

**Report of the 2026 Intersessional Meeting of the Tropical Tunas Species Group (including MSE)**  
*(hybrid/Madrid, Spain 20-22 April 2026)*

*The results, conclusions, and recommendations contained in this Report only reflect the view of the Tropical Tunas Species Group. 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, adoption of agenda, and meeting arrangements**

The meeting followed a hybrid format online and in-person at the ICCAT Secretariat in Madrid, Spain. Dr Serena Wright (United Kingdom (UK)), the Tropical Tunas Species Group (“the Group”) Coordinator, and Dr Matthew Lauretta, Yellowfin Tuna Rapporteur, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Mr Camille Manel, ICCAT Executive Secretary, welcomed the participants and thanked the efforts made by all participants to attend the meeting remotely. This SCRS meeting had a hybrid format and simultaneous interpretation in the three ICCAT official languages was provided.

The Chair reviewed the agenda, which was adopted with some changes (**Appendix 1**). The List of Participants is included in **Appendix 2**. The List of Documents and Presentations provided to the meeting is attached as **Appendix 3**. The abstracts of all SCRS documents and presentations provided to the meeting are included in **Appendix 4**. The following participants served as rapporteurs:

<i>Sections</i>	<i>Rapporteur</i>
Items 1, 9	M. Ortiz
Item 2	C. Brown
Item 3	A. Urtizberea, M. Lauretta
Item 4	G. Díaz
Item 5	C. Mayor, D. Angueko, D. Diaha, S. Wright
Item 6	S. Wright, M. Lauretta
Item 7	M. Neves dos Santos, S. Wright
Item 8	G. Díaz

**2. Overview of the outcome of the Intersessional Meetings of Panel 1**

The SCRS Chair provided a summary of the discussions at the Intersessional Meeting of Panel 1 on Tropical Tunas Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) held in October 2025 and the First Intersessional Meeting of Panel 1 held in March 2026 with respect to tropical tunas MSE, focused on the multi-stock MSE. After the initial presentation of the multi-stock MSE work at the Intersessional Meeting of Panel 1 on Tropical Tunas Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) in October 2025, Panel 1 members had requested some additional work, including examining separate species MSE and an MSE with interactions (for those fleets which typically catch more than one of the three tropical tuna species) that would account for the potential ability of fishers to shift targeting away from “choke stock” (a stock whose management constraint becomes binding first and therefore may limit fishing activity on other stock(s), even if those other stocks are healthy and have remaining fishing opportunities).

At the First Intersessional Meeting of Panel 1 in March 2026, the Contractor provided a presentation of the work done addressing those requests, as well as a general overview of the work in its current state.

At the First Intersessional Meeting of Panel 1 in March 2026, some Panel members felt that the presentation was too technical, and requested that informational documents and presentations of a less technical nature be provided in the future to explain the SCRS work. Despite this, some members of Panel 1 did provide some feedback, particularly with respect to operational management objectives including specific guidance on the parameters to be used for tuning and evaluating Candidate Management Procedures (CMPs). At the time of this Intersessional Meeting of the Tropical Tunas Species Group (including MSE), the Report of the First Intersessional Meeting of Panel 1 held in March 2026 was not yet available, the following is a non-exhaustive list of requests made by Panel 1 including:

- **Tuning objectives (PGK):** Probability of being in the Green quadrant of the Kobe phase plot (PGK) be treated as a target for tuning rather than a minimum threshold. Targets include 50%, 55%, 60%, and 65%.
- **Limit Reference Point (LRP) and risk:** The use of the interim LRP of  $0.4 B_{MSY}$  for the current work was confirmed. The SCRS is to evaluate risk levels of falling below this LRP at 5%, 10%, and 15% probabilities.
- **Harvest Control Rules (HCRs):** For model-based management procedures (MPs), fix the biomass threshold at  $B_{MSY}$ . Target fishing mortality (F) levels to be evaluated include  $0.8 F_{MSY}$ ,  $0.9 F_{MSY}$ , and  $F_{MSY}$ .
- **Management cycle:** 3-year management period for the resulting cycles.
- **Total allowable catch (TAC) variation:** Maximum TAC changes between periods of 10%, 15%, 20%, and 25%.
- **Maximum TAC exploration:** MPs with and without a maximum TAC cap, testing levels at maximum sustainable yield (MSY), 110% MSY, 115% MSY, and 120% MSY. Exploring the maximum TAC levels is a lower priority if the current technical workload is too high.

The Group acknowledged the feedback provided by the Panel 1 meeting, recognizing the need to implement a phased approach to address such proposals.

