



ICCAT Press Release

ICCAT agreed a new conservation measure for the North Atlantic shortfin mako shark

Closure of the 27th Regular meeting of the Commission

23 November 2021 – The COVID-19 pandemic has caused substantial problems throughout 2020 and 2021, with several of the Contracting Parties and Cooperating Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) being among the most impacted countries worldwide. However, this year ICCAT met online between 15 and 23 November 2021 and although the conditions were not ideal, it was possible to take the necessary decisions to avoid ICCAT fisheries being unregulated throughout 2022.

The Commission convened to evaluate the results of the 2021 work plan together with the current status of application of the regulatory measures in force and to establish the conservation and management measures for the future. In 2021, full scientific stock assessments were carried out for three species: **bigeye tuna** (*Thunnus obesus*), **western Atlantic bluefin tuna** (*Thunnus thynnus*) and **Mediterranean albacore** (*Thunnus alalunga*). In total, 21 new Recommendations and 3 Resolutions were adopted covering relevant issues on Atlantic tuna and tuna-like species conservation and fisheries management.

After 4 years of long discussions ICCAT agreed a new conservation measure for North Atlantic shortfin mako shark caught in association with ICCAT fisheries, starting in 2022, to end overfishing immediately and to gradually achieve biomass levels sufficient to support maximum sustainable yield (MSY) by 2070 with a probability ranging between 60 and 70% at least. The total fishing mortality was set to a maximum of 250 tonnes until new scientific advice is provided to the Commission.

An agreement was reached allowing for rollover of the multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas, which implies a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for bigeye tuna of 62,000 tonnes for 2022. In addition, in order to reduce the fishing mortality of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna, a new shorter FAD fishing closure was agreed. The annual TAC for yellowfin will remain at 110,000 tonnes. Finally, it was decided that intersessional meetings of Panel 1 will be held in 2022 to review existing measures and, *inter alia*, develop catch limits and associated catch verification mechanisms for 2023.



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS

An amendment was agreed to the *Recommendation by ICCAT for an Interim Conservation and Management Plan for Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna* (Rec. 17-06), which set a TAC, inclusive of dead discards, of 2,726 t for 2022, corresponding to an increase of 376 t.

In 2022, a new stock assessment for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna stock will be conducted to incorporate the most recent available data and use a new stock assessment model. The TAC for 2022 remains at 36,000 t, while the TAC for 2023 shall be decided at the 2022 annual meeting of the Commission in accordance with a Management Procedure (MP) or based on new scientific advice in 2022 if the MP is not yet available.

For the Mediterranean albacore stock, the Commission agreed to implement a 15-year rebuilding plan starting in 2022 and continuing through 2036. For 2022 the TAC was set at 2,500 tonnes.

For North Atlantic albacore stock, a TAC of 37,801 t for the period 2022-2023 was agreed, based on the interim Harvest Control Rule (HCR) as well as allocations, that included a Harvest Control Rule, with a view to adopting a long-term management procedure for this stock.

The management measures for Atlantic swordfish and blue shark were rolled over, and the TACs for 2022 were kept at the 2021 level, in accordance with SCRS advice. A new stock assessment of the North and South Atlantic swordfish stocks was scheduled for 2022.

The Compliance Committee noted that the trend toward improved compliance was continuing, although as was to be expected, the pandemic caused some difficulties in meeting deadlines, particularly in the early stages. Letters will be issued to thirty-one Contracting Parties and three Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities in which a range of compliance deficiencies were detected. The Committee also made important progress on the schedule of actions to be taken in cases of non-compliance as well as continued support for the work on online reporting.

The Commission, as advised by the Permanent Working Group (PWG), agreed on new technical working groups to advance work on catch documentation systems, electronic monitoring, as well as an *ad hoc* working group to examine labor standards in ICCAT fisheries. The Commission also adopted new measures on transshipment, VMS measures and vessel listing requirements.

The ICCAT Chair, Mr. Raul Delgado, in his address, thanked all Contracting Parties for their commitment to finally agreeing on a conservation measure for North Atlantic shortfin mako shark, as well as other measures that will avoid ICCAT fisheries being in an unregulated situation throughout 2022. Therefore, he urged ICCAT Contracting Parties to continue bilateral or multilateral consultations to overcome some of the difficulties inherent to the most relevant issues that will be addressed in the 2022 Commission meetings.

The Commission also elected a new Chairman, Mr. Ernesto Pena Lado (European Union) and expressed its profound appreciation for the excellent service that the outgoing Chair, Mr. Raul Delgado (Panama) had dedicated to the Commission over the past four years. Additionally, the Commission elected new 1st Vice Chair Ms. Zakia Driouich (Morocco) and elected Mr. Ramon Chong (Curaçao) as 2nd Vice Chair.

Finally, ICCAT would like to express its sincerest gratitude to all CPCs and its partners for their valuable contributions to the success of the meeting. We will be looking forward to meeting you in November 2022 at the 23rd Special meeting of the Commission.



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS

The meeting was attended by over 480 delegates from 50 Contracting Parties, 5 Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, 6 intergovernmental organizations, 25 Non-Governmental Organizations and 1 Non-Contracting Party.

For more information contact: Camille Jean Pierre Manel, ICCAT Executive Secretary:
Tel: +34 91 416 56 00, Email: camille.manel@iccat.int; www.iccat.int



List of adopted Recommendations and Resolutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT to replace Recommendation 03-20 on criteria for attaining the status of Cooperating Non-Contracting Party, Entity or Fishing Entity in ICCAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT to continue the development of an Integrated Online Reporting System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation on vessels without nationality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 18-08 on establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution by ICCAT establishing an ICCAT Working Group on Catch Document Scheme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution by ICCAT establishing a process to address labor standards in ICCAT fisheries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 20-08 on the application of the eBCD System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 18-13 replacing Recommendation 11-20 on an ICCAT bluefin tuna catch documentation program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT on transshipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 13-13 concerning the establishment of an ICCAT record of vessels 20 metres in length overall or greater authorized to operate in the Convention area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution by ICCAT Establishing a Pilot Project for the Implementation of Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) on Bluefin Tuna Processing Vessels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT for the establishment of an ICCAT Working Group on the use of Electronic Monitoring systems (EMS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 07-08 concerning data exchange format and protocol in relation to the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for the bluefin tuna fishery in the ICCAT Convention area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT to replace Recommendation 19-02 replacing Recommendation 16-01 on a multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 19-04 establishing a multi-annual management plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Rebuilding Plan for Mediterranean Albacore
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 17-06 for an interim conservation and management plan for western Atlantic bluefin tuna
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation by ICCAT on conservation and management measures, including a management procedure and exceptional circumstances protocol, for North Atlantic albacore



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 16-07 on South Atlantic albacore catch limits for the period 2017-2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT extending and amending Recommendation 17-02 amending the Recommendation 16-03 for the conservation of North Atlantic swordfish
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 19-08 on management measures for the conservation of South Atlantic blue shark caught in association with ICCAT fisheries
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT on Recommendation 17-03 amending the Recommendation 16-04 for the conservation of South Atlantic swordfish
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 19-07 amending the Recommendation 16-12 on management measures for the conservation of the North Atlantic blue shark caught in association with ICCAT fisheries
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommendation by ICCAT on the conservation of North Atlantic stock of shortfin mako caught in association with ICCAT fisheries