

## COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

*(ICCAT Secretariat)*

### **KOBE process**

Mr. Stefaan Depypere (EU) 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair of ICCAT is the Chair of the Kobe Steering Committee since early 2017.

In 2017 the ICCAT Secretariat has also taken leadership of the Joint t-RFMO FAD Working Group, which held its 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in Madrid between 19 and 21 April 2017. A Technical Working Group was hosted by IATTC in San Diego (USA) 8-10 May 2019.

A Joint t-RFMO meeting on bycatch, mainly focusing on sharks involving all t-RFMOs, is being organized by the ICCAT Secretariat in direct collaboration with the other t-RFMOs Secretariats. The meeting will take place in Porto (Portugal), 16-18 December 2019.

### **CITES**

In 2018 contacts have been established with CITES, following the recommendation made by the SCRS Sharks Working Group for the ICCAT Secretariat to make an official request to CITES to facilitate the sampling of CITES listed species for the purposes of scientific research conducted under the auspices of ICCAT research programmes. The Secretariat agreed that it would establish contact with the CITES Secretariat to seek a solution. The Secretariat has been informed that the issue is being taken up by the CITES Standing Committee, which has a Working Group dealing with the simplified procedure for permits and certificates. The Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties was held in Geneva (Switzerland), 17-28 August 2019, and news are expected by the end of November 2019. ICCAT was invited and attend a side event related to a proposal for the inclusion of mako sharks in CITES Appendix II. Such proposal was adopted during the 2019 CITES meeting.

### **ICES**

Considering the fruitful experience ICCAT and ICES have had in recent years regarding scientific collaboration, in 2018 both organisations expressed their willingness to strengthen this cooperation and explore new initiatives and discussions which have commenced between the Secretariats. It has been agreed therefore that it is appropriate and desirable to improve collaboration between ICCAT SCRS-ICES, particularly in the areas of by-catch, sharks and stock assessment issues, through our Sub-committee on Ecosystems and By-catch, the Shark Species Group, as well as the WGSAM. Specifically, it would be convenient that ICES scientific experts could continue to participate in ICCAT Shark Stock Assessments, as well as in the Stock Assessment Methods Working Group meetings. Currently there are ongoing discussions regarding the ICES/ICCAT North-Eastern Porbeagle stock assessment in 2020.

### **ACAP (*The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels*)**

In 2016, ICCAT signed guidelines for cooperation with ACAP. This cooperation is a non-binding agreement that covers such issues as participation as observers in each other's meetings, as well as consultation, cooperation and collaboration on issues of common issue. In 2019 no scientists from ACAP attended the SCRS meeting of the Sub-committee on Ecosystems.

### **OSPAR**

In 2019 the Secretariat attended the NEAFC-OSPAR Collective Arrangement meeting held 28-29 May in Gothenburg, Sweden. NEAFC and OSPAR meet regularly in order to discuss issues of common interest, given the overlap in their Convention areas. As both areas fall within the ICCAT Convention area, updates to initiatives can be of interest to ICCAT. The ICCAT Secretariat gave a presentation of ICCAT activities which may be of interest to other organizations. OSPAR is still considering creating an MPA in the North East Atlantic, mainly with the aim of protecting seabirds. A consultative process, requesting views from other international organizations with competence in the area, including ICCAT was undertaken, and ICCAT expressed an interest in being kept fully informed and in participating in the process to ensure that the creation of such an MPA, if

decided, would have no negative impact on legitimate ICCAT fisheries. At the 2019 collective arrangement it was clarified that OSPAR had no competence over ICCAT activities, and the designation of such an MPA would have no direct effect on ICCAT unless the ICCAT Commission decided to take any action.

#### **GFCM**

Following the contacts established in 2019 aiming to further strengthen the cooperation between the GFCM and ICCAT, the two Secretariats have been working on a draft text of a Memorandum of understanding mainly on issues of common interest. This draft text has been circulated to the member States of the organisations. It will be submitted to for consideration to the Commission in 2019 (see **Appendix 1**).

#### **South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)**

In 2019 contacts have been made between the ICCAT Secretariat and the SEAFO Secretariat, aiming to enhance the collaboration between the two organizations, namely regarding IUU issues, the collection and reporting of bycatch of ICCAT species in SEAFO fisheries. In that sense, the Executive Secretary has been in contact with the SEAFO Secretariat to further discuss and table a draft text for a MoU between the two organizations to be submitted for consideration of the Commission in 2019 (see **Appendix 2**).

#### **FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ Tuna Project**

At the 2017 ICCAT Commission meeting, it was decided to continue to cooperate with this programme provided that there are benefits to ICCAT. To this end, since the previous annual Commission meeting, the ICCAT Secretariat has participated in several FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ Tuna Project initiatives. These include participation in the following meetings that were funded or partially funded by the project:

1. 6<sup>th</sup> Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop and 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Tuna Compliance Network, 21-24 February 2019, Bangkok, Thailand;
2. Common Ocean/ABNJ Tuna Project [Workshop on Seabird Bycatch](#), 25 February - 1 March 2019, Kruger Park, South Africa;
3. [Joint t-RFMO FAD Working Group Meeting](#), 8-10 May 2019, held in San Diego, USA;
4. [Sixth Project Steering Committee](#) (PSC) meeting of the Common Oceans/ABNJ tuna project held in Rome, 8-10 July 2019;
5. 10th Meeting of the Committee for the review of implementation of measures adopted by the IATTC, 17-18 July 2019, Bilbao, Spain.
6. 3rd session of the Intergovernmental Conference on an International Legally Binding Instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, 19-30 August 2019, New York, USA.

Following the conclusion of the Feasibility study on the development of an Online Reporting System funded by the FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ Tuna Project, the Secretariat, in line with the directives of the Online Reporting Working Group has now commenced work on the development of an Integrated Online Management System and two software developers have been hired to work on this project. Funds have come from CPCs voluntary financial contributions (USA, Canada, China P.Rep.), as well as a contribution from the Common Oceans/ABNJ Tuna Project amounting to 75,000€. A brief summary on the work carried out in 2019 is provided in **Appendix 3**.

The above-mentioned Joint t-RFMO Bycatch Working Group meeting hosted by ICCAT with the financial support of the European Union, has also received a contribution of 40,000€ from the FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ program.

In addition, ABNJ provided funding for one staff member to attend the Tuna Compliance Network and one staff member to attend the IATTC Compliance Committee Meeting.

***WECAFC***

After the initial discussions between the two Executives Secretaries of the WECAFC and ICCAT, which were reported to the Commission in 2018, further contacts took place. The Chair of the ICCAT Commission attended the first meeting of the WECAFC on the transformation of this commission into a RFMO in the Barbados, and the Executive Secretary attended their 17<sup>th</sup> Session in Miami, USA. Further to these contacts, the two Secretariat are working on a draft text for a MoU between the two organizations to be submitted for consideration of the Commission in 2019 (**Appendix 4**).

***IAC***

Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC) has recently informed the Secretariat that IAC Parties this year adopted a Resolution (CIT-COP9-2019-R2) on the Conservation of Northwest Atlantic Leatherbacks, that includes a recommendation to the IAC Secretariat to resume the dialogue with ICCAT Secretariat and Parties, to establish a memorandum of understanding to improve our cooperation, and provide technical support to the Parties in the implementation of the relevant resolutions under both organizations.