

# Application to fish Eastern Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) 2025

## Guidance

### Introduction

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and Defra ran a trial UK commercial fishery for bluefin tuna (BFT) in 2023 and 2024. The aim of these trials was to evaluate the sustainability of a small scale commercial BFT fishery and the social and economic benefits this new fishery could potentially provide to UK fishers.

In 2025, the BFT fishery will transition into a routine UK commercial fishery.

The fishery will consist of 15 commercial vessels able to fish for BFT with 3 tonnes of quota per vessel. The fishery will be open from 1 July to 31 December 2025.

### To be eligible to apply you must:

- Have a commercial fishing licence and be registered in either England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland.
- Apply for a vessel of 12 metres and under in overall length.
- Agree to have individual fishing trips last less than 24 hours in duration.
- Agree to use rod and reel fishing gears only. No chumming will be permitted.
- Agree to record all catches of bluefin tuna and submit an ICCAT Electronic Bluefin Tuna Catch Document (eBCD) record for all landings (see reporting conditions).

You may only hold either a bluefin tuna commercial or recreational permit at one time. If you are applying for the commercial and recreational BFT fishery, please state which you would wish to accept if you were successful in both.

Commercial	
Recreational	

## How to complete and submit the application

Applications must be completed on an individual basis per vessel. No group applications will be accepted or applications for more than one vessel per application.

Applicants will be required to complete vessel, nominee and owner details. Applicants will also need to provide answers to two questions which relate to how applicants are best placed to deliver an environmentally sustainable fishery which brings economic and social benefits to the United Kingdom.

Consideration will also be given to an applicant's history of compliance with regulatory requirements relating to fishing. Further detail on what will be considered is available in the terms and conditions.

When completing this form, you should:

- answer all required questions. Incomplete applications forms will not be considered and will cause your application to be unsuccessful.
- contact the UK single issuing authority (UKSIA) at [BFT.Commercial@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:BFT.Commercial@marinemanagement.org.uk) if you experience any problems completing this application.

To submit this form, you can either:

- email your form to [BFT.Commercial@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:BFT.Commercial@marinemanagement.org.uk)
- post your form to: Marine Management Organisation C/o Liz Gee Pakefield Road, Lowestoft NR33 0HT. If you are planning on posting your application please let us know to expect it by emailing [BFT.Commercial@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:BFT.Commercial@marinemanagement.org.uk) or phoning 0300 123 1032.

Applications are open from 20 March 2025 and will close at midnight on 21 April 2025. Applications received outside of this period will not be considered.

## Next steps

Due to the commitments made in the 2025 UK fishing plan to ICCAT there are a limited number of vessels that will be authorised to fish for BFT.

Applying for an authorisation does not guarantee that your application will be successful, and you must not fish for BFT without a letter of authorisation from the MMO.

If your application is successful, you will be required to attend a 'report training' session prior to receiving your permit.

The application assessment process is as follows:

- Once the application period closes all identifying details will be redacted from your application to be entered into the blind sift. Each application will be allocated a number so no personal details are seen during the sift.
- During the blind sift, a panel of MMO and Defra colleagues will individually assess each application, and a moderation exercise will be completed where required.
- Only applications that score 3 or 4 (information on scoring is available in section 4) on both questions will be included in the random selection.
- A random selection will then take place. The random selection order will be stored and gives a list of the order the authorisations to be issued in.

Licence authorisations will be awarded to those who obtain a 3 or 4 in both questions and are then selected by the random selection tool.

Unfortunately, due to the volume of applications received individual feedback will not be provided.

MMO will notify successful applicants in late May before the opening of the fishery on 1 July 2025.

Licence authorisations will be non-transferable and valid for the 2025 fishing season only. Licence authorisations will not provide successful applicants with a track record for future quota considerations and provide no guarantee of access to BFT quota in future.

If you are successful, you will receive an authorisation letter to fish BFT, this is in addition to your domestic licence. Fishing for BFT must not commence until you have received the letter of authorisation.

