



Taking Stock of Tuna



SAVE NOW!
Turning the global tuna market towards sustainability

Introduction

Tuna is the world's favourite fish. It can be found from high-end sushi restaurants in Tokyo to family shopping trolleys in North American supermarkets and the dinner plates of Pacific island communities. With the world's appetite for tuna now greater than what our oceans can sustain, tuna stocks globally are coming under pressure, suffering from overfishing and in some cases reaching the point of collapse.

The situation is not the same for all tuna species or in all oceans. Greenpeace is campaigning to restore tuna stocks to a healthy state, and marine reserves in the Pacific and Mediterranean high seas are an important step towards achieving this. For some species - bluefin tuna for example - overfishing has reduced stocks to as low as 5% of their natural levels, and a sustainable fishing industry is no longer possible. In oceans such as the Pacific, where overfishing is a more recent problem, a halving of fishing effort would be enough to ensure a future for the region's tuna fisheries.

It's not just the amount of tuna we're catching, but also how it is being caught that adds to the problem. Industrial fishing methods such as longline fishing and purse seining with fish aggregating devices (FADs) to attract the fish, and the use of planes and helicopters to locate the fishing grounds, are putting excessive pressure on tuna stocks. Longline fishing can have a discard rate as high as 40% (for large long-range boats) and kill endangered sharks, turtles, birds and cetaceans. FADs also create a wide range of problems. Purse seining with FADs catches many tuna, like yellowfin and bigeye, before they breed. In addition, there is a bycatch of a vast array of other marine life, such as endangered sea turtles (like the olive ridley, green, leatherback, hawksbill and loggerhead), as well as sharks and other types of fish.

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Many other endangered species are caught up in the hunt for tuna

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Overfishing has reduced bluefin tuna stocks to as low as **5%** of their natural levels

The current demand for tuna is not sustainable. So what must we do to take tuna out of the can?

Restaurants cannot continue to serve bluefin tuna as fishing fleets chase down the last fish. Retailers should no longer sell cheap canned tuna that masks a much greater cost to ocean life and coastal communities. Those trading in tuna must take responsibility for the future of the world's favourite fish, and for their own industries, by seeking out tuna species and fishing methods that are truly sustainable.

Since 2005, Greenpeace has been campaigning for supermarkets to sell only sustainable seafood. This work began in the UK. In following years, Greenpeace offices from all over Europe, North America as well as New Zealand and Australia joined the campaign. One focus of our markets work has been on making retailers move to using only sustainable and equitable tuna sources.

'Red lists' of seafood species at very high risk of being sourced from unsustainable fisheries, and guides to supermarkets ranked according to the sustainability of their seafood purchasing, have been key tools in achieving this transition.

Alongside the 'poster child' bluefin tuna, other troubled species such as yellowfin and bigeye tuna feature on every single Greenpeace seafood 'red list'. Supermarkets in countries where the campaign has been active have started to adapt their fish purchasing policies. Many have developed sustainable seafood purchasing guidelines and, as a minimum, most companies have stopped selling a number of overfished or destructively-fished species. Some retailers have even removed all 'red-listed' products from their shelves. UK retailers and Dutch wholesalers have been leading the change on the market.

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/seafood/red-list-of-species>



Greenpeace International Seafood Redlist. We had had over 87,365 visits to this page, proving that consumers are wising up



Latest Developments

Campaigning for sustainable tuna started to shake up the world's tuna markets in 2007. From the fishing vessels out at sea to the end consumer, there is an increasing move towards sourcing sustainable seafood.

**Tuna.
While
Stocks
Last**

1 <http://blacklist.greenpeace.org>

2 <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/stolen-pacific-tuna>

3 <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/news/brussels-seafood-expo-230408>
<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/releases/greenpeace-activists-halt-tuna>

4 www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/pacific-plunder

5 <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/retailers-guide-skipjack>

6 <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/seafood/preordertuna>

MARCH 2007

In the face of increased illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing globally and limited resources by coastal states to patrol their waters, Greenpeace launched the world's first database for all known IUU fishing vessels and companies. It was welcomed by the international community as a useful tool for port authorities and officials worldwide in curbing pirate fishing, and, since tuna operators are also blacklisted, as a tool for retailers, wholesalers and processors to help them avoid IUU tuna¹.



