



Tuna stocks are recovering, and it is time for small-scale fisheries to also benefit from the recovery of this iconic Mediterranean resource.

To the attention of Catherine Chabaud, Minister for the Sea and Fisheries

10 December 2025

Madam Minister, as part of the implementation of the catch strategy adopted in 2023 and the assessment by international scientists, ICCAT, the international commission responsible for managing bluefin tuna, has confirmed the full recovery and increase in bluefin tuna stocks. For the next period, 2026-28, a 16% increase in the French quota is expected, representing an increase of more than 1,100 tonnes!

While we welcome the recovery of this species, we regret that the political decision once again reinforces the immutable principle of seniority alone in deciding how resources are allocated: those who have fished a lot will continue to fish more.

To make the voice of small-scale fisheries heard, we launched a class action lawsuit in 2017. Although the courts have ruled in our favour twice, we still have to fight following the ruling of the Council of State last June... a battle that has lasted almost 10 years! And yet, now more than ever, we believe that the principles of allocation must be reviewed, with the utmost transparency, within the framework of clear social, environmental and economic objectives, as required by Article 17 of the Common Fisheries Policy and in line with the guidelines proposed by the European Commission in its recent [vademeccum](#) for Member States.

This rebalancing could and should be done for the benefit of all without harming anyone. Indeed, with this significant increase, it would be possible to limit the weight of prior rights for those who already have a lot, to support those who have little, and to give a new lease of life to the vast majority of small-scale coastal fishermen who have nothing, which would strengthen their versatility and therefore their sustainability.

On this subject, we would like to recall the historic and still relevant role of the fishing prud'homies, which ensure the careful management of small-scale fishing, adapted to their territory, along the entire Mediterranean coast. The prud'homies could thus be allocated socio-economic or ancillary quotas in order to ensure the versatility of small-scale vessels, which adapt their practices throughout the seasons while respecting fragile environmental balances.

On the other side of the Strait of Gibraltar, in the Atlantic, bluefin tuna has made a massive comeback over the last ten years. Here too, many vessels are demanding access to this abundant resource, while so many others are lacking: mackerel, pollock, cod, whelk, whiting, etc. Just like longliners, other struggling fishing fleets should be able to benefit from access to a

This is the meaning of the solidarity in the fishing industry that we are calling for, so that it benefits fishing rooted in our territory rather than multinational fishing companies, and so that it respects the essential principles of coexistence between fleets.

Minister, we do not want to turn the tables, but to make a decent living from our wonderful profession as small-scale fishermen. A minor change in the distribution keys for the bluefin tuna quota could greatly benefit all fleets, without compromising the profits of industrial fishing... Few resources can boast such an opportunity at present. You have a historic opportunity to add social success for greater justice to the ecological success of bluefin tuna recovery.



Signatories:

La Ciotat Fishermen's Prud'homie

Var Departmental Committee for Sea Fishing and Marine Aquaculture Platform for
small-scale artisanal fishing in France

Low Impact Fishers of Europe