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2026 REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND STATISTICS (SCRS) TO THE ICCAT PLENARY

25th Special Meeting of the Commission
Vilamoura, Portugal
16 November 2026

COMPLETE 2026 SCRS REPORT AVAILABLE ONLINE AS PLE-104











Presentation Overview

Scientific Advice & Stock Status

- SCRS Organization & Challenges: Vice-Chair role, Committee milestones, and strict paper submission deadlines (Item 20.2).
- Stock Status Overview: Kobe matrix summary for 23 assessed stocks and Task 1/2 data availability scorecards.
- Cross-Cutting Subsidiary Bodies: Strategic outcomes for WGSAM (bycatch checklist, a4a model), SC-STATS (IOMS transition, data gaps), and SC-ECO (EcoCards, climate indicators, gear trials).
- List of ICCAT Research Programs: GBYP, SMTYP, SRDCP, EPBR, ALBYP, SWOYP, and TTRaD.

Recommendations, Requests & Governance

- Recommendations with Financial Implications (18.1): Permanent Secretariat MSE Technical Coordinator position and capacity funds.
- Other General Recommendations (18.2): MP review guidance, data streamlining (CPCs' Annual Reports Part I duplicates information already available for SCRS scientific work), and tagging reactivation.
- Handling of Recommendations (20.4): Lifting limits on non-financial recommendations and establishing a dedicated internal Annex.
- Responses to Commission Requests (19.1–19.7): Evaluations on alternative monitoring, Norway exemption, sea turtles, cetaceans, and OECMs.
- Looking Ahead (2027 Calendar & Chair Election): Proposed 2027 meetings and election of the next SCRS Chair (Item 21).

Acknowledgements for contributions during the year and assistance in developing this presentation:

The SCRS Chair gratefully acknowledges the leadership, scientific contributions, and dedicated support of the Officers and Rapporteurs of the cross-cutting subsidiary bodies: Pedro Lino (Convener, SC-STATS | EU–Portugal); Eider Andonegi (Co-convenor, SC-ECO-EBFM | EU–Spain) & Andrés Domingo (Co-convenor, SC-ECO-Bycatch | Uruguay); Fan Zhang (Chair, WGSAM | China); and Federico Más (Coordinator, Ad Hoc Working Group on Tagging Information | Uruguay).

ROLE OF SCRS VICE-CHAIR AT THIS MEETING

- Dr. Luis Gustavo Cardoso (Brazil) is currently serving as the SCRS Vice-Chair.

- Primary responsibilities:
  - Sharks, Small Tunas Species Groups, as well as South Atlantic Albacore
  - Collaborated with relevant SCRS Rapporteurs to prepare Panel 3 and 4 presentations for these species, which he will present

- Dr. Cardoso has collaborated with the SCRS Chair throughout the year on various projects, as well as in the coordination of preparations for this meeting.

SCRS CHALLENGES

- **Sustained high workload across SCRS and Secretariat**: including multiple stock assessments (SWO-S, SWO-Med, SMA-N, ALB-S), work associated with 8 MSEs across five species groups, data tasks.
- **Expanding MSE & EC Protocol commitments**: Development of new MSEs and cMP testing (ALB-N, ALB-S, BSH-N, BSH-S, ongoing Tropical Tunas Multi-Stock) alongside EC Protocol developments (SKJ-W) and required annual EC monitoring and status checks (ALB-N, SWO-N, BFT-W, BFT-E, SKJ-W).
- **Increasing demands on SCRS Officers**: Heavy administrative and leadership burdens coordinating intersessional work and preparing draft and final documents for Species Group meetings and the SCRS Plenary.
- **Reduced time for scientific paper review**: Recommending strict enforcement of submission deadlines so that more papers are available in advance of meetings.

Submission Deadlines for SCRS Documents and Presentations

Deadlines for the Submission of Scientific Documents and Presentations (Item 20.2)

Strict Document Submission Timetable:

Title and Abstract: Must be submitted two weeks prior to the start of the meeting.

Full Scientific Paper: Must be submitted seven days prior to the start of the meeting.

Provisional Application & Review:

The Committee agreed to apply this proposal provisionally in 2027.

The policy and its implementation will be formally revisited at the 2027 SCRS Plenary meeting.

Flexibility for Critical Documents:

Irrespective of the strict deadlines, for documents deemed critical to the objectives of the meeting, meeting Chairs retain the flexibility to accept them after the deadline.