Prior to commencing fishing for BFT those whose applications are successful will be required to do the following:

- Register their vessel on the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) registry via the MMO. Fishing must not begin until 15 days after the successful vessel details appear on the ICCAT registry.
- Register on the ICCAT Electronic Bluefin Tuna Catch Document Programme (eBCD) online system.
- Complete training on the ICCAT eBCD system.

During fishing for BFT successful applicants must:

- Comply with all conditions within their domestic fishing vessel licence and additional conditions contained within the authorisation.
- Only fish for bluefin tuna within the UK Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), excluding Northern Irish and Welsh waters.
- Have individual fishing trips last less than 24 hours in duration.
- Use rod and reel fishing gears only, with no chumming permitted.
- Record all catches using paper or electronic logbooks at sea.

- Report all catches to the UK Fisheries Monitoring Centre (UKFMC) or UK single liaison office (UKSLO).
- Report all catches on the ICCAT eBCD system.
- Agree to be contacted as part of the formal evaluation of the fishery.

### **Complaints and disputes process**

For complaints about the quality of customer service or disputes, please contact the UKSIA using the published [customer complaints procedure](#).

.....

\* Required

## Section 1: Vessel Details

1. Vessel Name \*
2. Length of vessel (12 m and under vessels to apply only) \*
3. Port Letter Number (PLN) \*
4. Registry of Shipping and Seaman (RSS) Number \*
5. Domestic Fishing Vessel Licence Number \*
6. Vessel International Radio Call Signal (IRCS)
7. ICCAT serial number (if available)

*Note: that not having an ICCAT serial number will not reduce the chances of you receiving a bluefin tuna licence. We ask this simply for administrative purposes.*

8. Which ports would you be operating from and landing into? \*

*Note: Defra must register all landing ports with ICCAT. Landings of bluefin tuna can only be made into designated ports registered with ICCAT. Please find the list of UK ports registered to land Bluefin with ICCAT: [Designated ports for UK flagged vessels landing bluefin tuna - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/designated-ports-for-uk-flagged-vessels-landing-bluefin-tuna)*

## Section 2: Nominee Details

*Your authorisation letter will be sent to the nominee email address you enter below. However, if any of the details do not match those already on record, we may need to contact you.*

*The email address supplied must be the one registered with your fisheries administration for the vessel's Domestic Fishing Vessel Licence.*

1. Name of Nominee, as appears on your domestic fishing vessel licence \*
2. Address \*
3. Email Address \*
4. Telephone Number (see example format +44123456789) \*

### Section 3: Owner Details

*If any of the owner details do not match those already on record, we may need to contact you.*

☐ Check the circle to confirm that owner details are the same as nominee details.

1. Name of vessel owner\*
2. Owner Address \*
3. Owner Email Address \*
4. Owner Telephone Number (see example format +44123456789) \*

## Section 4: Fishing Objectives questions

These questions relate to meeting the Fisheries Objectives in section 1 of the Fisheries Act 2020 and in particular the sustainability and national benefit objectives.

Questions 1 and 2 will be assessed with the following scoring system:

- 0 - No demonstration. No attempt made to answer the question. The application will not be considered further.
- 1 - Minimal demonstration. For example, but not limited to: some information has been provided which relates to one or two bullet points suggested to help answer the question. However, there is a lack of detail or evidence provided.
- 2 - Low level of demonstration. For example, but not limited to: some information has been provided which relates to the majority of the bullet points suggested to help answer the question; some detail or evidence has been provided.
- 3 - Good level of demonstration. For example, but not limited to: some information has been provided which relates to all of the bullet points suggested to help answer the question; a good level of detail or evidence has been provided.
- 4 - Excellent level of demonstration. For example, but not limited to: detailed information has been provided which relates to all of the bullet points suggested to help answer the question; very good level of detail and evidence has been provided with multiple examples.

If you are successful and at the end of the season the vessel in your application is found to not to have undertaken any specific activities outlined in your application, it may jeopardise your ability to apply to the fishery next year.

