

## ICCAT NEWSLETTER

No. 29, February 2019

### Executive Secretary

Dear readers, on publication of this 29th issue of the ICCAT Newsletter, the Secretariat hopes that you have already started your prosperous journey in 2019 in the world of tuna. As usual, the past six months have been very busy for ICCAT. While, as a result of collaboration with all CPCs and partners, significant progress has been made in many regards, much still remains to be done. The synergies that we have created will continue to be our daily companion, and will assist us in providing optimal responses to the different challenges. The Secretariat is fully committed to continuing to work with all parties to achieve our common goals.

### Introduction



During the 21st Special Meeting of the Commission that was held in Dubrovnik (Croatia), significant progress was made, and a number of relevant decisions were taken, including:

- ✓ A revised multi-annual management plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean;
- ✓ A rollover of current measures for tropical tunas and a commitment work to develop a new plan that is acceptable to all, in advance of the 2019 Commission meeting;
- ✓ New recommendations on reporting formats for implementation of billfish and shark measures; and
- ✓ Several refinements to Monitoring, Control and Surveillance measures such as development of the IUU vessel list, port State measures and vessel monitoring system (VMS).

In 2018, two species were subject to a full scientific stock assessment: bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) and blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*). Overall, 12 new Recommendations and two Resolutions were adopted covering relevant issues regarding Atlantic tuna and tuna-like species conservation and fisheries management. The following list of adopted recommendations will enter into force on 21 June 2019:

- ✓ *Rec. 18-01 Recommendation by ICCAT Supplementing and Amending Recommendation 16-01 on a Multi Annual Conservation and Management Programme for Tropical Tunas*
- ✓ *Rec. 18-02 Recommendation by ICCAT Establishing a Multi-Annual Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea*
- ✓ *Res. 18-03 Resolution by ICCAT on Development of Initial Management Objectives for Eastern and Western Bluefin Tuna*
- ✓ *Rec. 18-04 Recommendation by ICCAT to Replace Rec. 15-05 to Further Strengthen the Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Stocks*
- ✓ *Rec. 18-05 Recommendation by ICCAT on Improvement of Compliance Review of Conservation and Management Measures Regarding Billfish Caught in the ICCAT Convention Area*
- ✓ *Rec. 18-06 Recommendation by ICCAT to Replace Recommendation 16-13 on Improvement of Compliance Review of Conservation and Management Measures Regarding Sharks Caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries*
- ✓ *Rec. 18-07 Recommendation by ICCAT to Amend ICCAT Reporting Deadlines in Order to Facilitate an Effective and Efficient Compliance Process*

- ✓ *Rec. 18-08 Recommendation by ICCAT on Establishing a List of Vessels Presumed to have Carried out Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Activities*
- ✓ *Rec. 18-09 Recommendation by ICCAT on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing*
- ✓ *Rec. 18-10 Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning Minimum Standards for Vessel Monitoring Systems in the ICCAT Convention Area*
- ✓ *Res. 18-11 Resolution by ICCAT Establishing a Pilot Program for the Voluntary Exchange of Inspection Personnel in Fisheries Managed by ICCAT*
- ✓ *Rec. 18-12 Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 17-09 on the Application of the eBCD System*
- ✓ *Rec. 18-13 Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 11-20 on an ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Catch Documentation Program*
- ✓ *Rec. 18-14 Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Four Recommendations and One Resolution*

The 21st Special Meeting of the Commission was attended by over 650 delegates from 45 Contracting Parties, two cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities and observers from one non-Contracting Party, two international organisations and 21 NGOs.

A spirit of consensus was heralded by the new ICCAT Executive Secretary, Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel, and the Commission paid tribute, in a farewell ceremony to his predecessor Mr. Driss Meski.



*Farewell ceremony for the former ICCAT Executive Secretary during the 21st Special Meeting of the Commission (Dubrovnik, Croatia 12-19 November 2018). ICCAT Officers (from left to right), Shep Helguilè, Neil Ansell, Shingo Ota, Zakia Driouich, Stefaan Depypere, Raúl Delgado, Driss Meski, Camille Jean Pierre Manel (Executive Secretary), Fabio Hazin, Hasan Alper Elekon and Asanda Njobeni.*

## **RECENT MEETINGS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE THE LAST ISSUE**

### **Commission intersessional meetings**

- *Meeting of the Port Inspection Expert Group for Capacity Building and Assistance (Madrid, Spain, 18 to 19 September 2018)*
- *Meeting of the Compliance Committee (COC) (Dubrovnik, Croatia 10-11 November 2018)*
- *Meeting of the Technical and Legal Editing Group of Contracting Parties (Madrid, Spain 28-29 January 2019)*
- *Intersessional Meeting of Panel 2 (Madrid, Spain, 4-7 March 2019)*



### Commission meeting

- 21st Special Meeting of the Commission (*Dubrovnik, Croatia 12-19 November 2018*)

### SCRS intersessional meetings

- Meeting of the Sub-committee on Statistics (*Madrid, Spain, 24-25 September 2018*)
- SCRS Species Groups Meeting (*Madrid, Spain, 25 to 28 September 2018*)
- Meeting of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) (*Madrid, Spain, 1 to 5 October 2018*)
- Intersessional Meeting of the Bluefin Tuna MSE Technical Group (*Madrid, Spain, 7 to 9 February 2019*)
- Intersessional Meeting of the Bluefin Tuna Species Group (*Madrid, Spain, 11 to 15 February 2019*)
- Intersessional Meeting of the Swordfish Species Group (*Madrid, Spain, 25-28 February 2019*)

### External meetings

Between September 2018 and February 2019, members of the Secretariat staff have participated actively in meetings and activities related to ICCAT, providing both written and/or oral contributions.

- The Informal Operating Model and Management Procedure Technical Meeting (Informal OMMP), and The Extended Scientific Committee for the 23rd Meeting of the Scientific Committee (ESC 23), CCSBT (*San Sebastian, Spain, 2-4 September 2018*)
- Working Group (WG2) on Pelagic Fishes – ICCAT, The Mediterranean Advisory Council, MEDAC (*Rome, Italy, 11 October 2018*)
- The International MCS Network in partnership with Thailand's Department of Fisheries organised the 6th Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop (*Bangkok, 18-22 February 2019*).

The Executive Secretary has held meetings with the representatives of Albania, Algeria, Cabo Verde, China (People's Rep.), Croatia, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guatemala, Honduras, Korea (Rep.), Libya, Morocco, Panama, Philippines, Russia, Senegal, South Africa, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, as well as the Economy and Cultural Office of Chinese Taipei.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

New JCAP training courses to build the capacity of data collection in the semi-industrial, artisanal and recreational fisheries in Angola and Namibia have been approved, while others are being prepared. These initiatives will be implemented within the next six months. In addition, JCAP, which has entered its fifth and final year, is supporting the rebuilding of the statistical and fisheries data collection system in Liberia.

### ONGOING RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION PROGRAMMES

In Phase 8 of the *Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (ICCAT GBYP)*, with an overall budget of €1,750,000, activities continued, including data recovery, aerial surveys, biological studies, tagging trials and modelling approaches. An amendment to the Phase 8 workplan was approved in February 2019. It includes a temporary six-month extension, and aims to develop a series of new activities that were recommended by the SCRS and agreed by the Commission in its 2018 meeting. These include the design of a broad study on bluefin tuna growth in farms. The Phase 9 proposal, which covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019 and carries a total budget of €17,500.00, was submitted and approved in December 2018. These two GBYP phases are being implemented in parallel over the first semester of 2019. GBYP Phase 9 activities are broadly structured along the same lines as those referred to above, but focus on improved coordination between GBYP and national or international research initiatives, as well as methodological improvements, while promoting broad consensus on topics that are crucial for stock management, through ad hoc workshops and review papers on reproductive and growth parameters, and structure and spatial distribution of the different Atlantic bluefin tuna populations.



The ***Atlantic Ocean Tropical tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP)*** is still tagging tuna off West Africa, the U.S. Atlantic coast through sport and recreational fishers, and around St Helena in the South-East Atlantic. To date, over 100,000 tropical tunas have been tagged and more than 14,000 recovered with their valuable metadata. Important otolith reading work is ongoing and formal scientific analyses of the data will begin soon.

***Small Tunas Year Programme (SMTYP)*** continued developing biological studies on key population parameters for selected small tuna species, which shall allow to conduct assessments for small tuna in the near future. These studies have been carried out by a new cooperative and coordinated consortium composed by teams from the northeastern coast of Africa and southwestern Europe.

***Enhanced Programme for Billfish Research (EPBR)*** has expanded its activities, and is developing biological studies on key population parameters for the three major billfish species (blue and white marlins and sailfish) in the eastern Atlantic. This work, which is being developed by a Consortium of Western African countries, is essential to improve billfish stock assessments.

***Shark Research and Data Collection Programme (SRDCP)*** has focused its activities on four major themes: age and growth study; population genetics; stock boundaries, migrations and habitat use; and, post-release mortality on pelagic longline fisheries. Last year the focus was the shortfin mako shark, but the studies have now been extended to silky and porbeagle shark species.