2026 SCRS Accomplishments

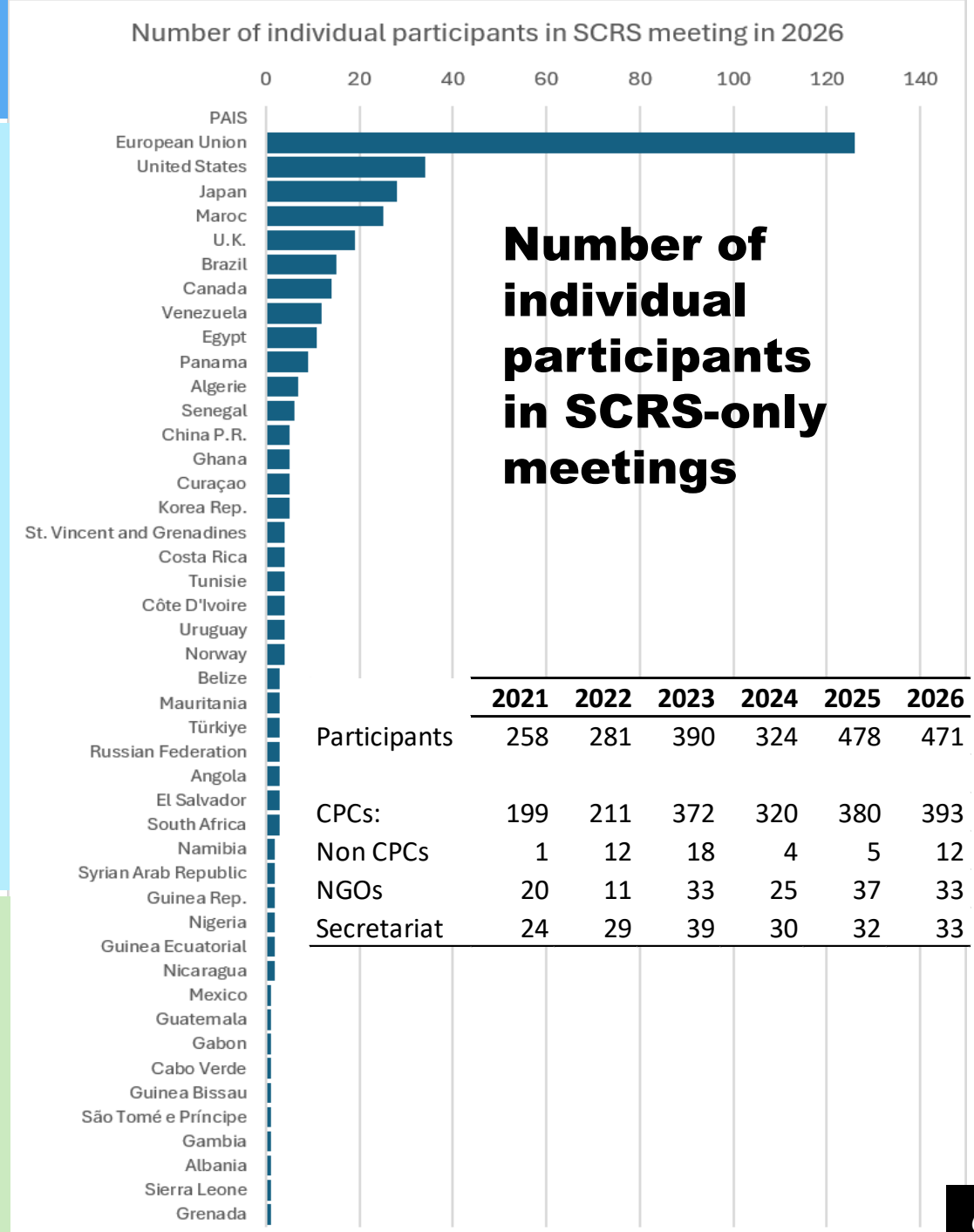
Completion of demanding SCRS meeting schedule:

- **Four (4) stock assessments: SWO-M, SWO-S, ALB-S, SMA-N**
- **Fourteen (14) intersessional SCRS or COM/SCRS meetings: WGSAM, SMA(2), SWO(2), BFT(2), ALB(2), TROP (1), ECO/BYCATCH, SC-STATS, and with SWGSM and PA2**
- **Five (5) workshops**
- **Numerous additional ad hoc online meetings (not included on the ICCAT Calendar) to deal with WG specific issues**

- e.g. meetings of analysts and extended species group to review progress and decisions during stock assessments; various Subgroups to advance MSE-related work associated with ALB, BFT, Tropical Tunas, BSH and SWO.

In 2026 SCRS Intersessional/Species Working Group/Plenary Meetings:

- **393 participants from 47 CPCs**
- **235 SCRS Papers submitted through September 2026**
- **111 Presentations**
- **44 responses to the Commission**



	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Participants	258	281	390	324	478	471
CPCs:	199	211	372	320	380	393
Non CPCs	1	12	18	4	5	12
NGOs	20	11	33	25	37	33
Secretariat	24	29	39	30	32	33

SCRS SCORECARD ON TASK 1 AND 2 DATA AVAILABILITY FOR ALL THE MAJOR ICCAT SPECIES BY STOCK/REGION

(Table 7 in the 2026 Secretariat Report on Research and Statistics PLE-105)

There is a general increase of scores over time, but this increase is not uniform across stocks.

Data scores for billfish, porbeagle, and most small tunas are low.

Overall, the scores are consistent with how the SCRS categorizes each species/stock in terms of fisheries data availability (data-poor/data-rich).

Table 7. SCRS scorecard on Task 1/2 data avaliability for all the major ICCAT species by stock/region (methodology in SCRS/2019/045).

