

Original: English

**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ICCAT REGIONAL  
OBSERVER PROGRAMME FOR EAST ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN BLUEFIN TUNA**

*ICCAT Secretariat*

The Regional Observer Programme for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna (ROP-BFT) is carried out under the provisions of the *Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 13-07 by ICCAT to Establish a Multi-annual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean* [Rec. 14-04]. The provisions of this Recommendation stipulate that observers are to be placed by the Secretariat to ensure observer coverage of 100% of purse seine vessels during all the annual fishing season. In this respect, an observer shall be present during the fishing operation; and during all transfer of bluefin tuna to the cages and all harvest of fish from the cage; and during all transfers of bluefin tuna from traps to transport cages.

**Implementation in 2017**

Following a Call for tender for the implementation of the Programme and a review of tenders by the selection committee the Commission again awarded the contract to the consortium MRAG/COFREPECHE. The Report of this consortium, available as **Annex 1** (Executive Summary attached as Appendix 1), contains more details on the implementation of the programme.

There were a total of 133 observer deployments on purse seine vessel in 2017. Ten CPCs participated in the programme. The list of vessels participating in the programme is attached as **Table 1**.

Since 2009, 394<sup>1</sup> farm deployments and 12 trap deployments have been requested, as shown in **Table 2**. The list of farms participating in the programme (25 of the 61 authorised farms) is attached as **Table 3**, and a list of traps which were observed by regional observers contained in **Table 4**.

All observer reports have been made available to CPCs as Annex 1 and 2 to COC-305/17. The submissions from the CPCs involved in relation to any issues of non-compliance are contained in COC-305/17.

**Implementation difficulties in 2017**

Failure to follow the procedures of requesting deployments and extensions to approved deployments continues to cause difficulties in the implementation, e.g. requests after 96 hours – in some cases one day before - requests for observers are not accompanied by proof of payment. It should be noted that the Secretariat cannot process any requests for which payment has not been made.

Some requests and payments for vessels were also received late. Completion of the section of the request for with details for any reimbursement is important, as in future this will be taken as official information for reimbursement of remnants at the end of the year.

Once again, in 2017, requests for changes to disembark port were received, even though the Secretariat had made clear from before the start of the season that such practice is not acceptable, due to the logistical difficulties and the additional safety concerns.

With regard to the international aspect of the programme, non-nationals were deployed as far as possible, with the exception of Turkish vessels/farms given the provisions of bullet four, paragraph 5 of Annex 7 of Rec. 14-04, as despite a persistent search, the consortium has been able to recruit only one qualified Turkish-speaking non-Turkish national.

In some cases, eBCD was not completed at the time of the caging as farms awaited the results of stereoscopic camera analysis in order to complete the eBCD with the correct figures. In many cases, these results were not available until after the observer left, and hence the eBCDs could not be signed by the

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<sup>1</sup> At 10 October 2017.

observers, who cannot carry out activities once their deployment period is finished. In order to avoid problems with trade, the eBCDs have been signed by the Secretariat, but will not continue to do so in the future. For the observers to be able to sign the eBCD, this must be presented during his/her deployment. The initial video figures can be entered, and these can be changed once the stereoscopic camera results are available. This was agreed by the Technical Working Group and the Commission has paid for a development within the system to allow this to happen.

### Requests for clarification

The consortium has requested some clarification on ICCAT requirements in relation to observer deployment. As the Secretariat does not have the ability to interpret ICCAT conservation and management measures, clarification from Panel 2 is sought:

