

Report of the Intersessional Meeting of the Subcommittee on Statistics
(Online, 24-25 February 2026)

The results, conclusions and recommendations contained in this report only reflect the view of the Subcommittee on Statistics. Therefore, these should be considered preliminary until the SCRS adopts them at its annual Plenary meeting and the Commission revises them at its annual meeting. Accordingly, ICCAT reserves the right to comment, object and endorse this report, until it is finally adopted by the Commission.

1. Opening and meeting arrangements

The Intersessional Meeting of the Subcommittee on Statistics (SC-STATS) was held online on 24-25 February 2026. The Convenor of the SC-STATS, Dr Pedro Lino (European Union (EU)), opened the meeting and reiterated the need to work efficiently, focusing on the main aspects under discussion. The ICCAT Executive Secretary welcomed the participants, and the Secretariat provided information on the logistical arrangements for the meeting.

The Convenor clarified that the mandate of the SC-STATS is to evaluate and improve the statistical data reported by CPCs, ensuring that they are of sufficient quality and quantity for scientific assessment purposes, and that it is not a forum for the development of new methodologies or research.

2. Adoption of the agenda and nomination of Rapporteurs

The Convenor presented the provisional agenda to the participants for their consideration, noting that the Secretariat would serve as rapporteur but invited participants to volunteer and assist with sections of the report. It was also noted that the meeting report would be adopted by correspondence rather than during the meeting. The Agenda is included in **Appendix 1**. The List of participants is included in **Appendix 2**. The List of presentations provided at the meeting is attached as **Appendix 3**. The abstracts of all SCRS presentations are included in **Appendix 4**.

The possibility of using the Zoom AI Companion to support the Rapporteurs was discussed, and this function was activated during the meeting. The Agenda was subsequently adopted.

3. Follow-up to SC-STATS 2025 and SCRS decisions

The Convenor briefly referred to recent SCRS and Commission decisions, noting in particular the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the experimental use of traplines (Rec. 25-09)*, introducing a new type of data collection, and the *Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 21-14 concerning the establishment of an ICCAT Record of vessels 20 metres in length overall or greater authorized to operate in the Convention area (Rec. 25-12)* on the mandatory reporting of fleet characteristics (ST01) for all fisheries and species. He recalled the importance of CPCs to be aware of these requirements.

4. Review of ICCAT statistical forms and reporting workflows

The Secretariat presented SCRS/P/2026/007, reviewing ICCAT statistical forms and reporting workflows, including new requirements under ICCAT Circular 00620/2026 and recent Recommendations. Updates to the 2026 forms were highlighted, notably the revision of the ST01 form to include additional fleet capacity indicators and the introduction of the new ST13 form for reporting on the experimental use of traplines. The Secretariat also outlined the updated reporting framework, noting that since 1 November 2025 the Integrated Online Management System (IOMS) has become the sole channel for the submission of statistical and tagging data, including automatic validation procedures. An updated reporting calendar aligned with SCRS timelines was presented.

Following the presentation, the Subcommittee reviewed the different components of the reporting framework, including the ST13 form, updates to TG03, reporting workflows and deadlines, open document formats, ST09 observer coverage, the status of ST10, and tagging reporting mechanisms.

4.1 ST13 – Experimental trapline reporting form

The Subcommittee continued its discussion of the draft ST13 form, taking into account comments submitted by Japan and the EU. The discussion addressed the level of detail required, including operation start and end positions, the use of aggregated spatial reporting for confidentiality, the definition of bait, the reporting of fishing depth, and consistency with data source categories used in ST09. The Subcommittee also discussed whether the experimental nature of the form justified allowing lower-resolution information, while noting that the primary objective is to collect data of sufficient quality to support future analyses on catchability, catch rates and selectivity.

The Subcommittee agreed that the ST13 form should follow the general logic of observer-based reporting and should not be split into separate forms. The data source field should distinguish between observer, vessel master and electronic monitoring system, consistent with ST09. It was also agreed that catches may be reported in number or weight, that catch and bycatch should be reported within a single structure, and that the target/bycatch field should remain optional during the experimental phase.