SCORECARD on Task 1/2 availability for the main ICCAT fisheries (terminal year: 2025)

				SCORES (by time series)			N. flag fisheries ranked			Change (%)
FisheryID	Spc. Group	Species	Species/stock	30 years (1996-25)	20 years (2006-25)	10 years (2016-25)	30 years (1996-25)	20 years (2006-25)	10 years (2016-25)	agains't 1995-24 (30 yrs)
1	Temperate tunas	ALB	ALB-N stock	7.28	8.27	7.85	13	11	9	-1%
2			ALB-S stock	6.36	6.47	7.46	9	9	6	-1%
3			ALB-M stock	3.05	5.50	6.12	11	8	7	4%
4		BFT	BFT-E stock (ATE region)	6.65	8.58	8.93	10	8	9	1%
5			BFT-E stock (MED region)	4.36	5.44	6.36	24	19	16	2%
6			BFT-W stock	8.40	9.19	8.76	9	7	7	-2%
7	Tropical tunas	BET	BET-A stock (AT + MD)	6.81	7.51	7.70	30	28	28	-1%
8		YFT	YFT-A stock (AT+MD)	6.36	6.92	6.73	37	34	32	1%
9		SKJ	SKJ-E stock	7.22	7.68	7.67	17	15	14	-1%
10			SKJ-W stock	3.76	3.90	4.02	5	4	5	-10%
11	SWO & billfish	SWO	SWO-N stock	8.25	8.49	8.22	11	11	10	0%
12			SWO-S stock	7.33	7.42	7.48	8	8	6	1%
13			SWO-M stock	5.46	6.80	8.40	10	10	8	3%
14		BUM	BUM-A stock (AT + MD)	3.75	3.74	3.55	35	34	35	-2%
15		WHM	WHM-A stock (AT + MD)	5.10	4.92	4.63	18	17	16	-1%
16		SFA	SFA-E stock	3.02	3.31	2.69	17	15	15	-4%
17			SFA-W stock	3.80	4.33	4.47	19	16	12	-2%
18		SPF	SPF-E stock	4.95	4.13	2.92	4	3	3	-3%
19			SPF-W stock	3.37	3.36	3.00	6	6	3	1%
20	Major shark species	BSH	BSH-N region	5.12	6.20	7.10	6	5	4	4%
21			BSH-S region	6.31	7.29	7.12	6	6	6	4%
22		POR	POR-ANE stock	0.63	0.91	1.94	11	11	8	19%
23			POR-ANW stock	2.87	3.00	4.14	5	8	7	0%
24			POR-ASE stock	0.70	1.38	1.33	4	3	3	0%
25			POR-ASW stock	0.45	0.95	0.00	6	4	1	-5%
26		SMA	SMA-N region	4.79	5.94	5.91	6	7	7	3%
27			SMA-S region	6.11	7.40	6.80	7	6	5	6%
28	Small tuna species	BLF	ATL	3.20	3.82	4.51	14	10	8	0%
29		BLT	ATL	1.72	1.82	2.10	7	8	4	-3%
30			MED	1.09	1.95	3.35	18	14	11	9%
31		BON	ATL	2.38	2.83	2.51	28	22	14	0%
32			MED	0.67	1.13	0.98	9	9	6	-1%
33		BOP	ATL	1.23	1.48	1.00	4	4	3	0%
34			MED	0.00	0.00	0.00	5	3	3	
35		BRS	ATL	0.92	0.95	1.00	3	4	3	0%
36		CER	ATL	0.00	0.66	0.57	1	7	6	
37		COM	MED	0.00	0.00	0.00	2	2	2	
38		FRI	ATL	4.77	5.06	4.52	26	23	19	1%
39		KGM	ATL	0.95	1.24	1.07	9	6	6	0%
40		LTA	ATL	4.33	4.78	4.08	28	23	17	1%
41			MED	1.06	1.67	2.35	17	13	11	12%
42		MAW	ATL	1.12	1.01	0.80	14	11	7	
43		SSM	ATL	0.00	0.00	0.00	4	3	2	
44		WAH	ATL	1.01	1.29	1.32	36	27	19	

2026 Overview of the Status of ICCAT Stocks

- 23 assessed stocks

- Stock Status estimated in the last year of data considered in the most recent assessment of each stock

(Note that BFT-E and BFT-W are included in the green total, despite status relative to B_{MSY} not being estimated)

No Overfishing ($F<F_{MSY}$) and Not Overfished ($B>B_{MSY}$)	Overfishing ($F>F_{MSY}$) but Not Overfished ($B>B_{MSY}$)	No Overfishing ($F<FMSY$) but Overfished ($B<B_{MSY}$)	Overfishing ($F>F_{MSY}$) and Overfished ($B<B_{MSY}$)	Overfishing and/or Overfished Status not fully determined
11	1	5	2	4

2026 Overview of the Status of ICCAT Stocks

ICCAT Stock code	assessed	Status in	B/Bmsy	F/Fmsy
BFT-W	2026	2024	NA	0.69
BFT-E	2026	2024	NA	0.73
ALB-N	2023	2021	2.19	0.45
SAI-E	2023	2021	1.83	0.36
SKJ-W	2022	2020	1.60	0.41
SKJ-E	2022	2020	1.60	0.63
YFT	2024	2022	1.37	0.89
BET	2025	2023	1.23	0.59
SWO-S	2026	2024	1.19	0.69
SWO-N	2022	2020	1.08	0.80
BSH-N	2023	2021	1.00	0.70
BSH-S	2023	2021	1.29	1.03
SAI-W	2023	2021	0.96	0.59
SMA-N	2026	2024	0.95	0.72
ALB-S	2026	2024	0.95	0.90
WHM	2025	2023	0.80	0.191
BUM	2024	2022	0.67	0.91
SWO-M	2026	2024	**0.64**	**1.11**
SMA-S	2025	2023	**0.949**	**1.052**
ALB-M	2024	2022	0.58 | 1.44	1.22 | 0.42
POR-NW	2020	2018	0.57	0.41
POR-NE	2022	2021	0.464	0.013
POR-SW / POR-SE	2020	2018	NA	0.011

(Note: Relative F for BFT is $F/F_{0.1}$)

Mostly tunas and swordfish

Mostly billfish and sharks

Sharks and Mediterranean stocks

(Note: traditional stock assessment methods could not be used for POR-NW and POR-NE, and stock status could not be fully determined)

Table 1. Atlantic bigeye tuna summary table.

