



ICCAT Newsletter

No. 24, September 2016

SMA tagging

Message from the ICCAT Executive Secretary

The Secretariat is pleased to present its readers with ICCAT Newsletter No. 24, informing about the latest events and activities of our Organisation.

Between February and September a total of 16 meetings were held, including those related to the assessment of five tuna stocks (yellowfin tuna, North and South Atlantic albacore; and East and West Atlantic sailfish). Additionally, a number of important contracts were signed and many field activities conducted within the currently ongoing ICCAT research programmes. Such a high level of work, involving a wide range of entities from many CPCs, strengthen the capacity of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) to meet the new challenges related to the provision of scientific advice to the Commission.



ICCAT's 50th Anniversary

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) is celebrating its 50th Anniversary. Our Commission was created in a context where few legal instruments existed. However, this has not prevented the Commission from playing an essential role in providing sound responses to issues related to rigorous management of tuna resources in its Convention area. Owing to the firm commitment of its CPCs, ICCAT has addressed highly complex issues and taken stringent measures to maintain certain species within the framework of sustainable management.

RECENT MEETINGS

Since February, six intersessional meetings of the Commission, eleven SCRS meetings, and a meeting of the eBCD Technical Working Group have been held.

INTERSESSIONAL COMMISSION MEETINGS

Intersessional meeting of the Panel 2

2-3 March, Madrid, Spain

Panel 2 met to review and endorse the fishing plans for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna, submitted by the CPCs concerned. Follow up actions from two CPCs which were not present at the meeting were requested, and all fishing plans were endorsed. The Panel also responded to some requests for clarification from the regional observer programme implementing consortium. The report of the meeting is available at:

www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_PA2_REP_ENG.pdf

Meeting of the Compliance Committee

4-5 March, Madrid, Spain

The Compliance Committee met principally to review procedures and the functioning of the Committee, and to determine how efficiency and effectiveness could be approved. There was general agreement that more time needed to be dedicated to issues of substance rather than infractions of administrative nature. There was also fruitful discussion on the role of the *Friends of the Chair*; ways of improving reporting for shark-related measures, ways to improve of the compliance tables, and possible changes to deadlines for Annual Reports. The report of the meeting is available at:

www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_FINAL_COC_REP_ENG.pdf



CoC/Pa2, Madrid



Meeting of the WG on Convention Amendment

7-8 March, Madrid, Spain

Even though advances were made during the discussion of several matters, the WG did not reach final agreement. The WG agreed to continue working intersessionally by correspondence, with a view to having a final consolidated text for presentation to the Commission in November. The report of the meeting is available at: www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_CONV_REPORT_ENG.pdf

2nd Meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group on FADs

14-16 March, Bilbao, Spain



The information provided by CPCs, pursuant to the FAD related provisions in the relevant ICCAT conservation and management measures, was reviewed and it was noted that this data is incomplete although data provision is improving. An assessment of the use of FADs in tropical tuna fisheries in ICCAT was made, as well as of the relative contribution of FADs to overall fishing mortality in ICCAT tropical tuna fisheries, followed by an assessment of developments in FAD-related technology. Several important recommendations were made that will be passed on to the Commission meeting in November. The report of the meeting is available at: www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_FADs_2nd_Final_ENG.pdf

11th Meeting of the IMM Working Group

18-19 July, Sapporo, Japan

The main focus of the meeting was to discuss the observer programmes, both scientific and for transshipment, and a possible High Seas Inspection Scheme (HSBI). The WG adopted an amended draft Recommendation on Transshipment, but further discussions will take place at the Annual meeting on Scientific Observer Programmes and the HSBI. The WG also reviewed the progress of the eBCD as well as its possible future financing; the implementation of the CLAV; and progress on assistance to developing States for the implementation of the measure of Port Inspection, all of which require more consideration by the Commission at its Annual meeting. The report of the meeting is available at: www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_IMM_REPORT_ENG.pdf



