

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS



COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA
CONSERVATION DES THONIDES DE L'ATLANTIQUE

COMISIÓN INTERNACIONAL PARA LA
CONSERVACIÓN DEL ATÚN ATLÁNTICO

Madrid, 5 January 2018

ICCAT CIRCULAR # 0077/ 2018

SUBJECT: 2018 BLUE MARLIN DATA PREPARATORY MEETING (MADRID, SPAIN, 12-16 MARCH 2018)

I have the honour to inform you that the 2018 Blue Marlin Data Preparatory Meeting will be held on 12-16 March 2018, in Madrid, Spain.

Attached please find the objectives, the tentative agenda of the meeting and other relevant information about the organization. I would appreciate it very much if you distribute this announcement to scientists who may contribute by participating in the meeting. This announcement will also be published on our web site.

In order to have an estimation of the number of participants in advance of the session I would also appreciate if you could send to the Secretariat a list of delegates who will participate in the meeting by **2 March 2018**.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.



Driss Meski
Executive Secretary

- **Commission Officers:**

Commission Chair:	R. Delgado	COC Chair:	D. Campbell
First Vice Chair:	S. Depypere	PWG Chair:	N. Ansell
Second Vice Chair:	Z. Driouich	STACFAD Chair:	H.A Elekon
SCRS Chair:	D. Die		
- **Head Delegates/Head Scientists**
- **Cooperating Parties, Entities, or Fishing Entities**

Attachment: Objectives, Tentative Agenda and Information for participants.

2018 BLUE MARLIN DATA PREPARATORY MEETING

(Madrid, Spain – 12-16 March 2018)

Objectives

The most recent assessment for blue marlin was conducted in 2011 through a process that included a data preparatory meeting in May 2010 and an assessment meeting in April 2011. During those meetings catch estimates were produced, updated biological parameters and estimated relative abundance indices for blue marlin. In 2011 the first full stock assessment for Atlantic blue marlin stock was completed. During the stock assessment, several models were used, including ASPIC, Bayesian Surplus Production model, and Stock Synthesis configured as age-structured production model.

The Billfish Species Group recognizes that important blue marlin catches occur in the tropical and subtropical central Atlantic where they are caught by commercial (as bycatch) and artisanal fisheries. Thus, obtaining standardized indices of abundance from these fisheries is essential. In past assessments, the quality and completeness of Task I and II data has been of concern. Therefore, all countries catching billfishes (directed or by-catch) should report species-specific catch, catch-at-size, and fishing effort statistics by as small time-area strata as possible, and CPUE standardized series. Participation in the Billfish Species Group has been poor in the recent meetings, with CPCs directly involved in the by-catch of blue marlin not attending the meetings. This made it difficult to evaluate indices of abundance from important fleets. Therefore, the Group requested that CPCs that can make valuable contributions to the assessments make the necessary arrangements to ensure the participation of their national scientists in the upcoming blue marlin data preparatory meeting.

In 2018, the Billfish Species Group will perform a stock assessment for Atlantic blue marlin stock. The methods to be used include surplus production models, and an integrated stock synthesis model. The data preparatory meeting will define the catch and size data, as well indices of abundance and other relevant biological and fisheries information to the assessment.

Tentative Agenda

1. Opening, adoption of the Agenda and meeting arrangements.
2. Review of available data for the assessment
 - 2.1. Biology
 - 2.2. Task I and II catch data
 - 2.3. Task II effort and size data
 - 2.4. Tagging data
3. Review of relative indices of abundance (CPUEs)
4. Discussion on models to be used during the assessment and their assumptions
5. Other data relevant for stock assessment and remaining issues in preparation for the June stock assessment meeting
6. Enhanced Program for Billfish Research (EPBR)
7. Other matters
8. Recommendations
9. Adoption of the report and closure

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. Date and Venue of the meeting

The meeting will be held from 12 March (Monday) to 16 March (Friday) 2018. (Registration starts at 08:30 am, 12 March). Meeting hours will be approximately from 09:00 to 18:00.

The meeting will be held at the ICCAT Secretariat: C/Corazón de María 8, Madrid, Spain. Please [click here](#) for a map with the Secretariat's location and information about Madrid.

2. Contact information

Chair: to be appointed

Secretariat Contact: Mauricio Ortiz (mauricio.ortiz@iccat.int)

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

C/ Corazón de María 8, 6th floor

Madrid 28002, Spain.

Tel: +34 91 416 5600; Fax: +34 91 415 2612

3. Language

The working language for the meeting will be English, as no simultaneous translation can be provided. Scientific documents can be written in English, French or Spanish.

4. Call for scientific papers

Participants are encouraged to submit relevant scientific papers. In order to better organize the meetings, in 2014 the SCRS established deadlines for submitting documents, which were revised in 2015. These deadlines provide the rapporteurs with valuable information to better fit the meeting timetable as well as allow the Secretariat to make the documents available to participants in advance of the meeting. In 2015 the SCRS "proposed that a new deadline for the submission of SCRS documents should be implemented; these documents should be provided in their entirety at least one week before the meeting in which they are to be presented to facilitate their review by participating scientists prior to these meetings". As such the full documents for this meeting should be provided to info@iccat.int or miguel.santos@iccat.int by **4 March 2018**. Authors are reminded to closely follow the [Guidelines for Authors of Scientific Documents for the ICCAT SCRS and Collective Volume Series](#). Furthermore, the original documents (text, tables and figures) should be prepared in WORD or compatible software.

5. Provision of data

Parties should submit relevant information such as catch, size and index of abundance information up to 2016, as well as all possible information for 2017 for blue marlin, by **1 March**, one and a half weeks prior to the 2018 data preparatory meeting.

6. Funding

Funding is available to cover travel and subsistence expenses for a scientist from each ICCAT developing Contracting Party who can provide information relevant to the meeting objectives, particularly in reference to provision of data.

According with the Rules of Procedure for the Administration of the Special Meeting Participation Fund adopted at the 2014 Commission meeting, requests should be received **45 days** in advance, i.e. **26 January 2018**. Requests for financial assistance cannot be accepted after that date.

All the information related with the ICCAT special funds for participation in ICCAT meeting and capacity building is available in the ICCAT web site ([here](#)). It is highly recommended to visit this web page in advance and to strictly follow the protocols. In particular, it is necessary to fully complete the invitation form including explanations of the expected contribution to the meeting and how it relates to the meeting objectives.

7. Hotel information

A list of recommended hotels will be uploaded to the ICCAT website shortly ([here](#)).