| Topic                            | Clarification sought   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Transfers                        | During the past season, we saw more at-sea transfer from the seine to two cages (or more) simultaneously.<br>Can you please detail the official procedure to be followed in terms of PTN, video, ITD and eBCD production?  |
| Group eBCDs                      | At the time of caging, relevant BCDs may be grouped as a "Grouped BCD" with a new BCD number in the following cases, provided that caging of all the fish is conducted on the same day and all the fish is caged in the same farming cage:<br>a) Multiple catches made by the same vessel<br>b) Catches made by JFO<br>The Grouped BCD shall replace all the related original BCDs and be accompanied by the list of all the associated BCD numbers. The copies of such associated BCDs shall be made available upon request of CPCs.<br><br>Is it correct to have two caging operations and only one eBCD? Or should it be one eBCD per caging operation?<br><br>During this caging season, a big gap has been observed between the caging operations at sea and the issuing of the official document (eBCD and ICD when any) to the observer.<br>Can you give a maximum number of days between the caging operation and the signature of the documentation by the observer, or is this bounded only by the length of requested deployment of that particular observer? |
| Caging authorisation information | Information in caging authorisations is often inconsistent with information in the ITDs and eBCDs. In these cases, should the observer sign the ICD/eBCD?  |
| Caging authorisation             | In Annex 8, of Rec. 14-04, the caging authorisation number is required to be shown. The assumption is that this authorisation number should follow the format of the transfer authorisation number set out in para 72 as no authorisation number format is established in the caging operations section (para 78-86).<br>However, it is noted that several CPCs use different formats for caging authorisation which are completely differently to that described in para 72. Furthermore, one caging authorisation may be used to cover several different caging authorisations, including control cagings.<br>Is this permissible?   |
| Cage numbers                     | Rec. 14-04 states that:<br>CPCs shall assign a unique number to all cages. Numbers shall be issued with a unique numbering system that includes at least the three letter CPC code followed by three numbers.<br>Is the at least referring only to the 3 letter CPC code, or can the cage number also include more than 3 numbers?<br>For example, several towing cages were noted to have an additional letter after the 3 numbers. Is this permissible?  |

| Topic                                    | Clarification sought   |
|--|--|
| Transfers                                | During the past season, we saw more at-sea transfer from the seine to two cages (or more) simultaneously.<br>Can you please detail the official procedure to be followed in terms of PTN, video, ITD and eBCD production?  |
| Cage numbers                             | Following on from the above point, it was noted that cage numbers are often transferred from the donor cage to the receiving cage (which was unnumbered) following the operation.<br>The implication is that the receiving cage does not have a unique number, or that this number is the same as the donor cage. Is this permissible?<br>In these cases, it is permissible for the observer to sign the ICD and eBCD? |
| Intra farm transfers and control cagings | Intra-farm transfers are often carried out as control operations following inconclusive caging videos. However, as previously stated these often do not have a separate authorisation.<br>In these cases, can the observer view this footage to verify the amount of tuna caged?<br>Furthermore, can the observer sign the eBCD/ICD?   |

### Future implementation

It should be recalled that with the eBCD system, the observers need electronic signatures to fill these eBCD sections. CPCs were reminded that the digital certificates for the signatures have to be prepared well in advance so as not to delay the validation of the eBCD by the government authority, and hence CPC cooperation is requested in sending accurate information on observer needs as far in advance as possible, especially for farms and traps. The dates of authorisation have been updated in the eBCD system following each request, either for new deployment or extension, and in most cases the observers were able to sign the eBCD.

**Table 1.** List of the 133 purse seiner vessels which participated in the ROP-BFT in 2017.

| CPC        | Vessel Details             |               |
|------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Albania    | Rozafa 15                  | AT000ALB00008 |
| Algeria    | Beni Louma                 | AT000DZA00015 |
| Algeria    | Borhan                     | AT000DZA00384 |
| Algeria    | Braham                     | AT000DZA00014 |
| Algeria    | Echahid Mostefa Benboulaïd | AT000DZA00017 |
| Algeria    | Elfadir                    | AT000DZA00010 |
| Algeria    | El Hadja Fatma             | AT000DZA00383 |
| Algeria    | El Madina                  | AT000DZA00003 |
| Algeria    | Chahid Hasni Saidi         | AT000DZA00009 |
| Algeria    | Neptune 6                  | AT000DZA00006 |
| Algeria    | Nouha                      | AT000DZA00332 |
| Algeria    | Sidi Maamar                | AT000DZA00018 |
| Algeria    | Sidi Slimane               | AT000DZA00001 |
| Algeria    | Younes 1                   | AT000DZA00007 |
| Algeria    | Younes 2                   | AT000DZA00008 |
| Egypt      | Seven Seas                 | AT000EGY00003 |
| Egypt      | Safinat Nooh               | AT000EGY00010 |
| EU-Croatia | Neptun I                   | ATEU0HRV00134 |
| EU-Croatia | Neptun Ii                  | ATEU0HRV00140 |
| EU-Croatia | Ponos                      | ATEU0HRV00058 |
| EU-Croatia | Sardina I                  | ATEU0HRV00133 |
| EU-Croatia | Sardina Ii                 | ATEU0HRV00161 |
| EU-Croatia | Preko                      | ATEU0HRV00021 |
| EU-Croatia | Tuljan Dva                 | ATEU0HRV00155 |
| EU-Croatia | Tacoma                     | ATEU0HRV00164 |
| EU-Croatia | Pelagos Ii                 | ATEU0HRV00017 |

