

SAMPLE ROLE CARDS

United States Representatives

UNITED STATES-AMERICAN BLUEFIN TUNA ASSOCIATION (ABTA)

The ABTA was formed to protect the Atlantic Bluefin tuna fishermen's rights to access Bluefin tuna and catch their fair share of Bluefin tuna. ICCAT agreements have allotted 57% of the international Western Atlantic catch quota to the United States, and one of ABTA's goals is to protect that share. Additionally, the ABTA is willing to sponsor independent research and stock assessments and make efforts to protect the food source of the Atlantic Bluefin tuna population. As a member of the ABTA, your primary concern is the Atlantic Bluefin tuna fishery. Populations of these fish must persist in order for fishermen to continue their livelihoods.

UNITED STATES-SCIENTIST

It is clear that Bluefin tuna meat is in high demand, particularly in Japan. It is also clear that populations of Atlantic Bluefin tuna have been decreasing rapidly in the last 30 years. It is estimated that as few as 9000 breeding adults are left in the North American stock of Atlantic Bluefin tuna. These fish are slow to mature, reaching maturity between 4 and 5 years of age, sometimes even later. There are many different methods in which these fish are caught, including rod & reel, long lines, traps, and purse seine nets. Often, juvenile Bluefin tuna are caught in traps and "farmed" until they mature. Catching both adult and juvenile fish will severely deplete the population, leaving few fish to repopulate. It is estimated that it could take anywhere from 4.5 to 14 years for the population to double. To make matters worse, the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010 occurred just before the beginning of the breeding/spawning season for Atlantic Bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico. The Loop Current in this area may have carried larvae directly into the oil. Your main concern is the population of this fish. The population needs time to recover.

UNITED STATES-GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

While fishing for Atlantic Bluefin tuna is currently allowed in the United States, consideration has been given to the state of the overall population. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) conducted a population assessment to determine whether or not it was necessary to give the Atlantic Bluefin tuna protection under the Endangered Species Act. The data indicated that endangered status and additional protection are not necessary. Fisheries provide an income for many coastal communities in the United States. As a government official, your primary concern is the people of your nation. With the United States already in an economic crisis, the nation cannot afford to lose this fishery.

UNITED STATES-NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPRESENTATIVE

The mission of NMFS is to protect living marine resources through science-based conservation and management, as well as to promote healthy ecosystems. As part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), NMFS contributed to collection of data to assess the population of the Atlantic Bluefin tuna. The data collected determined that the population does not require special protection under the Endangered Species Act. As a NMFS representative, your primary concern is to optimize the benefits of living marine resources to the nation. Therefore, your goal is to help the people of the nation get the most out of marine resources.

Japan Representatives

JAPAN-MITSUBISHI CORPORATION REPRESENTATIVE

Mitsubishi Corporation conducts business based upon three principles: corporate responsibility to society, integrity and fairness, and global understanding through business. Mitsubishi Corporation tries to preserve the global environment and pursue sustainable development in all aspects of its business. Among many of Mitsubishi Corporation's environmental initiatives, is looking for ways to curb climate change. As a start, the corporation has made all of its carbon emissions data public. Much of Japan's seafood is imported, and Mitsubishi Corporation is a major supplier of seafood to the Japanese market. As a result, conserving fish species is essential for long-term success for the business, as well as availability of seafood for future generations. The corporation recognizes that stocks of Atlantic Bluefin tuna are overfished, and is willing to take measures to ensure long-term sustainability of the fishery. As a representative of Mitsubishi Corporation, your concern is to support the mission of the corporation, as well as to serve customers/consumers to the best of your ability.

JAPAN-GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

Traditionally, seafood has been a large part of the diet of people in Japan. Japan is known to import, rather than catch, much of its seafood. For 1.2 billion people in the world, fish is the main source of protein. This is true for many people in Japan. As a government official, your concern is that the people of your nation continue to have a stable source of protein. At the last meeting of the ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), the chairman stated that there is "no evidence of a fishery collapse." The consensus after this meeting was that no new regulations or protections need to be implemented.

