

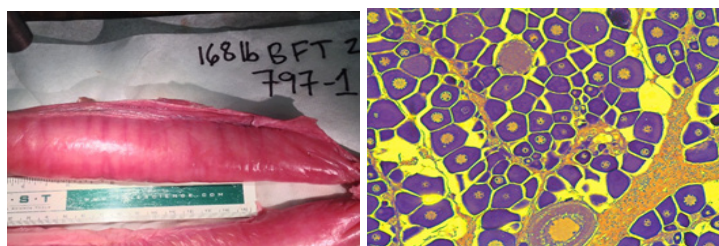
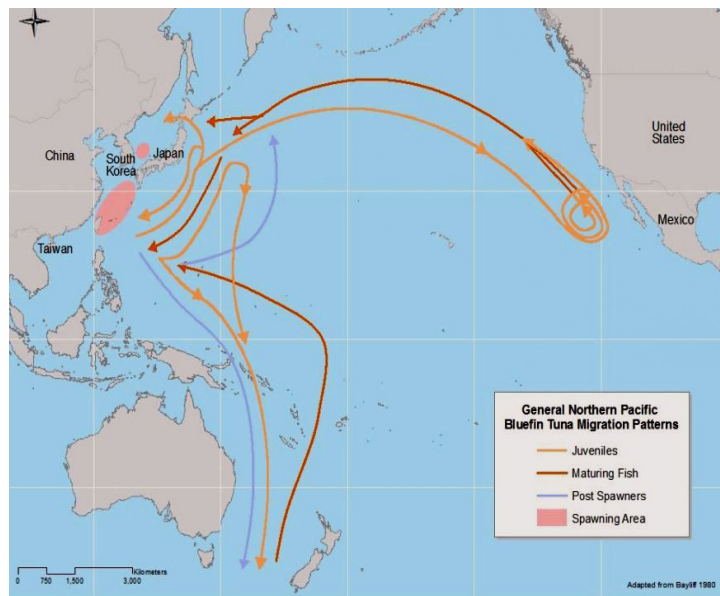
Got Bluefin Tuna?

Share your carcasses with researchers!

The Highly Migratory Species research team at NOAA's Southwest Fisheries Science Center needs your help collecting gonads (reproductive parts), stomachs, and otoliths from locally-caught tuna. In recent years, large (150-275 lb.) Pacific bluefin tuna (*Thunnus orientalis*) frequented California. If history repeats itself in 2017, we are asking for your help to collect samples from these large fish.

It is generally accepted that Pacific bluefin tuna only spawn in two regions in the western Pacific (*right*). After hatching, a portion of the young bluefin migrate to the eastern Pacific Ocean to forage and grow. These bluefin usually return to the western Pacific Ocean as they approach sexual maturity at around 3-6 years old (4-6 feet in length). However, in recent years fish that are potentially old enough to be mature have remained in the eastern Pacific for longer than usual, prompting new research and questions. One of our main objectives is to examine gonads from these fish to see if they are mature and determine if they are spawning offshore of California. While gonads collected so far have not exhibited developed ovaries or any evidence of spawning, we need more samples to be conclusive.

If you would like to share your bluefin tuna carcasses, please keep samples on ice to preserve freshness and contact us as soon as possible to arrange for timely pickup. Any and all samples you provide will improve the quality of our science!



Ovaries collected from a 168-pound immature female bluefin caught in 2015 (*left*). Thank you for donating this fish Ryan Lawler! Looking at the stained ovaries under magnification we see the undeveloped eggs in purple (*right*).

To participate, please contact:

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This research is a collaboration between:

