



Madrid, 2 February 2018

ICCAT CIRCULAR # 0596 / 2018

**SUBJECT: 2018 ICCAT BLUEFIN TUNA AND NORTH ATLANTIC SWORDFISH
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION (MSE) MEETING
(Madrid, Spain, 16-20 April 2018)**

I have the honour to inform you that the 2018 ICCAT Bluefin Tuna and North Atlantic Swordfish MSE Meeting will be held on 16-20 April 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 April 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**
- **Cooperating Parties, Entities, or Fishing Entities**

Attachment: Objectives, Tentative Agendas and Information for participants.

2018 ICCAT BLUEFIN TUNA AND NORTH ATLANTIC SWORDFISH MSE MEETING *(Madrid, Spain – 16-20 April 2018)*

Objectives

In 2017 the SCRS elaborated a work plan for 2018 which included an intersessional meeting to advance the MSE work conducted for bluefin tuna and include participants from the Swordfish Species Group who are scheduled to start working on MSE in 2018.

The Bluefin Tuna MSE specifications is being developed by the Bluefin Tuna Core Modelling Group and is funded by the ICCAT GBYP. Four meetings of the ICCAT GBYP Core Modelling MSE Group have been held since the 2016 SCRS plenary meeting. An operating model (OM) framework allowing mixing between the two stocks has been developed and conditioned to date on relative abundance, tagging and stock of origin. A core set of operating models has been agreed to span the major uncertainties identified in bluefin stock assessments.

It was agreed by the SCRS in 2017 that the next steps in the bluefin tuna MSE are:

- To encourage different SCRS scientists and managers to suggest management procedures based on the proposed set of relative abundance indices. These interactions will happen through:
 - a special joint meeting of the Swordfish Working Group and Bluefin Tuna Working Group which focused exclusively on MSE.
- To evaluate such management procedures over the course of 2018;
- To request the SCRS to select a small set of management procedures and their evaluations to be reported to the 2018 Commission meeting;
- To request the Commission to provide feedback on the tested management procedures and agree on a final set of management procedures to be evaluated for final presentation at the 2019 Commission meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is therefore for developers of Candidate Management Procedures (CMPs) to present the results of their first attempts. This will be to initially refine those CMPs in the light of interchanges between the developers. Ultimately developers will leave at the end of this meeting in a position to refine their CMPs further for report at the annual September Bluefin Tuna Species Group meeting. In addition the meeting will serve to introduce the Swordfish Species Group to the procedures and processes required to develop MPs.

A joint meeting of the Bluefin Tuna and Swordfish Species Groups will take place for the first two days, after which the two Species Groups will split and hold their own separate meeting for the last three days.

Tentative Agenda pertaining to Bluefin Tuna

1. Opening, adoption of Agenda and meeting arrangements
2. Review of available documents
3. Initial review of experiences with and comments on the coding package
4. Presentation of initial CMPs and associated results by each developer/set of developers
5. Development of a standard format for ready comparison of key results across CMPs and across trials
6. Presentation of results of possible refinements of CMPs developed during the meeting
7. Agreement of a tuning specification (possibly more than one) to facilitate comparison of future results presented (e.g. median target level of biomass at the end of the projection period for each of the west and the east populations for a single specified trial)
8. Initial discussion and specification of aspects where input from stakeholders will likely assist future refinement of CMPs (this will relate, in part, to increased detail regarding objectives and trade-offs)
9. Possible amendments to the coding package and its associated trials
10. Work programme for further CMP refinement, with deadlines, leading to results sought for presentation at the September Bluefin Species Group meeting.
11. Recommendations
12. Other matters
13. Adoption of the report and closure

Tentative Agenda pertaining to North Atlantic Swordfish

1. Opening, adoption of Agenda and meeting arrangements
2. Review of any work done to date on swordfish MSE
3. Limit Reference points and Management Strategy Evaluation
 - Discussion on generic LRPs as applicable to swordfish and their use in HCRs
 - How LRPs are used in other Species Groups
4. Discussion of potential Operating Models applicable for swordfish. Conditioning of Operating Models
5. Development of an MSE work plan for swordfish (comments and feedback from the external expert)
6. Progress on other research in the Atlantic swordfish work plan
 - Stock structure project
 - Size/sex distribution
 - Length/weight relationships
7. Other matters
8. Recommendations
9. Adoption of report and closure

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. Date and venue

The meeting will be held from 16 April (Monday) to 20 April (Friday) 2018 (registration starts at 08:30 am, 16 April). 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. For a map with the Secretariat's location and information about Madrid please [consult here](#).

2. Contact information

Chair of Bluefin MSE Group: Doug Butterworth (doug.butterworth@uct.ac.za)
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Chair of Swordfish Species Group: Rui Coelho (rpcoelho@ipma.pt)
Portuguese Institute for the Ocean and Atmosphere, I.P. (IPMA),
Avenida 5 de Outubro, s/n,
8700-305 Olhão, Portugal
Tel: +351 289 700 504, Fax: +351 289 700 535

Secretariat contact: Paul de Bruyn (paul.debruyn@iccat.int)
International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
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Madrid 28002, Spain
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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 **9 April 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

For the bluefin tuna meeting, an external consultant, has now completed a "Package" which will allow the testing of Candidate Management Procedures for Atlantic bluefin further. Details of how to download this package together with associated information can be requested from the Secretariat contact.

For the swordfish meeting, given that part of the meeting will focus on the initial planning of MSE, participants are requested to bring any data, information or preliminary analysis that may help and contribute to this process. For other issues, the meeting will focus mainly on items under the SWO work plan that are being developed in 2018, particularly: 1) revision of Atlantic swordfish length/weight relationships; 2) size/sex distribution; and, 3) stock structure project. As such, participants interested in collaborating in those studies are requested to contact the Chair of the Swordfish Group and/or the Secretariat for information on how to submit data.

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. **2 March 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. 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 is available on the [ICCAT website](#).