## **ASSISTANCE FUNDS FOR DEVELOPING STATES**

In 2018, the Meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties (Rec. 14-14), financed the attendance of 120 delegates from 27 CPCs at ICCAT scientific and non-scientific meetings. The Commission has adopted new ***Rules of procedure for the administration of the special Meeting Participation Fund***".

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Issues 1 to 7 of Volume 75 of the *Collective Volume of Scientific Papers* (Vol. 75), including 85 scientific papers and reports presented to the SCRS during 2018, have been published.

## **2019 CALENDER OF EVENTS**

The following events are scheduled to be held in 2019:

### **Commission meetings**

- ***13th Meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM) (Madrid, Spain, 2-4 April 2019)***
- ***Intersessional Meeting of Panel 1 (Curaçao, 16-17 November 2019)***
- ***26th Regular Meeting of the Commission (Curaçao, 18-25 November 2019)***

### **SCRS meetings**

- ***White Marlin Data Preparatory Meeting (Madrid, Spain, 12-15 March 2019)***
- ***Intersessional Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Ecosystems (Madrid, Spain, 8-12 April 2019)***
- ***Meeting of the Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods (WGSAM) (Madrid, Spain, 8-12 April 2019)***
- ***Yellowfin Tuna Data Preparatory Meeting (Madrid, Spain 22-26 April 2019)***



- [Shortfin Mako Stock Assessment Update Meeting \(Madrid, Spain, 20-24 May 2019\)](#)
- [White Marlin Stock Assessment Meeting \(Miami, USA, 10-14 June 2019\)](#)
- [Intersessional Meeting of the Small Tunas Species Group \(Olhão, Portugal, 24-27 June 2019\)](#)
- [Yellowfin Stock Assessment Meeting \(Côte d'Ivoire, TBC, 8-16 July\)](#)
- [Intersessional Meeting of the Bluefin Tuna MSE Technical Group \(St Andrews, New Brunswick, Canada, 23 to 27 July 2019\)](#)
- [Intersessional Meeting of the Bluefin Tuna MSE Technical Group \(Madrid, Spain, 16-20 September\)](#)
- [SCRS Species Groups Meetings \(SC Statistics 24-25\) \(23-27 September, Madrid, Spain\)](#)
- [Standing Committee on Research and Statistics \(SCRS\) meeting \(Madrid, Spain, 30 September – 4 October\)](#)

### COM/SCRS meeting

- [J-tRFMO FAD Working Group Meeting \(San Diego, USA, 8-10 May 2019\)](#)

### Other activities

In September 2018, a contract was signed with the European Union for a one-year term, to continue improving the capacity of developing countries. It covers the activities of the *Recommendation by ICCAT to Support Effective Implementation of Recommendation 12-07 by ICCAT for an ICCAT Scheme for Minimum Standards for Inspection in Port* (Rec. 14-08), *Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 11-26 on the Establishment of a Meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties* (Rec. 14-14) and a capacity-building course for scientists and managers on management strategy evaluation (MSE).

In October 2018, a contract for €200,000 was entered into with the EU to continue building the capacity of developing countries. With this contract, €120,000.00 was allocated to the Meeting Participation Fund, €25,000.00 to the special Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Fund (MCSF) and €20,000 to an MSE training course.

Also in October 2018, the United States made a contribution of €17,260.00 to the Special Data Fund and another of the same amount to the special Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Fund (MCSF).

In December 2018, a new contract was signed with the European Union for a one-year term, to continue strengthening the scientific basis for decision-making in ICCAT. This contract (for a total amount of €850,800.00) includes an voluntary contribution from the European Union (€638,050.00) for ICCAT scientific activities.

The FAO Common Ocean/ABNJ Tuna Project funded the 2018 Meeting of the Port Inspection Expert Group for Capacity Building and Assistance, through the special Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Fund (MCSF).

## OTHER NEWS



ICCAT would like to thank the former SCRS Chair, Dr David Die, for his hard work over the past years and to congratulate Dr Gary Melvin who was elected to the post of SCRS Chair. Dr Rui Coelho was elected Vice-Chair.

*Meeting of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), (Madrid, Spain - 1 to 5 October 2018). Farewell of the former SCRS Chair, Dr David Die. Dr Gary Melvin (on the far right) was elected as the new SCRS Chair.*

*An emotional farewell for ICCAT interpreter, Mrs. Linda Faillace, during the 21st Special Meeting of the Commission (Dubrovnik, Croatia 12-19 November 2018).*



During the 21st Special Meeting of the Commission, it was agreed that the 26th Regular Meeting of the Commission will be held in Curaçao (18-25 November 2019).