Intersessional meeting of the Panel 2

20-21 July, Sapporo, Japan



The main focus of the meeting was to discuss the progress made on Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the northern albacore stock. The meeting provided a valuable opportunity for the SCRS to receive feedback on the MSE process from the Panel in order to proceed and advance on it. The attending CPCs were satisfied with progress to date, but expressed the desire to have a fuller understanding of work conducted by the SCRS before the Commission formally adopts Harvest Control Rules (HCRs). The report of the meeting is available at: www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_PA2_Report_ENG.pdf

ICCAT/JCAP Training courses, São Tomé e Príncipe

SCRS INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS

2nd meeting of the ICCAT Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods

15-19 February, Madrid, Spain



The meeting focused on the incorporation of oceanographic and environmental factors into stock assessment; identification of data for building a habitat model for North Atlantic swordfish, unifying CPUE datasets; and, how to estimate Maximum Sustainable Yield for fisheries with time varying selectivity. The WG also reviewed the work done by the albacore species group on developing a harvest control rule, using Management Strategy Evaluation.

The report of the meeting is available at:

www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_WGSAM_REPORT_ENG.pdf

Yellowfin Data Preparatory and Stock Assessment meetings

7-11 March and 27 Jun-1 July, Pasaia, Spain



The most recent biological and fisheries information were reviewed for this tropical tuna species, whose major fisheries are located in the Gulf of Guinea. Decisions were taken on the main parameters of input for the different evaluation models to be used during the stock assessment session. A work plan was also outlined to submit and compile information not yet available. The reports of these meetings are available at: www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_YFT_DATA_PREP_REPORT_ENG.pdf

Small Tunas Species Group Intersessional meeting

4-8 April, Madrid, Spain



The most recent biological and fisheries information related to small tunas were reviewed, with particular emphasis on bullet tuna, Atlantic bonito and little tunny. Particular attention was given to an update of the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) presented in 2015, including species of both the South and North Atlantic. An evaluation of the vulnerability of the species was made, based on their productivity and susceptibility attributes. Time was also dedicated to revise the activities conducted in 2015 within the Small Tuna Year Programme (SMTYP) and to plan the work to be carried out in 2016. The report of the meeting is available at:

www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_SMT_DATA_PREP_REP_ENG.pdf

Sharks Species Group Intersessional meeting, 25-29 April, Madeira, Portugal

The discussion was mainly focused on data preparation for the envisioned 2017 shortfin mako stock assessment. The ongoing Shark Research and Data Collection Programme (SRDCP) was presented and planning for 2017 and beyond was addressed. A discussion was also held on the revision of the list of sharks species considered of interest to the IC-CAT Commission (oceanic, pelagic and highly migratory). The report of the meeting is available at:

www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_SHK_REPORT_ENG.pdf

Atlantic Albacore Stock Assessment session, 28 April-6 May, Madeira, Portugal



The meeting aimed at updating the North and South Atlantic albacore stock status and to provide management advice to the Commission. To this purpose the Group also conducted a management strategy evaluation for the northern stock and tested harvest control rules and associated reference points. The report of the meeting is available at:

www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_ALB_REPORT_ENG.pdf



Sailfish Stock Assessment meeting

30 May to 3 June, Miami

A revision of new information on the species was carried out, leading to important improvements in the biological parameters required for stock assessment modelling. It was noted that the data available for sailfish was somewhat incomplete, which made the assessment process very difficult. A range of different models were applied, but the results from the assessment were inconclusive and thus neither projections, nor Kobe strategy matrices, were developed due to the uncertainty in the stock status results. The report of the meeting is available at: www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_SAI_REPORT_ENG.pdf

Mediterranean Swordfish Stock Assessment session

11-16 July, Casablanca, Morocco

A revision of new information on the fisheries was carried out, leading to relevant improvements in the parameters required for stock assessment modelling. A range of different scenarios were applied to the stock. The results showing the stock is currently overfished and suffering overfishing. The report of the meeting is available at:

www.iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2016_SWO_MED_REPORT_ENG.pdf



