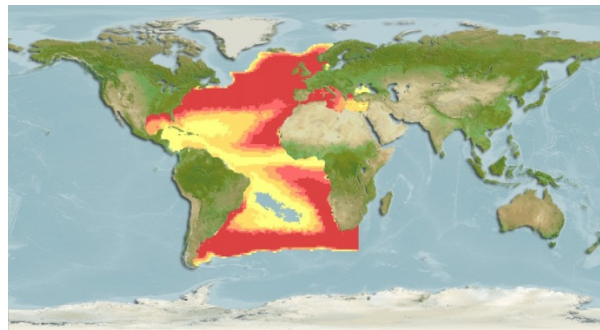


STUDENT ROLE PLAY BACKGROUND INFORMATION



ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA FISHERY ICCAT MEETING

The Atlantic Bluefin tuna is one of the largest, fastest, and most highly evolved fish in the sea. They average 6.5 feet in length and 550 pounds in weight, but can be larger. These fish are homeothermic, which means they are warm-blooded and maintain a constant body temperature (like us). As a result, they can survive in warm and cool waters. This allows the Atlantic Bluefin tuna to be a highly migratory species, breeding and spawning in the warm waters of the Mediterranean Sea in the East and the Gulf of Mexico in the West. The red and yellow areas on the map below indicate the historical range of the Atlantic Bluefin tuna.



Bluefin tuna have been eaten for centuries, but since 1970, the demand for Bluefin tuna as a food source has drastically increased. As a result, the Atlantic population has decreased by about 70% in the last 30 years and Atlantic Bluefin tuna populations are now severely threatened. Many nations have set their own restrictions and catch quotas (maximum number that can be caught) for this fishery. The International Commission for Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT: <http://www.iccat.int/en/>) helps monitor this fishery on an international level. ICCAT has 48 member nations and meets every two years to vote on catch quotas for the overall fishery and each nation individually. Each member nation may cast one vote at these meetings. As a class, we will simulate an actual ICCAT meeting and each of you will take on a role as a stakeholder from one of four member nations. As a group, we will then try to reach consensus regarding the following proposal: Should global fishing for Atlantic Bluefin tuna be banned?