**FAQ**

***What is CHART Cymru and how would a recreational scientific catch tag and release or CHART programme work in 2023?***

*CHART Cymru is the acronym for a recreational scientific ‘CatcH And Release Tagging programme’ in Wales for Atlantic bluefin tuna (hereafter BFT).  Charter skippers apply to join the programme and those selected will be trained in tuna catching, tagging and data recording techniques and bycatch avoidance measures. This training will enable them to contribute to BFT research, while also ensuring BFT welfare and protection of the wider marine environment. Once trained, skippers will secure a Welsh Government Authorisation for the duration of the programme in 2023, allowing them to take paying customers out on BFT fishing trips. All activities will be closely monitored by Swansea University, on behalf of Welsh government, to ensure that the benefits of the programme are maximised, and that risks to BFT welfare and conservation are minimised.*

***When will CHART happen?***

*Applications for the CHART Cymru programme can be made until 20th July.  The anticipated dates for the fishing season will be from 1st August to 10th December inclusive.*

***Who decides which charter vessels are allowed to join this project?***

*The application process and criteria to select charter boat skippers as participants in the programme are available in the application pack. The process and criteria were designed and agreed in collaboration with representatives from angling and charter fishing groups. Final decisions will be made by Welsh Government.*

***How many vessels will participate in the programme?***

*During 2023 the Welsh Government will authorise up to 10 vessels for this programme.*

***Who is funding this project?***

*The CHART Cymru programme is being funded by the Welsh Government.*

***Will the successful applicants be paid to take part?***

*The funding for the programme is being used to set up, monitor and evaluate the programme, but not to pay the successful applicants. Once trained and licenced, skippers will be able to take paying recreational anglers out to catch BFT (although only the trained skipper or crew will then tag and release the fish).*

***Will there be any costs associated with participating in the programme?***

*Successful applicants will not need to make payment for a licence.  However, attendance at training workshops will be expected to be undertaken at the applicant’s expense, and applicants will be expected to supply the required equipment at their own expense.*

***How many years will the programme last?***

*CHART Cymru was approved by the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd. No decisions beyond 2023 have been made at this point.*

***How can anglers get involved?***

*Anglers may participate in the fishery by booking places on an authorised vessel, a list of which will be published on the Swansea University CHART Cymru website once the successful applicants have been decided.*

***Will training be provided to those who receive authorisation?***

*All new authorised skippers and their primary crews must attend a mandatory training workshop, where guidance will be provided around best practice for fish restraint, tagging, welfare, condition assessments, data collection and fishing techniques. Only skippers who have attended the training will be eligible to receive an authorisation to fish. The workshops are planned for July 2023 and for those unable to attend in July, in mid August 2023.*

***What will an authorised skipper be permitted to do?***

*The primary goal of the authorisation is to enable the skipper and their crew member to contribute to the CHART Cymru programme.  Their role will be to manage the fishing and tagging process and ensure that BFT are handled appropriately and released in the best possible condition.  Only authorised skippers and their trained crew will be permitted to tag BFT and they will also be responsible for the safe release of the BFT caught by anglers on their boat.*

***What will an authorised skipper not be permitted to do?***

*Bringing live BFT onboard is strictly prohibited, as is the use of live bait to capture BFT. Skippers may not target and tag BFT outside of the pre-notified fishing days and they may not delegate tagging responsibility to anyone other than a registered certificated crew. All BFT fishing activity must comply with the conditions stipulated in their Welsh Government authorisation.*

***What measures are in place to protect against unauthorised targeting of BFT?***

*Welsh Government will undertake inspections and patrols around the coast. Any unauthorised skippers found targeting BFT maybe subject to prosecution and any vessels acting outside the conditions of the authorisation may have their authorisation revoked.*

***What should I do if I have concerns or information on unauthorised targeting of BFT?***

Fisheries-Intel@gov.wales*Please contact Welsh Government to report any concerns or to pass on information relating to unauthorised targeting or landing of BFT.*

***Where will CHART Cymru be operating?***

*The Welsh zone of ICES areas 7a, f and g*

***What data will CHART Cymru be collecting and why are these data important?***

*The main aim of the programme is data collection to improve the science and management of BFT in Welsh waters. Data collection is therefore required for each angling trip targeting BFT and for BFT capture events. Data will be collected on the effort, number of hookups and tagged BFT, behaviour and condition of the fish and length of the BFT. Additionally, data will be collected on the socio-economic benefits of CHART Cymru. Every BFT angling trip will be closely monitored with trained CHART Cymru observers on board for at least 10% of trips. Data will contribute not only to improve our understanding of BFT in Welsh waters but will also be summarised and supplied to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) as the management body of BFT, to support sustainable management of this species.*

***What are the conservation impacts of the programme?***

*The purpose of the programme is to gather scientific information about BFT and the benefits of a BFT catch and release programme.  Animal welfare and sustainability have been at the forefront of the programme design process, and any impact on BFT will be minimised by applying a rigorous application and selection process, gear restrictions, close monitoring and ongoing evaluation of the programme. Successful applicants will have to attend a mandatory training and best practice workshop which will cover, fish restraint, tagging, welfare, condition assessments, data collection and fishing techniques. Scientific observers will be on board at least 10% of the trips and camera monitoring will be encouraged during to inform and refine angling processes and bycatch interaction avoidance best practice and.*

*Natural Resources Wales have been directly involved in the programme design and have worked with the Welsh Government to assess the potential impacts from CHART Cymru to the Welsh marine environment via a Habitats Regulations Assessment. Measures to minimise and mitigate potential interactions with Welsh marine Species and habitats have been applied wherever appropriate and will be incorporated into Welsh Government authorisation conditions.*

***Can skippers sell/use any BFT which may suffer mortality during the capture?***

***No.*** *Any incidental mortalities or moribund fish must be reported to the Welsh Government Fisheries Monitoring Centre (WFMC) and Swansea University.*

***Can BFT be landed if they are caught accidentally by other recreational vessels?***

***No.*** *Recreational sea anglers are* ***not permitted*** *to target BFT and must release any unintended catches (bycatch) immediately and unharmed. BFT caught as bycatch which are dead must also be reported to the Welsh Government Fisheries Monitoring Centre (WFMC) immediately on* 0300 025 3500.

*Website :* Fisheries-Intel@gov.wales

***Who do I contact for more information?***

*You can e-mail**CHARTCymru@swansea.ac.uk**for more information. Please state the nature of your enquiry (e.g. general, FoI request) and your position (e.g. journalist, skipper, angler, public etc.) so we can direct your enquiry to the right person.*