

THE STATES OF DELIBERATION
of the
ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THE EXTENSION OF THE UK'S CONTRACTING PARTY STATUS TO THE INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS TO THE BAILIWICK OF
GUERNSEY

The States are asked to decide:

Whether, after consideration of the policy letter entitled 'The Extension of the UK's Contracting Party Status to the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas to the Bailiwick of Guernsey', dated 11th September 2026, they are of the opinion:

1. To agree that the Committee *for* Economic Development shall implement such measures as it sees fit for the purpose of ensuring that Guernsey may comply and remain in compliance with obligations that arise from the extension of the UK's contracting party status to the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas ("ICCAT") to the Bailiwick of Guernsey, including but not limited to the measures listed in section 6 of the policy letter.
2. To direct the preparation of such legislation as may be necessary to give effect to the above decision, including consequential amendments to other legislation.
3. To delegate authority to the Policy & Resources Committee to take the necessary steps to extend ICCAT to Guernsey (or the wider Bailiwick, subject to Alderney and Sark's consent), subject to the Committee *for* Economic Development's confirmation of future compliance with the above, in line with practice already agreed by the States of Deliberation.

THE STATES OF DELIBERATION
of the
ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THE EXTENSION OF THE UK'S CONTRACTING PARTY STATUS TO THE INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS TO THE BAILIWICK OF
GUERNSEY

The Presiding Officer
States of Guernsey
Royal Court House
St Peter Port

11th September 2026

Dear Sir

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This policy letter proposes the introduction in Guernsey of the necessary measures to allow the extension of the UK's contracting party status to the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas ("ICCAT"), including:
- (a) the establishment of a permit regime for recreational fishing for tuna;
 - (b) a prohibition on taking other fish species managed under ICCAT (see paragraph 3.3), notably bluewater shark species including shortfin mako and thresher sharks;
 - (c) a prohibition on the transshipment of ICCAT species between vessels of any size; and
 - (d) the introduction of measures against vessels engaging in Illegal, Unreported and Unlawful ("IUU") fishing.
- 1.2 These changes will require the amendment of the Fishing Ordinance, 1997, and the introduction of new licence conditions on commercial fishing licences. Along with similar changes made in Alderney and Sark, they will bring the Bailiwick of Guernsey ("the Bailiwick") into alignment with ICCAT requirements so that the UK can formally request extension of its contracting party status to the Bailiwick. A Memorandum of Understanding will also be entered into with the UK in relation to operational matters.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 Atlantic bluefin tuna has been increasing in abundance in the territorial waters of the Bailiwick over the last five years. This has led to growing interest in fishing for the species among local commercial fishing license-holders and recreational anglers.
- 2.2 Atlantic bluefin tuna do not stay in one country or territory's waters - they migrate across the entire Atlantic and Mediterranean. Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of The Sea ("UNCLOS"), species that cross borders must be managed collectively through Regional Fisheries Management Organisations ("RFMOs").
- 2.3 For the Atlantic, the RFMO is the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas ("the Commission"). The Convention (i.e. ICCAT) sets the legal mandate, while the Commission acts as the functioning administrative and regulatory body. Atlantic bluefin tuna is a shared international stock which ICCAT manages by setting Total Allowable Catches ("TACs") for species such as tuna, as well as distributing those TACs into quotas among contracting parties (which include countries or regional blocs like the EU).
- 2.4 If a country wishes its fishers to catch tuna it must hold a share of the TAC, and the only way to obtain this is by being a contracting party to ICCAT¹. The UK has been a contracting party to ICCAT since 2020, and its contracting party status of ICCAT may be extended to the Bailiwick.
- 2.5 The UK's Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs ("Defra") has established a rod and line tuna fishery in UK waters over the past two years, operating under a limited quota. Defra has advised that, should the Bailiwick seek to obtain a quota from the UK's TAC, it must request an extension of the UK's ICCAT contracting party status to cover it. Officers have therefore been working with Defra to consider the extent of the requirements and ensure that the Bailiwick complies with the requirements set out by ICCAT.
- 2.6 The purpose of this policy letter is to set out the steps that Guernsey (alongside Sark and Alderney should they wish) must have in place to allow the UK's contracting party status to be extended to Guernsey/the Bailiwick, thereby enabling an Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery to be established.

3 Background: ICCAT

¹ A country or territory may also have recognised cooperating status of ICCAT, but this is not proposed in relation to the Bailiwick.

