ICCAT Press Release

After extended discussions ICCAT agreed on new TACs and quotas for bluefin tuna and new conservation and management measures for sharks and skipjack tuna

Closure of the 25th Special Meeting of the Commission

23 November 2026 – The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) met in Vilamoura (Portugal) to take important decisions on the regulation of ICCAT fisheries, including a new measure for the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT and a new Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and quotas for bigeye tuna in 2027.

Vilamoura (Portugal), at the heart of the Algarve region of Portugal, welcomed the 2026 Annual Meeting of ICCAT. Inspired by its lively palm-lined marina, peaceful green spaces and sea views, the Commission celebrated its 60th anniversary and evaluated the results of the 2026 workplan, together with the current status of compliance with the regulatory measures in force, and established the conservation and management measures for the future. In 2026, full scientific stock assessments were carried out for three species: **North Atlantic shortfin mako shark** (*Isurus oxyrinchus*); **South Atlantic albacore tuna** (*Thunnus alalunga*) and **South Atlantic and Mediterranean swordfish** (*Xiphias gladius*). In total, 17 new Recommendations were adopted covering relevant issues on Atlantic tuna and tuna-like species conservation and fisheries management.

After 18 years of long and intensive discussions the Commission has agreed on a new measure regarding the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT, by setting two alternatives to deal with shark fins to be applied before sharks are stored in fish holds: 1) each individual shark carcass is bound to the corresponding fins using rope or wire; or 2) identical and uniquely numbered tags are attached to each shark carcass and its corresponding fins in a manner for inspectors to identify the matching of the carcass and fins at any time.

Further to ICCAT Recommendation 25-08, ICCAT agreed on retention allowances for southern Atlantic shortfin mako for 2027.

Following last year's adoption of a Management Procedure (MP) for western Atlantic skipjack tuna, the Commission approved changes to the Exceptional Circumstances Protocol (ECP), particularly related to ECP's principles, indicators to be used and the process to determine if exceptional circumstances occur.

ICCAT amended the multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas, by setting a new TAC for bigeye tuna (85,000 t) and adjusted catch limits for 2027, as well as to reduce the amount of synthetic marine debris related to Fishing Aggregating Devices (FADs).

Following the Scientific Committee advice, ICCAT agreed on a new TAC for the period 2027-2030, which represents an increase of 25% to the southern Atlantic swordfish TAC (now set at 12,500 t).

ICCAT also adopted new provisions reducing the landing limits for blue marlin and white marlin/roundscale spearfish combined for the Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities in ICCAT (CPCs) listed in the limits table. Under the new measure, maximum landing limits of 20 t and 6 t were set for unlisted developing Caribbean CPCs and the United Kingdom, respectively; while landing limits for all other CPCs are limited to 10 t for Atlantic blue marlin and 2 t for white marlin/roundscale spearfish.

ICCAT has agreed the development of a management procedure for southern Atlantic albacore, setting a management objective aiming the stock to have a 60% or greater probability of being in the green quadrant of the Kobe matrix on average during the 30-year projection period. Furthermore, ICCAT approved interim catch limits for this stock, setting a TAC of 24,333 t for 2027, which shall continue to apply until the first TAC established under the management procedure takes effect. An update on the management procedure was also agreed for northern Atlantic albacore tuna, by incorporating minor data and model improvements on the methodology to be used to estimate stock status within the current management procedure.

On eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna management, ICCAT updated technical measures related to monitoring, control and surveillance, as well as the assignment of a 100 t quota to Montenegro. Furthermore, ICCAT also agreed to extend the purse seine campaign targeting bluefin tuna in the Adriatic Sea until October, to assess the spatial and temporal distribution of bluefin tuna in the Adriatic Sea, in order to inform the potential future development of such activity.

The Compliance Committee (COC) reviewed the implementation of ICCAT requirements by the ICCAT CPCs, and the Commission approved responsive actions to improve compliance. Improvement of compliance by a number of CPCs was recognized. The Committee also identified concrete improvements to its process that will streamline and strengthen the Compliance Committee's work, including endorsing a template for the comprehensive review of implementation of ICCAT's requirements for port State measures to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Furthermore, the Commission continued to make progress on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance, and technical measures to ensure the effective implementation of ICCAT conservation and management measures, including by introducing a ban on driftnets for the capture of certain ICCAT species, new measures for vessel chartering and access agreements. In addition, ICCAT tasked its various Working Groups including those on Catch Document Systems and Electronic Monitoring.

Finally, the Commission adopted a revised roadmap for the ongoing Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) processes, which currently relate to seven species and 11 stocks.

The Chair, Ms. Zakia Driouich, echoed the Commission and paid tribute to Dr Craig Brown for his hard work and leadership during his tenure as Chair of the Scientific Committee. In addition, she welcomed Dr Luis Gustavo Cardoso as upcoming Chair and wished him success in his new role.

The Commission also elected new 1st and 2nd Vice Chairs, Mr Robert Robinson (Belize) and Mr Arnaud Peyronnet (EU-France), respectively, and expressed its profound appreciation for the services that the outgoing Vice Chairs, Mr Ramon Chang (Curaçao) and Mr Ernesto Penas Lado (EU-Spain) have dedicated to the Commission over the past years.

For further information please visit the ICCAT website and/or contact the ICCAT Secretariat or the ICCAT Executive Secretary, Mr Camille Jean Pierre Manel.

Vilamoura, 23 November 2026

List of adopted Recommendations

Document reference			Title
PWG	417	A	Recommendation by ICCAT on establishment of a Standing Catch Document Scheme Working Group (CDS WG)
PWG	427	C	Recommendation by ICCAT on Access Agreements
PWG	434	D	Recommendation by ICCAT on vessel chartering
PWG	437	B	Recommendation by ICCAT establishing a ban on driftnets for the capture of certain ICCAT species
PA1	510	SPONS_1	Recommendation by ICCAT on a management procedure for western Atlantic skipjack tuna
PA1	525	A	Recommendation by ICCAT extending and amending Recommendation 24-01 on a multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas
PA2	612	B_REV_1	Recommendation by ICCAT on conservation and management measures, including a management procedure and exceptional pcircumstances protocol, for North Atlantic albacore
PA2	614		Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 25-04 for a pilot project for a purse seine campaign in the Adriatic Sea
PA2	620	A	Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 25-04 establishing a multi-annual management plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean
PA2	625		Recommendation by ICCAT to establish a rebuilding plan for Mediterranean albacore
PA3	702	B_REV_1	Recommendation by ICCAT on interim catch limits for southern Atlantic albacore
PA3	703	A	Recommendation by ICCAT on the development of candidate management procedures for southern Atlantic albacore
PA4	806	B	Recommendation by ICCAT concerning the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT
PA4	808	C	Recommendation by ICCAT to establish rebuilding programs for blue marlin and white marlin/roundscale spearfish
PA4	813	C	Recommendation by ICCAT for the conservation of South Atlantic swordfish
PA4	823		Recommendation by ICCAT to replace Recommendation 24-11 for catch limits for Mediterranean swordfish
PA4	825		Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 25-08 replacing Recommendation 22-11 on the conservation of the South Atlantic stock of shortfin mako caught in association with ICCAT fisheries