



Madrid, 23 May 2017

ICCAT CIRCULAR # 3507 / 2017

**SUBJECT: 2017 INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON ECOSYSTEMS
(Madrid, Spain, 10-14 July, 2017)**

I have the honour to inform you that an Intersessional Meeting of the Sub-committee on Ecosystems will be held on 10-14 July 2017, at the Secretariat offices in Madrid.

Attached please find the objectives, the Tentative Agenda of the meeting and other relevant information about the organization. I would appreciate it very much if you could distribute this announcement to scientists who may contribute by participating in the meeting. This announcement will also be published on our [website](#).

In order to have an estimation of the number of participants in advance of the session I would also appreciate if you could send to the Secretariat a list of delegates who will participate in the meeting by **26 June 2017**.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Driss Meski
Executive Secretary



DISTRIBUTION:

- Commission Officers:

Commission Chairman:	M. Tsamenyi	COC Chairman:	D. Campbell
First Vice Chair:	S. Depypere	PWG Chair:	F. Donatella
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- **Head Delegates / Head Scientists**
- **Cooperating Parties, Entities, or Fishing Entities**

Attach.: Tentative Agenda, information for participants.

2017 INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON ECOSYSTEMS
(Madrid, Spain, 10-14 July 2017)

Objectives

Pertaining to ecosystems

The Sub-committee aims to continue the work required to assess the feasibility of and provide information towards implementing ecosystems based fisheries management (EBFM) in agreement with Resolution 15-11. Furthermore, it will review available information on the trophic ecology of unique pelagic ecosystems that are important for ICCAT species in the Convention area as requested in Resolution 16-23. The Working Group will discuss the progress made towards these objectives as well as consider ways of liaising with other tuna RFMOs in order to progress on issues of mutual relevance and benefit.

Pertaining to by-catch

Seabirds

Recognising that the paucity of seabird by-catch data submitted to the ICCAT Secretariat has prevented an assessment of Rec. 11-09, the Sub-committee noted that there are opportunities to progress this work intersessionally through additional mechanisms. In 2016, the Sub-committee recognised that although the main focus of seabird work would be a review of the effectiveness of Rec. 11-09, there is a need for a separate strategy to investigate seabird by-catch in the Mediterranean area. One of the first steps should be to investigate what fisheries operating in the Mediterranean area are incidentally catching seabirds.

Sea turtles

Recognizing that there is a paucity of by-catch data submitted to the ICCAT Secretariat despite repeated requests for this information, the Sub-committee recognizes that the method described in Mckee Gray *et al.*, in press¹ can be used as an alternative method to facilitate the Sub-committee's work as this model uses sea turtle CPUE reported in published literature. Thus, the Sub-committee agreed to review and improve the method in 2017, especially with regard to the utilization of observer data collected by CPCs.

¹ Mckee Gray C., Diaz G., and Swimmer Y. (in press). Preliminary estimates of the number of sea turtle interactions with pelagic longline gear in the ICCAT Convention area. Document SCRS/2016/125: 25 p.

Tentative Agenda

1. Opening, adoption of the Agenda and meeting arrangements
 - Ecosystems*
2. EBFM
 - 2.1 Review the progress that has been made in implementing ecosystem based fisheries management and enhanced stock assessments
 - 2.2 Review updates to the status and pressure indicators, reference levels and management actions for elements of ICCAT's EBFM framework and any progress on developing new indicators for all ecological components of ICCAT's EBFM framework (i.e. target species, by-catch, habitat and trophic relationships)
 - 2.3 Review the progress on developing an Ecosystem Report Card for ICCAT
 - 2.4 Review mechanisms to effectively coordinate, integrate and communicate ecosystem-relevant research across the ICCAT Species Working Groups and within the SCRS
 - 2.5 Review the proceedings of the joint meeting between tRFMOs on the implementation of the EBFM approach
3. Ecology
 - 3.1 Review information on the trophic ecology of pelagic ecosystems that are important and unique for ICCAT species in the Convention area
 - By-catch (preliminary)*
4. Data used for by-catch analyses
 - 4.1 Revision and update of ST09 forms
 - 4.2 Status of ST09 observer data received by the Secretariat (Report cards)
 - 4.3 Update on Effdis estimations
5. Sea turtles
 - 5.1 Review sea turtle by-catch data by CPCs – total estimated removals
 - 5.2 Review of methods to estimate sea turtle interactions and mortality
 - 5.3 Indirect by-catch mortality
6. Sea birds
 - 6.1 Feedback on GEF-ABNJ seabird mitigation meeting
 - 6.2 Review of progress on seabird interaction estimations and mitigation
 - 6.2.1 CPC Estimations of total by-catch number
 - 6.2.2 Potential collaborative Modeling approaches
 - 6.3 Seabird by-catch and mitigation in the Mediterranean
 - 6.3.1 Identification of fleets that have seabird interactions
 - 6.3.2 Data availability
7. Fish species caught as by-catch but not considered by other species groups
8. Other matters
 - 8.1 Integration of the Sub-committee on Ecosystems with other species Working Groups
 - 8.2 Discuss the information required to evaluate mitigation efforts for by-catch species
9. Recommendations
 - 9.1 General recommendations
 - 9.2 Recommendations with financial implications
10. Adoption of the Report and closure

Additional information for participants

1 Date and venue

10 (Monday) to 14 July (Friday) 2017. (Registration starts at 09:00 am, July 10). Meeting hours will be approximately from 09:00 to 18:00.

The meeting will be held at the ICCAT Secretariat: c/Corazón de María 8, Madrid, Spain. For a map with the Secretariat's location and information about Madrid please consult the [website](#).

2 Contact information

Co-convener (EBFM): Dr Alex Hanke (alex.hanke@dfo.mpo.gc.ca)
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Co-convener (By-catch): Andrés Domingo (adomingo@dinara.gub.uy; dimanchester@gmail.com)
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Secretariat Contact: Dr Paul De Bruyn (paul.debruyn@iccat.int)
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3 Language

The working language for the meeting will be English, as no simultaneous translation can be provided. Scientific documents can be written in English, Spanish or French.

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 **3 July 2017**. Authors are reminded to closely follow the [Guidelines for Authors](#) of Scientific Documents for the ICCAT SCRS and Collective Volume Series. Furthermore, the original documents (text, tables and figures) should be prepared in WORD or compatible software.

5 Provision of data

Recognizing that there is a paucity of by-catch data submitted to the ICCAT Secretariat despite repeated requests for this information, the Sub-committee requested that CPCs submit sea turtle by-catch information including data not reported using the ST09 data submission form, and also to estimate total removals using their observer data.

6 Funding

Funding is available to cover travel and subsistence expenses for a scientist from each ICCAT developing Contracting Party who can provide information relevant to the meeting objectives, particularly in reference to provision of data.

According with the Rules of Procedure for the Administration of the Special Meeting Participation Fund adopted at the 2014 Commission meeting, requests should be received **45 days** in advance, i.e. **26 May 2017**. Requests for financial assistance cannot be accepted after that date.

All the information related with the ICCAT special funds for participation in ICCAT meeting and capacity building is available on the ICCAT [website](#). 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.