

**INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION  
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT)**

**22<sup>nd</sup> Regular Meeting of ICCAT**

**PRESS RELEASE**

19th November, 2011

**ISTANBUL, TURKEY** – The forty-eight Contracting Parties to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas were convened for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Regular Meeting of the Commission from the 11th to the 19th of November 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey. Thirty-nine Contracting Parties attended, joined by observers from two Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities, three Non Contracting Parties, six inter-governmental organizations and twenty-two non-governmental organizations.

The Commission reviewed the status of tuna stocks and by-caught shark species in the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea based on the findings of the Standing Committee for Research and Statistics Scientific (SCRS) which met in Madrid in October 2011, as well as compliance with ICCAT conservation and management measures.

***Conservation by species***

By the end of the meeting, the members of ICCAT has agreed and adopted new management measures for tropical tuna, North Atlantic and Mediterranean swordfish, North and South Atlantic albacore and billfish, as well as for the conservation of sharks that are taken in association with ICCAT fisheries. New improved measures for monitoring, control and surveillance were also adopted, together with measures to increase protection of seabirds, and structural improvements to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

**Tropical tuna**

For the first time since 1993 ICCAT adopted a management measure specifically aimed at the population of Atlantic yellowfin tuna, in conjunction with the continued management plan for bigeye tuna. A TAC of 85,000 t was set for bigeye tuna, with additional control measures comprising, *inter alia* a closed time/area season and a Regional Observer Programme.

**Swordfish**

The North Atlantic swordfish stock was successfully rebuilt in 2009 to levels above the target set by the Commission's management plan. This year a new multi-year conservation and management plan was agreed with the objective of achieving BMSY. The Commission adopted the measure consistent with the Precautionary Approach, that will ensure the long term sustainable exploitation of this fishery.

Additional management measures on the Mediterranean swordfish fishery were taken in 2011 including obligatory monitoring, control and surveillance measures.

**Albacore**

Agreement was reached among the active fishers of the south Atlantic albacore fishery, with a new sharing arrangement being adopted by consensus, with a reduction in TAC to align it with scientific advice. Given

the healthy state of the northern albacore stock, the existing conservation measures were continued into 2013.

### **Bluefin tuna**

For bluefin tuna, long-term management plans remain in place for both the eastern and western stocks. Fishing plans presented for the east Atlantic and Mediterranean were scrutinised to ensure their coherency with the current management plan and then approved by the Commission. The year 2012 will bring greater controls with the size limit for purse seiners required to carry an ICCAT observer dropping from 24 metres to 20 metres, as agreed in 2010. The Atlantic-wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (GBYP) in support of bluefin scientific research for better management continues under ICCAT coordination. The programme, which was established in 2009, is expected to have a total budget of up to 19 million euro over six years, with the work plan for 2012 estimated at almost five million euro. Work in 2011 included aerial surveys on spawning bluefin, biological sampling and scientific tagging cruises. The programme is supported not only by funding from CPCs but also by industries and NGOs. In 2012 activities will continue under a formal Recommendation by the Commission which includes the granting of a Research Mortality Allowance of 20 metric tons.

At this year's meeting, ICCAT also drew up guidelines for improved cooperation with CITES, not only on bluefin tuna but for all species under the ICCAT mandate.

### **Other species**

The Commission amended the current management plan for billfish to bring catchers into line with scientific advice and agreed to study additional measures in 2012. The protection of vulnerable shark species taken in association with ICCAT species continued to be a priority in 2011 meeting, with new measures aimed at protecting the silky sharks being adopted, including the prohibition of taking on board, retaining, transshipping or landing the species. Measures to mitigate the impact of longline tuna fisheries in the South Atlantic on seabirds were also adopted.

### ***Strengthening Compliance***

The work of the Compliance Committee continued with a thorough review of compliance by each Contracting Party to identify failures to comply with ICCAT management measures such as a failure to report catch data or overharvesting of ICCAT species, and to review actions taken in relation to breaches of compliance detected in 2010.

A general improvement in overall compliance was noted, with twelve Contracting Parties being in full compliance with all reporting requirements and deadlines. Additionally, the general improvement in compliance has led to the 15 of the 23 parties identified as having incurred a breach of ICCAT conservation and management measures in 2010 having the identification lifted in 2011. While some deficiencies still remain – in many cases due to the number and complexity of ICCAT reporting requirements rather than a lack of political will – all Parties undertook commitments to make further efforts to ensure full compliance in the future.

