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SUMMARY REPORT BY THE COMMISSION CHAIR

(All the documents referred to in this report are available on the [2020 Commission documents webpage](#))

Introduction

Due to the pandemic of COVID-19, it was not possible to hold the 22nd Special Meeting of the Commission as originally foreseen. Notwithstanding, aware of the need to ensure continued conservation and management of stocks managed by ICCAT, the CPCs agreed to carry out a decision-making process through correspondence. This report summarises the decisions taken through this process.

All CPCs were invited to participate in the online decision-making process. Observer participation was also confirmed by the following non-governmental organisations: ABIPESCA, ANATUN, Defenders of Wildlife, Ecology Action Centre (EAC), Global Tuna Alliance, IPNLF, Europêche, FIP, HIS, ISSF, Monterey Bay Aquarium, MSC, Oceana, Pew Charitable Trusts, Project Aware Foundation, SCIAENA, Shark Trust, Shark Project, SRC, The Ocean Foundation and the WWF.

The international governmental organisations that were kept apprised of the process included: ACAP, ACCOBAMS, CARICOM, CCAMLR, CCSBT, CECAF, CIESM, CITES; COMHAFAT, CPPS. CSR, FAO, FFA, GFCM, IAC, IATTC, INFOPÊCHE, IOTC, IPHC, IWC, NAFO, NASCO, NEAFC, Nigeria-Sao Tomé Joint Development Authority, NPAFC, OECD, OLDEPESCA, OMC, SEAFO, UN, UNEP/CMS, UNESCO, WCPFC, and WECAFC.

The Commission welcomes the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as a Contracting Party to ICCAT, effective on 21 October 2020. As the United Kingdom will represent its Overseas Territories, and Vanuatu withdrew from the Commission, the total number of Contracting Parties is now 52. The opening statement of the UK is contained in **Annex x**.

Statements sent to plenary during the three correspondence periods which closed the work of the subsidiary bodies, as well as consolidated final statements, were also received from El Salvador, European Union, Guatemala, Japan, Nicaragua, Panama, Senegal, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States, Chinese Taipei and from the following observers: Ecology Action Centre (EAC), Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs), Global Tuna Alliance, International Pole and Line Foundation (IPLF), ISSF, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Pew Charitable Trusts, Sciaena, Shark Project and Shark Trust (on behalf of various NGOs). Except for consolidated statements, statements which conformed to the standard length or were made available in three languages have been published on the 2020 Commission document site, and are included in Annex x. Consolidated statements were not included on the document site but they are also contained in Annex x.

This standard for statement submission had been determined by the Chair, together with the procedure for decision making, following consultation with the other Commission officers and CPCs. It had been agreed that each proposal would be subject to up to three periods of correspondence, and if no agreement could be reached at the end of these three periods, the final decision would rest with Plenary if requested by the Chair of the subsidiary body. A slightly different calendar was agreed for the Compliance Committee given the different nature of the decisions to be taken by that body.

1. Review of the reports of the 2020 Intersessional Meetings, including Online meetings as appropriate and consideration of any necessary actions

No comments were made on any of the reports of the intersessional meetings, and the following are thus deemed to be adopted by the Commission and are contained in **Annex xx**.

- Report of the First Virtual Working Group on the Review of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission (VWG_RRP) [PLE-101]
- Report on Virtual Working Group for Sustainable Financing (VWG_SF) [STF-205]
- Report of Port Inspection Expert group for Capacity and Assistance [PWG_406]
- Report of the Intersessional Meeting of Panel 2 [PA2_602]

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- Report of the Working Group on Control and Traceability Measures [PA2_603]
 - 2020 SCRS Advice to the Commission [PLE_104]

2. Cooperation with other organisations, including review of outstanding MoUs or determination of action plan as appropriate

The Secretariat signed the MoU with SEAFO as adopted at the 2019 Commission. As there has been some difficulty in agreeing on the wording of the MoUs with GFCM and WECAFC, the Commission has agreed that the letters of cooperation for specific areas, as currently foreseen by the Agreement between ICCAT and FAO, can be drafted during the intersessional period as needed. The possibility of making progress on MoUs with these bodies will be further explored at the 2021 ICCAT annual meeting, as needed and appropriate.