The determination of the initial parameter levels and combinations was dependent on the conclusions from the ensuing discussions on the MSE, operating models (OMs) and performance, which are reflected in other sections of this report.

### 3. Update of the multi-stock MSE and next steps

The Group reviewed document SCRS/2026/059 and discussed the underlying assumptions for the various components of the multi-stock MSE. The Group recommended updating the bigeye tuna (BET) operating models to be parameterized similar to the 2025 bigeye tuna stock assessment. This includes an important revision to the assumptions of natural mortality and associated uncertainty. Due to the substantial revisions recommended for the operating models, the Group recommended that initial candidate management procedures be evaluated after the revision of the operating models. The Group agreed to adopt the approach of the 2025 bigeye tuna assessment, which utilized the current best practices approach and associated statistical properties. To ensure consistency in the approach, the Group will validate the reconditioned operating models with diagnostics.

Discussions also focused on the assumptions regarding the stock recruitment assumed in the model projections, noting that recruitment deviations estimated in the assessment over the last decade have been predominantly positive for eastern skipjack and yellowfin tuna. To address this, the Group agreed to the following:

- The reference set of operating models will include the long-term equilibrium stock-recruitment relationship, consistent with the assumptions of the stock assessments.
- A robustness test set of operating models will explore alternative recruitment assumptions using recent 10-year average recruitment into the projection period. The Group will re-evaluate whether this approach should be elevated to the reference set of models, based on diagnostics and candidate management procedure performance.

Currently, catch proportion by gear/fleet is based on the most recent three years of data for each species by gear type. Alternative catch proportion scenarios can be evaluated after OM reconditioning and initial CMP testing preferably evaluating the multi-stock effects.

The Group discussed both model-based and empirical candidate management procedures. Two specific CMPs were proposed for initial testing:

- Model-based CMP: Utilizes a surplus production model and a harvest control rule based on stock status (similar to the North Atlantic albacore MSE framework). The initial model parameterization will use a harvest control rule with  $F_{TARGET} = F_{MSY}$  to validate model projections (i.e. long-term equilibrium  $SSB=SSB_{MSY}$ ). After that, two alternative targets will be assessed,  $F_{TARGET}=0.8 F_{MSY}$  and  $F_{TARGET}=0.9F_{MSY}$ .
- Empirical CMP: An index-based approach that compares the most recent three-year average catch per unit effort (CPUE) to the preceding three-year period, with proportional TAC adjustments. The joint longline index is proposed for initial CMP testing for yellowfin and bigeye tuna, and the acoustic buoy as well as the purse seine fish aggregating device (FAD) indices is proposed for eastern skipjack.

The Group established a phased approach to evaluate catch stability and biomass limit thresholds (probability of biomass exceeding  $B_{LIM} = 40\%SSB_{MSY}$ ):

- Initial constraint: A maximum variability in TAC of 25% will be assumed.
- More restrictive scenarios will follow the initial trials at 25%, to evaluate CMP performance under tighter constraints including 10%, 15% and 20%.
- Tuning: CMP tuning to specific stock status PGK (50%, 55%, 60% and 65%) and biomass limits thresholds (10%, 15%, 20% probability of B below  $B_{LIM}=40\%SSB_{MSY}$ ) can be evaluated after operating model reconditioning and candidate management procedure evaluations are completed based on guidance provided by Panel 1.

To better understand the impact of “choke stock”, the Group reviewed three implementation approaches presented in document SCRS/2026/059 (**Table 1**):

- 1) A single-stock MSE (full adaptation) approach, equivalent to the single-species stock assessment with associated uncertainty grids.
- 2) Multi-stock MSE:
  - a) No adaptation
  - b) Partial adaptation

The Group requested additional information regarding the multi-stock partial adaptation, and enquired if any information is available to demonstrate fleet targeting shifts. It was discussed that this approach requires more empirical evidence to accurately represent fleet adaptability and parameterize the mixed interaction model.

The Group reviewed a “Shiny” application that will display the MSE summary and results. That will allow the Group to be familiarized with the format and information to be presented in the online App. Access to the App is currently available to the members of the Group. After pending the implementation of the recommended OM revisions, the application will be made available online. The Group agreed that it is necessary to consider further how or if the results from single and multi-stock MSE will be incorporated into the final presentation of MSE results to the Commission.

The Tropical Tunas Technical Sub-group on MSE will schedule informal online meetings prior to the September SCRS meeting to review progress on OM updates, CMP development and multi-stock framework implementation. Additionally, the Group recommended organizing MSE ambassador meetings to communicate the structure, assumptions, and results of the MSE after adoption of results by the SCRS. The Group agreed that this planned work, including the reconditioning of OMs to the 2025 bigeye tuna stock assessment, would require revising the current MSE roadmap (**Table 2**).