Indicator		*Stock Status*
Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)[1]	86,030 t (79,702 t - 114,311 t)[3]	
TAC (2025)	73,011 t	
Current (2025) Yield[2]	51,042 t	
Relative Spawning Biomass (SSB_{2023}/SSB_{MSY})[1]	1.23 (0.81-1.85)[3]	
Relative Fishing Mortality (F_{2023}/F_{MSY})[1]	0.59 (0.36-0.98)[3]	
Stock Status	Overfished: NO (26.2% probability of being overfished)[4] Overfishing: NO (9.1% probability of overfishing)[4]	2023
Management measure in effect	Rec. 24-01[5] TAC (2025) 73,011 t	

[1] Combined result of 18 stock synthesis model runs using data from 1950-2023.
[2] Provisional and subject to revision as of 18 September 2026.
[3] Point estimate, 80% bias corrected confidence intervals are shown.
[4] As estimated from the Kobe plot probability in each quadrant.
[5] Rec. 24-01 only entered in force in June 2025, but other previous Recommendations (Rec. 21-01, Rec. 22-01 and Rec. 23-01) also applied to the BET stock.

Key Outcomes of the Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods

Standardizing Discard & Bycatch Reporting

Streamlined Evaluation for CPCs: Established a standardized diagnostic checklist for submitting discard estimates (a draft to be tested by Species Groups). Once a CPC's methodology is approved, it does not require annual resubmission unless methods or fleet practices change.

Ensuring Accounting in Official Catch: Clear workflow established to incorporate approved dead and live discard estimates directly into Task 1 Nominal Catches (T1NC) by statistical area.

Observer Coverage Impacts: Analysis highlighted that low observer coverage (below ~20%) for ratio estimators can lead to significant underestimation of total bycatch, affecting the reliability of assessments.

Improving Scientific Advice & Climate Resilience

Testing Climate Robustness: Applied exploratory climate stress-testing to Management Procedures (e.g. western skipjack and northern swordfish) to ensure adopted harvest strategies remain robust under environmental change.

Expanding Assessment Tools: Endorsed the a4a modeling framework for the ICCAT software catalogue, enhancing regional capacity and alignment with Mediterranean fisheries management.

Hands-On CPC Training: Developing a no-R code Shiny interface for the Bycatch Estimation Tool (BYET) and technical MSE workshops to directly support national scientists.

Key Outcomes of the Sub-Committee on Statistics

Mandatory Reporting & System Modernization

IOMS Exclusive Submission Channel: The IOMS Form Manager is now the sole portal for all standard statistical (ST01–ST13) and tagging data (TG01-TG03). Email submissions are obsolete.

Timeliness vs. Completeness: Submitting on time does not equal compliant data. Substantial gaps persist in Task 2 catch/effort (T2CE) and size data (T2SZ), directly compromising stock assessment accuracy.

Explicit Zero-Activity Reporting: CPCs with no active vessels or zero catch in a reporting year must explicitly file zero-catch forms rather than omitting reports.

Streamlined Forms & Transparency Tools

Eliminating Redundancy: Discontinuation of Form ST10 (tropical tuna port sampling) is supported because data are already captured in Task 2 size samples, reducing administrative burden on CPCs.

Experimental Trapline form (ST13): Implemented standard operational reporting to track gear dimensions, bait, and interactions as trapline use expands.

Interactive Public & Restricted Dashboards: Deployed modern web dashboards for Task 1/Task 2 data, giving CPCs direct visibility into reporting scores and data gaps, and request/response tracking.

Key Outcomes of the Sub-Committee on Ecosystems and Bycatch

Operationalizing the Ecosystem Approach (EAFM)

EcoCards for Decision-Makers: Developing concise, visual report cards summarizing fishery pressures, climate indicators, socio-economic trends, and non-target stock health.

Translating Science into Management: Shifting ecosystem indicators from descriptive research into practical advice linked to stock status checks and Management Strategy Evaluations (MSE).

Climate Shifting Boundaries: Integrating ocean warming and salinity changes into management advice to explain shifts in stock distribution, catchability, and spawning areas.

Proven Mitigation Technologies & Harmonization

Gear Modifications in Commercial Fisheries: Japanese longline observers recorded no seabird interactions on traplines and a lower sea-turtle bycatch rate than on conventional hooks, while purse-seine release ramps achieve ~50% survival for silky sharks.

Seabird Risk Hotspots: Tracking data reveal high spatial overlap between declining wandering albatross populations and South Atlantic longline fleets, underscoring the ongoing review of mitigation measures.

