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**Fisheries commission needs to face up to disappearing tuna and disobedient members in western and central Pacific**

**Apia, Samoa:** WWF is calling on members of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) to take immediate and decisive action to forestall the imminent collapse of two key tuna stocks and dangerous declines in others.

“But the commission must demand member parties such as China, Japan, Korea and Chinese Taipei begin supplying basic catch and effort data for their fishing fleets,” said Bubba Cook, WWF´s Western and Central Pacific Tuna Programme Manager.

The 33 member states and territories of the WCPFC are meeting from December 1-5 in Apia, Samoa, following October’s [decision](http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?232412/Nations-agree-to-slash-Eastern-Pacific-catch-of-bluefin-tuna) by the Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) to almost halve catch quotas for Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

Scientific advice to both commissions, which contain a significant overlap of member countries, is that the fate of the Pacific bluefin depends on a tiny breeding stock approaching the end of its lifecycle which is a tiny fraction of an overall population now less than four per cent of historic levels.

Bigeye Tuna stocks are at only 16 percent of historic levels and heavily over-exploited, while worrying declines are occurring in stocks of skipjack, albacore, and yellowfin tuna.

WWF is calling on WCPFC members to heed the scientific advice and halve catches of the juvenile Pacific Bluefin that now make up more than 90 per cent of catches.

Other measures for tuna more generally include firm limits on the number of fishing vessels, the adoption of a long term stock recovery plan with biological reference point limits, and reductions in the reliance on Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs).

Cook said the continuing refusal of several nations to provide basic information on the operation of their fishing fleets as required by the WCPFC undermined basic fisheries management, monitoring and surveillance, and imposed additional costs and disadvantage to members that did obey the rules.

“This is an intentional disregard of international law and regulations and the WCPFC cannot continue accepting the same excuses they have heard for almost a decade,” Cook said.

**Note to editors:**

The **WCPFC** is responsible for the conservation and management of tuna and other marine resources in the [Western and Central Pacific Ocean](http://www.iattc.org/EPOmap.htm). The members of the WCPFC are:

Australia, Canada, China, Cook Islands, European Community, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, Japan, Kiribati, Korea, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Chinese Taipei, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America, Vanuatu

**2** The annual meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission **(**WCPFC**)** will take place in Apia, Samoa, on December 1-5.

**For more detailed information:**

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**About WWF**

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with more than 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

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