#### **4. Development of the Exceptional Circumstances Protocol (ECP) for western Atlantic skipjack**

Document SCRS/2026/077 presented the conceptual basis and critical structural elements for an Exceptional Circumstances Protocol (ECP) for the western Atlantic skipjack (SKJ-W) tuna MSE.

The Group thanked the authors for the high quality and clarity of the presentation. The authors emphasized that the information presented represents a qualitative framework to develop a full ECP for SKJ-W and the Group considered it an excellent starting point. The Group enquired which will be the process to develop a quantitative ECP. In other words, which will be the process to select the value of the indicators that trigger the ECP. It was explained to the Group that they are planning to use available data and simulations to propose different levels of the indicators. Such proposal will be presented for its consideration by the SCRS at its 2026 annual meeting. In addition, if necessary, the MSE technical team could meet intersessionally to discuss developing such indicators.

The Group also discussed some of the indicators proposed by the authors. While overcatch is considered an important indicator, it was mentioned that undercatch should also be considered an indicator. In their presentation, the authors included a 20% over catch level as a trigger for the ECP. The Group considered that such level might be too high for this species. Once again, the authors emphasized that they were presenting examples of potential indicator levels and not specific proposals.

Another indicator proposed by the authors related to changes in the spatial distribution of the fleets. There was unanimous agreement that this was a very important indicator, since catches from the western stock might be reported as catches from the eastern stock (and vice versa). However, the Group discussed that such indicator could be difficult to operationalize.

As indicated by the authors, the Group agreed that an ECP cannot describe or incorporate all potential issues that can trigger the ECP. It was agreed that a balance should be found between incorporating a large number of indicators and performing an unnecessary large amount of work when developing such indicators.

The Group noted that among the proposed indicators it was the proportion of the three tropical tuna species in the catches, and the fact that new scientific evidence could invalidate the OMs. The Group agreed on the importance of including these two indicators in the western skipjack ECP and congratulated the authors for considering them.

The Group also recommended that the authors prepare a more generalized framework for developing an ECP that could be posted in the [ICCAT MSE webpage](#).

The presentation prepared by the authors suggested, as a proposal, what indicators could be updated/reviewed annually in contrast to those that could be reviewed at longer time scales. The Group briefly discussed the suggestion but did not develop a specific recommendation.

#### **5. Review of new information**

##### **5.1 Statistics**

During the meeting, it was observed that the proportion of bigeye tuna catches (of the total catches of BET+YFT+SKJ) in +purse seine fish aggregating device (FAD) catches appear to be declining in recent years. The Group noted that (if confirmed) this could reflect avoidance of bigeye tuna in purse seine FAD sets (which would be valuable to characterize for consideration within the tropical tuna multi-stock MSE), but it could also reflect misidentification of bigeye as yellowfin tuna during sampling - something which has been observed in the past.

The Group considered it important to confirm these trends in bigeye tuna proportion in the purse seine FAD catches reported to ICCAT and to understand the cause, and decided that an ad hoc subgroup should carry out this work intersessionally.

Document SCRS/2026/081 provided an overview of bycatch statistics of tropical tunas (skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye) in Guinea (Rep.) from 1995 to 2025, based on data collected by the national fisheries monitoring system.

The Group discussed the information presented and questions were raised regarding the characteristics of the artisanal fleet, including the types of gears used, vessel characteristics, the existence of a fleet census, as well as the sampling system and the destination of the catches (e.g. local markets). It was noted that the artisanal fishery mainly uses gillnets, including drifting and encircling nets, operated by small vessels.

The Group also discussed whether the reported catches should be considered as bycatch or targeted catches, noting some inconsistencies in their classification, and raised concerns regarding the recent increase in artisanal catches and whether this reflects an increase in fishing effort and/or monitoring. In this context, it was noted that artisanal fleets have shifted from shark fisheries to targeting tropical tunas.

Finally, it was noted that some industrial purse seine Task 1 and Task 2 data for the period 2014-2021 appear to be missing from the ICCAT database, and that further work with the Secretariat would be needed to complete this information.

## **5.2 Biology**

Document SCRS/2026/067 on the collection and analysis of biological samples for the age and growth of tropical tunas under an ICCAT contract was presented.

The authors indicated that the findings from this work would be presented to the joint ICCAT/iTUNNES workshop that will be attended by experts in June 2026. The results of this workshop will enable the Group to explore the possibility of issuing a new call for tenders to complete the work in line with the requirements identified following the workshop.