Bluefin Species Group Intersessional meeting

25-29 July, Madrid, Spain



The Commission approved a delay in the bluefin tuna stock assessment until 2017, on condition that updated stock projections are provided in 2016. During the meeting the Group: reviewed historical and new information on biology and stock structure; reviewed Task I and Task II statistics; reviewed the indices of abundance available for use in the next stock assessment; reviewed, discussed and completed the technical specifications for the MSE work; and reviewed age-length keys. The report of the meeting will shortly be available at: www.iccat.int/en/meetingscurrent.htm

Sub-Committee on Ecosystems Intersessional meeting

5-9 September, Madrid, Spain

The Sub-Committee (SC-Eco) discussed the progress made towards the feasibility of and provision of information towards implementing ecosystems based fisheries management (EBFM), as well as the possibility of liaising with other t-RFMOs to discuss issues of mutual relevance and benefit. As regards the by-catch component, the SC-Eco: examined the trend of annual by-catch in number and rate of seabirds, as a first step in the evaluation of the effect of the new mitigation measures; estimated total number of sea turtles accidentally caught by longline fisheries to evaluate the impact of ICCAT fisheries on these reptiles. The report of the meeting will shortly be available at: www.iccat.int/en/meetingscurrent.htm

For more detailed information, please visit: www.iccat.int/en/meetings.asp



External Meetings

Representatives of the Secretariat staff have participated actively in various meetings and activities related to ICCAT providing both written and/or oral contributions.

9th International Forum on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

5-16 February 2016, Chatham House, London, UK



NEAFC Seminar on Allocation Criteria and Associated Issues

22 February, London, UK



Working Group on IUU Fishing (CoC/GFCM)

19-21 April, Madrid, Spain



COFI/FAO meeting

9-15 July, Rome, Italy



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Review Conference on UNFSA, NY

Second session of the Preparatory Committee, BBNJ

26 August to 2 September, NY, USA



2016 Our Ocean, One Future Conference

15-16 September, Washington DC, USA



Capacity Building

JCAP Training Course for the Capacity Building on Tuna Fisheries Research

14-18 March, São Tomé & Príncipe

JCAP Recovery of Statistic System in São Tomé & Príncipe

March-November, São Tomé & Príncipe

JCAP Help videos to assist CPCs for the submission of information

[see: www.iccat.int/JCAP_videos/index_en.htm]

February-August

Workshop on CPUE Standardization with R

26-28 May, Miami, USA

ICCAT/CITES training workshop on identification, data collection and reporting of shark species

12-16 September, Madrid, Spain

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Secretariat has continued to support the activities of the SCRS and the Commission.



During 2016, the Secretariat has continued to carry out the activities required of it for the implementation of ICCAT conservation and management measures, including the implementation of the Bluefin Tuna Regional Observer Programme (ROP-BFT) on vessels and in farming facilities during the 2016 fishing campaign and the Regional Observer Programme for Transshipments, the maintenance of the various compliance records (vessels, traps, farms, ports) and the statistical and catch document schemes.

The Secretariat continues to collaborate in the maintenance of the Consolidated List of Authorised Vessels (CLAV). The ABNJ Steering Committee approved the extension of the expert currently employed by FAO who is coordinating the process of elimination of duplications and other actions, but from 2016, the coordination of this work will have to be agreed among the tRFMOs through the Kobe process.

Apart from the activities mentioned above, the Secretariat was responsible for the maintenance of the joint Web page of tuna RFMOs, which can be visited at: www.tuna-org.org/

ONGOING RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION PROGRAMMES



Atlantic Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (GBYP)

Phase 5 of ICCAT GBYP ended in late February 2016, after holding the meeting of the Core Modelling MSE Group, and conducting two cost-benefits analyses (tagging; aerial surveys as a mean to estimate the abundance of adult bluefin tunas). Phase 6 begun by launching the second external review of ICCAT GBYP, followed by several Calls for tenders and invitations for data mining, recovery of electronic-tags data, additional analysis of market data, new electronic tagging activities, collection of additional biological samples and studies. Data from over 900 electronic tags has been collected and made available to the Bluefin Species

Group and 78 bluefin tuna specimens have already been electronically tagged during 2016 while several other tags will be deployed in the fall. Additionally, a data mining and training course was organized in Mauritania; and a bluefin tuna larval workshop has held in September. The GBYP Steering Committee met on 30-31 July to review the work conducted during Phase 6 and planning Phase 7 activities, amongst other issues.