Cross-RFMO Harmonization: Aligning circle-hook standards and safe-handling protocols with IOTC, IATTC, and WCPFC to avoid conflicting vessel requirements across oceans.

List of SCRS 2026 Research Programs

Key SCRS Research Programs
(will be discussed as needed in the appropriate Panels)

- Atlantic-Wide Research Program for Bluefin Tuna (GBYP)
- Small Tunas Year Program (SMTYP)
- Shark Research and Data Collection Program (SRDCP)
- Enhanced Program for Billfish Research (EPBR)
- Albacore Year Program (ALBYP)
- Swordfish Year Program (SWOYP)
- Tropical Tunas Research and Data Collection Program (TTRaD)

2026 SCRS REPORT • ITEM 18.1

General Recommendations to the Commission that have Financial Implications

Cross-cutting research and capacity building: Secretariat MSE Technical Coordinator position, SC-ECO EcoCards workshop, SC-STATS Caribbean project & cloud infrastructure, and WGSAM BYET & MSE training workshops.

Secretariat: MSE Technical Coordinator Position

Recommendation to the Commission:

- The Committee recommends the Commission increase the capacity of the Secretariat by creating a full-time, permanent position entitled “MSE Technical Coordinator”.

Key Institutional Benefits:

- Single point of contact on all MSE development and Management Procedure (MP) implementation across ICCAT.
- Consistency across time and efforts, significantly reducing workload for national scientists and Secretariat staff.
- Directly addresses the unevenness in MSE knowledge and technical experience across the various SCRS Working Groups.

Core Responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain workplans for each MSE process in collaboration with Species Groups and Panels.
- Facilitate synergies and consistency in framing objectives, presenting results, reviewing MPs, and checking Exceptional Circumstances (ECs).
- Provide technical coding support, MSE modeling expertise, and initial overviews of potential MSE processes for new stocks.

MSE Activities Budget vs. MSE Technical Coordinator Cost

Comparative Analysis of SCRS Dedicated MSE Funds vs. Secretariat Permanent Position:

The Committee views that creating this permanent position will lead to significant reductions in external contract costs across species programs:

Budget Category / MSE Activity	2027 (€)	2028 (€)	2029 (€)
Adopted MPs: ALB-N	35,000	35,000	35,000
Adopted MPs: BFT	100,000	80,000	80,000
Adopted MPs: SWO-N	30,000	5,000	15,000
Adopted MPs: SKJ-W	12,000	---	---
Adopted MPs: TRO MSE Communication	---	12,000	12,000
Sub-total (Adopted MPs)	177,000	132,000	142,000
MSEs Underway: TRO multi-stock	50,000	50,000	20,000
MSEs Underway: BSH-N & BSH-S	60,000	60,000	60,000
MSEs Underway: ALB-S (external funded 2026-27)	---	35,000	35,000
Sub-total (MSEs Underway)	110,000	145,000	115,000
TOTAL SCRS BUDGET DEDICATED TO MSEs	**287,000**	**277,000**	**257,000**
PROPOSED MSE TECHNICAL COORDINATOR POSITION	***169,578***	***172,970***	***172,970***

Workshop on EcoCard (1st Quarter 2027):

- Organize a workshop in early 2027 to continue supporting the development of EcoCards, with a particular focus on advancing environmental and climate indicators.
- Aims to evaluate environmental/climate variability impacts on large pelagics and explore links to stock assessment, MSE, and ecosystem-based advisory tools.

Activity / Line Item	2027 (€)	2028 (€)	2029 (€)	Explanations
Workshop on ECOcard	21,575	---	---	Advance EcoCard work; attendance of up to 11 experts (5-day workshop)
Subtotal Meetings	21,575	0	0	
Science Coordination	1,205	---	---	Secretariat coordination estimated in relation to overall science budget
TOTAL SC-ECO REQUEST	**22,780**	**0**	**0**	**Breakdown for 2028/2029 to be provided in 2027**

Key Recommended Activities:

Phase II & III Caribbean Regional Data Collection Project: Continue supporting project to improve reporting and analysis of blue marlin and yellowfin tuna artisanal data (fully funded by U.S.).

Cloud Infrastructure: Set aside additional dedicated funds for server renting and deployment of new public data dissemination applications.

Activity / Line Item	2027 (€)	2028 (€)	2029 (€)	Explanations
Caribbean Project (Phase II & III)	37,500	---	---	Concluded in 2027; fully funded by U.S. commitment
Cloud Infrastructure	4,500	4,500	4,500	Monthly renting of cloud servers with scalable software capacity
Subtotal Studies	42,000	4,500	4,500	
Science Coordination	2,346	253	285	Proportion of SC-STATS budget relative to overall science budget
TOTAL SC-STATS REQUEST	**44,346**	**4,753**	**4,785**	**Additional 2028/2029 funds to be updated in 2027**

Capacity Building and Modeling Recommendations:

- BYET Training Workshop: 2027 training workshop to increase CPC reporting compliance on dead/live discards.
- Technical MSE Training: 5-day advanced MSE training in 2027 (FLBEIA platform); intermediate training in 2028-29.
- BYET Software Development: Further refine the Bycatch Estimation Tool based on user feedback.

