



STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS.

S.I. No. 352 of 2024



SEA-FISHERIES (BLUEFIN TUNA) REGULATIONS 2024

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I, CHARLIE MCCONALOGUE, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, in exercise of the powers conferred on me by sections 3 and 15 of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 (No. 8 of 2006), hereby make the following regulations:

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Sea-Fisheries (Bluefin Tuna) Regulations 2024.

2. These Regulations do not apply to a person onboard a fishing vessel that is—

- (a) licensed under section 4 (as inserted by section 97 of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006) of the Fisheries (Amendment) Act 2003,
- (b) entered in the Register of Fishing Boats maintained under section 74 of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006, or required by regulations under section 76 of that Act to be so entered, and
- (c) registered under the Merchant Shipping (Registry, Lettering and Numbering of Fishing Boats) Regulations 2005 (S.I. No. 261 of 2005).

3. In these Regulations:

“bluefin tuna” means *Thunnus thynnus*;

“section 14 authorisation” means an authorisation issued by the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications under section 14 (as substituted by section 4 of the Fisheries (Amendment) Act 1962) of the Fisheries (Consolidation) Act 1959, permitting such person, as the vessel operator of a specific vessel identified in the authorisation, to target bluefin tuna in a catch, tag and release fishery.

4. A person shall not target, retain on board, tranship, transfer, tow, land, transport, store, offer for sale or sell bluefin tuna.

5. The holder of a section 14 authorisation shall not remove from the sea a bluefin tuna caught alive but, if so removed, the bluefin tuna shall be—

- (a) carefully handled and returned immediately alive to the waters from which it was taken, and
- (b) recorded, and reported, in accordance with Regulation 7.

6. The holder of a section 14 authorisation shall, in respect of a bluefin tuna that dies during capture—

- (a) return the bluefin tuna immediately to the waters from which it was taken, and
- (b) record and report the event in accordance with Regulation 7.

7. (1) The holder of a section 14 authorisation shall, if engaged in the catching, tagging and releasing of bluefin tuna:

- (a) on or before return to port, record bluefin tuna caught, and/or tagged and released and/or any bluefin tuna that died on that trip in the fish data collection form, and record such data electronically on a system identified by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, as published on its website, and,
- (b) no later than 24 hours after the return to port, report, by means of a completed survey trip and quantitative data report, any bluefin tuna that were successfully caught and/or tagged and released or any bluefin tuna that died, or were removed, in accordance with Regulation 5, on that trip to a body established under statute, identified by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, as published on its website.

(2) The form of the completed survey trip and quantitative data report referred to in paragraph (1)(b) shall be specified on the website of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority and information required in such a report shall include information on fishing time, effort (number of persons engaged in fishing), fish playing time, misses, and any bluefin tuna that is caught and/or tagged and released.

8. A record and report made by the holder of a section 14 authorisation in accordance with Regulation 7 shall include the following particulars:

- (i) the name of the vessel;
- (ii) the name of the vessel operator responsible for the catch and/or tag and release of the bluefin tuna;
- (iii) the length of the largest bluefin tuna caught in centimetres, or where only one bluefin tuna is caught, the length of that bluefin tuna;
- (iv) all bluefin tuna catches and/or tagged and released, alive or dead, in numbers;
- (v) tag identification details of each bluefin tuna caught and, where a previously tagged bluefin tuna is caught during fishing, the existing tag identification details of such fish.

9. Where the holder of a section 14 authorisation targets bluefin tuna by means of a vessel, the operator and owner of the vessel shall ensure that a fully

functioning vessel monitoring system is installed and operational at all times on the vessel and is capable of transmitting, in a manner, and to a destination, as may be specified by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, live data on the date and time, and on the speed, heading and position of the vessel.

10. For the purposes of Regulation 9, a “vessel monitoring system” shall mean a satellite-tracking device that transmits live data on the date and time, and fishing vessel’s identification, geographical position, course and speed.

11. The Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction (Bluefin Tuna) Regulations 2019 (S.I. No. 265 of 2019) are revoked.



GIVEN under my Official Seal,
26 June, 2024.

CHARLIE MCCONALOGUE,
Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the instrument and does not purport to be a legal interpretation.)

These Regulations provide that any person not authorised to target bluefin tuna in a catch, tag and release fishery shall not target, retain on board, tranship, transfer, tow, land, transport, store, offer for sale or sell bluefin tuna.

These Regulations provide that any bluefin tuna caught alive in a bluefin tuna catch, tag and release fishery shall not be removed from the sea but, if so removed, the bluefin tuna shall be carefully handled and returned immediately alive to the waters from which it was taken, and recorded, and reported.

These Regulations provide that for any bluefin tuna that dies during capture in a bluefin tuna catch, tag and release fishery, the bluefin tuna shall be returned immediately to the waters from which it was taken, and the event recorded and reported.

These Regulations also provide that a fully functioning vessel monitoring system shall be installed and operational at all times on the vessel that is used to target bluefin tuna in a catch, tag and release fishery and that the vessel monitoring system is capable of transmitting, in a manner, and to a destination, as may be specified by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, live data on the date and time, and on the speed, heading and position of the vessel.

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