Regarding spatial information, the Subcommittee agreed to retain coordinates while introducing a field indicating the reporting format (e.g. decimal degrees, 1×1 or 5×5 squares) to address confidentiality constraints. The bait field will be revised to distinguish natural bait, artificial bait and no bait, and fishing depth will be reported using predefined categories consistent with ST09. The Secretariat will prepare a revised draft for circulation with a view to finalising an experimental version shortly after the meeting.

4.2 TG03 – Electronic tagging form

The Secretariat presented revisions to the TG03 form, including the addition of fields for Platform Transmitter Terminal (PTT) identifiers and other relevant tag information. The Subcommittee agreed to adopt the revised structure, noting that these additions would improve traceability and data management.

4.3 Reporting workflow and deadlines

The Secretariat presented an updated reporting workflow aligned with SCRS timelines. The Subcommittee recalled that 15 July remains the official deadline for data submission. A cut-off date of 1 September was proposed for the inclusion of data in SCRS analyses to ensure sufficient time for the preparation of tables and documents.

The Subcommittee agreed that data submitted after 1 September would be processed but not included in SCRS analyses for that year. It was also noted that updates may continue thereafter, with a clear distinction maintained between data considered by the SCRS and subsequent revisions.

4.4 Open document formats

The Secretariat presented the potential transition from XLSX to Open Document Spreadsheet (ODS) formats. The Subcommittee discussed the advantages of open and interoperable formats, including improved compatibility and reduced reliance on proprietary software, noting that the change would not affect user interaction with the forms.

The Subcommittee agreed to progressively transition to ODS, with implementation foreseen for the 2027 reporting cycle.

4.5 ST09 – Observer coverage reporting

The Secretariat informed the Subcommittee that some ST09 submissions lacked observer coverage information, limiting the interpretation of associated data.

The Subcommittee agreed that, where a CPC indicates the existence of an observer programme, the corresponding coverage fields should be mandatory, to be enforced through validation logic.

4.6 ST10 – Tropical tunas port sampling form

The Subcommittee recalled that the possible discontinuation of ST10 had been raised previously due to overlap with ST02 and ST04.

The Subcommittee agreed to discontinue ST10, noting its limited use and redundancy.

4.7 Tagging reporting mechanisms

The Secretariat presented different tagging data submission scenarios, including CPC reporting via IOMS, research programmes, and submissions from non-CPC entities.

The Subcommittee agreed that tagging data should primarily be submitted through tagging national correspondents via IOMS. For other cases, including non-CPC entities or occasional submissions, data may be submitted directly to the Secretariat, ensuring that the source is clearly identified. The Subcommittee emphasised the need to maintain simple and practical procedures while avoiding unnecessary complexity in user access management.

5. Progress on continuous review and improvements to Task 1 and Task 2 datasets

The Subcommittee discussed the presentation SCRS/P/2026/008 on the historical development and continuous improvement of Task 1 and Task 2 datasets.

Several participants expressed appreciation for the comprehensive overview provided, highlighting the significant progress achieved over the past two decades in ICCAT statistical reporting. It was noted that the transition from heterogeneous reporting formats, including CPC-specific spreadsheets and earlier fax-based submissions, to standardised electronic forms represented a major advancement.

The Subcommittee also recognised the importance of the tools developed by the SCRS to improve data quality and transparency, including standardised reporting forms, SCRS catalogues, Report Cards, Scorecards and the zero-catch matrix, which have strengthened the ability to identify data gaps and monitor progress over time. At the same time, it was noted that further work remains necessary to improve the completeness, resolution and consistency of Task 1 and Task 2 datasets.

During the discussion, strong support was expressed for formally recognising the contribution of Mr Papa Kébé at the Secretariat to the development and modernisation of ICCAT statistical systems. The Subcommittee supported the proposal to acknowledge his contribution during the next SCRS Plenary.