| CPC        | Vessel Details          |               |
|------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| EU-Croatia | Carica                  | ATEU0HRV00163 |
| EU-Croatia | Kali                    | ATEU0HRV00037 |
| EU-Croatia | Marlin                  | ATEU0HRV00156 |
| EU-Cyprus  | My Hendrika             | ATEU0CYP00047 |
| EU-France  | Anne Antoine 2          | ATEU0FRA00003 |
| EU-France  | Chrisderic Ii           | ATEU0FRA00019 |
| EU-France  | Cisberlande V           | ATEU0FRA00021 |
| EU-France  | Eric Marin              | ATEU0FRA00087 |
| EU-France  | Gerald Jean Iii         | ATEU0FRA00026 |
| EU-France  | Gerald Jean Iv          | ATEU0FRA00093 |
| EU-France  | Gerard Luc Iv           | ATEU0FRA00028 |
| EU-France  | Janvier Giordano        | ATEU0FRA00037 |
| EU-France  | Janvier Louis Raphael   | ATEU0FRA00083 |
| EU-France  | Jeanmarie Christian 4   | ATEU0FRA00041 |
| EU-France  | Jean Marie Christian 6  | ATEU0FRA00043 |
| EU-France  | Jean Marie Christian 7  | ATEU0FRA00078 |
| EU-France  | Saint Sophie François 2 | ATEU0FRA00064 |
| EU-France  | Saint Sophie François 3 | ATEU0FRA00065 |
| EU-France  | Vent Du Nord II         | ATEU0FRA00090 |
| EU-France  | Ville D'agde Iv         | ATEU0FRA00089 |
| EU-France  | Ville D'arzew Ii        | ATEU0FRA00077 |
| EU-Italy   | Maria Grazia            | ATEU0ITA00694 |
| EU-Italy   | Angela Madre            | ATEU0ITA00635 |
| EU-Italy   | Giuseppe Padre Secondo  | ATEU0ITA00289 |
| EU-Italy   | Madonna Di Fatima       | ATEU0ITA00348 |
| EU-Italy   | Vergine Del Rosario     | ATEU0ITA00617 |
| EU-Italy   | Genevieve Prima         | ATEU0ITA00654 |
| EU-Italy   | Sparviero Uno           | ATEU0ITA00565 |
| EU-Italy   | Atlante                 | ATEU0ITA00065 |
| EU-Italy   | Maria Antonietta        | ATEU0ITA00368 |
| EU-Italy   | Lucia Madre             | ATEU0ITA00664 |
| EU-Italy   | Angelo Catania          | ATEU0ITA00636 |
| EU-Italy   | Michelangelo            | ATEU0ITA00671 |
| EU-Malta   | Ta' Matthew             | ATEU0MLT00001 |
| EU-Spain   | Leonardo Brull Segon    | ATEU0ESP00173 |
| EU-Spain   | La Frau Dos             | ATEU0ESP00172 |
| EU-Spain   | Gepus                   | ATEU0ESP00119 |
| EU-Spain   | Nuevo Panchilleta       | ATEU0ESP00276 |
| EU-Spain   | Nuevo Elorz             | ATEU0ESP00250 |
| EU-Spain   | Tio Gel Segon           | ATEU0ESP00394 |
| Libya      | Albahr Alhader          | AT000LBY00077 |
| Libya      | Alamwaje Alhadere       | AT000LBY00078 |
| Libya      | Nawasi Alkir 1          | AT000LBY00015 |
| Libya      | Deela                   | AT000LBY00024 |
| Libya      | El Hader 2              | AT000LBY00037 |
| Libya      | Al Hares 2              | AT000LBY00074 |
| Libya      | Tayma                   | AT000LBY00083 |
| Libya      | Alssafa IV              | AT000LBY00060 |
| Libya      | Apollonia               | AT000LBY00012 |
| Libya      | Tripolitania            | AT000LBY00013 |
| Libya      | Morina                  | AT000LBY00028 |
| Libya      | Cyrene                  | AT000LBY00010 |
| Libya      | Zarqa Alymama I         | AT000LBY00064 |
| Libya      | Al-Mustakbel            | AT000LBY00085 |
| Morocco    | Azrou 1                 | AT000MAR00081 |
| Morocco    | Mediouna                | AT000MAR01418 |
| Norway     | Ms Bluefin              | AT000NOR00004 |

