

ICCAT NEWSLETTER

No. 27, February 2018

Note from the Executive Secretary

This ICCAT Newsletter is the last publication of its kind while I am Executive Secretary. I am very happy to have established this connection with its readers since I took up office in 2004. It has enabled Contracting Parties and anyone else with an interest in ICCAT to remain informed about its activities and events. I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Secretariat staff who have contributed to the maintenance of this publication over the past 14 years and I wish them well for the continuation of this task. At the end of my mandate, I cannot conceal my great sense of satisfaction with all that I have been able to achieve as the ICCAT leader. I hope to leave to my successor a functioning and well organised Secretariat that is equipped with sufficient human and financial resources to ensure its smooth continuity. Finally I would like to congratulate Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel on his appointment as ICCAT Executive Secretary and wish him every success in his role which he will assume from 1 July 2018.

ICCAT is an organisation with a proven track record in management of tuna species in the Atlantic and adjacent seas. Thanks to the conscientiousness of its CPCs, ICCAT has managed to meet the challenges and restore balance. I sincerely hope that this mindset continues.

Thank you to everyone and farewell.

Driss Meski

Introduction

The 25th Regular Meeting of the Commission was held in Marrakech (Morocco). Over 630 delegates attended the meeting from 44 Contracting Parties, four cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities and observers from two non-Contracting Parties, six international organisations and 23 NGOs.

During the meeting significant progress was made, including the adoption of nine Recommendations. A number of relevant decisions were made, including:

- ✓ ICCAT elected a new Chairman, Mr. Raul Delgado (Panama), and expressed its profound appreciation for the excellent service of the outgoing Chair, Mr. Martin Tsamenyi (Ghana) over the past two years. The progress made under his leadership was highlighted. Mr. S. Depypere (European Union) was re-elected as First Vice-Chair, and Mrs. Zakia Driouich (Morocco) as Second Vice-Chair. Mrs. Lapointe will no longer be available to serve as Chair of STACFAD, and Mr. Hasan Alper Elekon (Turkey) has been appointed as new Chair of STACFAD. Mr. Derek Campbell was re-elected as Chair of COC. Mr. Neil Ansell will serve as Chair of PWG, replacing Mr. Fabrizio Donatella. Regarding the Panels, Côte d'Ivoire, Japan, South Africa and Brazil were also re-elected to chair Panels 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively. All the officers will serve a two-year term of office.
- ✓ Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel (Senegal) has been elected Executive Secretary and will take up his appointment on 1 July 2018. He will replace Mr. Driss Meski (Morocco), who will retire after serving ICCAT as Executive Secretary for 14 years.
- ✓ During the Commission meeting, the confirmation of adherence to the Convention by Grenada was received. Grenada was welcomed as the 52nd ICCAT Contracting Party.
- ✓ The new approved TAC for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna for 2018 is 28,200 t, and is set at 32,240 t and 36,000 t for 2019 and 2020, respectively.
- ✓ A new four year management plan up to 2021 was approved for Atlantic swordfish.
- ✓ Supplementary measures (ban on wasteful discards from the purse seine fishery) were adopted for tropical tunas, in an attempt to ensure food security for the coastal States affected by these fisheries.
- ✓ Additionally, an agreement was reached on measures for the northern stock of shortfin mako shark; Harvest Control Rules for northern Atlantic albacore were agreed; and, technical details of the electronic bluefin catch document scheme (eBCD) were tweaked.

List of adopted recommendations that will enter into force on 11 June 2018:

- ✓ *Rec. 17-01 Recommendation by ICCAT on prohibition on discards of tropical tunas caught by purse seiners*
- ✓ *Rec. 17-02 Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation for the conservation of North Atlantic swordfish, Rec. 16-03*
- ✓ *Rec. 17-03 Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation for the conservation of South Atlantic swordfish, Rec. 16-04*
- ✓ *Rec. 17-04 Recommendation by ICCAT on a harvest control rule for North Atlantic albacore supplementing the multiannual conservation and management programme, Rec. 16-06*
- ✓ *Rec. 17-05 Recommendation by ICCAT establishing management measures for the stock of Mediterranean albacore*
- ✓ *Rec. 17-06 Recommendation by ICCAT for an interim conservation and management plan for western Atlantic bluefin tuna*
- ✓ *Rec. 17-07 Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 14-04 on bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean*
- ✓ *Rec. 17-08 Recommendation by ICCAT on the conservation of North Atlantic stock of shortfin mako caught in association with ICCAT fisheries*
- ✓ *Rec. 17-09 Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 15-10 on the application of the eBCD system*

RECENT MEETINGS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE THE LAST ISSUE

Commission intersessional meeting

- [Meeting of the Port Inspection Expert Group for Capacity and Assistance, 9-10 October, Madrid, Spain](#)

Commission meeting

- [25th Regular Meeting of the Commission, 14-21 November, Marrakech, Morocco](#)

COM/SCRS intersessional meeting

- [3rd Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on FADs, 11-12 September, Madrid, Spain](#)

SCRS intersessional meetings

- [Sub-Committee on Statistics, 25-26 September, Madrid, Spain](#)
- [SCRS Species Groups meetings, 27-29 September, Madrid, Spain](#)
- [Meeting of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics \(SCRS\), 2-6 October, Madrid, Spain](#)

External meetings

Between September and December 2017 members of the Secretariat staff have participated actively in five meetings and activities related to ICCAT providing both written and/or oral contributions.

