



Press Release

April 12, 2012

The American Bluefin Tuna Association

"Superfish: Bluefin Tuna" aired on National Geographic Channel on Thursday 4/12/12

Salem, NH, April 12, 2012 - A one-hour film entitled, "Superfish: Bluefin Tuna", aired on the National Geographic Channel this evening, intends to capitalize on the heightened interest in bluefin tuna generated by National Geographic's own 10-part weekly series, "Wicked Tuna" that premiered on April 1, 2012. "Superfish: Bluefin Tuna" is a production of the Tag A Giant Foundation, a California-based not-for-profit that conducts scientific research on marine conservation issues. "Superfish: Bluefin Tuna" presents some of the most spectacular underwater footage ever taken of bluefin.

As mentioned in the film, bluefin tuna is found in all major oceans in the world. The three sub-species of bluefin are Southern, Pacific and Atlantic bluefin, each representing a genetically different spawning stock. Bluefin tuna attract regular attention by media and most of this interest is generated by not-for profit and environmental activist organizations. These organizations use media as a way of focusing interest in bluefin. However, bluefin is a very complex issue and the complexities are often overlooked. One simple example of the confusion that can be created are frequent statements made on the issue of "bluefin", giving rise to the mistaken concept that bluefin issues are generic or worldwide in nature, without specifying a particular sub-species of bluefin. Fortunately, for Atlantic bluefin tuna, there are noted scientific authorities to which media and the public can turn to understand the present state of the science of bluefin without incurring the bias or confusing data that is often found in the press releases and web content of these interest groups.

The Standing Committee for Research and Statistics (SCRS), the scientific arm of the International Committee for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) and the preeminent authority on bluefin science, publishes a Stock Assessment on Atlantic bluefin every two years. The most recent stock assessment was in September 2010. A more recent and very extensive study, referred to as the "Status Review" on Atlantic bluefin, was undertaken by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and published in May of 2011, the culmination of a year-long process to determine if Atlantic bluefin warranted protection under the Endangered Species Act. Even more recently, at the beginning of 2012, the Canadian Government Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) published their own findings on the question of endangerment status for Atlantic bluefin under the Canadian "Species at Risk Act" (SARA). Many of the most highly regarded marine scientists and pelagic science specialists have been involved in these scientific studies. Viewed as a whole, these three papers

represent the state of the science of Atlantic bluefin tuna. Both the U.S. and Canadian governments have separately determined in these studies that Atlantic bluefin is not endangered or threatened with endangerment. The SCRS have never stated that Atlantic bluefin was endangered and the scientists of SCRS have always advocated for sensible, sustainable harvest levels. The bona fides of the scientists involved in each of these scientific studies is unquestioned, and the findings in these studies are unchallenged.

"These studies should finally lay to rest the question of endangerment of Atlantic bluefin but some organizations and individuals prefer to take a more radical view in the media to serve their fundraising needs", said Rich Ruais, Executive Director of the American Bluefin Tuna Association.

Given that the U.S. purse seine fleet has been inactive in recent years, the only active directed U.S. commercial Atlantic bluefin fishery is an artisanal fishery comprised of small vessels that catch one fish at a time using rod and reel or harpoon. This artisanal fishery is the most highly regulated bluefin fishery in the world, has enjoyed decades of full compliance with regulations and is widely known and understood to harvest sustainably. In this fishery is embodied the concept of sustainable fishing practices and through its leadership in the area of conservation has become an exemplar for all other bluefin fisheries worldwide.

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