- 3.1 ICCAT is an intergovernmental convention established in 1966 to manage tuna and tuna-like species, swordfish, and associated migratory fish stocks throughout the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent seas. It coordinates scientific research, sets catch limits and management measures, and monitors compliance among participating coastal states and fishing entities.
- 3.2 ICCAT covers species that migrate widely across Atlantic waters, including areas where Guernsey's commercial and recreational fleets operate or have direct ecological interest. Overfishing in any one region affects the whole stock, making international cooperation on this matter essential. As these stocks move across multiple jurisdictions, effective management requires collective international cooperation. ICCAT provides the principal forum for this work.²
- 3.3 ICCAT regulates approximately thirty species, including tuna, albacore, yellowfin, bigeye, swordfish, marlin, sailfish and several mackerel species.

4. Potential benefits of the extension of the UK's contracting party status

- 4.1 The increase in the abundance of Atlantic bluefin tuna and, more recently, common octopus in the English Channel, may be part of a wider climate change driven shift in fish assemblages.³
- 4.2 The primary reason for the extension of the UK's contracting party status is therefore strategic, enabling the Bailiwick to access the UK Atlantic bluefin tuna quota. This would also place our recreational and commercial anglers on a level playing field with neighbouring jurisdictions in Jersey, the UK and France. Although the current quota is relatively low—and therefore the immediate economic benefit modest—any future increase would provide greater economic value to the Bailiwick.
- 4.3 The local fishing industry has suffered significantly from the well documented recent octopus bloom, and access to the potentially lucrative Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery would support its economic viability. For the 2026-2029 quota period, 230 tonnes of Atlantic bluefin tuna quota will be available annually, distributed via approximately 30 commercial permits. Each permit holder will be able to land 4 – 5 tonnes of Atlantic bluefin tuna. Prices vary with size and quality, but each permit is likely to generate up to £50,000 for the licence holder.⁴ The number of permits that Bailiwick fishers receive is dependent on the application process administered by Defra. There are ongoing discussions regarding apportionment of quotas to specific regions that could further benefit the Bailiwick in time for the 2027 fishing season.

² [ICCAT-CICTA-CICAA](#)

³ [Impacts on Fish of Relevance to the UK and Ireland.pdf](#)

⁴ Estimates are based on 2026 price per kilo for Atlantic bluefin tuna.

4.4 Several charter vessels based in the Bailiwick would also be able to offer dedicated Atlantic bluefin tuna catch and release trips, contributing to the Bailiwick's visitor economy. If the fishery were to expand further, this may encourage the establishment of additional dedicated charter vessels. Consideration will also be given to allowing visiting Jersey or UK charter vessels holding an Atlantic bluefin tuna permit to fish in Bailiwick waters, potentially increasing the charter vessel visitor economy.

4.5 It is also probable that there will be additional spending on fishing tackle, fuel and other associated costs from participation in the recreational catch-and-release fishery.

5 Why the Bailiwick needs to obtain extension of the UK's contracting party status for vessels to fish for tuna

5.1 In order to establish any Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery in a country or territory—whether commercial or recreational— that country must be a contracting party of ICCAT or, as for the Bailiwick, a country's contracting party status must be extended to that territory.

5.2 Fishing for Atlantic bluefin tuna by a vessel which is not from a fleet of an ICCAT contracting party is treated as IUU fishing.

5.3 ICCAT maintains an IUU vessel list. Non-member or non-cooperating entities whose vessels fish for ICCAT-managed species illegally can be formally blacklisted. Blacklisting removes market access for the fish caught (import bans and refusal of landings), signals to other jurisdictions that the vessels are operating illegally and triggers enhanced inspection and reporting requirements at ports.

5.4 ICCAT's compliance recommendations include trader restrictive measures against both non-compliant members and non-members. These include prohibiting imports of Atlantic bluefin tuna from identified non-contracting parties and banning landings or transshipments by non-contracting parties involved in serious infringements.

5.5 ICCAT prohibits imports of Atlantic bluefin tuna from non-member countries engaged in illegal fishing, demonstrating that trade sanctions are part of its enforcement toolkit.⁵

5.6 Without ICCAT extension, any Bailiwick vessels engaging in illegal Atlantic bluefin tuna fishing would cause reputational damage to not only Guernsey,

⁵ [APPENDIX 8 - ICCAT Recommendations & Resolutions Relating to Compliance](#)

but to the UK as it is responsible for the Bailiwick's actions at the international level.

