

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON INFORMATION COLLECTION
AND HARMONIZATION OF DATA ON BY-CATCH AND DISCARDS IN ICCAT FISHERIES**

(Entered into force: **June 7, 2012**)

RECALLING the findings of ICCAT's independent performance review in 2008, including the panel's recommendation that "ICCAT develop a stronger approach generally to by-catch and develop and adopt appropriate mitigation measures including reporting on the effectiveness of these measures throughout the fisheries";

ACKNOWLEDGING the findings of the International Workshop on Tuna RFMO Management of Issues Relating to Bycatch in June 2010, including the recommendation that RFMOs should assess fishery impacts on bycatch, using the best available data;

CONSIDERING that the FAO issued International Guidelines for By-catch Management and Reduction of Discards in January 2011, advising RFMOs to recognize the importance of addressing bycatch problems and to collaborate with other RFMOs to address common issues of concern;

FURTHER CONSIDERING the recommendations developed at the first meeting of the Joint Tuna RFMO Technical Working Group on Bycatch in July 2011;

RECOGNIZING that discussions within the Future of ICCAT Working Group have highlighted the importance of ecosystem considerations;

NOTING that the Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish Minimum Standards for Fishing Vessel Scientific Observer Programs [Rec. 10-10] requires CPCs to establish observer programs to collect data that quantify bycatch (including sharks, sea turtles, marine mammals, and seabirds) and report this information to the SCRS;

RESPONDING to recommendations from the SCRS Subcommittee on Ecosystems, including the need for all CPCs to collect and provide bycatch data to the SCRS;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that the SCRS Sub-Committee on Ecosystems, together with the Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods, is developing guidelines for the presentation and analysis of bycatch statistics;

DETERMINED to improve data collection and reporting on bycatch in ICCAT fisheries, as a basis for future assessment by the SCRS of impacts of these fisheries on bycatch species and consideration of appropriate conservation and management measures by the Commission;

UNDERSCORING the importance of full and active involvement by ICCAT in the work of the Joint Tuna RFMO Technical Working Group on By-Catch, including the development of minimum standards for data collection;

FURTHER NOTING that although Recommendations 04-10, 07-07 and 10-09 established some reporting requirements for species encountered as bycatch in ICCAT fisheries, many CPCs have not taken the necessary steps to collect and report these data.

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:**

1. Notwithstanding other data collection and reporting programs and requirements adopted by ICCAT and noting continued obligations to fulfill those requirements, in particular those of Recommendation 10-10¹:

¹ Rec. 10-10 was replaced by Rec. 16-14.

- a) Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities (CPCs) shall require the collection of bycatch and discard data in their existing domestic scientific observer programs and logbook programs;
 - b) CPCs that wish to employ an alternative scientific monitoring approach for vessels <15 meters, as specified in paragraph 1b) of Recommendation 10-10¹, shall describe their alternative approach as part of the observer program report that is due to the SCRS on July 31, 2012 (as required by paragraph 5 of Recommendation 10-10¹).
 - c) For artisanal fisheries that are not subject to ICCAT's minimum standards for scientific observer programs (Recommendation 10-10¹) or recording of catch requirements (Recommendation 03-13) CPCs shall implement measures to collect bycatch and discard data through alternative means and describe these efforts in their Annual Reports, beginning in 2012. The SCRS shall evaluate these measures in 2013 and provide advice to the Commission on this matter;
 - d) CPCs shall report the bycatch and discard data collected under paragraphs 1a and b to the Secretariat in the format specified by SCRS, in accordance with existing deadlines for data reporting;
 - e) CPCs shall report on steps taken to mitigate bycatch and reduce discards, and on any relevant research in this field, as part of their Annual Reports, beginning in 2012;
2. CPCs shall provide these data in a manner consistent with their domestic confidentiality requirements.
 3. Where possible, CPCs shall provide existing identification guides for sharks, seabirds and turtles and marine mammals caught in the Convention Area to the ICCAT Secretariat, and the Secretariat shall request sub-regional RFMOs to provide the Commission with relevant identification guides. The Secretariat shall share these guides with the T-RFMO Technical Working Group on Bycatch, as appropriate.
 4. The ICCAT Secretariat and SCRS will continue to support the work plan of the T-RFMO Joint Bycatch Technical Working Group.
 5. This recommendation applies to discards and bycatch of species caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT, as reflected in the FAO International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and the Reduction of Discards.