Document SCRS/2026/080 on the updated biological characteristics of skipjack tuna caught in the southern waters of Morocco between 2021 and 2024 was presented. The authors described the sampling methods based on data from the Fisheries Monitoring Programme, in collaboration with local fishers operating at the ports of Laâyoune and Tan Tan. Fishing effort was expressed as the number of fishing trips.

Results from the study indicated stable CPUE and size structure of the catch, with the dominant size range varying between 44 and 50 cm at Laâyoune and between 41 and 46 cm at Tan Tan. The length-weight relationship, calculated using Ricker's formula (Ricker, 1980), indicates isometric growth for this species. The Group encouraged to expand this type of study to updated size-weight information across the Atlantic and include other tropical tuna species.

The presentation SCRS/P/2026/039 analysed the variations in growth and natural mortality by sex for bigeye and yellowfin tuna based on the recovery of adult individuals after several years at liberty. Although the study was based on a limited number of recaptures, this study highlights two major findings. First, the distribution of observed sizes in the population serves as an indicator of the differences in asymptotic size between the two sexes. Second, the analysis of the numbers of adult males and females yellowfin recaptured as a function of their age reveals significant disparities in the adult natural mortality rates in the Indian Ocean. The higher natural mortality of female yellowfin tunas, combined with their smaller asymptotic size compared to males, are two factors explaining well the peculiar sex ratio at size of yellowfin (**Figure 1**) that has been observed in the Atlantic since 1975.

The Group commended the author for the quality of the work and expressed a keen interest in a thorough examination of the proposed analytical approaches. In this regard, questions and contributions emphasized the need to strengthen the sampling of large individuals in the Atlantic to identify if there are similar differences in asymptotic growth. Where samples are available, further analysis will be conducted during the age and growth workshop in June 2026 in collaboration with the iTUNNES project.

### 5.3 Fisheries

Document SCRS/2026/054 provided an updated overview of the tuna fisheries within the Madeira archipelago, focusing on the principal species landed by the local fleet between 2014 and 2024. Updates were provided on landings, fleet structure, size composition, fishing grounds and sea surface temperature anomalies. For bigeye tuna a size range of 45 to 185 cm was recorded, with an indication that samples from large bigeye tuna are being contributed to age and growth studies underway in the Atlantic (iTUNNES project).

The authors further noted that rising sea surface temperatures could influence the migratory behaviour and distribution of tuna in this region. The Group emphasised interest in better understanding the influence and impacts of climate change on fishery dynamics and tropical tuna distribution.

## 6. Responses to Commission

The ICCAT Secretariat developed an SCRS Responses to the Commission Tracking System, which was presented at the Intersessional Meeting of the Subcommittee on Statistics Meeting in February 2026. A short overview of the tool was presented by the Secretariat to the Group, including role-based access, status tracking, filtering and exporting.

The Group thanked the development team and indicated that this tool will be useful to help track the status of responses. There were several clarifications requested by the Group linked to process:

- Requests from the Commission are compiled by the Secretariat, with SCRS Officers validating these entries.
- Only SCRS Officers and Commission Panel Chairs can modify some selected entries.
- Responses should only be entered when adopted by the SCRS, with clarification that the tool should not be used to track the progress of drafted responses.

The Group queried current plans for access to the tool, including potential to make this available to members of the public. The Secretariat indicated that the decision on public access should be made by the Commission.

In terms of next steps in the use of the tool, the Group emphasised the importance of getting feedback from the Commission to understand when Responses were considered complete. There was an indication that Panel Chairs would be approached to review and decide on whether they are content with the response prepared by the SCRS, or if further work was required. The Group also requested that there be an option to reflect where the SCRS felt that no response was required.

The Group reviewed some of the most recent requests from the Commission (requests from 2024 and 2025) including, where feasible, appropriate points of contact to conduct the necessary work. Western skipjack MSE requests will be undertaken in line with the MSE roadmap by the development team. For example, the exceptional circumstances protocol will be developed this year including preliminary evaluations (which mirrors the approach taken for bluefin tuna).

Related to the pilot project on yellowfin tuna farming, the Group confirmed that any new information would be reviewed, once results have been presented.

The Group was reminded to review intersessionally the outstanding requests from the Commission, with a request to prepare any relevant work ahead of the Species Group meeting in September.

## 7. Tropical Tuna Research and Data Collection Program updates

The Secretariat provided the Group with an update on the use of science project funds between 2021 and 2025. It was noted that the [Tropical Tuna Research and Data Collection Program \(TTRaD\)](#) has had difficulties during the most recent years making full use of the available funds. While in 2021, 95% of the available funds were used, in 2023 only 63% were used. However, it was highlighted that an effort is being made to make better use of the available funds, which in 2025 reached 83%. In 2026, the TTRaD is back on track and over 75% of the available funds are already committed.

