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A Norvegian ship transporting bluefin tuna
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Mediterranean Tuna Fishery Could Be Closed

International pressure on the matter constantly increases

New international pressure adds to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), in regard to closing the bluefin tuna fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea, as Italy and Spain requested the protection of the fish and the creation of tuna sanctuaries throughout breeding grounds, respectively. Italian fisheries advocated for their option as the lesser of two evils. Less fish is more than no fish, they said.

 The ICCAT is scheduled to meet in Morocco in about three weeks, to discuss new rules for the exploitation of fisheries under its control. In a review of fishing activities, dating a little while back, the international body called the management of fishing activities "an international disgrace." Also, the organization asked for the fishery in the Mediterranean to be closed, at least temporarily, until measures to ensure the sustainable usage of the resource can be set in place.

 At the World Conservation Congress, governmental delegates from most countries also requested the closure of the area, pending an investigation on how the fishery came to be endangered by complete fish disappearance. "These signs from Italy and Spain are just the latest in a litany of calls for the closure of the imperiled Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery," said WWF Mediterranean Head of Fisheries, Dr. Sergi Tudela.

 The Italian fleet is held especially accountable for this situation, as international experts say that Italian ships violated the rules agreed upon by all states in the European Union on repeated occasions. On the bright side, the Spanish government, which currently holds the largest fishing quota for tuna in the area, has agreed to create protected areas in all of the 3 most important spawning regions in the world - the south of the Balearics, in the Central Mediterranean, and in the Levant Sea.

 "Both a suspension of fishing and the creation of sanctuaries in main spawning areas will be key to the sustainable management of bluefin tuna in these troubled waters," Tudela concluded.

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