| CPC     | Vessel Details         |               |
|---------|------------------------|---------------|
| Syria   | Fesal                  | AT000SYR00019 |
| Tunisia | Futuro 1               | AT000TUN00065 |
| Tunisia | Ghedir El Gholla       | AT000TUN00030 |
| Tunisia | Mohamed Sadok          | AT000TUN00051 |
| Tunisia | Mabrouk                | AT000TUN00015 |
| Tunisia | Yosri                  | AT000TUN00040 |
| Tunisia | El Horchani            | AT000TUN00009 |
| Tunisia | Hadj Mokhtar           | AT000TUN00025 |
| Tunisia | Hadj Ahmed             | AT000TUN00070 |
| Tunisia | Mohamed Yassine        | AT000TUN00045 |
| Tunisia | Imen                   | AT000TUN00010 |
| Tunisia | Jamel                  | AT000TUN00011 |
| Tunisia | El Houssaine           | AT000TUN00049 |
| Tunisia | Jaouhar                | AT000TUN00046 |
| Tunisia | Abderrahmen            | AT000TUN00047 |
| Tunisia | El Khalij              | AT000TUN00014 |
| Tunisia | Hassen                 | AT000TUN00008 |
| Tunisia | Saifallah              | AT000TUN00043 |
| Tunisia | Tapsus                 | AT000TUN00024 |
| Tunisia | Tijani                 | AT000TUN00026 |
| Tunisia | Hajhedi                | AT000TUN00007 |
| Tunisia | Sallem                 | AT000TUN00023 |
| Tunisia | Ibn Rachiq             | AT000TUN00037 |
| Tunisia | Abouchamma             | AT000TUN00002 |
| Tunisia | Denphir 1              | AT000TUN00479 |
| Tunisia | Ghali                  | AT000TUN00036 |
| Tunisia | Essaidajannet          | AT000TUN00050 |
| Tunisia | Mohamed Adem           | AT000TUN00012 |
| Turkey  | Haci Mustafa Kuloğlu   | AT000TUR00024 |
| Turkey  | Kul Balıkçılık-1       | AT000TUR00030 |
| Turkey  | Nursu-3                | AT000TUR00104 |
| Turkey  | Tuncay Sagun-6         | AT000TUR00040 |
| Turkey  | Cihan Cengiz Karadeniz | AT000TUR00450 |
| Turkey  | Tuncay Sagun 7         | AT000TUR07658 |
| Turkey  | Geçiciler Balıkçılık   | AT000TUR00496 |
| Turkey  | Ağaoğullari-5          | AT000TUR00182 |
| Turkey  | Tuncay Sagun-2         | AT000TUR00455 |
| Turkey  | Fat Balıkçılık         | AT000TUR00020 |
| Turkey  | İbrahimreis-Iii        | AT000TUR00026 |
| Turkey  | Mamuli Reis-Iii        | AT000TUR00033 |
| Turkey  | Geçiciler Balıkçılık 1 | AT000TUR00220 |
| Turkey  | Mehmet Kaptan-7        | AT000TUR00034 |
| Turkey  | Soydemirler            | AT000TUR00043 |
| Turkey  | Sürsan-1               | AT000TUR00407 |
| Turkey  | Dursun Çınaroğlu       | AT000TUR00131 |
| Turkey  | Cevdet Karadeniz-1     | AT000TUR00012 |
| Turkey  | Azizler-Ii             | AT000TUR00004 |
| Turkey  | Margo Balıkçılık       | AT000TUR07659 |
| Turkey  | Zamkinoz İsmail 1      | AT000TUR00302 |
| Turkey  | Akgün Balıkçılık-A     | AT000TUR00523 |

**Table 2.** Number of farm/trap deployments by year.

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Number of farm<br/>deployments</i> | <i>Number of trap<br/>deployments</i> |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2009        | 10                                    |                                       |
| 2010        | 52                                    |                                       |
| 2011        | 54                                    |                                       |
| 2012        | 50                                    |                                       |
| 2013        | 47                                    | 2                                     |
| 2014        | 44                                    | 3                                     |
| 2015        | 56                                    | 3                                     |
| 2016        | 44                                    | 2                                     |
| 2017        | 37                                    | 2                                     |

\* At 10 October 2017.