6. Review of the shark species codes and statistics using guidance from SCRS/2025/238

The Secretariat presented revisions to ICCAT statistical and tagging forms for 2026 based on recommendations from the Shark Species Group (Forselledo *et al.*, 2025), aimed at improving taxonomic consistency and the accuracy of shark data reporting.

A total of 23 species were incorporated into the forms (ST02–ST13 and tagging forms), including 20 reactivated and 3 newly added species, mainly sharks. In addition, six species codes were removed due to taxonomic revisions, historical errors, or inappropriate groupings. These changes apply to future reporting only, while historical Task 1 data remains unchanged. Taxonomic updates were aligned with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) standards, including the replacement of “Manta” by “Mobula” and the removal of *Isurus spp.* (unclassified mako).

The Subcommittee noted that some issues remain under consideration, including the treatment of certain taxa at genus level (e.g. *Centrophorus spp.*) and potential inconsistencies in historical data. Further refinements will be coordinated with the Shark Species Group.

The Subcommittee raised no substantive objections to the proposed modifications. The revisions were considered acceptable and were adopted. The Secretariat will inform the Shark Species Group accordingly and continue coordination on any future updates to the statistical forms.

7. Migration of Task 1 and Task 2 to the IOMS

The Secretariat presented SCRS/P/2026/009 on the migration of Task 1 Nominal Catches (T1NC) to the IOMS. The T1NC Manager module, currently under development, will support the management of annual catch data reported through ST02, including automated validation, data processing, dashboards for CPC verification, and improved data extraction and quality control. It was highlighted the importance of clearly defined business rules, particularly the distinction between SCRS-approved and provisional data, and the standardised use of ICCAT codes to enable automation. Ongoing work includes the redesign of databases, integration with compliance-related information (compliance tables (COCT)), and the development of web services and user interfaces, with testing foreseen for early 2027. Regarding Task 2 catch and effort data (T2CE), plans for the development of a corresponding module within IOMS was outlined, based on similar principles to the T1NC system. The new module aims to simplify data submission, validation and access, while accommodating the greater complexity of Task 2 data, including disaggregation by fleet, gear, time and space. It was noted that the redesign of the T2CE database has been initiated, and further work is planned on data integration, dashboards and system functionality. Finally, the Secretariat noted that migration to IOMS will enhance standardization, efficiency and transparency in the management of ICCAT statistical data.

The Subcommittee discussed the migration of Task 1 and Task 2 data management to IOMS. Clarification was sought regarding submission procedures, particularly whether statistical forms would continue to be submitted via traditional channels. The Secretariat confirmed that, since 1 November 2025, all statistical and tagging data must be submitted exclusively through IOMS (Form Manager), and that the developments presented relate to data processing, validation and visualization modules rather than to submission mechanisms. Some participants emphasized the need to ensure that all CPCs are fully aware of this requirement.

The Subcommittee noted that the ongoing development of Task 1 and Task 2 modules aims to automate validation workflows, centralize data management, and provide CPCs with real-time access to their submissions. The Secretariat indicated its readiness to provide additional support and guidance to CPCs during the transition period. Technical aspects related to automation were also discussed, including the refinement of validation rules and the introduction of safeguards to prevent user errors. It was noted that these features would be further developed during the implementation phase, while ensuring data integrity through appropriate versioning and recovery mechanisms.

8. Split the sampling areas in the Mediterranean to replace older T1NC areas

The Secretariat provided presentation SCRS/P/2026/010 that proposed to subdivide the Mediterranean (MEDI) sampling areas into four geographically defined subareas, with the objective of replacing the former T1 areas and improving the consistency and usefulness of statistical information in the Mediterranean. The Secretariat recalled that the proposed delimitation is to be based on 5° longitude increments, consistent with the current minimum spatial resolution reported in ICCAT datasets (5°×5°), particularly for forms ST03-T2CE (catch and effort), ST04-T2SZ (size sampling) and ST05-T2CS (catch-at-size estimations).

