



Madrid, 21 December 2018

ICCAT CIRCULAR # 8952 / 2018

SUBJECT: 2019 INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF THE ICCAT BLUEFIN TUNA MSE TECHNICAL GROUP AND INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF THE BLUEFIN TUNA SPECIES GROUP
(Madrid, Spain, 7-9 and 11-15 February 2019)

I should like to inform you that the 2019 Intersessional Meeting of the ICCAT Bluefin Tuna MSE Technical Group and Intersessional Meeting of the Bluefin Tuna Species Group will be held on 7-9 and 11-15 February 2019, respectively, at the ICCAT headquarters in Madrid, Spain.

Attached please find the objectives, the tentative agendas of the meetings and other relevant information about their organization. I would appreciate very much if you could distribute this announcement to scientists who may contribute by participating in the meetings. This announcement will also be published on the [current meetings page](#) of 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 meetings by **28 January 2019**.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.



Executive Secretary

Gamille Jean Pierre Manel

DISTRIBUTION:

- **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:	G. Melvin	SCRS Vice Chair:	RI Coelho

- **Head Delegates / Head Scientists**

- **Cooperating Parties, Entities, or Fishing Entities**

Attachment: Objectives, Tentative Agendas and Information for participants.

2019 INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF THE ICCAT BLUEFIN TUNA MSE TECHNICAL GROUP
(Madrid, Spain – 7-9 February 2019)

Objectives

In 2018 the SCRS elaborated a work plan for 2019 which included several intersessional meetings to advance the MSE work conducted for bluefin tuna.

The bluefin tuna MSE specifications are being developed by the Bluefin Tuna MSE Technical Group and is funded by the GBYP. Five meetings of the GBYP Core Modelling MSE Group have been held since the 2016 SCRS plenary meeting. An operating models (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 2018 that the next steps in the Bluefin Tuna MSE Technical Group meeting include proposing final reference set of OMs¹ with acceptable conditioning, and review of progress on CMP². Development. Initially propose key performance statistics³.

The results of this meeting will be discussed during the Bluefin Tuna Species Group meeting to be held in Madrid, between 11 and 15 February 2019.

Tentative Agenda

1. Opening
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Nomination of the rapporteurs
4. Review of available documents
5. Summary of developments since the September 2018 bluefin session
6. Comparative analysis of the results of the different OMs
7. Collation of results from CMP developers* and preparation of their presentation to the Intersessional Meeting of the Bluefin Tuna Species Group
8. Tuning of CMPs to a reference west and an east performance statistic for a specified OM to the extent possible, and preparation of summary results (such tunings are to facilitate evaluation of results of different CMPs for comparable recovery vs short-medium term catch trade-offs)
9. Consideration of the reconditioning of OMs to develop a suggested procedure for their review at the Intersessional Meeting of the Bluefin Tuna Species Group, in particular as regards acceptability
10. Initial draft of suggested form of presentation to Panel 2 to assist further development of this at the Intersessional Meeting of the Bluefin Tuna Species Group
11. Coding package: possible suggestions for modifications
12. Adoption of the report

*The updated coding package, taking account of comments made on reconditioning results to the extent possible, will be circulated early in January to allow CMP developers to refine their CMPs and report the associated results.

¹ An Operating Model (OM) is a mathematical–statistical model used to describe the fishery dynamics in simulation trials, including the specifications for generating simulated resource monitoring data when projecting forward in time. Multiple models will usually be considered to reflect the uncertainties about the dynamics of the resource and fishery.

² A Management Procedure (MP) is formally specified, and is a combination of monitoring data, analysis method, harvest control rule and management measure that has been simulation tested to demonstrate adequately robust performance in the face of plausible uncertainties about stock and fishery dynamics. CMP refers to a candidate Management Procedure (i.e. proposed but not as yet adopted).

³ A performance statistic relates to a quantity (e.g. average catch over projection period) evaluated in a simulation trial of one CMP under one OM.

2019 ICCAT BLUEFIN TUNA INTERSESSIONAL MEETING

(Madrid, Spain – 11-15 February 2019)

Objectives

In 2018 the SCRS elaborated a work plan for 2019 which included one intersessional meeting of the Bluefin Tuna Species group. The main objectives included:

- Approve final set of OMs and review progress to provide advice on CMP development;
- Provide input to SCRS Chair on content of MSE presentation to Panel 2;
- Update the scientific advice at the Species Group meeting preceding the 2019 SCRS plenary based on updated fishery indicators.