SEPTEMBER 2007

Greenpeace exposed stolen Pacific tuna in the European market mainly fished by European owned and controlled fishing vessels (for example, Albacora Group, Conservas Garavilla and Calvopesca, all from Spain). As a result, some European supermarket chains removed these products from their shelves. Several others started working on ensuring they have necessary traceability and checks in place that will enable them to trade only in legal and sustainable products².



APRIL 2008

80 activists from 15 countries closed down the stands of five large tuna suppliers at the *European Seafood Exposition* in Brussels, the world's largest seafood trading event, where 1,600 companies from 80 countries trade marine life from all around the globe. The activists covered the stands with fishing nets, chained themselves to the stands and put up banners in 13 languages saying; 'Time and Tuna are running out'. A large banner with the same message was hung from the front of the building. A message was also broadcast through the exhibition halls' public address systems urging traders to buy only sustainably-caught seafood. Greenpeace's message that "if the industry doesn't shift towards sustainable seafood, there will simply be no tuna left to trade, and their businesses will be closed forever" is still reverberating throughout the industry today³.



AUGUST 2008

Greenpeace UK launched its ranking of UK canned tuna brands. Sainsbury's pole-and-line caught tuna leads the ranking list as the most sustainable brand on the market. Branded products from John West and Princes are at the bottom of the league. The race for sustainability in the UK canned tuna market became headline news.



JUNE 2009

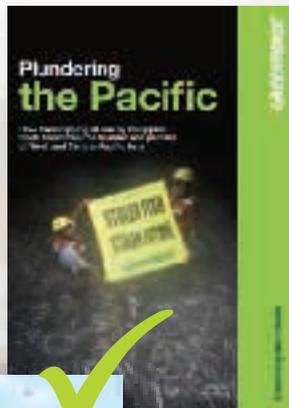
Massive media coverage on bluefin and canned tuna issues is achieved in the UK on the back of the launch of the film, 'The End of the Line', a documentary about the devastating effect of overfishing using tuna as a key example.

**Tuna.
End of the
Line?**



OCTOBER 2008

Greenpeace published "*Plundering the Pacific - How transshipping at sea by Philippine fleets facilitates the launder and plunder of West and Central Pacific tuna*"⁴. The report provided a case study of how IUU tuna from the Pacific ends up on the European and US markets, and how the pockets of international waters in the Pacific are used as a loophole to avoid industry regulations.



JULY 2009

Working with responsible sushi restaurants in London Greenpeace launched an online pledge in the UK to boycott bluefin tuna. By the beginning of December 2009, 6,400 people had signed up.



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APRIL 2009

Greenpeace published a "*Retailers' Guide to Sustainable and Equitable Pole and Line Skipjack*"⁵. This case study highlighted the Maldivian model of pole-and-line fisheries as a sustainable model for markets to look towards at the European tuna conference in Brussels.



The same day, a 'pre-order petition' for pole-and-line skipjack tuna was launched⁶. Its purpose is to encourage companies to demonstrate that there is a market demand for sustainable and equitable skipjack tuna products and, through that, to encourage the development of sustainable and equitable pole-and-line fisheries in the Pacific. Retailers, wholesalers, restaurants, processors, traders and other commercial buyers interested in seeking coastal states partners willing to develop pole-and-line fishing operations are encouraged to sign up. Tuna traders from the UK and the Netherlands signed up immediately.

SEPTEMBER 2009

Following the 'pre-order petition' launched in April 2009 Greenpeace ran a workshop in Papua New Guinea (PNG) bringing together key market players who signed up to the petition, Pacific stakeholders and countries interested to develop such fisheries. As a result, the Forum Fisheries Agency in the Pacific was officially tasked with the development of pole-and-line skipjack fisheries in the Solomon Islands and PNG. By the beginning of September 2009, 70 million cans of sustainable pole-and-line tuna had been 'pre-ordered'.

In a workshop held by the Italian National Association for Fish Can producers (ANCIT), Greenpeace presented the scientific data on the state of yellowfin tuna stocks (the main species of relevance for this industry) and the main limitations of the 'maximum sustainable yield' concept, which is the management approach currently applied to the world's tuna stocks. The workshop helped to open up a dialogue with the industry. After months of silence and no replies to Greenpeace's requests on the issue, some of the main tuna cannery industries in Italy decided to start collaborating.

