

# Echebstar Thanks Crews For Work Efforts During Pandemic

20 April 2020



Spanish tuna fishing company, Echebstar, has publicly thanked its crews for their efforts during the coronavirus crisis, especially since many of them are unable to be relieved from their work due to international travel restrictions.

In a communiqué on its website last week, Echebstar stated that it is "deeply grateful to our seafarers for their commitment and loyalty to our company."

"Due to international travel restrictions, we are unable to rotate our crews following completion of their sea periods. We are proud to report that our people, the majority of whom have been with us for many years,

understand and accept the situation," read the statement.

José Luis Jauregui, who heads Echebstar's MSC tuna sustainability efforts, told *Atuna* that the company wanted to publicly recognize the efforts made by its crew members. "They are affected by the situation and they cannot be sent back home and they have accepted to stay on board and continue fishing. It is good for us as we can guarantee supply to our customers so we are supporting the tuna supply chain."

According to Jauregui, the current situation affects 250 fishers who mostly are from Spain, Ivory Coast, and Seychelles. The company has six seiners and two supply boats operating in the waters of Seychelles, Mauritius, and Madagascar. Usually, the crews work four months on board and are on leave for four months.

"The problem is that we have relief crews ready to go but unfortunately, international flights are canceled. The situation is such that we are unable to do a proper rotation of our crews. We are doing our best to move them as soon as possible," he explained.

As the current scenario continues, Jauregui expects some of the fishers to be on board at least six months while some are on leave for the same period.

To prevent any spread of infection and minimize risks, crews are confined on board and not allowed to disembark at ports. Echebstar has not had a single case of COVID-19.

"We have introduced the preventative measures needed to protect them [crews] from the virus while they are on board and we have ensured that they are able to maintain strong virtual contact with their friends and family. When the threat posed by the virus has diminished to the extent that our crews may resume their usual work pattern, those now fishing will be able to enjoy deserved vacations," stated the company's communique.

"During this period, and as ever, we continue fishing in strict compliance with the highest standards of sustainability and respect for the environment. While there will undoubtedly be delays in the various processes at the international, national and company level, we continue to implement our 2020 – 21 work programs to meet the milestones to the conditions to certification," concluded the message.

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