Tentative Agenda

11-13 February

1. Opening
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Nomination of the rapporteurs
4. Review of available documents
5. Description of developments since the September 2018 Bluefin Tuna Species Group Meeting
6. Summary of outcomes from the 7-9 February meeting of the BFT MSE Technical Group
7. Overview of updates to the trial specification document
8. Overview of data used for conditioning
 - specific review of the basis for mixing models and estimation of their parameters, including specification of associated robustness tests, with this to include:
 - i. data used on genetics and microchemistry
 - ii. data used from electronic tagging and criteria used for their selection
 - iii. approach used for the assignment of stock origin
 - iv. finalisation of associated robustness tests
 - v. spatial structure (including how this is informed by electronic tagging)
 - data guillotine: final decision on which data to be used in OMs (consideration possibly postponed until after discussion of item 11b)
9. Results from the reconditioning of the Reference Set of OMs
 - i. general review as to adequacy of coverage of the range of plausible dynamics
 - ii. consideration of the technical group's suggestions for the basis to evaluate the acceptability of conditioning
 - iii. specific consideration of acceptability of each OM's reconditioning
 - iv. proposals, if any, for modifications to certain reconditionings
10. Initial review of CMP results available, in particular to specify any further runs required during the meeting
11. Robustness tests
 - consideration of specifications and results for such tests as may already have been coded and perhaps run
 - further robustness tests, considering in particular those already specified in the trials specification document
 - priority order for coding and running

12. Reference set review: possible revision and acceptance (this may involve replacement of some existing factors with certain robustness tests)
13. Review of performance statistics (e.g. average catch over projection period) and their possible modification
14. Prepare/Review materials for SWGSM/Panel 2 meeting (early March) to present options for operational management objectives and performance statistics

14 February

15. Overview of report of reproduction workshop
16. Review of further results from candidate CMPs
17. Discussion on presentation of CMP results
18. Selection of tuning criteria to facilitate comparison of results from different CMPs
19. Discussion of consolidation at a future stage of results across different OMs, the possible use of plausibility weighting, and if so how that might be determined
20. Discussion of process to advise the Commission as to whether the updated indices support continuation of management advice (comparing the updated indices with prediction intervals from the projections)
 - Ensure that CPCs update indices for the Species Group meeting
 - What catches to use for 2017 and 2018 (reported or reported + IUU)
21. Discussion on development of Exceptional Circumstances provisions
22. Comparison of future indices with probability envelopes predicted by OM projections
23. Other scientific papers (if time is available)

15 February

24. Recommendations
25. Further discussion and planning of report/presentation for Panel 2
26. Workplan and update of BFT roadmap (specifying future meetings in particular), together with the process for moving forward
27. Adoption of report
28. Closure

Additional information for participants

1. Date and venue

The meetings will be held from 7-9 February (Thursday to Saturday) and 11-15 February (Monday to Friday) 2019 (registration starts at 08:30 am, on 7 and 11 February, respectively). 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.

2. Contact information

Chair of Bluefin Tuna MSE Technical Group:

Doug Butterworth (doug.butterworth@uct.ac.za)

Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7701
South Africa

Tel: +27 21 650 2343/2340

Chairs of Bluefin Tuna Species Group:

Ana Gordo (gordo@ceab.csic.es)

Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Blanes (CEAB - CSIC), Acc. Cala St. Francesc, 14, 17300 Blanes,
Girona, Spain; Tel: +34 972 336101

John Walter (john.f.walter@noaa.gov)

NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Fisheries Center, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 75 Virginia Beach Drive,
Miami, Florida 33149, USA; Tel: +305 365 4114, Fax: +1 305 361 4562

Secretariat contact: Ai Kimoto (ai.kimoto@iccat.int) and 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 **31 January and 4 February 2019**, respectively. 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. 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. However, due to the late announcement of these meetings, the deadline for the request of funding assistance will be **7 January 2019**. Requests for financial assistance cannot be accepted after that date.

All the information related with the [ICCAT special funds for participation in ICCAT meetings 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.

6. Hotel information

A list of recommended hotels is available on the [current meeting page](#) of the ICCAT web site.