The Subcommittee recognized that the subdivision into four areas represents a significant improvement compared to the current situation, as it provides explicit geographical boundaries instead of historically named areas without a clear spatial definition. It was highlighted that the main objective of the proposal is to enhance the quality and utility of statistics for the main ICCAT fisheries in the Mediterranean.

The Subcommittee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of strictly maintaining the 5°×5° grid versus introducing finer adjustments in certain sensitive areas. It was noted that the use of 5°×5° degree increments facilitate the historical reclassification of data, whereas moving boundaries to positions not aligned with this grid could complicate the retrospective reassignment of catches, given the limited spatial resolution available in Task 1 and, in many cases, also in Task 2 data submissions.

Several specific points were identified as potentially requiring further refinement, including: (i) the delimitation at the Strait of Gibraltar, in order to avoid the artificial allocation of Mediterranean catches to the Atlantic; (ii) the position of the boundary between the central and eastern Mediterranean; (iii) the treatment of the Sea of Marmara in relation to the Black Sea; and (iv) possible implications for CPCs whose coastlines would be split between two sub-areas (e.g. in the areas of Tunisia and Libya).

The Subcommittee also acknowledged the value of considering, in the medium term, a higher spatial resolution (e.g. $1^{\circ} \times 1^{\circ}$) for certain fisheries, which would allow more detailed spatial analyses and facilitate the reassignment of historical data should future boundary modifications be required.

Concerns were expressed regarding the potential discontinuity between historical series (when all catches were reported under “Mediterranean”) and the new subdivided scheme. The importance of carefully assessing the impact of this transition on SCRS analyses was underlined.

Overall, the Subcommittee expressed its general support for subdividing the MEDI sampling areas into four geographically defined areas, subject to possible minor adjustments to the boundaries. It was agreed that the proposal should be circulated to the relevant Species Groups for review and comments, and that a refined version should be reconsidered at the next meeting of the Subcommittee to ensure that the new scheme adequately meets the needs of all affected species/stocks.

9. Technical sub-groups established by SC-STATS - progress review

The Subcommittee reviewed the status of several technical sub-groups, including the Technical Sub-group on ST09 (Observers – *Recommendation by ICCAT on the bycatch of sea turtles caught in association with ICCAT fisheries (combine, streamline, and amend Recommendations 10-09 and 13-11) (Rec. 22-12)*), the Technical Sub-group on Standardisation of T1NC Tables in Executive Summaries, the Technical Sub-group on Treatment of Data Gaps and Use of Estimates (“Carryovers”), the Technical Sub-group on ICCAT Rules and Procedures on Data Protection, Access and Dissemination, and the Technical Sub-group on Flat File (CSV) Formats for Task 2 Datasets.

It was noted that progress across these sub-groups remains at different stages of development, with some requiring further engagement and consolidation of work. In particular, the Subcommittee highlighted the need to reactivate discussions on Task 1 standardization and to advance work on carry-over procedures, emphasizing the importance of establishing clearer rules and improving data completeness. CPC scientists and statistical correspondents were invited to actively participate in these technical sub-groups to ensure progress ahead of the next meeting.

a) Technical Sub-group on ST09 (Observers - Rec. 22-12)

The Subcommittee reviewed the status of the Technical Sub-group on ST09 (Observers - *Rec. 22-12*). The Secretariat circulated the revised form to interested participants following the SCRS meeting and requested feedback by April 2026. The Secretariat will send a reminder to facilitate the submission of comments, with a view to reporting progress at the next Meeting of the Subcommittee of Ecosystems and Bycatch, prior to consideration by the SCRS.