Finally, it was recommended that the Group avoid major changes to funding requests for 2027, unless duly justified by the achievement that might have been made. Instead, new activities should be discussed within the long-term planning of TTRaD and funding requests be considered for the next biennial period (2028-2029).

The Secretariat also highlighted the importance of duly justifying the funding request, namely by associating those to specific Commission requests. On the other hand, it was also noted the need for the Group to report back the effective advances achieved and inform the Commission on the effective date for the conclusion of the different studies.

A short presentation was provided on the ongoing work within the TTRaD and outstanding Terms of Reference (ToRs) required from the Group, which includes: (a) continued sample collection and analysis of age and growth for all tropical tunas, and (b) skipjack age validation. The Group was requested to review the objectives and deliverables for these ToRs, noting that sample collection could focus on gaps identified in the age and growth workshop which is scheduled for June 2026. The Group also noted that samples could also be sought to improve understanding of difference in asymptotic growth of bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna in the Atlantic as recommended in SCRS/P/2026/039.

## **8. Recommendations**

### ***Biology***

- Collect necessary samples to develop growth studies of bigeye and yellowfin by sex, and to identify sex ratios by size and age.
- Building on the growth models presented in document SCRS/2026/067, new information will be reviewed during the age and growth workshop in June 2026. The expert group are requested to provide updates at the September 2026 Species Group meeting, including recommendations on size gaps and areas of research.

### ***Statistics***

- Create an ad hoc sub-group tasked with reviewing the tropical tuna catch composition and ICCAT Task 1NC statistics.

### ***Climate change***

- Request that the Group undertake further studies exploring the impacts of climate change on tropical tuna abundance and distribution as initially explored in document SCRS/2026/054, which showed changes in catch composition for fisheries operating in the Madeira archipelago.

### ***MSE***

#### ***Ambassadors' meetings***

- Identify MSE Ambassadors for the multi-stock MSE.

#### ***Shiny application***

- Continue development of the multi-stock MSE Shiny app and allow access and initial use within the Tropical Tunas Technical Sub-group on MSE. Explore options to create a manual and/or interactive tutorial to help to engage with the Shiny app including links to relevant websites.

## **9. Other matters**

No other matters were discussed by the Group.

## **10. Adoption of the report and closure**

The Report of the 2026 Intersessional Meeting of the Tropical Tunas Species Group was adopted during the meeting. The Chairs and the ICCAT Secretariat thanked all the participants and the interpreters for their efforts to work effectively and efficiently throughout the meeting.

## **References**

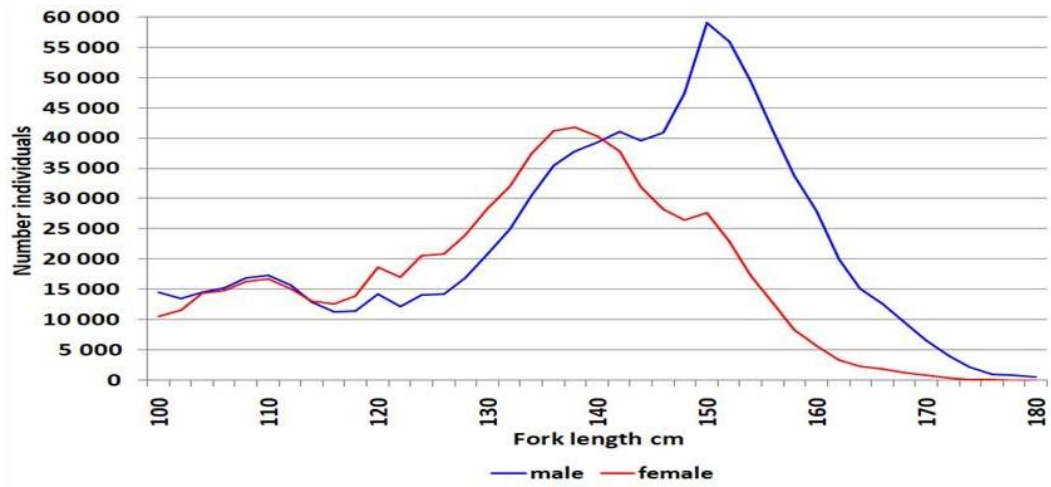
- Duparc, A., Aragno, V., Depetris, M., Floch, L., Cauquil, P., Lebranchu, J., Gaertner, D., Marsac, F., Bach, P. 2020. Assessment of the species composition of major tropical tunas in purse seine catches: a new modelling approach for the tropical tuna treatment processing (case of the French fleet in Atlantic Ocean). [Col. Vol. Sci. Pap. ICCAT, 76\(6\): 951-982.](#)
- Ricker, W.E. 1980. Calcul et interprétation des statistiques biologiques des populations de poissons. Office des recherches sur les pêcheries du Canada, organisme de publication, Ottawa, 409 p.

