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17<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Re: Tuna CHART programme and new angling methods

Dear ICSA members,

Your request (dated 02/01/24) to the Tuna CHART management group, seeking to allow anglers to use three new angling methods for the Tuna CHART programme, has been reviewed. The review process entailed the management group referring your request to the Tuna CHART Technical group that has, in turn, reviewed and risk assessed all the proposed new methods and provided recommendations. Fish welfare was a key consideration, as has always been the case for this programme, and a precautionary approach is necessary when adopting new methods in this important fishery.

The management group has agreed to permit two of the methods on a pilot basis in 2024:

1. **Stand-up harness:**

- a. All authorised skippers may allow anglers, that they deem capable, to use a stand-up harness.
- b. Anglers may bring their own harness if they wish and use it if deemed capable by the skipper.

2. **Jigging:**

- a. Authorised skippers who have previously tagged a minimum of 20 bluefin tuna within the Tuna CHART programme may permit jigging on board their vessel. **These particular skippers will be formally advised in their individual authorisation that they may allow jigging in 2024.**

Authorisations permitting jigging will be reassessed prior to the 2025 season only, no change will be permitted in 2024.



- b. Only anglers deemed capable by the authorised skipper should be permitted to undertake jigging.
- c. Jigging can take place with bent-butt jigging rods only. Anglers may use their own bent-butt jigging rods.

**For both methods where anglers are likely to be using their own gear (stand-up harness or bent-butt jigging rod), skippers will be required to:**

- I. Document the gear taken on board using the Tuna CHART app and paper forms (photographs and gear rating).
- II. Provide advance notice to IFI so that an observer can potentially be present for the trip.

**Please note that the safety of the angler must be always considered.**

These new methods and the results of this pilot programme will be reviewed after the 2024 season to assess how they operated. Avoiding fish mortalities is crucial to maintaining the fishery and the welfare of the bluefin tuna must be considered at all times.

**Popping and casting will not be permitted in 2024.**

Following the review and results of the pilot study, popping and casting may possibly be reviewed again and considered for the 2025 season.

Thank you for your continued involvement in the programme and for your assistance in gathering critical data regarding the presence and type of bluefin tuna in Irish waters.

Kind Regards,

Deirdre O'Leary

On behalf of the Tuna CHART Group