The Subcommittee noted that progress in approving the revised form remains limited and encouraged broader participation in the sub-group. Members were reminded that adopting this form is essential to meet the requirements of *Rec. 22-12*. The Subcommittee invited CPC scientists and Statistical Correspondents to join the sub-group and contribute to advancing this work.

b) Technical Sub-group on Standardisation of T1NC Tables in Executive Summaries

The Subcommittee reviewed the status of the Technical Sub-group on Standardisation of T1NC Tables in Executive Summaries. It was recalled that previous proposals had identified several issues requiring further work, including the treatment of non-reported catches, blank cells, very small catches shown as zero, and the use of carryovers. CPC scientists and statistical correspondents were invited to participate in the intersessional work of this sub-group.

During the discussion, participants stressed the need to ensure consistency across species groups while considering the revised format of Executive Summaries and avoiding unnecessary expansion of tables. It was also noted that missing data should be clearly distinguished from true zero catches. The Subcommittee agreed that these issues should be addressed intersessionally by the relevant technical sub-groups and brought back for consideration at the next Subcommittee meeting.

c) *Technical Sub-group on Treatment of Data Gaps and Use of Estimates (“Carryovers”)*

The Subcommittee reviewed the status of the Technical Sub-group on the Treatment of Data Gaps and Use of Estimates (“Carryovers”). It was recalled that carryovers are values carried forward from previous years when no new data are reported, as a temporary procedure to avoid gaps in the series.

The Subcommittee noted concern that, in some cases, carryovers may continue for several years and become estimates based on previous estimates, resulting in values that may no longer be realistic. It was therefore emphasized that such carryovers should be replaced by actual CPC-reported data as soon as possible, and that clearer rules are needed to regulate their use and prevent this situation from continuing over time. CPC scientists and statistical correspondents were invited to participate in the technical sub-group to advance this work intersessionally.

d) *Technical Sub-group on ICCAT Rules and Procedures on Data Protection, Access and Dissemination*

The Subcommittee reviewed the status of the Technical Sub-group on ICCAT Rules and Procedures on Data Protection, Access and Dissemination, recalling that a preliminary review (Mayor *et al.*, 2025) had identified several issues, although previous discussions were limited.

Key concerns included ambiguities in the definition and dissemination of datasets, inconsistencies between data access rules and the Commission’s mandate, and the lack of clear provisions for certain data (e.g. Task 3). It was also noted that the rules do not clearly define levels of aggregation or anonymization, nor modalities for data exchange with other Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).

The Subcommittee emphasized the need for clearer guidance for the Secretariat when responding to data requests and highlighted the importance of initiating the work of the technical sub-group, including the development of a roadmap and draft revisions for consideration at the next Subcommittee meeting and subsequent adoption by the Commission. The need for external legal input was underlined, and CPCs were invited to participate in the technical sub-group.

e) *Technical Sub-group on Flat File (CSV) Formats for Task 2 Datasets*

The Subcommittee reviewed the progress of the Technical Sub-group on Flat File (CSV) Formats for Task 2 Datasets. The Secretariat presented a proposal to develop a single harmonized CSV format for Task 2 size sample data, aimed at reducing parallel formats and simplifying reporting and processing. It was noted that the proposal focuses initially on ST04, with potential extension to ST05.

Some participants expressed concerns regarding the implications of adopting a standardized format, noting that certain CPCs currently use customized reporting systems (e.g. multi-species formats or partial fields) that may not be easily aligned. The Secretariat clarified that the proposal aims to harmonize structure rather than change data content, and that CPCs would not be required to provide additional information.

The Subcommittee acknowledged the potential benefits of a harmonized machine-readable format, particularly for IOMS integration, while emphasizing the need for further CPC input to refine the proposal. CPCs were invited to participate in the technical sub-group and to ensure that Statistical Correspondents have access to IOMS and its testing environment ahead of reporting deadlines.

10. Review of the 2026 Workplan

The Convenor introduced the 2026 Workplan and recalled that the document is available in the background documents folder of the meeting. The objective of this agenda item was mainly to remind participants of the activities planned for the year and to highlight those tasks requiring participation from CPCs and scientists.