**Table 1.** Scenarios describing different fleet dynamics under mixed fisheries in the Atlantic tropical tuna multi-stock MSE.

<b>Adaptation scenario</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Full adaptation	Fleets are assumed to adapt their fishing practices to fully utilize the catches for each species assigned to that fleet	This is the independent MSE analysis for each stock
No adaptation	Fleets are assumed to have no ability to adapt and therefore catches for each fleet and species are fully constrained by the choke stock / species for that fleet	Multi-stock MSE approach
Partial adaptation	Fleets are able to partially adapt their fishing practices resulting in intermediate catch levels for those species and fleets where a choke effect occurs (e.g. catches are between the Full and No adaptation scenarios)	Multi-stock MSE approach

**Table 2.** Proposed revisions to the multi-stock MSE timeline.

		2025 progress		2026		2027		2028	
		SCRS	Commission	SCRS	Commission	SCRS	Commission	SCRS	Commission
PREVIOUS TIMELINE		Further developed MSE framework, incorporating PA1 feedback, including mechanism to implement multi-stock CMPs, development of TSD, and creation of Shiny visualization tool.	PA1 to meet intersessionally to provide guidance on how to handle: trade-offs in species yields; changes in effort over time; changes in gear use over time; and variable allocations over time. Also to discuss CMP design and operational management objectives, considering how the multi-stock interactions are handled in the current MSE.	Refine MSE framework and evaluate multi-stock CMPs based on PA1 feedback.	PA1 to meet intersessionally to provide guidance on CMP design. Hold Ambassadors meeting. Consider MP adoption at annual meeting, including the 2027-29 TACs.	Develop EC criteria for ECP. Check for ECs.	Adopt ECP at annual meeting (assuming 2026 MP adoption; otherwise, consider MP adoption).		
	UPDATED TIMELINE (FOR PA1)			Further develop MSE framework incorporating PA1 feedback and collaboration with Tropical Tuna WG. Build the multi-stock approach to investigate "choke" species effects and produce first round of evaluations of CMPs. SCRS to report PA1 on the status of development of the MSE and potential timeline for adoption.	PA1 to meet intersessionally to provide feedback on the MSE process. Hold Ambassadors meeting. Consider advice from SCRS plenary about new timeline.	Refine MSE framework and further evaluations of CMPs based on SCRS plenary and PA1 feedback. Standardize abundance indices (joint PLL, BAI, PSFAD) for potential application of CMP to set TAC for 2028-2030.	PA1 to meet intersessionally to provide guidance on CMP design. Hold Ambassadors meeting. Consider MP adoption at annual meeting, including the 2028-30 TACs.	Develop EC criteria for ECP. Check for ECs.	Adopt ECP at annual meeting (assuming 2026 MP adoption; otherwise, consider MP adoption).



**Figure 1.** Catch at size of male and female of Atlantic yellowfin tuna from the LL and PS gears, during the period 2015 – 2024, based on the information of the 2003 sex ratio at size from the Oceanographic Research Centre at Abidjan (CRO). Reproduced from presentation SCRS/P/2026/039.

**Agenda**

1. Opening, adoption of agenda and meeting arrangements
2. Overview of the outcome of the intersessional meetings of Panel 1
3. Update of the multi-stock MSE and next steps
4. Development of the Exceptional Circumstances Protocol for western Atlantic skipjack
5. Review of new information on:
  - 5.1 Statistics
  - 5.2 Biology
  - 5.3 Fisheries
6. Responses to the Commission
7. Tropical Tuna Research and Data collection Program updates
8. Recommendations
9. Other matters
10. Adoption of the report and closure

