



PRESS RELEASE

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Bluefin Tuna Open Season 2019

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Climate Change (DEHCC) would like to inform all anglers that the open season for Bluefin tuna in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters (BGTW) commences on Sunday 16th June 2019 and ends on the 14th October 2019 or until the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is reached. Anglers are reminded that a Class K licence is required to fish for Bluefin tuna and there will be a total allowable catch of 15.5 tonnes after which the season will close.

The DEHCC would also like to remind anglers that the practice of 'popping' for tuna, which has been known to cause serious injury to dolphins, will not be allowed inside the Dolphin Protection Zone approximately north of Rosia Bay. This area forms part of the conservation measures intended to provide a refuge for dolphins that frequent our waters. Anglers targeting Bluefin tuna are advised that casting any lines close to dolphins, which are protected species, may result in their fishing licenses being revoked. Other fishing methods will continue to be allowed within the Dolphin Protection Zone.

Building on the measures introduced last year, a Bluefin tuna tagging programme will also be implemented by the DEHCC. Anglers are also required to report any recreational catches of Billfish species, such as the Mediterranean Swordfish, which are locally classified as Species in Need of Strict Protection.

A dedicated office and landing point has been setup within the North Mole (No. 1 Jetty). Anglers are advised that all tuna and billfish catches must be reported and weighed at the landing point where vessels will be able to dock. The landing point will be manned [from 09:00 to 14:30 \(Monday-Saturday\)](#). Any catches landed [from 14:30](#) to sunset must also be reported and weighed at the landing point by contacting the on-call landing point staff on mobile number [54020033](#). This service will also be operational on Sundays and public holidays. Landing point staff will assist anglers in completing the required catch form and should be contacted as soon as a fish is landed on board a vessel. Anglers are reminded that the minimum size of Bluefin tuna that can be caught is 30kgs and 115cm fork length. The minimum size for Mediterranean Swordfish is 90 cm excluding the sword length. Further information on minimum sizes can be found online by accessing the

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Department's Species Identification Booklet
(https://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/new/sites/default/files/HMGoG_Documents/Species_Identification_Booklet.pdf).

The DEHCC's Environmental Protection & Research Unit (EPRU) will be working very closely with both the Royal Gibraltar Police and HM Customs during the open season in order to monitor vessel activity in BGTW and ensure that the requirements of the Tuna Preservation Regulations are adhered to. As part of its duties, the EPRU will be emphasising the need to adhere to the Cetacean Protocol. The objective of the Protocol is to protect dolphins and whales in BGTW. It can be viewed online from <http://www.thinkinggreen.gov.gi/biodiversity/marine>. Vessels are required to maintain a minimum distance of 60 metres from any dolphin or whale whilst navigating in BGTW. The Protocol also establishes a 500 metre radius from the animals within which vessels must travel at a constant speed of no more than 4 knots or no greater than the slowest animal in the group.

For further information on the Bluefin tuna open season please contact the DEHCC on Tel: [200 48450](tel:20048450).