ICCAT/GBYP
CALL FOR COOPERATION FOR BLUEFIN TUNA AGEING CALIBRATION
APRIL 2014

The Atlantic-wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (ICCAT-GBYP) has been requested to carry out an international ageing calibration exercise, with the objective of assessing the use of calcified structures for obtaining catch-at-age composition in order to improve the current length/weight-age estimations for bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus* L.) catches.

According to the request made by the SCRS bluefin tuna species group and by the GBYP Steering Committee, a set of electronic images will be available in order to provide a common set of samples to be circulated among all interested institutions. This set will consist of sections of paired structures, otoliths and spines, coming from the same specimen, which have been collected by GBYP and other research programmes.

The collection will include 100 specimens representative of all length classes and, for each specimen, three sets of images will be prepared: otoliths with transmitted and reflected light and spines with transmitted light. The images will have a unique reference number only i.e. no other associated information, in order to facilitate a blind age reading. The images will have a scale bar for magnification reference. The list of correspondence between the sample characteristics and the reference number will be kept confidential and used only in the final analyses of the data.

All images will use Tiff-format to allow the addition of raster layer age annotations for each reader and a specific scale bar for first annulus identification in otoliths. All technical information about the preparation of the images will be circulated to the participating institutions. A common reading form will be used with relevant information for the age interpretation of each calcified structure, including instructions and recommendations. A compilation of bluefin tuna direct ageing references and age interpretation criteria for both structures will also be available to the participants.

The participation in the GBYP ageing calibration exercise is voluntary and free of cost to the GBYP. It is recommended that each participating institution contributes more than one reader. Each reader should provide a completed reading form and annotated images to the ICCAT/GBYP-ageing FTP site. The FTP site will be password protected but made accessible to all registered participants.

Each team (or team-leader, it is up to each participant to decide) will have the opportunity to co-author a paper to be presented at the ICCAT-SCRS BFT Species Group.

Each interested institution or team shall send the following to GBYP (gbyp@iccat.int) by **May 15, 2014** at the latest:

- Name, address and contacts (e-mail and telephone) of the participating entity;
- Name and e-mail of the team leader and any other participating scientist;
- Participants will provide a brief description of their ageing experience on the species they have read so far, with which method and the number of years, highlighting previous experience in ageing bluefin tuna or other tuna species;
- Declaration of availability for participating to the ICCAT-GBYP ageing calibration, according to this ICCAT/GBYP Call for Cooperation.