JAPAN-SCIENTIST

The Bluefin tuna is in high demand and provides a source of protein for many people in Japan. Populations have been declining since the 1970s, but ICCAT has been monitoring populations and setting regulations on catch since 1967. The population should be well-managed. However, there is some illegal fishing that is not monitored and could deplete stocks. Also, some long-line fisheries result in bycatch of Bluefin tuna. Though fishermen attempt to throw these fish back, they are often dead. A new type of hook has been developed for long-line fishing, which will straighten out when a Bluefin tuna gets caught, but stay curved for smaller fish like yellowfin or marlin. This will help eliminate bycatch. Still, it should be noted that the population of Bluefin tuna, which is clearly very low, will need a great deal of time to recover. The population could take anywhere from 4.5 to 14 years to double.

Algeria Representatives

ALGERIA-GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

Algeria has a quota of 1500 tons of Bluefin tuna per year. About 60% of the quota is caught by domestic fishermen and the other 40% by foreign trawlers, including fleets from Asia. The Bluefin tuna fishery is an extremely profitable one. Populations may be declining, but Algerian fishermen catch only their quota. Other fishing fleets may not do the same. Developed nations, like those foreign trawlers in our area, should decrease their catch so that developing nations can expand their fisheries. Fish farming is also becoming popular in the Mediterranean Sea. Fish are an important source of protein in the diet of many people in Algeria. As a government official, your main concern is the health and livelihood of the people of Algeria – the fishery provides jobs and food.

ALGERIA-FISHERMAN

The catch quota for Algeria is 1500 tons of Bluefin tuna. Foreign trawlers fish in the same areas as local fishermen, catching a good portion of this quota. The foreign trawlers are much better equipped to catch Bluefin tuna than the trawlers of the Algerian fishermen. This competitive disadvantage drastically reduces the income of many Algerian fishermen. In addition, much of the local catch is exported to other nations, like Japan. It is very rare that consumers in Algeria find Bluefin tuna available for purchase. As a fisherman, your main concern is your livelihood and that of your family.

European Union (EU) Representatives

EUROPEAN UNION (EU)-GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

Bluefin tuna fisheries are an important part of the economy in the EU. These fisheries are especially prevalent in Malta, Spain, France, and Italy. As much as 70% of the EU's catch is by purse seine net. The fish caught are transferred to cages at sea to grow and mature before being sold. The population of Bluefin tuna has dropped 80% since the 1970s. The EU follows the guidelines and quotas set out by the ICCAT in 2006 to protect the population of Bluefin tuna in the Atlantic and Mediterranean. In addition, the EU has significantly increased its efforts to protect the Bluefin tuna in 2011. The EU bans joint fishing operations with other members of ICCAT and carefully monitors tuna from capture to market. Your main concern as the government official of the EU is the well-being of the people and economy of your nation.

EUROPEAN UNION (EU)-SCIENTIST

The Eastern stock of Atlantic Bluefin tuna has dropped 80% since the early 1970s. In the past, ICCAT has set restrictions and quotas to protect the Bluefin tuna population. Some nations follow the restrictions and adhere to the quotas more closely than others. As a result, there is some illegal fishing, as well as bycatch, threatening the already threatened population. This particular species of fish can have a fairly long population doubling time – from 4.5 to 14 years. Besides being overfished, Bluefin tuna are also caught as juveniles. Some fisheries will catch fish, transfer them to cages, and allow them to grow and mature before selling them. While this provides the fishermen with a greater profit, the fish are not given time to reproduce and supplement the population. As a scientist, your main concern is the survival of this population of fish.

EUROPEAN UNION (EU)-FISHERMAN

Tonnara is an ancient fishing technique still used in Sicily and Sardinia. In this technique, Bluefin tuna are caught and pulled on board a boat using only the fishermen's arm strength. The entire process is a centuries-old tradition, including ancient songs and a bit of blood and gore. While this is a somewhat gruesome tradition, it is extremely selective, and therefore not as harmful to the ecosystem. Much smaller amounts of Bluefin tuna are caught this way – this is not like a commercial fishery. Tuna have been an important part of cultures throughout history, from being used as homeopathic remedies to essential parts of poetry or music. Because of the decline in this fish's population, only 10 tonnara remain today, as compared to 200 before the decline of the population. As a fisherman, your concern is to preserve both your culture and your livelihood.