To improve compliance with the bluefin tuna catch document scheme, Japan led the way in refining the scheme and proposing improvements, while the European Union chaired a technical group to determine the steps to be taken to establish an electronic Bluefin Catch Document scheme. The pilot study to be carried out in 2012 will test the eBCD system which will be set up at a cost of around 400,000 Euros. A resolution on the evaluation of systems for tracing products of other tuna species was also adopted.

With regard to non-Contracting Parties, the Commission celebrated another success in the fight against IUU fishing, with sufficient information having been received from both Bolivia and Georgia to warrant the trade restrictive measure against these two countries to be lifted.

The Commission took a major initiative in adopting penalties for those Contracting Parties which do not report data to ICCAT, by linking the right to fish with the obligation to report catch data.

### ***Strengthening ICCAT***

To facilitate the determination of non-compliance and the improvement of MCS measures, the Commission adopted revised terms of reference for both the ICCAT Conservation and Management Measures Compliance Committee and the Permanent Working Group for the Improvement of ICCAT Statistics and Conservation Measures (PWG). In addition, it was agreed that these bodies would be incorporated into the Rules of Procedure as permanent subsidiary bodies.

The Commission also agreed on the need to continue the work of the Working Group on the Future of ICCAT with a clear cut mandate to examine the issues of most urgency.

The Commission also confirmed its commitment to the eco-systemic management approach by including in the 2012-13 budget funding for the recruitment of a by-catch coordinator at the ICCAT Secretariat, a position which had been recommended by the scientific committee for many years.

Recommendations were also adopted to improve data on by-catch, artisanal fishery catches and transparency in access agreements.

### **Capacity-building and assistance to developing States**

In 2011, ICCAT spent almost 132,000 € on capacity-building activities. These funds have been used to facilitate participation in scientific meetings, training workshops, sampling and observer programs, and to recover historical logbook data. This year a Recommendation was adopted to allow the funding of delegates from developing States to attend Commission and related inter-sessional meetings, to allow fuller participation in decision making.

### ***Into 2012***

Mr. Masanori Miyahara of Japan was elected as Chairman of the Commission for the 2012-13 period, to substitute Dr. Fabio Hazin.

The next annual meeting of ICCAT will be held in either Uruguay or Morocco between 12 November and 18 November 2012. Other inter-sessional meetings will be held throughout the year; detailed venue information can be found as it becomes available in [www.iccat.int](http://www.iccat.int), under "Meetings".

Driss Meski  
ICCAT Executive Secretary

19th November 2011

## Recommendations and Resolutions adopted in 2011

<i>Draft Recommendation by ICCAT to Amend the Mandate and Terms of Reference Adopted by the Commission for the ICCAT Conservation and Management Measures Compliance Committee</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT to Clarify the Application of Compliance Recommendations and for Developing the Compliance Annex</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Establishment of an ICCAT Record of Vessels 20 Meters in Length overall or Greater Authorized to Operate in the Convention area</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on a MultiAnnual Conservation and Management Program for Bigeye and Yellowfin tunas</i>
<i>Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT concerning the North Atlantic Albacore Rebuilding Programme</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT concerning the Atlantic-Wide Bluefin tuna Research Programme (GBYP)</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on the Southern Albacore Catch limits for 2012 and 2013</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on the conservation of Silky Shark caught in association with ICCAT fisheries</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT for the Conservation of north Atlantic swordfish</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT for Management Measures for Mediterranean Swordfish in the Framework of ICCAT</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT to Further Strengthen the Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Populations</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on Reducing Incidental ByCatch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries</i>
<i>Resolution by ICCAT on a Program of Work for the Working Group on the Future of ICCAT</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on the Principles of Decision Making for ICCAT Conservation and Management Measures</i>
<i>Resolution by ICCAT to Standardize the Presentation of Scientific Information in the SCRS Annual Report and in Working Group Detailed Reports</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 09-11 on an ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Catch Documentation Program</i>
<i>Draft Recommendation by ICCAT to Amend the Terms of Reference of the Permanent Working Group for the Improvement of ICCAT Statistics and Conservation Measures (PWG).</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on Access Agreements</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on Information Collection and Harmonization of data on By-catch and Discards on ICCAT Fisheries</i>
<i>Resolution by ICCAT on Traceability of Tuna Products</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on Penalties Applicable in case of non-Fulfilment of reporting obligations</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the lifting of Trade Restrictive Measures on Bolivia and Georgia</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 10-11 on an Electronic Bluefin Tuna Catch Document Programme (eBCD)</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT further amending the Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a list of Vessels Presumed to have Carried out Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Activities in the ICCAT Convention Area</i>
<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on the Establishment of a Meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties</i>
<i>Resolution on Best Available Science</i>