Activity / Line Item	2027 (€)	2028 (€)	2029 (€)	Explanations
BYET Training Workshop	30,000	---	---	Capacity building for CPCs to report bycatch/discards
Technical MSE Workshops (5-days)	40,000	40,000	40,000	Advanced (2027, FLBEIA) & intermediate (2028-29) training
BYET Tool Development	20,000	---	---	Incorporate feedback from previous training workshops
Subtotal Activities	90,000	40,000	40,000	
Science Coordination	2,398	2,164	2,532	Secretariat science coordination
TOTAL WGSAM REQUEST	**92,398**	**42,164**	**42,532**	**Instructors labor and participant support included**

2026 SCRS REPORT • ITEM 18.2

Other General Recommendations to the Commission

data requirements compilation, CPCs' Annual Reports Part I redundancy, MP review guidelines, SC-ECO Ecopath with Ecosim modeling, SC-STATS size compliance, WGSAM bycatch checklist, and reactivating the Tagging Coordination Platform.

General Recommendations

Guidance on the Management Procedure (MP) Review Process:

- Regular Multi-Year Reviews: Unlike annual Exceptional Circumstances (EC) checks, MPs undergo regular scheduled reviews (e.g. 6-year cycle for BFT) to incorporate updated stock behavior, new science, and improved performance.
- Re-conditioning Operating Models (OMs): OMs are revised with recent monitoring data to verify whether the MP still meets Commission management objectives (Rec. 23-07).
- Retuning vs. Restructuring: If performance deteriorates meaningfully, the MP should be retuned (adjusting parameter values) rather than undergoing a complete structural overhaul.

Distinction Between MP Reviews and Exceptional Circumstances Checks:

- EC Checks (Annual): Ensure an MP is 'on course' by checking if indices and catches stay within expected ranges.
- Triggering ECs: Does not immediately overturn TAC advice, but may cause the scheduled MP review to be brought forward.

Scientific Data Submissions

Recommendations to Assist CPCs and Strengthen Data Quality:

- Document on Data Requirements: Secretariat to compile and clarify all annual scientific data obligations per species, fishery, and gear, distinguishing mandatory vs. optional data.
- Data Quality & Completeness: Explore options to assess data quality and provide an annual completeness scorecard per CPC.
- Proactive Gap Notification: Identify data gaps ahead of preparatory meetings and directly notify relevant CPCs.
- Fisheries Indicator Overview: Secretariat to provide an annual overview of fishery trends (catch, effort, capacity) in September.

Streamlining Reporting: CPCs' Annual Reports Part I redundancy

"Noting the interest of the Commission to streamline reporting requirements and avoid unnecessary duplications in data reporting, the Committee recommends that the Commission notes that the information included in the CPCs' Annual Reports Part I is already provided to the subsidiary bodies of the Committee in a more detailed, accurate and useful manner through other sources. Therefore, the Committee is of the view that Part I of the CPCs' Annual Reports do not provide any added value to its scientific work."

Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) Model Collaboration:

"The Committee recommended that SC-ECO and the Tropical Tuna Species Group collaborate to test the use of the Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) model developed in the Tropical Atlantic described in document SCRS/2026/103 (Meléndez-Arteaga et al., 2026) and Meléndez-Arteaga et al. (2025) for responding to ICCAT Commission requests related to evaluating ecosystem impacts of tropical tuna fisheries."

Collaborative Work with Other Tuna RFMOs:

"The Committee recommended that ICCAT continue to strengthen collaborative work with other tuna RFMOs on bycatch-related issues, including the exchange of scientific information, harmonization of approaches where appropriate, and coordination on conservation and management strategies."

Task 2 Size Data Reporting (Mediterranean Purse Seine):

"The Committee noted important data gaps for several important stocks and fisheries. In particular this year the Committee noted: That important Task 2 size data (ST04) from the Mediterranean purse seine fishery were not reported within the established deadlines and reiterated the need for CPCs to comply with the data submission obligations adopted by the SCRS and the Commission.

The Subcommittee also acknowledged that some, but not all, CPCs have submitted their size data in ST06 forms and encouraged the relevant CPCs to continue working with the Secretariat to ensure that these data are provided in a timely manner for stock assessments."

Proposed Carryover Estimates Policy:

"The Committee recommended that carryover estimates be applied only for data preparatory meetings and not during the Species Group meetings held in September. CPCs should review any carryover estimates concerning their fisheries and submit the corresponding official data through the IOMS Form Manager. However, the text was not finalized and required further clarification before adoption."

Bycatch Estimation Checklist Usability:

"SCRS Species Groups to test the usability of the draft checklist of bycatch estimation methods evaluation and work with the WGSAM to further refine the checklist."

Workshop on Non-Stationary Dynamics under Climate Change:

"In 2027 the WGSAM should consider organizing a workshop addressing non-stationary population dynamics in stock assessment and MSE under climate change by inviting experts from ICCAT and other organizations in 2028."

Ad Hoc WG on Coordination of Tagging Information

Reactivating the Tagging Coordination Platform:

"The Group agreed on the importance of reactivating and maintaining its activity more regularly, aiming for the provision of a coordination platform between the different tagging activities carried out by the Species Groups and the ICCAT Secretariat."

Integrating Tagging with Genomics & CKMR:

"It was highlighted that tagging activities remain valuable tools to address several biological and ecological aspects of interest to the SCRS and the different Working Groups. In addition, it was mentioned that an important step forward could be to coordinate tagging activities with other modern and complementary techniques such as genomics and close-kin mark-recapture (CKMR)."