Atlantic Ocean Tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP)



AOTTP have contracted a consortium involving 5 Contracting Parties to tag tropical tunas off the territorial waters of up to 19 countries. Work began around the Azores Islands in late June. Tagging then continued off Senegal and Mauritania during July and August and started recently in the Canary Islands. As of 31 August, more than 12,000 fish (bigeye, skipjack, yellowfin and little tunny) have been tagged, and more than 1,500 recoveries have been recorded so far, see <http://aottp.iccat.int/index.php?option=search>

Publicity and tag recovery campaigns are under-way with focal points in the Azores and Canary Islands, and dedicated tag-recovery offices set up in Dakar and Abidjan. Publicity materials (posters, t-shirts, etc.) have been designed and reward schemes and payment systems are working. All data collected can be viewed in an interactive online map (see: <https://aottp.cartodb.com/me>), based on data collected using a smartphone application especially developed to facilitate data recording and uploading.



AOTTP, and its subcontractors has been training scientists from developing countries in all aspects of tagging at sea, data collection and tag-recovery. The AOTTP Coordination is also working closely with SCRS aiming at the effective use of the tagging data to improve the tropical tuna stock assessments and the provision of scientific advice for management of these fishing resources.

Shark research and Data Collection Programme (SRDCP)

SRDCP held a workshop to conduct collaborative work related to update the age and growth dynamics of the shortfin mako in the Atlantic Ocean. The population genetics study to estimate stock structure and phylogeography is ongoing and new additional samples from areas with little coverage are being provided. A post-release mortality study of shortfin mako caught on pelagic longline fisheries continued with the deployment of four new Survivorship Popup Satellite Archival Transmitting Tags (sPATs) in the temperate Northeast and Western North Atlantic. A total of 12 data sets from electronic tagging are already available as part of the satellite telemetry study to gather and provide information on stock boundaries, movement patterns and habitat use by the shortfin mako shark. A fifth project to characterize the feeding habits and identify potential trophic groups based on stable isotopes and fatty acids led by Uruguay has also been initiated.

Small Tunas year Programme (SMTYP)

In 2016, SMTYP continued the recovery of historical Task I and Task II data series and launched a call for the collection of biological samples for the main small tuna species for the first time. This will reinforce data mining of Task I and Task II and enhance biological knowledge on those species, aiming future small tuna stock assessments. In that regards, four contracts were issued by the ICCAT Secretariat last March to conduct data mining and biological studies in the Mediterranean and in the North-eastern Atlantic, whose results will be presented in the forthcoming Small Tunas Species Group meeting in September 2016.

Enhanced Programme for Billfish Research (EPBR)

EPBR continued funding support for billfish landing studies carried out by western African CPCs. This resulted in scientists from Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and São Tomé & Príncipe participating in an ICCAT workshop to develop indices of abundance for sailfish. Subsequently, their data and results were presented and used in the recent sailfish stock assessment session. The genetic sampling study to compare mixing and distribution of white marlin and roundscale spearfish is ongoing. Additional sampling kits are needed to complete the study. Sampling materials have been ordered and will be appropriately distributed.

ASSISTANCE FUNDS FOR DEVELOPING STATES

ICCAT has established funds to encourage improvement in statistics for species under ICCAT mandate. Currently, there is a budget for special funds for data improvement established by Resolution by ICCAT on improvements in data collection and quality assurance [Res. 03-21].

These funds are provided through voluntary contributions from some Contracting Parties and from the Working Capital Fund.

From January to September 2016, the meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties [Rec. 14-14], funded the attendance of 81 delegates from 23 CPCs to ICCAT scientific and non-scientific meetings.



