Pew

The Pew Charitable Trusts' Opening Statement to the 25th Special Meeting of the ICCAT Commission meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance and Administration November 2026

The Pew Charitable Trusts appreciates the opportunity to address this year's agenda of the Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD). Pew has almost two decades of experience at ICCAT, and we welcome the Committee's focus on strengthening the Commission's governance, financial position, and capacity to fulfil its conservation and management mandate. To that end, we wish to highlight the following:

ICCAT Performance review

STACFAD should advance the third Performance Review for ICCAT, aimed at ensuring optimal functioning of the Commission. The focus on overall governance and ICCAT's ability to fulfil its conservation and management mandate - consistent with relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions– is especially timely considering other international instruments now underway, e.g., the high seas treaty (BBNJ). As an international organization, working across multiple UN bodies and within 10 RFMOs, Pew intends to provide practical, global, and objective insights into this process.

Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) Technical Coordinator

Recognizing the recommendation from SCRS for a full-time MSE technical coordinator, STACFAD and the Secretariat should streamline workforce planning to accommodate this position within the current staff. Certain Secretariat staff already have the required MSE expertise to deliver this role but currently work on multiple other matters. This position would specifically coordinate and provide technical MSE expertise across species groups within SCRS. This single point of contact on all MSE development and MP implementation will support consistency in SCRS timelines and workload. The SCRS report also notes that "*that there could be significant reductions in the SCRS budget related to MSE activities if this "MSE Technical Coordinator" permanent position is created within the Secretariat".* With all this in mind and acknowledging the repeated requests from SCRS to address capacity for the core work of the Commission, STACFAD should establish an MSE coordinator without further delays.

Observer Participation

While observers were not included in the meetings of the Virtual Working Group on a Sustainable Financial Position for ICCAT (VWG-SF), Pew understands the need to reduce the cost

of ICCAT meetings and recognizes that this may involve increasing observer participation fees. However, we are concerned about any room layout which severely limits meaningful stakeholder engagement and expert contributions. We appreciate the inclusion of text to "*prevent any impediment to the right of head delegates and accredited observers to take the floor".* ICCAT's observer guidelines explicitly state that NGOs supporting the Commission can participate in all meetings (with very limited exceptions) and the Rules of Procedure recognise that observers may address meetings and participate in their work; we therefore welcome the Proposal for updated Rules of Procedure for the Virtual Working Group on Sustainable Finance to ensure a transparent process for informed and accountable decision-making within STACFAD.