The Secretariat explained that most of the tasks included in the Workplan relate to ongoing database development, data management and improvements to statistical workflows carried out by the Secretariat. These activities include continued development and maintenance of databases, improvements to reporting tools, and the implementation of new data management processes associated with ICCAT information systems.

The Convenor highlighted that the elements requiring direct involvement from CPCs mainly correspond to the work of the technical sub-groups established under the Subcommittee, including the Technical Sub-group on ST09 (Observers - [Rec. 22-12](#)), the Technical Sub-group on Standardisation of T1NC Tables in Executive Summaries, the Technical Sub-group on Treatment of Data Gaps and Use of Estimates (“Carryovers”), the Technical Sub-group on ICCAT Rules and Procedures on Data Protection, Access and Dissemination, and the Technical Sub-group on Flat File (CSV) Formats for Task 2 Datasets.

The Subcommittee emphasized the importance of active CPC participation in these groups to ensure progress ahead of the SCRS meeting in September 2026 and encouraged members to engage in intersessional work. The usefulness of holding this intersessional SC-STATS meeting early in the year to review priorities and organise work was noted, and it was suggested that the need to hold such a meeting on an annual or biennial basis should be evaluated at a future SCRS meeting.

The Subcommittee acknowledged the importance of the 2026 Workplan as a framework to guide intersessional activities and encouraged CPCs to contribute actively to the tasks identified for the year.

11. Responses to the Commission

The Secretariat presented a new web-based application to catalogue and track Commission requests and the corresponding SCRS responses. The application, building on a previously used Excel-based system, allows users to visualize requests by group, monitor the status of responses over time, and access associated documents. It was noted that it includes functionalities for filtering, exporting, and editing entries, and is intended to provide a user-friendly and transparent overview of pending and completed responses.

The Subcommittee welcomed the development of the application and highlighted its usefulness for improving traceability and coordination between the SCRS and the Commission. It was clarified that completed responses would remain in the database for historical reference, while additional functionalities would allow users to distinguish between pending and completed items. The importance of clearly defining response status, including the possibility of incorporating SCRS assessments, was noted. The Subcommittee also emphasized that maintaining the database up to date would require active involvement from Species Group Chairs and the Secretariat, and recognized the potential for further development and broader application of the tool.

The Subcommittee acknowledged the usefulness of the application and expressed appreciation for the Secretariat’s efforts to improve the management and traceability of Commission requests and SCRS responses.

12. Other matters

a) Additional data sources received by the ICCAT Secretariat

The Secretariat presented an overview of additional sources of information (SCRS/P/2026/012) received and catalogued outside the standard ICCAT statistical reporting forms. These datasets may provide complementary information of potential scientific value but currently lack standardized reporting formats within ICCAT and require substantial effort for validation, harmonization and storage. The Secretariat indicated that the purpose of the presentation was to seek guidance and a clearer mandate from the Subcommittee and, if necessary, from the SCRS, on how to proceed with these data sources.

The Subcommittee noted that these non-traditional datasets include cannery data, Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) related information from buoy providers, data from the Bluefin Tuna Regional Observer Programme, and Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) related information. It was recalled that cannery data had previously been compiled and integrated into a dedicated database up to 2021 through a specific project, but that the incorporation of new information into that database had stopped thereafter. The Secretariat explained that this was mainly due to the heterogeneity of the files received, the absence of standardized reporting formats, and the significant resources required to process and validate the information.

Participants recognized the potential scientific value of these additional datasets. In particular, cannery data were considered potentially useful for cross-checking catch statistics and obtaining biological information such as fish size composition, while FAD, Regional Observer Programme and VMS related data were also recognized as potentially useful for scientific analyses if appropriately processed. At the same time, it was emphasized that maintaining, standardizing and analysing these datasets requires substantial Secretariat resources and should therefore be guided by clear priorities and an explicit mandate.