Market actions taken on tuna

There is a movement towards sustainable sourcing in tuna markets not just in the UK, but all over Europe and North America. Here are some examples of significant market developments on tuna by supermarkets worldwide:

Bluefin tuna

Northern bluefin is found in the northern half of the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean and the southern Black Sea. Its Southern cousin is found in temperate and cold seas of the southern hemisphere, but migrates to the tropics to spawn. All bluefin species have very high market values, especially in the sushi markets. It is now well-known that Southern and Northern Atlantic bluefin are depleted and continue to be overfished. Pacific bluefin is not yet officially considered to be overfished, but stock assessments are poor and unreliable; it is thought to be declining and suffering overfishing. It is also considered to be 'very highly' vulnerable⁷. High juvenile catch is a general problem, and purse seiners setting on FADs and longlining for bluefin have bycatch issues similar to those targeting other tuna species. Humane Society International believes that the Southern bluefin fishery is possibly responsible for the most significant impact on endangered albatrosses - the fishery overlaps the distribution of 17 of the world's 24 albatross species.

Greenpeace is asking retailers and other seafood traders to stop selling any bluefin tuna.

US supermarkets Ahold, Wegmans, A&P, Price Chopper, Publix, Safeway, Target, Walmart and Whole Foods are no longer selling bluefin.

Carrefour has stopped selling bluefin in Italy and Spain, and in France from mid-2009. In France, it was preceded by Auchan, another French supermarket chain that had already stopped selling it in 2006. Carrefour's Spanish subsidiary, Alcampo, stopped selling it in 2008.

Germany's Kaiser's Tengelmann and Kaufland and Co-op in Italy stopped in April 2007. The last supermarkets in the Netherlands stopped sourcing bluefin in 2008, as did the Nordic supermarket chain ICA (Royal Ahold), which has outlets in Norway, Sweden and the Baltic States.

Bluefin tuna has also been the main focus of some targeted work on up-market sushi chains in the UK and US. In particular, Greenpeace has exposed the celebrity-favourite Nobu as an unrepentant stockist of bluefin, and this has generated substantial media coverage, in these countries and elsewhere. Even the UK fisheries minister stated publicly that restaurants should not be selling bluefin or other endangered species. Much of this media and public attention has been closely linked to the UK release of 'The End of the Line'.



© GREENPEACE / LLOYD



⁷ <http://filaman.ifm-geomar.de/Summary/SpeciesSummary.php?id=14290>

PAMS TUNA
SWEET THAI
CHILLI 185G

2.89

318745 23/02/2007

Bigeye tuna

Bigeye tuna is a tropical and subtropical species found in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans. Bigeye tuna are in long-term decline. All stocks except the Atlantic stock are considered overfished, and catches of juvenile bigeye are a major problem for stock recovery.

Bigeye fisheries have similar bycatch issues to other tuna fisheries. They are mainly caught by longline fishing and purse seining. Atlantic longline fisheries also impact upon bluefin tuna and declining billfish stocks. Purse seiners setting on FADs have the potential to cause serious problems particularly for juvenile bigeye.

Greenpeace is asking retailers and other seafood traders to stop selling any bigeye tuna.

Publix in US has committed to delist bigeye tuna from its product range.

In the Dutch market, there had been a rapid increase in sourcing overfished tuna species when fresh and frozen steaks were introduced. Since the start of Greenpeace's campaign in 2007, however, the Dutch retail market has been kept free of bigeye tuna.

Tesco in the UK dropped the sale of bigeye tuna in 2006.



© GREENPEACE / PAUL HILTON

Publix 

TESCO 

*Publix in US
has committed to
delist bigeye tuna from
its product range.*

**SMART
SAVE!**

Yellowfin tuna

Yellowfin tuna is found throughout the world's tropical and subtropical seas except the Mediterranean. Although all four stocks are known to be declining, they are all being fished at a high rate: in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and in the Indian Ocean yellowfin are considered overfished, while the other two stocks are likely being overfished.

60% of yellowfin are caught by purse seine, and an increasing number of these are using FADs (e.g. between 30% and 40% of seiners in the Indian Ocean). About 15% of yellowfin tuna are caught by longline fishing.

Greenpeace is asking retailers and other seafood traders to stop selling any yellowfin tuna.

A number of supermarkets in Germany have delisted yellowfin, including Lidl, Aldi North and Aldi South. In the Netherlands many supermarkets stopped sourcing fresh and frozen yellowfin tuna steaks in 2008 and are replacing other unsustainable yellowfin tuna products.

Walmart in the US is committed to delist fresh and frozen yellowfin tuna and is working on the implementation. US retailer Target is currently incorporating the sale of pole-and-line skipjack, as well as domestic pole-and-line albacore into its inventory as a replacement for much of its yellowfin tuna.