6 What is required for the UK's contracting party status to be extended?

- 6.1 In order for the UK's contracting party status to be extended to the Bailiwick, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark will be required to amend their respective Fishing Ordinances to enable the creation of a permit regime to allow recreational fishing (currently allowed by ICCAT on a catch and release basis only) within their territorial seas. By way of an example, this regime will allow conditions to be included on permits (for example, that any tuna caught must be released), introduce offences of recreational fishing for Atlantic bluefin tuna without a permit or in contravention of a permit, and introduce a fee for the grant of such permits.
- 6.2 Licence conditions on commercial fishing licences will also be added or amended in order to satisfy the requirements of ICCAT.
- 6.3 For both a recreational and commercial fishery, additional legislative prohibitions on the taking of various blue-water shark species, including shortfin mako and thresher sharks, will also be required. Further provisions will also be required in relation to IUU fishing.
- 6.4 A Memorandum of Understanding ("MoU") between the UK and the Bailiwick will also be entered into by the Committee *for* Economic Development ("the Committee") on behalf of Guernsey to address elements of compliance with ICCAT that do not require legislative change or conditions imposed on licences or permits. As part of Jersey's compliance process, it similarly entered into a separate MoU, e.g. in relation to the provision of information needed for the UK's reporting requirements.
- 6.5 The MoU, which is not legally binding, will cover the issues including: joint fishing operations, bycatch species, data submissions, biological sampling, monitoring and compliance, and statistical documents.
- 6.6 The Committee will be a signatory alongside Alderney and Sark. This was the action taken previously for the Bailiwick of Guernsey-Defra MoU that replaced the 2012 Fisheries Management Agreement; although it should be noted that both Alderney and Sark will need to consent to being party to this ICCAT MoU with Defra.
- 6.7 After the extension of the UK's contracting party status of ICCAT, the Bailiwick's annual contribution is expected to cost approximately £4,000 – £5,000. The cost will be recovered through the introduction of a licence fee for recreational permits.

7 The application process for quota distribution

- 7.1 Subject to the ICCAT extension, the current expectation is that applications for commercial fishing licences for the 2027 fishing season (which opens in July 2027) will be administered directly by Defra. Bailiwick applicants would therefore apply alongside other UK and Crown Dependency applicants under a centralised scoring system. For the 2027 season, it is anticipated that only 30 commercial licences will be available across the UK and Crown Dependencies. There is no guarantee that a commercial licence will be awarded to a Bailiwick of Guernsey-based operator. It will not be possible for a non-Bailiwick of Guernsey registered vessel to fish commercially for bluefin tuna in Bailiwick waters.
- 7.2 It is proposed that recreational permits would be administered locally by Guernsey's Sea Fisheries on behalf of all Islands as is currently the case for other types of licences, with priority given to charter vessels. While final allocations are still to be confirmed, it is expected that approximately 25 catch-and-release recreational permits may be available to Bailiwick applicants for the 2027 fishing season. Fees will be built into the permitting legislation to fully cover the cost of ICCAT membership and associated administration. Before any recreational bluefin tuna permit is granted, an applicant will need to have completed a Defra-approved training course on handling, safety and welfare standards.

8 Notification obligations under the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement

- 8.1 Under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the UK (on behalf of the Bailiwick) is required to notify the EU of any new fisheries management measures that are likely to affect EU vessels fishing in Bailiwick waters. Defra has advised that updating each Island's respective Fishing Ordinances would not require such notification.

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 The costs for each jurisdiction of being a contracting party to ICCAT are calculated based on the organisation's formula for contracting parties, which considers factors like GDP, tuna catch and canned production, as well as the number of panel meetings attended. Defra has informed Guernsey officers that the Bailiwick's contribution following extension of the UK's contracting party status to ICCAT is expected to be approximately £4,000 - £5,000 per year, and it is anticipated that this will be covered by a licence fee for recreational permits.
- 9.2 Administration of recreational licence permit compliance checks and data reporting will be done within existing resources by Guernsey Sea Fisheries.

10 Compliance with Rule 4

- 10.1 Rule 4 of the Rules of Procedure of the States of Deliberation and their Committees set out the information which must be included in, or appended to, motions laid before the States.
- 10.2 In accordance with Rule 4(1)(a), the propositions which this policy letter accompanies contributes to the States' objectives and policy plans through enabling economic benefits through our blue economy and diversifying economic opportunities.
- 10.3 In accordance with Rule 4(1)(b), consultation has been undertaken with St James' Chambers, the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure, the Policy and Resources Committee, Alderney and Sark.
- 10.4 In accordance with Rule 4(1)(c), the propositions have been submitted to His Majesty's Procureur for advice on any legal or constitutional implications.
- 10.5 In accordance with Rule 4(1)(d), after the extension of the UK's participant status of ICCAT, the Bailiwick's annual contribution is expected to be approximately £4,000 – 5,000 and it is anticipated that this will be covered by a licence fee for recreational permits, meaning that it would be cost-neutral for the States.
- 10.6 In accordance with Rule 4(2), the propositions relate to the Committee's responsibility for the administration of the Bailiwick of Guernsey fishing vessel licensing scheme and enforcing fisheries legislation on land and at sea.
- 10.7 The propositions have the unanimous support of the Committee.

Yours faithfully

A Kazantseva-Miller
President

M S Laine
Vice President

R M Humphreys
M Leadbeater
L Van Katwyk

B R Duerden
Non-States Member