The Subcommittee noted the need to determine, for each type of dataset, whether it has been used in practice, whether there are concrete plans for future use, and whether the scientific value justifies the effort and potential additional resources required for its continued processing. It was suggested that this issue should be raised again at the relevant species groups and, if necessary, at the SCRS Plenary, supported by a clearer framework and criteria (e.g. last time the data were used, are the data submitted in a standardized form, is it planned for them to be used in the future, etc.) to help define priorities and guide future decisions.

b) Ad Hoc Working Group on Coordination of Tagging Information outputs

The Secretariat presented an update on ongoing work related to ICCAT tagging databases and the coordination of tagging information (SCRS/P/2026/013), including the outcomes of the [Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Coordination of Tagging Information](#), which was held online on 3 February 2026. The presentation summarized recent developments in tagging data management, including the creation and improvement of databases integrating information from electronic tags (eTags), CPC submissions, and external providers.

The Subcommittee was informed that recent work has focused on monitoring e-tag performance, incorporating additional metadata, and enhancing data integration across sources. It was noted that tagging data availability varies among species, with some datasets, such as those for bluefin tuna, already being well developed. Ongoing work also includes the incorporation of new data formats, improvements in processing capacity, and migration of database infrastructure to support large volumes of data. Efforts to fill historical gaps and improve data quality through cross-checking, including collaboration with CPCs, were also highlighted.

During the discussion, questions were raised regarding access to raw tagging data. The Secretariat clarified that access is governed by the [ICCAT Rules and Procedures on Data Protection, Access and Dissemination](#), and that requests should follow formal procedures through the Executive Secretary. The Subcommittee emphasized the importance of ensuring that these procedures are clearly defined and understood.

c) Update on the Secretariat budget execution and status of the Caribbean Data Collection Project

The Secretariat presented a summary of the 2025 spending, as well as the budget balance that would be available for 2026 and 2027. The Subcommittee was also informed about the current status of the new contract regarding Phases II and III of Caribbean Data Collection Project.

d) Bycatch and target catch fields in Task 1 nominal catches form

The Subcommittee reviewed the adopted inclusion of the “target/bycatch” field in the Task 1 nominal catch form. The discussion highlighted the practical difficulties in consistently distinguishing between target and bycatch across fleets, sets and species.

It was noted that, although the field is widely completed by CPCs, the accuracy and consistency of the information may be variable. While some participants considered that the field may still provide useful contextual information, others stressed the need for caution in its interpretation.

The Subcommittee agreed that, in the absence of strong justification for its removal, the field should be maintained. However, it was emphasized that users should exercise caution when using these data, given the potential limitations in their classification.

13. Adoption of the report and closure of the meeting

The meeting concluded with expressions of appreciation to the Secretariat, participants, and data providers for their contributions. It was recalled that the report would be adopted by correspondence. The meeting was adjourned.

References

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List of presentations

DocRef	Title	Authors
SCRS/P/2026/007	Review of ICCAT statistical forms and reporting workflows	ICCAT Secretariat
SCRS/P/2026/008	Progress on continuous review and improvements to Task 1 and Task 2 datasets	ICCAT Secretariat
SCRS/P/2026/009	Migration of Task 1 and Task 2 to the IOMS	ICCAT Secretariat
SCRS/P/2026/010	Split the sampling areas in the Mediterranean to replace older T1NC areas	ICCAT Secretariat
SCRS/P/2026/011	Technical ad hoc group on flat file (CSV) formats for Task 2 datasets	ICCAT Secretariat
SCRS/P/2026/012	Additional data sources received by the ICCAT Secretariat	ICCAT Secretariat
SCRS/P/2026/013	Ad hoc WG on Coordination of Tagging Info outputs	ICCAT Secretariat

Appendix 4**SCRS documents and presentation abstracts as provided by the authors**

SCRS/P/2026/007 - This paper reviews recent updates to ICCAT statistical forms and reporting workflows for the 2026 reporting cycle. It summarizes new requirements for the submission of Task 1, Task 2, Task 3 and tagging data, including complementary data and specific historical revisions requested by the Commission and SCRS. Key changes include the revision of ST01 with new fleet capacity variables and the introduction of the ST13 form for trapline fisheries. Updates to tagging reporting (TG03) and the implementation of IOMS as the sole submission platform, with automated validation, are also presented. The paper outlines revised reporting workflows and deadlines, discusses the potential use of ODS formats, and identifies key issues for SC-STATS consideration, including ST13 finalization, ST09 requirements, and the possible discontinuation of ST10.

