 Madrid, Spain

Dear Distinguished Commissioners,

I am writing today to urge strong, definitive, and effective action by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to manage Atlantic bluefin tuna. Improving international fishery management and ending illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing are high priorities for the United States Government.

Over the past 40 years, ICCAT has overseen a 72-percent decline in the adult population of the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock of bluefin tuna. In recent years, nations have allowed their vessels to fish for this stock at two to three times the levels supported by the most recent science, causing a significant and rapid decline. In addition, reports of IUU fishing for this stock have been rampant in recent years, with catch estimates as high as approximately double the quota established by ICCAT.

As a member of ICCAT, the United States calls for strong and definitive action at the November 2009 meeting in Brazil. This includes ending overfishing by establishing management measures that set responsible science-based quotas, strongly enforce these quotas and closures during spawning periods, and address IUU fishing.

The United States recently announced its strong support for Monaco's proposal to list Atlantic bluefin tuna under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to prohibit international trade of the species, unless ICCAT takes decisive action. The proposal to list bluefin tuna under Appendix I sends a strong message that nations of the world need to conserve North Atlantic bluefin tuna. The United States believes that ICCAT must rise to this challenge, as it has in the past with other species. Now is the time for ICCAT to demonstrate to the world that it can effectively manage Atlantic bluefin tuna.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy H. Sutley", is written over the typed name.

Nancy H. Sutley
Chair