3. Review and endorsement, if appropriate, of the decisions taken by Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD)

The Chair of STACFAD reported that the Committee had endorsed the Administrative Report [STF_201] and Financial Report [STF_202] prepared by the Secretariat. In addition, the Committee put forward a revised Commission budget and a revised eBCD budget.

In addition, the STACFAD Chair informed the Commission of the progress made on the Virtual Working Group on Sustainable Financing (VWG-SF) and put forward for Commission adoption a “Draft Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 14-14 on the establishment of a Meeting Participation fund for developing ICCAT Contracting Parties” [STF_205_App_2B] and “Draft Rules of Procedure on the Meeting Participation Fund” [STF_205_App_3C].

On the understanding that future revision may be required in light of experience following implementation, these were adopted by the Commission and are attached as XXX. The Commission also took note that the VWG-SF will continue its work in 2021.

Statements to Plenary on STACFAD issues were presented by the European Union [PLE_123] and Senegal [PLE_125] and are contained in xxx.

The Report of STACFAD was adopted by the Commission and is contained in **Annex xx**.

4. Review and endorsement, if appropriate, of proposals put forward by the Panels 1 to 4

Panel 1

The Chair of Panel 1 indicated that the Panel had not reached full consensus on the “Draft Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT to Amend the Recommendation by ICCAT to Replace Recommendation 16-01 by ICCAT on a Multi-Annual Conservation and Management Programme for Tropical Tunas [19-02]” [PA1_503A] but that there had been considerable support for this proposal. He therefore requested that this proposal be further considered by the Commission through Plenary.

The Chair further noted that the table indicating catch limits and reference limits for 2020 (PA1-502B) had not been agreed and was not being put forward by the Panel for adoption.

Mr. Helguilé also presented a roadmap (PA1-511A) for work to be carried out in 2021 which is attached to the Report of Panel 1. This did not reach full consensus during Panel 1 discussions, but the Chair of the Panel requested that it be presented to Plenary for final review and possible adoption as there had been some support for the plan, and it was hoped that agreement on the way forward could be reached.

The Commission Chair reminded the CPCs of the process agreed for taking decisions through correspondence. In light of that, the Commission reviewed the “Draft Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT to Amend the Recommendation by ICCAT to Replace Recommendation 16-01 by ICCAT on a Multi-Annual Conservation and Management Programme for Tropical Tunas [19-02]” [PA1_503A] and agreed its adoption. The adopted measure is contained in **Annex xx**.

Statements to Plenary regarding Panel 1 were submitted by the European Union, Guatemala, Japan, Nicaragua, Senegal, the United States, Chinese Taipei and FIP, and are attached as **Appendices xx to Annex xxx**.

The Report of Panel 1 [PA1_550A], following some amendment, was adopted by the Commission and is contained in Annex xx.

Panel 2

Five draft proposals had been tabled for discussion by Panel 2, four by the Chair of Panel 2 taking into account initial input of Panel 2 members and one by the United States on western bluefin tuna.

The “Draft Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 16-06 Establishing a Multi-Annual Conservation and Management Programme for North Atlantic Albacore” [PA2_606B], submitted by the Panel 2 Chair was adopted by the Panel following some amendments, as was the “Draft Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 17-04 on a Harvest Control Rule for North Atlantic Albacore Supplementing the Multiannual Conservation and Management Programme in Rec. 16-06” [PA2_607C].

The Panel 2 Chair proposed a “Draft Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 19-04 Establishing A Multi-Annual Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean” [PA2_609B] which, following the incorporation of some amendments, was adopted by the Panel.

The Chair proposed to merge the “Draft Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 17-06 for an Interim Conservation and Management Plan for Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna” [PA2_608] which he had tabled with the “Draft Recommendation by ICCAT extending and amending the interim conservation and management plan for western Atlantic bluefin tuna” [PA2_610] tabled by the United States. This revised and merged proposal was adopted by the Panel as “Draft Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 17-06 for an Interim Conservation and Management Plan for Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna” [PA2_608C].

The Chair also put forward a workplan for preparation of the intersessional meeting of Panel 2 to be held virtually in March 2021. This workplan is attached to the report of Panel 2 (Annex xx)

The Commission adopted the following four Recommendations:

- Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 16-06 Establishing a Multi-Annual Conservation and Management Programme for North Atlantic Albacore [PA2_606B];
- Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 17-04 on a Harvest Control Rule for North Atlantic Albacore Supplementing the Multiannual Conservation and Management Programme in Rec. 16-06 [PA2_607C];
- Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 19-04 Establishing A Multi-Annual Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean [PA2_609B]; and
- Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 17-06 for an Interim Conservation and Management Plan for Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna [PA2_608C].