**Table 3.** Farming facilities on which ICCAT Regional Observers were deployed in 2016/2017.

| <i>CPC</i>  | <i>2016</i>   | <i>2017</i>   |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| EU-Croatia  | ATEU1HRV00003 | ATEU1HRV00003 |
| EU-Croatia  | ATEU1HRV00006 | ATEU1HRV00006 |
| EU-Croatia  | ATEU1HRV00008 | ATEU1HRV00008 |
| EU-Croatia  | ATEU1HRV00011 | ATEU1HRV00011 |
|             |               | ATEU1HRV00012 |
|             |               | ATEU1HRV00015 |
| EU-Malta    | ATEU1MLT00001 | ATEU1MLT00001 |
| EU-Malta    | ATEU1MLT00003 | ATEU1MLT00002 |
| EU-Malta    | ATEU1MLT00004 | ATEU1MLT00003 |
| EU-Malta    | ATEU1MLT00007 | ATEU1MLT00004 |
| EU-Malta    | ATEU1MLT00008 | ATEU1MLT00007 |
|             |               | ATEU1MLT00008 |
| EU-Portugal |               | ATEU1PRT00002 |
| EU-Spain    | ATEU1ESP00001 | ATEU1ESP00001 |
| EU-Spain    |               | ATEU1ESP00003 |
| EU-Spain    | ATEU1ESP00004 | ATEU1ESP00004 |
| EU-Spain    | ATEU1ESP00005 | ATEU1ESP00005 |
| Morocco     | AT001MAR00002 | AT001MAR00002 |
| Tunisia     | AT001TUN00001 |               |
| Tunisia     | AT001TUN00004 | AT001TUN00004 |
| Turkey      | AT001TUR00004 | AT001TUR00004 |
| Turkey      | AT001TUR00005 | AT001TUR00005 |
| Turkey      | AT001TUR00010 | AT001TUR00010 |
| Turkey      | AT001TUR00011 | AT001TUR00011 |
| Turkey      | AT001TUR00013 | AT001TUR00013 |
| Turkey      | AT001TUR00014 | AT001TUR00014 |

**Table 4.** Traps observed under the ICCAT Regional Observers Programme in 2016/2017.

| <i>CPC</i>  | <i>2016</i>   | <i>2017</i>   |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| EU-Italy    | ATEU2ITA00003 | ATEU2ITA00003 |
| EU-Italy    | ATEU2ITA00009 | ATEU2ITA00009 |
| EU-Portugal |               | ATEU2PRT00002 |
| Morocco     |               | AT002MAR00002 |
| Morocco     |               | AT002MAR00003 |
| Morocco     |               | AT002MAR00005 |
| Morocco     |               | AT002MAR00011 |

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CONSORTIUM'S REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ROP-BFT

*Executive Summary*

The service provider for implementing year eight (April 2017/March 2018) of the ICCAT ROP-BFT comprises of a consortium led by MRAG based in London and COFREPECHE in Paris assisted by regional partners located around the Mediterranean. This is the eighth year that the Consortium has been awarded the contract to implement the ROP-BFT and experience gained in previous years has been used to enhance systems in place for recruitment, training and deployment of observers and overall performance of the Programme.

The ROP-BFT allows the Commission to assess compliance with the regulatory framework. During year eight of the ROP-BFT 145 observers have been trained, equipped and mobilised for 134 purse seine deployments, of which one was cancelled, 17 completed and 12 current deployments on farms to date, achieving 100% observer coverage on authorised purse seiners, farms and traps within the remit of the programme, which included monitoring all fishing, transfer, caging and harvesting activities.

This report describes the key issues faced in assessing compliance with the regulatory framework during implementation of year eight of the ROP-BFT divided into operational and technical categories and focuses on issues that affect the observer role during deployments.

**Estimating tuna transfers from video records:** The key technical issue across all deployment types (on purse seiners and farms) was the inability to consistently estimate the amount of tuna transferred from video records. This was mainly a result of poor quality video records and/or viewing facilities (on vessels) or video availability immediately following the transfer operation. Some operators repeated transfers during caging operations because the initial video record was unsuitable for providing a means of accurately estimating the amount of tuna. Therefore further research/investigation is required to recommend a minimum standard of camera and viewing equipment for at sea conditions. Such an investigation should also produce recommendations on procedures that should be followed by operators so that the video record covers the entire transfer process and produce a video record that could be provided to the observer immediately following the transfer to ensure they have sufficient time to review the footage during their deployment. It can also be very difficult for an observer to determine if video footage has been tampered with when cuts in the video are hidden by cross fades. This problem is most likely when observers are not provided the video of the transfer immediately.

**Improved consultation between CPCs, Secretariat, SCRS and ROP-BFT Consortium:** During 2016 no meeting was held between CPCs, the Secretariat, SCRS and the Consortium. In previous years, meetings were held which proved to be constructive in improving the Programme and the Consortium would propose that they be continued prior to the next fishing season.