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## Appendix 3

## List of papers and presentations

Doc Ref	Title	Authors
SCRS/2026/054	Updated fishery statistics of tuna species caught off Madeira archipelago, 2014-2024	Alves A., Amorim A., Ferreira R., Gouveia L.
SCRS/2026/059	Evaluation of Candidate Management Procedures for Atlantic tropical tunas	Urtizberea A., Correa G.M., Merino G., Arrizabalaga H.
SCRS/2026/067	Projet thonidés tropicaux : collecte et analyse d'échantillons biologiques pour l'âge et la croissance des thons tropicaux	Diaha N.C., Ngom S.F., Abekan E., Ba K., Aissan R.A., Sadio N., Djeneba C., N'guessan Y.
SCRS/2026/077	Conceptual basis and structural elements for an exceptional circumstances protocol in the western skipjack tuna management strategy evaluation	Sant'Ana R., Mourato B.
SCRS/2026/080	Mise à jour des traits biologiques de la bonite à ventre rayé capturée dans la zone sud du Maroc entre 2021 et 2024	El-Joumani E.M., Baibbat S.A., Bensbai J., Abid N.
SCRS/2026/081	Statistique des prises accessoires des thonidés tropicaux (albacore, listao, thon obèse) des navires de la pêche industrielle (PI), pêche semi-industrielle (PA) et pêche artisanale (PA) 1995-2025	Soumah M.
SCRS/P/2026/039	Growth and natural mortality by sex of BET and YFT: Identical or distinct?	Fonteneau A.

**SCRS papers and presentation abstracts as provided by the authors**

SCRS/2026/054 - This document provides an updated overview of tuna fisheries in the Madeira archipelago, focusing on the principal species landed by the local fleet during the 2014-2024: bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*), skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*), albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) and bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*). The study compiles long-term information on landings, fleet structure, size composition, fishing grounds, and sea surface temperature anomalies. Results show strong interannual variability across species, influenced by migratory behaviour, environmental conditions, and management measures established under ICCAT and the European Commission. Tropical tunas continue to dominate regional landings, although recent years show declining trends for bigeye and skipjack. Temperate tunas display high variability, with albacore declining markedly since 2019, while bluefin tuna landings reflect both strict quota constraints and indications of stock recovery. Spatial patterns reveal shifting fishing activity between Madeira and the Azores, especially after 2018. Length-frequency data indicate stable size structures for several species and emerging changes for others, particularly bigeye. Long-term warming reflected in SST anomalies may influence tuna distribution and migration. This information enhances understanding of recent trends and provides essential input for ongoing management within ICCAT.

SCRS/2026/059 - This document presents a preliminary management strategy evaluation (MSE) of alternative Candidate Management Procedures (CMPs) for Atlantic tropical tunas (bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack) to support discussions in ICCAT Panel 1 and inform progress towards the management objectives of Resolution 24-02. We evaluate three CMP families: (i) a model-based procedure using the SPiCT state-space surplus production estimator coupled to a harvest control rule to set three-year Total Allowable Catches (TACs), including options for stability clauses and maximum TAC caps; (ii) an index-based rule that adjusts TACs in response to recent deviations of CPUE indices from target levels; and (iii) a quasi-constant-catch rule that maintains TAC unless indices fall below a reference threshold. Performance is assessed using a suite of conservation, yield and stability indicators (e.g., biomass and fishing mortality relative to MSY benchmarks, Kobe status probabilities, catch levels and variability). To quantify the consequences of technical interactions among fleets targeting multiple stocks, CMPs are tested under three contrasting MSE frameworks: single-stock simulations without constraints, a multi-stock “choke species” scenario where effort is limited by the most constraining stock, and an intermediate mixed-interaction framework intended for final evaluations. Results shown illustrate how recent recruitment signals can drive short-term TAC increases and how maximum TAC caps and stability clauses can dampen fluctuations, while multi-stock constraints can create substantial gaps between TAC and realized catches for specific fleets and stocks. Overall, the analyses highlight trade-offs among conservation risk, catch opportunities and interannual stability and provide a basis for shortlisting CMP configurations for further testing. The results shown here are preliminary and will be discussed with the Tropical Tuna Working Group for refinement.

SCRS/2026/067 - Dans le but de mettre à jour les paramètres de croissance du thon obèse (*Thunnus obesus*, BET), de l'albacore (*Thunnus albacares*, YFT) et du listao (*Katsuwonus pelamis*, SKJ), le projet « thonidés tropicaux » a été lancé par l'ICCAT. La méthodologie reposait sur la collecte d'échantillons dans l'Atlantique Nord-Est et Sud-Est, suivie du prélèvement de structures osseuses destinées à la préparation et à la lecture des âges. Les données historiques, notamment celles issues de l'AOTTP, ont également été intégrées à l'analyse. Au total, 1 190 spécimens provenant de diverses sources ont été examinés.

Les résultats indiquent que les BET, YFT et SKJ proviennent majoritairement de l'Atlantique Sud-Est, avec des proportions respectives de 48 %, 59 % et 63 %. Ces contributions sont suivies par celles de l'AOTTP (37 % pour le BET et 31 % pour le YFT), de l'Atlantique Nord-Est (14 % pour le BET, 10 % pour le YFT et 37 % pour le SKJ), ainsi que de Sainte-Hélène, qui ne représente que 1 % des spécimens de BET.