These adopted measures are contained in xxx.

Statements to Plenary regarding Panel 2 were submitted by the European Union and the PEW Charitable Trust and are contained in Appendix x to Annex y.

The Report of Panel 2 [PA2_650A], following minor amendment, was adopted by the Commission and is contained in Annex xx.

Panel 3

The Chair of Panel 3 had put forward a “Draft Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT to Amend the Recommendation by ICCAT on South Atlantic Albacore Catch Limits for the Period 2017-2020” [PA3_701], in order to ensure continuity of management measures in 2021. No comments on the proposal were received other than explicit support from one CPC, and this measure was put forward to the Commission for approval. CPCs were also invited to inform the Commission of their intention to apply the carry-over provisions in 2021. The list of CPCs wishing to avail themselves of this is shown in the Report of Panel 3.

The Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT to Amend the Recommendation by ICCAT on South Atlantic Albacore Catch Limits for the Period 2017-2020 [PA3-701] was adopted by the Commission and is attached in Annex x.

The Report of Panel 3 [PA3_750A], following minor amendment, was adopted by the Commission and is contained in Annex xx.

Panel 4

Four draft proposals were discussed by Panel 4.

The “Draft Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 19-03 by ICCAT for the Conservation of North Atlantic Swordfish” [PA4_803], proposed by Morocco met with no objection and was agreed by Panel 4 and referred to the Commission for adoption.

Three draft proposals on shortfin mako were initially tabled in Panel 4: The “Draft Recommendation by ICCAT on the Conservation of North Atlantic Stock of Shortfin Mako Caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries” [PA4_804], submitted by EU; a “Draft Recommendation by ICCAT to establish a rebuilding program for North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks caught in association with ICCAT fisheries” [PA4_805], submitted by the United States and a “Draft recommendation by ICCAT on conservation of Atlantic shortfin mako caught in association with ICCAT fisheries” [PA4_806 SPONS 4] tabled by Canada and co-sponsored by Chinese Taipei, Gabon, Senegal and the United Kingdom. No consensus could be reached on the measures for shortfin mako by Panel 4, and it was agreed that further work be carried out in July 2021 during an intersessional meeting.

[...]

The United States submitted, for information, a document entitled Best Practices for Reducing Total Mortality of North Atlantic Shortfin Mako Sharks [PA4-807].

The Commission adopted the Recommendation by ICCAT Amending the Recommendation 19-03 by ICCAT for the Conservation of North Atlantic Swordfish [PA4 803]. It is contained in Annex x.

Statements to Plenary on Panel 4 issues were presented by the United Kingdom [PLE_127], Sharkproject [PLE-121], IPNLF [PLE-122], Shark Trust [PLE_124], PEW Charitable Trust [PLE_126] and Ecology Action Centre [PLE_128]. These Statements are contained in xxx.

The Report of Panel 4 [PA4_850] was adopted by the Commission and is contained in Annex xx.

5. Review and endorsement, if appropriate, of the decisions taken by the Conservation and Management Measures Compliance Committee (COC)

On the basis of the Compliance Summary Tables presented in COC_308, as revised, the Committee endorsed the COC Chair's recommended actions contained in XXX [Appendix 2 to COC_308D], which were presented to the Commission for its approval. The Commission approved the recommended actions.

The Compliance Tables [COC_304] had been subject to several updates. As no further comments were received within the stipulated deadline on the final version circulated for comment, all tables with the exception of BET were deemed approved by the COC and presented to the Commission for its endorsement. In the case of the BET table, numbers that had been removed in error from a previous version were reinserted in the final published version, and the COC Chair presented this table to the Commission for endorsement. The Commission endorsed all the compliance tables reflected in COC_304-E.

The Committee took note that, by the end of the correspondence period, Task 1 data were still missing from four CPCs [Costa Rica, The Gambia, Grenada, Guinea Bissau] and that, as a result, reported to the Commission that these CPCs would be subject to prohibition of retention of ICCAT species for which there is a data deficiency from 1 January 2021 unless the missing data or confirmation of zero catch for 2019 and previous years, as applicable, were received. The Commission took due note of this matter.