Changing the Committee's Handling of Recommendations

Eliminating Restrictions on Recommendations to the Commission Without Financial Implications (Item 20.4.1)

- Longstanding practice has limited recommendations appearing in the main body of the annual SCRS Report that do not carry financial implications to a maximum of two per section. (Note: there has never been a limit on recommendations with financial implications).
- The Committee agreed that, as of 2027, the numeric limit on recommendations to the Commission without financial implications shall be removed. This change will be applied provisionally in 2027 and revisited at the 2027 SCRS Plenary meeting.

Proposal for the Preservation of SCRS Species Group Recommendations (Item 20.4.2)

- Establishes a formal process to systematically record, track, and preserve internal scientific and operational recommendations agreed upon by Species Groups during species group week, which previously risked being lost or omitted from the institutional record.

Two Categorized Lists Adopted by Groups:

  - ***Self-directed recommendations:*** recommendations directed to the Species Group itself for future work, research priorities, or data requests.
  - ***External / inter-Group recommendations:*** directed to other specific SCRS bodies (e.g. WGSAM, SC-STATS, SC-ECO, or other Species Groups) or to the SCRS as a whole, explicitly identifying the intended recipient body.

- Organization in a Dedicated Annex: Recommendations from all groups will be compiled in a dedicated, translated Annex to the SCRS Report, consolidated and restructured by recipient body. Under each recipient header, the list will include both self-directed recommendations and all recommendations received from other groups, clearly identifying the originating group.
- Status at Plenary: Presented for information only to respect consensus reached within the groups (*i.e.* not subject to editing or drafting changes in Plenary), while allowing their implications to be considered (e.g. in finalizing work plans).

2026 SCRS REPORT • ITEMS 19.1 – 19.7

Responses to the Commission's Requests

Formal Plenary-level scientific responses: SC-STATS alternative monitoring (Rec. 16-14) & Norway shark check sheet exemption; SC-ECO sea turtle boundaries, time-area closures, cetacean release guidelines, and biodiversity / OECMs (Res. 23-23).

RESPONSES TO THE COMMISSION

19.1 The SCRS will advise the Commission on the suitability of the alternative approach proposed by CPCs, Rec. 16-14, para 4b

- Limited information was presented in 2026 allowing evaluation of alternative monitoring approaches.
- Bluefin Tuna, Sharks, and Tropical Tunas groups noted no specific proposals were submitted for evaluation.
- Tropical Tunas noted ongoing work by the Technical Sub-group on Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) to develop minimum standards for smaller vessels, which may inform future alternative approaches.

RESPONSES TO THE COMMISSION

19.2 Norway requests a partial exemption from submission of the ICCAT Shark Implementation Check Sheet, Rec. 18-06, para 3

- The Committee reviewed catch and distribution data (2015–2026) confirming Norwegian bluefin fisheries operate far north of the geographical distribution of the relevant shark species.
- The SCRS accepted Norway's request for a partial exemption covering Rec. 23-11, Rec. 25-08, Rec. 10-07, Rec. 10-08, Rec. 11-08, and Rec. 09-07.
- Exemption is valid for 2027–2031, subject to annual confirmation in Norway's Annual Report that fishery operations have not changed.

RESPONSES TO THE COMMISSION

19.4 SCRS is requested to review periodically the provisions of this measure related to the spatio-temporal ecology of sea turtles, including their interactions and mortality associated with these fisheries, Rec. 22-12, para 7

- The Committee is conducting collaborative work in both the Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea to gather additional information on the impact of ICCAT fisheries on sea turtles. Once this work is completed, it could contribute to a response to this request.

RESPONSES TO THE COMMISSION

19.5 SCRS shall assess available information on the use of time-area fishing restrictions and closures in areas where there is a higher risk of interaction with sea turtles and advise the Commission, as appropriate, Rec. 22-12, para 10

- The Committee is working to determine the status of turtles at the time of capture in some ICCAT fisheries in order to link this to their distribution areas. This objective is expected to be achieved by 2027.

RESPONSES TO THE COMMISSION

19.6 SCRS, to the extent possible, develop further best practice guidelines for the safe handling and release of cetaceans, taking into account relevant guidelines already developed by relevant international organizations, Rec. 23-15, para 4

- The Committee included in its work plan for 2027 the development of a guide of good practices for the safe handling and release of cetaceans caught within the framework of ICCAT fisheries.

RESPONSES TO THE COMMISSION

19.7 The SCRS should investigate workable examples of how marine biodiversity can be conserved in a way that is compatible with the conduct of responsible and sustainable fisheries, including other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), either as complementary or alternative measures to other area-based approaches, Res. 23-23

- The Committee acknowledged that, given the overall context of this specific request, further clarification from the Commission would be necessary regarding what is specifically being requested the SCRS and the Subcommittee to do.

Stock Assessments Proposed for 2027

1. Mediterranean Blue Shark (BSH-MD)

FIRST QUANTITATIVE BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT

Regional Priority:

Addresses high uncertainty surrounding Mediterranean shark status, responding to repeated Species Group calls to prioritize the region.

Wider Regional Review:

Available biological and fishery data for other Mediterranean pelagic shark species will be evaluated in parallel.