L'analyse des modèles de croissance de von Bertalanffy montre que le listao présente la croissance la plus rapide ( $K = 0,515$ ), tout en atteignant la plus faible taille asymptotique ( $L_{\infty} = 75,9$  cm). Sa longévité observée est relativement courte, d'environ quatre ans. L'albacore affiche une croissance intermédiaire ( $K = 0,172$ ) et une taille asymptotique de 191 cm. Le thon obèse, quant à lui, est l'espèce de plus grande taille, avec une longueur asymptotique théorique de 226 cm ( $L_{\infty}$ ), et se caractérise par une croissance plus lente et étalée dans le temps ( $K = 0,147$ ).

SCRS/2026/077 - This document presents a conceptual framework for developing an Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Protocol within the western Atlantic skipjack tuna (SKJ-W) Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE). The protocol is designed to ensure that Management Procedures (MPs) remain effective when unforeseen biological, fishery, data, or implementation conditions arise that are not accounted for in Operating Models. The framework establishes a structured process consisting of five core components: monitoring, detection principles, trigger evaluation, scientific review, and management response. Three primary detection principles guide EC identification: (i) deviations in stock or fishery dynamics outside modeled expectations, (ii) loss or degradation of essential data inputs, and (iii) significant discrepancies between realized catches and prescribed Total Allowable Catch (TAC) levels. Indicators associated with each principle are evaluated against predefined thresholds to identify persistent and meaningful deviations. Following EC detection, a formal review process assesses severity, evaluates risks to MP performance, and recommends management actions, including TAC adjustments or MP revision. Overall, the protocol promotes adaptive, transparent, and precautionary fisheries management under uncertainty.

SCRS/2026/080 - La pêche des thonidés tropicaux revêt une grande importance dans la zone atlantique sud du Maroc, particulièrement en raison des débarquements importants enregistrés. Parmi ces espèces le listao (*Katsuwonus pélamis*) dont l'étude d'exploitation et de la biologie a été menée au niveau de Laayoune et Tan Tan de 2021 à 2024. Les indicateurs d'exploitation de cette espèce ont connu globalement une tendance positive durant cette période. La distribution des tailles de cette espèce a révélé une dominance d'individus mesurant entre 44 cm et 50 cm suggérant que la pêche cible une population adulte. La relation taille-poids de listao montre une bonne corrélation avec une croissance isométrique. Ces données sont essentielles pour mieux comprendre la dynamique de cette espèce ainsi que pour informer la gestion durable de la pêche au listao dans la région sud du Maroc.

SCRS/2026/081 - La République de Guinée dispose d'une Zone Économique Exclusive (ZEE) s'étendant sur 200 milles nautiques (environ 370 km) au large de ses côtes. Cet espace maritime se distingue par l'abondance des ressources halieutiques, regroupant principalement des espèces démersales, des céphalopodes ainsi que des thonidés (majeurs et mineurs). L'exploitation de ces ressources est assurée par des segments de pêche industrielle, semi-industrielle et artisanale. Ces activités, strictement encadrées par des licences spécifiques (thonidés, pélagiques, démersaux, céphalopodes et crevettes), constituent un pilier stratégique pour la sécurité alimentaire et le développement socio-économique du pays, avec un impact majeur sur le PIB et la création d'emplois. Outre la flottille spécialisée dans la capture des thonidés, les autres navires autorisés génèrent des prises accessoires significatives de thons et d'espèces apparentées. Le Centre National des Sciences Halieutiques de Boussoura (CNSHB) assure le suivi de ses activités via une base de données statistiques consolidée depuis 1995. À cet égard, les données relatives aux captures accessoires des thonidés tropicaux révèlent des captures non moins importantes de 1995 à 2025.

SCRS/P/2026/039 - This presentation analyzed the variations in growth and natural mortality by sex for bigeye (BET) and yellowfin (YFT) tuna based on the recovery of adult individuals after several years at liberty. Although the study was based on a limited number of recaptures, this study highlights two major findings. First, the distribution of observed sizes in the population serves as an indicator of the differences in asymptotic size between the two sexes. Second, the analysis of the numbers of adult males and females yellowfin recaptured as a function of their age reveals significant disparities in the adult natural mortality rates in the Indian Ocean. The higher natural mortality of female yellowfin tunas, combined with their smaller asymptotic size compared to males, are 2 factors explaining well the peculiar sex ratio at size of yellowfin that has been observed in the Atlantic since 1975.