

Original: English

**LETTER FROM PA2 CHAIR ON ATLANTIC BFT STOCKS WAY FORWARD
(ROUND 3 OF CORRESPONDANCE PERIOD)**

December 11, 2020

Dear Panel 2 members:

I hope this letter finds you and your colleagues fine.

This letter deals with all the issues of Panel 2.

1. North Atlantic albacore

No comment was provided on PA2-606B and PA2-607C, which includes a quota transfer from Chinese Taipei to Belize. I will send these two documents to the Commission for adoption. A consolidation of these Recommendations will be considered at the 2021 Commission meeting.

2. Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna

No comment was provided on PA2-609B. I will send this document to the Commission for adoption. There was no consensus on the allocation request from Russia and the request will be discussed at the 2021 Commission meeting. The interpretation of paragraph 10 in Rec. 19-04 will also be discussed at the 2021 Commission meeting if necessary.

3. Panel 2 Intersessional Meeting

Several comments were provided on PA2-618-APP-1A and PA2-618-APP-2A. After my clarification, these documents remain unchanged. I will submit these documents to the Commission for reference as holding this intersessional meeting is already written in Rec. 19-04 and detailed planning is up to Panel 2 members.

4. Western Atlantic bluefin tuna

I circulated PA2-608B indicating a one-year roll-over of Rec. 17-06 with the next stock assessment to be conducted in 2022. After circulating PA2-608B and during the comment period, further informal discussion took place and an agreement was reached among concerned CPCs on PA2-608C with the following text to be inserted to the report to the Commission:


“Panel 2 agreed to recommend to the Commission that a stock assessment for the western Atlantic BFT be conducted in 2021, one year earlier than the SCRS original plan. In relation to this agreement, Panel 2 understood that: (i) the proposed meeting for the stock assessment in September 2021 as well as the preparatory work required to conduct the assessment will not negatively affect the ongoing MSE process for BFT and if the SCRS considers a negative impact to be unavoidable, MSE will be given priority and the 2021 SCRS advice to the Commission on WBFT will be based on the 2020 stock assessment; (ii) if the preparatory work does not proceed as planned, the SCRS will postpone the assessment to 2022; and (iii) the external expert will be contracted and perform the required work in accordance with standard SCRS and Secretariat practices and procedures and will be supported by the Commission budget with a voluntary fund from Canada”

I will submit this paper as well as the text to the Commission for adoption.

A one-week comment period is set to make sure that my understanding on these issues is correct.

The exact deadline will be specified by the Secretariat as it depends on their translation.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shingo Ota', is centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and 'O'.

Shingo Ota
Panel 2 Chair