There was no objection within the COC to renewal of cooperating status for Bolivia, Costa Rica, Chinese Taipei, Guyana, and Suriname, on the understanding that such status will be reviewed in light of performance during 2021. The Commission agreed with the COC recommendation to renew cooperating status for these five parties.

The Committee took note of the concerns raised regarding the possible renewal of cooperating status for Colombia and recommended to the Commission that cooperating status not be renewed. The COC indicated that Colombia's request should be considered further at the 2021 ICCAT annual meeting. During Plenary, there was an objection to this decision, and two Parties indicated that they supported the request of Colombia and did not agree with the proposal to not renew cooperating status. The Statements by Guatemala and Honduras are contained in PLE-142 and PLE-143 and attached in Annex xx.

It was also recommended by the COC that letters seeking improved cooperation with ICCAT be sent to the following non-CPCs: Dominica, Gibraltar, St. Kitts & Nevis, and Tanzania, and the Commission agreed.

Finally, the COC Chair recommended rescheduling in 2021 the cancelled two-day special COC session originally planned to take place just before the 2020 annual meeting and supported holding an intersessional meeting of the Online Reporting Technical Working Group in February 2021. The Commission agreed with these recommendations.

6. Review and endorsement, if appropriate, of the decisions taken by the Permanent Working Group for the Improvement of ICCAT Statistics and Conservation Measures (PWG)

The Secretariat had circulated a draft IUU vessel list [PWG_405] on which several comments were received. These were taken into account in a revised version which was adopted by the PWG and put forward to the Commission for adoption [PWG_405C]. It was agreed that the mechanisms for incorporating changes intersessionally would be reviewed at the next meeting of the Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM) Working Group.

The Chair of the PWG had put forward a "Draft Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 18-12 on the Application of the EBCD System" [PWG_408], as some of the provisions of Rec. 18-12 were set to expire on the 31 December 2020. Following some exchanges for clarification, this measure was agreed by the PWG and put forward to the Commission for approval.

The Recommendation by ICCAT to Amend Rec. 18-12 on the Application of the EBCD System was adopted by the Commission and is contained in XXX [PWG_408].

It was agreed that the other pending PWG issues would be deferred to an intersessional meeting of the IMM, the tentative agenda for which is attached to the PWG report (Annex xx).

The ICCAT IUU vessel List 2020 [PWG_405C] was adopted by the Commission. It was noted that deletion certificates would be forthcoming from The Gambia and Senegal for two of the listed vessels and that the procedure for changing the flag State information on the IUU vessel list for these vessels could be considered in 2021 following receipt of these.

The Report of PWG [PWG_450A], following minor amendment, was adopted by the Commission and is contained in Annex xx.

7. Intersessional meetings in 2021

Taking into account that a State of Alarm has been imposed by Spain until 9 May 2021, the scheduling of intersessional face-to-face meetings early in 2021 is not advisable, particularly as many of these meetings would normally be held at the Secretariat offices in Madrid. It was agreed that an on-line meeting of Panel 2 would be needed in March to adopt the fishing plans, and that face-to-face meetings should be held, if possible, for Panel 1, Panel 4, the IMM Working Group and the Compliance Committee (two-day session to take place in conjunction with the annual meeting in 2021), preceded by correspondence exchanges and on-line meetings as appropriate. If in-person meetings are not possible, these meetings should be converted to a virtual format. It was also agreed that the Online Reporting Technical Working Group should hold a virtual meeting in February. Following discussion among the officers and having sought the views of the CPCs, the tentative schedule of intersessional meetings, including virtual and scientific meetings, is attached as xx [PLE_106E]. The Commission noted that, while all the SCRS related meetings are reflected in this document as taking place online, they will be changed to in-person meetings if conditions allow.

8. Other matters

The Commission took note of the progress made by the Working Group on the Review of the Rules of Procedure; the work of this virtual group should be completed in 2021.

9. Date and place of the next meeting of the Commission

In the expectation that a face-to-face meeting can be held in 2021, the Commission agreed that the dates of the next annual meeting will be 15 to 22 November 2021. It was noted that no offer to host the meeting had yet been received, which could seriously limit the capacity of the meeting. Capacity could also be limited depending on the situation with the pandemic at that time. If no offer to host the meeting is received, the Secretariat will search for a possible venue for the meeting within the available financial resources.

10. Adoption of the report containing the decisions of the Commission

[The report was adopted together with the documents mentioned therein.]