

TIME TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF GBYP

ICCAT GBYP Steering Committee

The ICCAT GBYP is now in its fifth year of activity. While the GBYP has yielded several significant achievements and demonstrated the value and need for a large scale, international and coordinated research program, there is still a large amount of work that is required to achieve its primary objectives which were identified by the Commission, the SCRS and, more recently, by the Mid-Term Review. This is in part due to a combination of factors that include the shortage in the resources made available to the program, the complexity of the issues being addressed, the needed for extended and/or on-going time series of data for many of the objectives to be realized (e.g. index of abundance from aerial surveys, which need at least 7/8 years before providing a trend) and political/external factors which constrained some of the activities. It is time to plan for the long term future of the GBYP both to capitalize on the work already done and to ensure continuity in the data and activities requiring a long term time series of data. The stock assessment and provision of management advice for the Atlantic Bluefin is challenging and difficult because of the long-lived nature of the species, not well elucidated stock and sub-stock structure and dynamics, poor understanding of its life history (e.g. reproductive biology and natural mortality) and a complex mixture of fisheries targeting different components of the stocks. Some of these difficulties require targeted medium-term research program (e.g. improved understanding of reproductive biology, spatial stock dynamics) while others require an ongoing commitment to the collection of relevant data for input into the stock assessment (e.g. length-age keys, fishery independent indices of abundance). The Steering Committee believes that the future GBYP needs to be conceived and designed to accommodate both the on-going and medium-term component of the stock assessment research undertaken by ICCAT. The document SCRS/2014/194 includes all detailed research proposals made by the Steering Committee for biological studies, reproductive biology, fishery-independent indices of abundance, stock structure and spatial dynamics, analyses and modelling and for the long-term multi-year funding and management of this important and complex programme. According to these needs, the Steering Committee is proposing an extended programme, according to the attached table (Appendix 1) and recommends the adoption of a scientific quota, as it was proposed in 2013 by the SCRS Chair (Appendix 2). It should be emphasized that the planning and implementation of the current GBYP have been consistently hampered by uncertainties regarding funding levels and the timeframe for availability of funds and within which they needed to be spent. There is an urgent need to improve the funding situation of the GBYP in terms of the level of funding, the timeframe in which funds are made available and a firm commitment to a multi-year timeframe. To this end the GBYP SC recommends the adoption of a scientific quota, as it was proposed in 2013 by the SCRS Chair (Appendix 2). The Steering Committee also considers that there is a need to clarifying the roles, responsibility and decision making process for the program and some changes/ improvements to the operational and staffing arrangements for the program. These are detailed in document SCRS/2014/194 and the SC recommends that these be undertaken.

Appendix 1:

Table 1. Revised time table for an extended and revised ICCAT GBYP programme, according to the research needs identified by the Steering Committee, the minimum number of years needed for obtain trends for fishery independent data and the calendar adopted by the SCRS for the new Modelling approaches. The first year of the programme (2009) was not included, due to the lack of activity. The fishery independent data shall be collected continuously also in future years, while tagging can be done periodically.

ICCAT GBYP REVISED RESEARCH PROGRAMME												
ACTIVITY	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Coordination												
Data mining and recovery												
Biological studies												
Aerial survey*												
Tagging activities*												
Fishery independent indices*												
Modelling												
ABFT GBYP Conference												
* Aerial survey and tagging activities have been included under the item "Fishery independent indices" for the next years.												

Appendix 2. Updated Recommendation for GBYP Scientific Quota (previously presented to the 2013 Commission Meeting)

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ESTABLISHING A SCIENTIFIC QUOTA FOR THE FUNDING OF THE ATLANTIC-WIDE RESEARCH PROGRAMME FOR BLUEFIN TUNA (GBYP)

by

SCRS Chair

RECALLING the Commission decision in 2008 to adopt the Atlantic-wide Research Programme for the Bluefin Tuna (GBYP), endorsing the proposal made by the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS).

RECALLING the Commission decision in 2009 to initiate the GBYP, endorsing the reviewed and updated SCRS proposal.

RECALLING also the *Resolution by ICCAT Concerning Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Scientific Research on Stock Origin and Mixing* (Res. 08-06).

RECOGNIZING that the research results obtained by GBYP in the initial three phases of the programme, in particular fishery independent data by aerial surveys and/or tagging activities need to be continued for a medium/long period.

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that the Recommendation 11-06 provides the framework to facilitate the practical execution of diverse research activities, including the allowance of some Bluefin tuna mortality with research purposes.

CONSIDERING that the GBYP Research Program is a multiyear program, and that it is essential to conduct research over several consecutive years so as to get the expected results.

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the current funding mechanism of the GBYP Research Program does not guarantee multiyear funding at the level required by the programmed research plan.

RECOGNIZING that the SCRS, in 2012, has investigated alternative funding mechanisms of similar Research Programs, and requests the Commission to adopt a Scientific Quota eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna, to cover the GBYP research activities in 2013 and in following years.

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of conducting the GBYP research as it was requested by the Commission under a clear economic framework.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the provisions of paragraph 27 of the *ICCAT Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities* [Ref. 01-25] and considering that the GBYP is not defined as a qualifying participant under the terms of the Criteria;

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

1. In order to secure multiyear funding for the GBYP Research activities, a multiannual constant Scientific Quota be set at 300 t per year, for the period 2015-2021. This scientific quota, set over and outside the total quota shared by CPCs, will not affect the quota sharing even in the future.
2. This quota be sold according to the “Management of the Scientific Quota” (paragraph 3), and the funds generated be used to fund the ICCAT GBYP Research activities.
3. The Secretariat shall elaborate the terms of reference for the call for bids. The terms of reference shall clearly state the requirements for the bidder and circulated to all CPCs.
4. Management of the scientific quota:
 - 4.1. Each year, before 15th January, the ICCAT Secretariat shall announce the public auction of the Scientific Quota, and the deadlines for receiving bids. The interested public and private entities belonging to CPCs that are members of ICCAT Panel 2 shall bid for a fraction or for the entire Scientific Quota. The minimum quantity for submitting partial bids is set at 50 tons.
 - 4.2. The day after the deadline, the ICCAT Secretariat shall communicate to all concerned CPCs the detailed of the interested entities together with the corresponding bids.
 - 4.3. Immediately after the consultation with the concerned CPCs, the ICCAT Secretariat shall communicate to all CPCs the details of the selected bids (bidders and amount bided).
 - 4.4. Each entity awarded for any BFT Scientific quota level shall follow the normal fishing, monitoring and compliance procedures established by ICCAT, and particularly those established within the Multi-annual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea (ICCAT Rec. 06-07, 07-04, 09-06, 10-04, 12-03, 13-08 and any future amendment) and any other applicable ICCAT and/or domestic rules.
 - 4.5. The selected entities shall make the corresponding payment to ICCAT Secretariat within 15 days after the adjudication.
 - 4.6. These funds shall become automatically available for the activities of the GBYP Research Program.
 - 4.7. The funds available through the Scientific Quota shall provide a basic funding level to GBYP, without preventing any additional voluntary contribution by the CPCs or public or private entities, for ensuring the necessary level of funding for carrying on the GBYP activities decided by the Commission.