



SAVE BLUEFIN TUNA

A Remarkable Species

Bluefin tuna are an ocean-going fish that grow up to 10 feet long and can weigh 1,200 pounds. Unlike almost all fish, bluefin are warm-blooded and able to regulate their body temperature, which helps during their epic journeys across the Atlantic. Bluefin tuna are top ocean predators and sometimes hunt cooperatively, much like wolves. With streamlined bodies and retractable fins, bluefin can bolt through the water at speeds of 50 miles per hour and can cross oceans in the course of only a few weeks.

The Problem

Prized as a high-value dish at sushi restaurants, bluefin are being pushed toward extinction by decades of overfishing. The International Union for Conservation of Nature lists two species of bluefin, the Atlantic and the southern, as endangered or critically endangered, on its “Red List” of imperiled species. The Pacific bluefin tuna is not yet listed, but overfishing is now occurring, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service. Sadly, bluefin remains on the menu in some restaurants. The sushi market keeps prices for tuna high — a single tuna sold for \$177,000 in a fish market in 2010 — and encourages illegal and unreported fishing.

The Atlantic bluefin’s plight was made much worse in spring 2010 when BP’s oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico fouled prime spawning ground. Scientists estimate the spill killed 20 percent of juvenile tuna in the area. The western Atlantic stock of bluefin has dropped by more than 80 percent since 1970. The eastern Atlantic stock dropped by 74 percent between 1957 and 2007.

Atlantic bluefin tuna simply can’t survive if these kinds of declines continue.

The Solution

1. This species badly needs legal protections. The Center for Biological Diversity has petitioned the federal government to protect Atlantic bluefin under the Endangered Species Act. That petition is currently under consideration.

2. International regulators have refused to adopt fishing quotas to protect bluefin, so now it’s up to consumers to eliminate demand. The Center has launched a bluefin boycott, calling on consumers to pledge to avoid bluefin and restaurants that serve it. Chefs and restaurants are also being urged to sign a pledge not to buy or serve this imperiled species.

You Can Help

We can save bluefin tuna. Sign the Center’s boycott pledge today, pass it on to your friends and family, post it to Facebook and other social networking sites and alert your local sushi restaurants about this campaign. By cutting market demand for this species, we’ll reduce fishing and save thousands of bluefin.

Voice your support for protecting bluefin tuna under the Endangered Species Act. Tell the Fisheries Service that bluefin need immediate protection — and then tell your congressional representative and write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

Go to bluefinboycott.org to sign the pledge, print out a poster, get help writing a letter to the editor and fisheries managers and learn more.

