



*“Delivering fisheries sustainability
and economic development
through better science”*

Atlantic Ocean Tropical tuna Tagging Programme

AOTTP Symposium
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European Commission

Why ICCAT Matters

ICCAT is the largest RFMO

52 Contracting Parties

6 Cooperating Non Contracting Parties

Nearly all with some level of interest in the fisheries for tropical tunas.

ICCAT - Most important RFMO for the European Union.

Many of our 27 member States have long lasting traditions of fishing for tunas, in both the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic.

These activities can in many cases be tracked back to the antiquity and tuna fisheries have sustained our coastal communities for thousands of years.

Currently just under 9800 EU vessels are authorised in ICCAT, most of them small artisanal vessels.

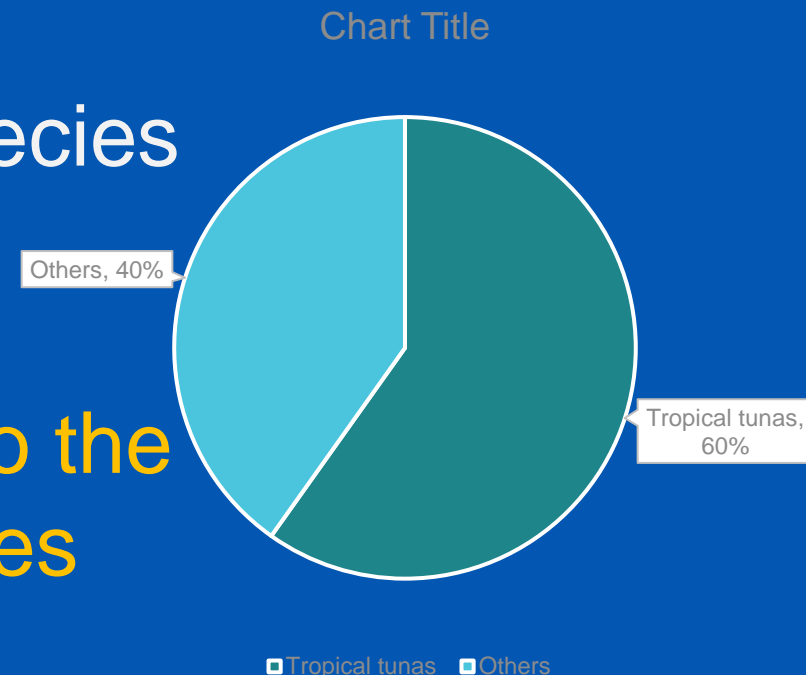
The importance of tropical tunas

In 2019, the total catch of all ICCAT species was just above **785,000t**.

470,000t (about 60%) corresponding to the catches of the three tropical tuna species (BET, SKJ and YFT).

Skipjack tuna alone reached 264,395 t or about 34% of all catches in ICCAT.

Importance in terms of food security for many developing coastal States.



The Common Fisheries policy and the role of RFMOS

RFMOs are uniquely positioned to deliver on the sustainable management of highly migratory fish.

Common Fisheries policy (CFP).

Positions of the EU in international organisations dealing with fisheries and in RFMOs is based on the best available scientific advice.

EU support the development of scientific knowledge and advice to ensure that the recommendations of RFMOs are based on such scientific advice.

EU contribution to science in ICCAT

Biggest contributor to SCRS in terms of the participation of its scientists to the work of the Committee.

Largest sponsor in terms of financial contributions to the ICCAT Commission, in particular for scientific activities. Each year, around 2 million Euro of EU voluntary contributions to support scientific activities in ICCAT.

EU contribution to science in ICCAT

- Complemented by funds managed by European Commission Department for International Development and Cooperation, who co-funded 80% the AOTTP program, for in excess of 13.5 million Euro.
- Contributions to the **ICCAT Capacity fund** to facilitate the participation of scientists from developing countries to SCRS and Commission meetings.

Sustainable management of tropical tunas as a priority

Importance of tropical tunas for developing Countries.

Additional incentive to ensure that these stocks are managed sustainably, and according to the best available science.

Gradual but consistent increase in fishing pressure.
Sustainability of these fisheries is increasingly being questioned.

Currently, Bigeye tuna is both overfished and subject to overfishing, and yellowfin tuna is subject to overfishing.

Sound management requires good science

Managers need the best scientific information available.

In 2010, SCRS indicated that **key parameters of tropical tuna's population's dynamics were poorly estimated**, adding **uncertainties** to the stock assessments.

Necessary to establish a **large-scale research programme** based on tagging methodologies to accurately estimate population dynamics parameters, such as stock structure, growth, natural mortality, fishing mortality and distribution.

Sound management requires good science

Important contribution of similar large scale tagging programs in the Indian Ocean and in the Pacific.

European Union identified this as a priority for ICCAT, and explored how to support the establishment of this program.

EU Secured the necessary funds and the participation of other CPCs to co-fund this initiative.

One crucial dimension for the EU was how to ensure the development of scientific capacity in the developing coastal States.

Success

Important new reliable data feeding into the stock assessments for the various stocks of tropical tunas. Already improving our understanding of the population dynamics and laying the groundwork for the adoption of harvest control rules

Opening of new areas of research. Substantial development of scientific capacity in developing Countries, which we hope can remain a long lasting legacy of this programme .

Achievements made possible because of the opportunities that RFMOs like ICCAT offer for cooperation between the Countries, stakeholders and scientists.

Success

Blueprint for possible future similar large scale programs for other ICCAT species.

Important that activities continue in the near future, to ensure the continuation of the tag recovery/reporting and data analysis.

This is required to secure full return on the investments made under this program.

The European Union would like to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of:

- The AOTTP team,
- The ICCAT Secretariat,
- The other donors,
- The fisheries administrations in the partners CPCs
- The tagging and tags-recovery teams.

Thank you.