In 2016, the following capacity building funds aimed at supporting training in data collection and data analysis, stock assessment methods, etc., were made available: Japan Capacity-building Assistance Project (JCAP), CITES Small Scale Funding Agreement and the European Union Capacity Development Fund.

PUBLICATIONS

The following publications were issued in 2016:



The **ICCAT Biennial Reports** 2014-2015 Part II (2015), Volumes 1 and 2 were published. They contain the reports of the 2015 meetings of the Commission and the SCRS and are available at: www.iccat.int/en/pubs_biennial.htm



Eight (8) tomes of the **Collective Volume of Scientific Papers** (Vol. 72) were issued, which include 127 scientific documents and reports presented to the SCRS during 2015. The Secretariat has been working with authors to make these available on the ICCAT Web site earlier. This year's edition of the ICCAT Collective Volume of Scientific Papers was published in early June and are available at: www.iccat.int/en/pubs_CVSP.htm



Statistical Bulletin [#43 (I)], was issued, which includes catch series by species and country since 1950. From last year, the paper publication is now biennial, updated annually, and available in electronic format both on the ICCAT website (www.iccat.int/sbull/SB43-1-2016/index.html) and on CD.

All recent ICCAT publications can be downloaded from www.iccat.int. To obtain copies of older publications please contact: info@iccat.int

2016 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The following events are scheduled to be held in 2016:

Species Group meetings

26-30 September, Madrid, Spain

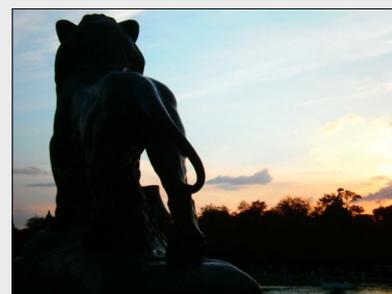
These meetings will be held to update the biological information and the available statistics on all the species under ICCAT mandate. The tropical tunas (yellowfin tuna), albacore, billfish (sailfish) and swordfish (Mediterranean) species groups will carry out the update of the A stock assessments. The Sub-Committee on Statistics will hold a meeting that same week to review data submissions, as well as the progress made in the development of the Secretariat's databases. The remaining species groups will review new fisheries and biological information made available during 2016.

Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) meeting

3-7 October, Madrid, Spain

The SCRS will meet to review the status of all stocks and prepare responses to the Commission concerning scientific issues. This year, the SCRS will review the implementation of the 2015-2020 SCRS Science Strategic Plan, adopted by the Commission in 2014, and will revise the work plan for 2017.

Scientists who wish to present documents to the SCRS meeting should request in advance a document reference from the Secretariat.



20th Special Meeting of the Commission Annual meeting,

14-21 November, Vilamoura, Portugal



The Commission will review the results obtained from stock assessments carried out during 2016 to adopt the recommendations and resolutions for the management of these resources. Other relevant matters to be discussed include reviewing the report of the ICCAT Performance Review Panel and the procedures for selection of the new ICCAT Executive Secretary. For more information on the venue and hotel booking please consult: www.iccat.int/en/Commission2016.htm; or send an e-mail to: iccat@winable.pt

For further information about these meetings (registration forms, agendas, timetables, info for participants, etc.), please consult our Website: www.iccat.int/en/meetingscurrent.htm

OTHER NEWS

Since the last Newsletter, the Secretariat has circulated a post announcement to cover the position for a **Tag Recovery Officer** within the AOTTP. Following a selection process, Mr. Pedro Guemes joined the Secretariat in February 2016, as Tag Recovery Office within the AOTTP.



In May 2016, Mr. Pablo Herranz also joined the Secretariat as **Administrative Assistant** to the Department of Administration and Finance.

From the Secretariat, we would like to wish them both a warm welcome as new staff members of ICCAT.



After four years as **JDMIP and JCAP Coordinator**, Ms. Mari Mishima had to return to Japan in August. The Secretariat will miss Ms. Mari Mishima's hard work and her support. We would like to thank her for all that she performed during her time at the Secretariat and wish her a great success in her new activities. Through this Newsletter, her colleagues from the Secretariat wish her every success in this new stage of her life.