1. Explain how your vessel set-up, knowledge and experience will enable the sustainable fishing of bluefin tuna (BFT) and bring the best quality product to market.\*

When answering this question you may wish to include information on:

- The suitability of your vessel for catching and storing BFT, and the equipment and handling processes you would employ to maintain quality of BFT.
- Your knowledge and experience of hook and line fishing to efficiently catch BFT and minimise catches of undersize BFT and other species.
- Equipment, knowledge and experience to land, store and transport high quality BFT.
- How you would ensure the full traceability/legality of any BFT caught.





*PLEASE NOTE YOUR ANSWER IS LIMITED TO 1000 WORDS*



*PLEASE NOTE YOUR ANSWER IS LIMITED TO 1000 WORDS*

2. Explain how your involvement in the BFT fishery will bring economic, social and employment benefits to the UK. \*

When answering this question you may wish to include information on:

- Any potential direct and indirect economic and employment benefits e.g. how landing and selling of BFT could benefit harbours/processors/markets/people etc.
- Any potential social benefits e.g. culture, education, community.
- How these benefits may relate to local areas.

*PLEASE NOTE YOUR ANSWER IS LIMITED TO 1000 WORDS*



*PLEASE NOTE YOUR ANSWER IS LIMITED TO 1000 WORDS*

## Section 5: Terms and conditions and declaration

### Terms and conditions

By issuing this expression of interest, UKSIA is not bound to accept any application or grant a bluefin tuna fishing authorisation to any applicant. MMO reserves the right to withdraw or terminate the application exercise at any time.

MMO reserve the right to refuse applications due to an applicant's history of compliance with regulatory requirements relating to fishing. This includes refusing to progress applications where a master/owner in the application has been found guilty of any fisheries offences in the last three years which resulted in an Official Written Warning (OWW), Financial Administrative Penalties (FAPs) or finding of guilt by a court.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that they understand the requirements for this expression of interest process. If any information is unclear, you can raise a query with the UKSIA. The UKSIA will respond to all clarifications as quickly as possible but cannot guarantee a minimum response time. It is the responsibility of applicants to make sure that they raise any queries sufficiently early to allow them to submit their expressions of interest by the deadline. If a query is relevant to other applicants, the UKSIA will share all clarifications with other applicants, as and when necessary.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring they submit a complete and accurate application and provide all the information requested. Only completed applications will be considered. Once applications are submitted, amendments will not be accepted. If they wish to make an amendment, applicants should withdraw their existing application and submit a new application before the expiry of the expression of interest deadline.

Applicants may withdraw an application at any time by contacting the UKSIA. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered except in exceptional circumstances at the UKSIA's discretion. The UKSIA may also, at its own discretion, change the deadline and in such circumstances, the UKSIA will notify all applicants of any change via email.

MMO reserves the right to amend or withdraw this guidance and the application exercise at any time. This could include by way of example amending the process for submitting applications or extending the deadline.

## Declaration

By submitting this application, you are agreeing that the information you have provided is to the best of your knowledge, true and accurate.

Any personal information provided within your application would be handled only for the purpose of processing your application and for any required monitoring during or post 2025 season. Your application without personal details included will be shared with the panel appointed to consider applications.

You can find out more about the MMO's standards for requesting and processing personal information in the [MMO personal information charter](#).

The UK is required to share information with ICCAT on fishing vessels used for the purposes of the commercial exploitation of bluefin tuna resources including name and address of owner(s) and operator(s), which may be published by ICCAT. For more information read the [ICCAT recommendation 22-08](#).

*I am applying for a bluefin tuna authorisation as a (please indicate one): \**

- ☐ Vessel Owner  
☐ Vessel licence nominee  
☐ Vessel Agent

☐ I confirm that by completing this form and submitting to the UKSIA I have the authorisation of the vessel owner(s) to act on their behalf. \*

I understand that the UKSIA may contact the vessel owner/nominee/agent directly in relation to this application. \*

I confirm that I accept the terms and conditions laid out above. \*

Name .....

Date.....