Overwaitea in Canada has ceased the sale of fresh and frozen Yellowfin Tuna steaks after Greenpeace Canada released its seafood red list and two reports on the seafood purchasing practices of Canadian supermarkets.



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Aldi and Lidl in Germany have delisted Yellowfin Tuna

SMART SAVE!

PAMS TUNA
SWEET THAI
CHILLI 185G

2.89

318745 23/02/2009

Skipjack tuna

Skipjack stocks worldwide are generally considered to be in a healthy state, although recently initial concerns over the status of some of the stocks have started to emerge. In skipjack fisheries there has been an increasing use of FADs since the early 1990s.

Greenpeace is asking retailers and other seafood traders to stop selling skipjack tuna from fisheries involving significant amounts of unwanted bycatch, like purse seine FAD fisheries and longline fisheries, and is encouraging them to move to pole-and-line caught tuna as the more sustainable and equitable alternative.

The Pret a Manger chain in the UK recently announced that it will move over to pole-and-line caught tuna for its sandwiches. After Greenpeace had contacted the company over several months, it went public with the announcement following the launch of the *'The End of the Line'* film in the UK. Pret a Manger is the first sandwich retailer to make this shift, and this has been possible, at least in part, because of the pioneering work by Sainsbury's and the Co-op in securing reliable supplies of pole-and-line tuna.

Although already top of Greenpeace UK's tuna league table, Sainsbury's has upped its game and increased the amount of pole-and-line caught tuna on its shelves. 100% of its own-brand tuna products (including the basic range) are caught by this method, and it has now introduced a new branded pole-and-line caught range; it is promoting the responsible sourcing of tuna in its stores.

Marks & Spencer in the UK has announced that all of its canned tuna will move over to pole-and-line caught sources, and is currently phasing this in. In addition, it is the first retailer to take the next step and extend this to all of its products containing tuna, including sandwiches, salads and ready meals.

Waitrose in the UK has announced that it will introduce a new own-brand range of canned tuna in the near future, which will be 100% pole-and-line caught skipjack.

In 2009, the first pole-and-line caught canned skipjack (Deep Blue) was sold in Dutch supermarkets. The cans featured improved labelling, which included the catch method, common name and the text 'sustainably caught with lines - ecologically responsible fishery'.



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Where next?

Following increasing concerns raised over the sustainability of tuna products with key market players, including John West and Princess, the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) was launched in March 2009. The ISSF calls itself 'a global partnership among science, the tuna industry and the environmental non-governmental organisation community'. Its mission is to 'undertake science-based initiatives for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of tuna stocks, reducing by-catch and promoting ecosystem health'.

Most of the world's largest tuna brands (Bolton Alimentari, Bumble Bee Foods, LLC / Clover Leaf Seafoods, MW Brands, Princes, Sea Value, StarKist, Thai Union / Chicken of the Sea and TriMarine), as well as WWF, are part of the ISSF. At present, Spanish tuna producers are not members of ISSF.

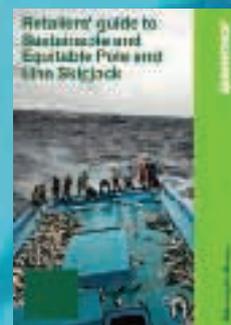
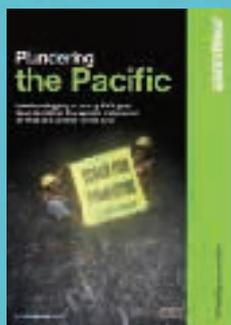
Greenpeace welcomed the formation of ISSF when it went public in April 2009. ISSF's policies speak in favour of science-based and sustainable management. However, Greenpeace regards many of ISSF's policies as not sufficiently far-reaching to meet the objectives of sustainable management and is disappointed by the level of real action taken by ISSA member companies to ensure the sustainability of the products their trade with to date.

Greenpeace is challenging members of the tuna industry to follow the steps taken by responsible retailers – and to take clear action towards trading only sustainable and equitable tuna products. Greenpeace will continue to watch and expose those companies who try to hide behind words and promises or simply take no action at all.



**At present,
Spanish tuna
producers are
not members
of ISSF.**

Other publications about Tuna



www.greenpeace.org

All these publications available online now FREE!

GREENPEACE

Greenpeace is an independent global campaigning organisation that acts to change attitudes and behaviour, to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace.

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