Atlantic MSE Continuity:

Advances ongoing MSE work for North and South Atlantic blue shark (BSH-N & BSH-S) according to the adopted ICCAT Roadmap.

Meeting Format:

Hybrid data preparatory and stock assessment meetings; progress on Atlantic MSEs will also be reviewed during these sessions.

2. Eastern Atlantic Skipjack (SKJ-E)

BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT & MSE RECONDITIONING

Assessment Background:

Last assessed in 2022 (data through 2020), which provided the stock's first quantitative status estimates.

MSE Reconditioning Need:

2026 stock projections revealed the 2022 model could not sustain catches well below estimated MSY, making it unsuitable for Multi-Stock MSE Operating Models (OMs).

Core 2027 Deliverables:

Provide updated management advice (using data through 2025) and establish calibrated Stock Synthesis models to condition the SKJ-E MSE OMs.

Multi-Stock Framework:

Work on yellowfin (YFT) and bigeye (BET) components continues in parallel, with progress reviewed at hybrid preparatory and assessment meetings.

Resolving the SKJ-E model structure is essential before candidate MPs can be finalized for tropical tunas.

SCRS draft calendar for 2027 / Projet de calendrier du SCRS pour 2027 / Proyecto de calendario del SCRS para 2027

2027	FRI VEN VIE	SAT SAM SAB	SUN DIM DOM	MON LUN LUN	TUE MAR MAR	WED MER MIE	THU JEU JUE	FRI VEN VIE	SAT SAM SAB	SUN DIM DOM	MON LUN LUN	TUE MAR MAR	WED MER MIE	THU JEU JUE	FRI VEN VIE	SAT SAM SAB	SUN DIM DOM	MON LUN LUN	TUE MAR MAR	WED MER MIE	THU JEU JUE	FRI VEN VIE	SAT SAM SAB	SUN DIM DOM	MON LUN LUN	TUE MAR MAR	WED MER MIE	THU JEU JUE	FRI VEN VIE	SAT SAM SAB	SUN DIM DOM	MON LUN LUN	TUE MAR MAR	WED MER MIE	THU JEU JUE	FRI VEN VIE	SAT SAM SAB	SUN DIM DOM
January **Janvier** **Enero**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31								
February **Février** **Febrero**				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 ALB SG MSE	18	19	20	21	22	23 Small Tuna SG intersessesional	24	25	26	27	28								
March **Mars** **Marzo**				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Billfish SG intersessesional	10	11	12	13	14	15 Mediterranean Blue Shark Data Preparatory + MSE												25	26	27	28	29	30	31				
April **Avril** **Abril**							1	2	3	4	5 Eastern Skipjack Data Prep. + MSE	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14 1st Inters. BFT (I)	15	16	17	18	19	20 Swordfish SG intersessesional	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
May **Mai** **Mayo**		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 1st Inters. BFT (II)	13	14	15	16	17	18 WGSAM							24 SC-ECO						29	30	31				
June **Juin** **Junio**					1	2	3	4	5	6	7 ALB SG MSE	8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Mediterranean Blue Shark Stock Assessment + MSE													26	27	28	29	30			
July **Juillet** **Julio**							1	2	3	4	5 Eastern Skipjack Stock Assessment + MSE	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
August **Août** **Agosto**			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
September **Septembre** **Septiembre**						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20 Species Groups + SC-STAT	21	22	23	24	25	26	27 SCRS Plenary	28	29	30		
October **Octobre** **Octubre**	1 SCRS	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							
November **Novembre** **Noviembre**				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30					
December **Décembre** **Diciembre**						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		

Free day in ICCAT
Jour libre à l'ICCAT
Día libre en ICCAT

Online meeting
Réunion en ligne
Reunión en línea

Secretariat meeting preparation/holidays
Préparation des réunions du Secrétariat/vacances
Preparación de las reuniones de la Secretaría/vacaciones

Election of the SCRS Chair

Election of Prof. Luis Gustavo Cardoso

Dr. Luis Gustavo Cardoso was nominated by Brazil for the position of SCRS Chair. Many Contracting Parties supported this nomination, thanking Dr Cardoso for his hard work during his mandate as SCRS Vice-Chair. Dr. Cardoso was elected as the next SCRS Chair by acclamation.

During his tenure as Vice-Chair, he has had primary responsibilities to work with the Sharks and Small Tunas WGs, as well as matters regarding ALB-S and serving as SWO-S Rapporteur. He has also provided valuable support and counsel to the SCRS Chair on many other topics. In addition to his time as SCRS Vice-Chair, he has experience at both the SCRS and Commission.

Term of Office: His mandate as SCRS Chair will formally commence on 1 January 2027.

Leadership Transition & Acknowledgements

Upon his election as the next SCRS Chair, Dr. Cardoso outlined priorities to strengthen inclusiveness and streamline the Committee's work and communication with the Commission, and expressed his intention to lead collaboratively, with the support of the Officers and Secretariat.

Dr. Craig Brown (USA) concludes two consecutive terms (four years) of dedicated leadership as SCRS Chair at the end of 2026. Contracting Parties thanked Dr. Brown for his hard work and leadership during his tenure as Chair of the Committee.

Dr. Brown congratulated Dr. Cardoso on his election and thanked him for his invaluable assistance during his tenure as Vice-Chair, expressing full confidence that the Committee will be in good hands under Dr Cardoso’s leadership.