SCRS/P/2026/008 - This paper reviews progress in the continuous improvement of ICCAT Task 1 and Task 2 datasets, a permanent SCRS activity since the adoption of standard catalogues and filtering criteria. It summarizes major achievements over the past two decades, including improvements in data completeness, resolution, standardization and recovery of historical series. Recent developments across T1 and T2 datasets are presented, highlighting advances in data structure, increased spatial and temporal resolution, and enhanced consistency through validation and harmonization processes. Ongoing work focuses on resolving remaining gaps, improving effort data, refining species and fleet classifications, and increasing dataset comparability over time. The paper also outlines future priorities, emphasizing the need for continued CPC engagement, data recovery efforts, and alignment with SCRS catalogues to further improve data quality and support stock assessment needs.

SCRS/P/2026/009 - This paper presents the migration of Task 1 and Task 2 data to the IOMS, describing ongoing work for Task 1 Nominal Catches (T1NC) and planned developments for Task 2 Catch and Effort (T2CE). For T1NC, a dedicated module with automated validation, defined business rules, and CPC data access tools is under development. For T2CE, similar approaches are envisaged to simplify data submission, validation, and access. The migration is expected to improve data management and workflow efficiency, while requiring careful handling of submissions under increased automation.

SCRS/P/2026/010 - This paper proposes the revision of Task 1 sampling areas in the Mediterranean, addressing the lack of clear geographical definitions in current T1NC areas. A new subdivision of the Mediterranean is presented, introducing more detailed sampling areas and updated coding, with reference to FAO/GFCM geographical structures. Examples of application to species reporting are provided. The proposed changes aim to improve spatial resolution and consistency of T1NC data, facilitating better data interpretation and supporting stock assessment needs.

SCRS/P/2026/011 - This paper presents the work of the technical ad hoc group on the development of a harmonized CSV format for Task 2 datasets, focusing on size samples (ST04). The proposal aims to replace multiple existing formats with a single machine-readable standard, simplifying data submission by CPCs and processing by the Secretariat, and facilitating integration into IOMS. Key elements include standardized CSV rules, use of existing ICCAT codes, and a simplified data structure retaining essential information. The approach is illustrated through examples and is intended to improve consistency, efficiency, and interoperability of Task 2 data reporting.

SCRS/P/2026/012 - This paper reviews additional data sources received by the ICCAT Secretariat beyond those submitted under standard ICCAT annual reporting requirements, including tuna cannery reports, FAD buoy data, Regional Observer Program (ROP) information, and VMS data. These datasets present potential to complement traditional fisheries statistics and support scientific analyses, particularly for species composition, size structure, and spatial fishing patterns. However, challenges remain regarding standardization, data coverage, resource requirements, and confidentiality constraints. The paper seeks guidance from SC-STATS on priorities and future directions for the use and management of these data sources.

SCRS/P/2026/013 - This paper summarizes the activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Coordination of Tagging Information outputs, including recent developments in electronic tagging (eTAGs), database management, and data submission workflows. Updates are provided on improvements in eTAG performance, the development of a relational database integrating tagging metadata, and the transition to IOMS as the exclusive platform for submitting tagging forms (TG01-TG03). Progress on cross-check validation between USA and ICCAT tagging databases is also presented, including species reviewed and pending. The work aims to improve consistency, integration, and accessibility of tagging data for scientific purposes.