The Tuna Compliance Network held its 2nd meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands, 15-18 February 2018. This meeting brought together officers responsible for compliance and officers responsible for data management from the five tuna RFMOs to share ideas on ways of improving data flows and information sharing in order to positively impact their compliance process.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The ICCAT/Japan Capacity-Building Assistance Project (JCAP) held a capacity building course in São Tomé e Príncipe (15-19 January) to improve data collection onboard tuna fishing vessel.

ONGOING RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION PROGRAMMES

Phase 7 of the *Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (ICCAT GBYP)* continued activities including data recovery, aerial surveys, biological studies, tagging trials and modelling approaches ([additional information](#)). In January 2018 a new Coordinator (Dr Francisco Alemany) was appointed to replace Dr Antonio Di Natale who has retired after serving ICCAT for seven years. The Phase 8 proposal has been prepared aiming at the continuation of the programme, with an overall budget of €1,750,000.

Since last September the *Atlantic Ocean Tropical tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP)* has continued to tag tuna, most recently off South America (Brazil and Uruguay), the US Atlantic coast, and the Madeira archipelago. To date more than 64,500 tropical tunas have been tagged and more than 11,500 recovered with their valuable associated metadata. Otolith reading and general tag data analytical workshops were held.

Small Tunas Year Programme (SMTYP) continued developing biological studies on key population parameters for selected small tuna species off the northeastern coast of Africa and southwestern Europe. A new cooperative and coordinated approach was recently approved as such activities are essential to conduct small tuna assessments in the near future.

Enhanced Programme for Billfish Research (EPBR) continued its activities, namely in terms of the collection of billfish fisheries statistics off the western coast of Africa. The objectives of EPBR have recently been expanded to evaluate habitat use, study spawning patterns and population genetics, as these are essential to improve billfish stock assessments.

Shark Research and Data Collection Programme (SRDCP) focused efforts on four major activities that were considered essential for shortfin mako shark assessment, including: age and growth study; population genetics; stock boundaries, migrations and habitat use; and, post-release mortality on pelagic longline fisheries.

ASSISTANCE FUNDS FOR DEVELOPING STATES

In 2017 the Meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties (Rec. 14-14), funded the attendance of 90 delegates from 26 CPCs to ICCAT scientific and non-scientific meetings.

PUBLICATIONS

Volume 74 of the *Collective Volume of Scientific Papers* (Vol. 74), including 176 scientific documents and reports presented to the SCRS during 2017, was published.

2018 CALENDER OF EVENTS

The following events are scheduled to be held in 2018:

Commission meetings

Intersessional Meeting of Panel 2, 5-7 March, Madrid
Meeting of the Online Reporting Technology Working Group, 26-27 March, Madrid
12th Meeting of the IMM Working Group, 9-12 April, Madrid
Meeting of the Standing Working Group on Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers, 21-23 May, Funchal, Madeira

Meeting of the Working Group on Convention Amendment, 24-25 May, Funchal, Madeira
Intersessional Meeting of Panel 1, 23-25 July, Bilbao
Meeting of the Port Inspection Expert Group for Capacity and Assistance, 18-19 September, Madrid
Meeting of the Compliance Committee (COC), 10-11 November, (TBA), Croatia
21st Special Meeting of the Commission, 12-19 November, (TBA), Croatia

SCRS meetings

Blue Marlin Data Preparatory Meeting, 12-16 March, Madrid
Small Tunas Species Group Intersessional Meeting, 2-6 April, Madrid
Bluefin Tuna and North Atlantic Swordfish Management Strategy Evaluation Meeting, 16-20 April, Madrid
Bigeye Tuna Data Preparatory Meeting, 23-27 April, Madrid
Meeting of the ICCAT Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods, 7-11 May, Madrid
Sub-Committee on Ecosystems Intersessional Meeting, 4-8 June, Madrid
Blue Marlin Stock Assessment Session, 16-20 June, Madrid
Sharks Species Group Intersessional Meeting, 2-6 July, Madrid

Bigeye Tuna Stock Assessment Session, 16-20 July, Pasaia
SCRS Species Groups Meetings (SC Statistics 24-25), 24-28 September, Madrid
Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) meeting, 1-5 October, Madrid

Other activities

ICCAT is planning a series of three workshops during the 1st semester of 2018 in Madrid (Spain), to promote the involvement of the ICCAT SCRS scientific community in the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process:

1. Introduction to MSE. Basic principles and concepts, 19-22 March.
2. Introduction to MSE Modelling. Initial concepts in Programming and development of the various models and procedures necessary for the evaluation of Harvest Control Rules (HCRs), 14-17 May.
3. Advanced programming for MSE (Continuation of the concepts and materials), 25-28 June.

ICCAT is chairing the joint tuna-RFMO MSE Working Group. The 2nd meeting of this group will take place from 13-15 June, Seattle (USA).

OTHER NEWS

Dr Laurence Kell and Dr Antonio di Natale retired in October 2017 and January 2018, respectively. Through this Newsletter, their colleagues from the Secretariat wish them every success in this new stage of their lives.

Dr Francisco Alemany has been appointed as the new GBYP Coordinator to ICCAT. Mr. Carlos Mayor has joined the Secretariat on a permanent basis as Database Programmer within the Department of Research and Statistics.

The Secretariat has also circulated a post announcement to cover the position for an ICCAT Population Dynamics Expert.

We invite you to visit the prototype of our new web site at the address <http://new.iccat.int/en/> and to try this on different devices. Should you detect any errors please inform us by e-mail.