




MESSAGE FROM THE ICCAT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The ICCAT Secretariat has the pleasure to present its readers with **ICCAT Newsletter No. 15**, informing of the latest events and activities of our Organization.

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RECENT MEETINGS

 **2011 Meeting of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS).**



The SCRS held a meeting from October 3 to 7, 2011 in Madrid, Spain. The Report of the meeting is published in the ICCAT Biennial Reports and will be printed in February 2012. The electronic version is available from the ICCAT web site.

The SCRS carried out stock assessments in 2011 on Atlantic blue marlin, Atlantic yellowfin, Southern Atlantic albacore tuna and, for the first time, Mediterranean albacore.

The Sub-Committee on Ecosystems worked on spatial production methods and matters regarding by-catch, such as estimate procedures and measures to reduce the impact of tuna fisheries on these. Likewise, the Sub-Committee recommended the reorganization of the Sub-Committee incorporating an ecosystems rapporteur. The Assessment Group on Methods revised the development of stock assessment methods within the GBYP and carried out research on the definition of Limit Reference Points. The Sharks Species Group worked on the preparation of the Ecological Risk Assessment and the Tropical Tuna Species Group carried out a historical revision of fishery statistics, corresponding to Ghana, in particular.

The results of the Working Group on the Organization of the SCRS were also reviewed, in particular those aspects related to the participation of CPC scientists and the Secretariat in the work of the SCRS.

During the meeting, the Committee approved a protocol for the use of funds for data improvement and ICCAT's scientific capacity building.

 **22nd Regular Meeting of the Commission**

The 22nd Regular Meeting of the Commission and the Compliance Committee meeting were held in Istanbul (Turkey) from November 11 to 19, 2011. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Fabio Hazin. The support of the European Union and excellent work of the Government of Turkey guaranteed its success.

The following twenty-two Recommendations and four Resolutions were adopted by the Commission at its 22nd Regular Meeting:

Recommendation by ICCAT on a Multi-Annual Conservation and Management Program for Bigeye and Yellowfin Tunas [Rec. 11-01]

Recommendation by ICCAT for the Conservation of North Atlantic Swordfish [Rec. 11-02]

Recommendation by ICCAT on Management Measures for Mediterranean Swordfish in the Framework of ICCAT [Rec. 11-03]

Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the North Atlantic Albacore Rebuilding Programme [Rec. 11-04]

Recommendation by ICCAT on the Southern Albacore Catch Limits for 2012 and 2013 (GBYP) [Rec. 11-05]

Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (GBYP) [Rec. 11-06]

Recommendation by ICCAT to Further Strengthen the Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Populations [Rec. 11-07]

Recommendation by ICCAT on the Conservation of Silky Sharks Caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries [Rec. 11-08]

Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT on Reducing Incidental By-Catch of Seabirds in ICCAT Longline Fisheries [Rec. 11-09]

Recommendation by ICCAT on Information Collection and Harmonization of Data on By-catch and Discards in ICCAT Fisheries [Rec. 11-10]

Recommendation by ICCAT to Clarify the Application of Compliance Recommendations and for Developing the Compliance Annex [Rec. 11-11]

Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Establishment of an ICCAT Record of Vessels 20 Meters in Length Overall or Greater Authorized to Operate in the Convention Area [Rec. 11-12]

Recommendation by ICCAT on the Principles of Decision Making for ICCAT Conservation and Management Measures [Rec. 11-13]

Recommendation by ICCAT on Penalties Applicable in Case of non-Fulfillment of Reporting Obligations [Rec. 11-15]

Recommendation by ICCAT on Access Agreements [Rec. 11-16]

Recommendation by ICCAT Further Amending Recommendation 09-10 Establishing a List of Vessels Presumed to Have Carried out Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Activities in the ICCAT Convention Area [Rec. 11-18]

Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Lifting of Trade Restrictive Measures against Bolivia and Georgia [Rec. 11-19]

Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 09-11 on an ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Catch Documentation Program [Rec. 11-20]

Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 10-11 on an Electronic Bluefin Tuna Catch Document Programme (eBCD) [Rec. 11-21]

Recommendation by ICCAT to Amend the Terms of Reference of the Permanent Working Group for the Improvement of ICCAT Statistics and Conservation Measures (PWG) [Rec. 11-23]

Recommendation by ICCAT to Amend the Mandate and Terms of Reference Adopted by the Commission for the ICCAT Conservation and Management Measures Compliance Committee (COC) [Rec. 11-24]

Recommendation by ICCAT on the Establishment of a Meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties [Rec. 11-26]

Resolution by ICCAT to Standardize the Presentation of Scientific Information in the SCRS Annual Report and in Working Group Detailed Reports [Res. 11-14]

Resolution by ICCAT on Best Available Science [Res. 11-17]

Resolution by ICCAT on Traceability of Tuna Products [Res. 11-22]

Resolution by ICCAT on a Program of Work for the Working Group on the Future of ICCAT [Res. 11-25]



The Recommendations will enter into force on June 7, 2012.

The full texts of the Recommendations and Resolutions are available on the ICCAT web page: www.iccat.int.



During the meeting, the Commission officers were renewed. Mr. Masanori Miyahara was elected ICCAT Chairman replacing Dr. Fabio Hazin. The other officers elected by the Commission are as follows:

- First Vice Chair, Mr. Mario Aguilar
- Second Vice Chair, M. G. Tackey
- Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD): S. Lapointe
- Chair of the ICCAT Conservation and Management Measures Compliance Committee (COC): C. Rogers
- Chair of the Permanent Working Group for the Improvement of ICCAT Statistics and Conservation Measures (PWG): T. El Ktiri

Likewise the Chairs of Panels 1 and Panel 4 were given to Côte d'Ivoire, the European Union, South Africa and Brazil.

CALENDER OF EVENTS - 2012

Seven SCRS meetings and three Commission meetings are scheduled for 2012, as well as some coordination meetings within the framework of the GBYP and a meeting of the eBCD Technical Working Group took place on January 16 and 17 in Madrid (Spain).

Below is a list of the meetings scheduled up to the distribution of the Newsletter which will be published in September.

April

- *Seventh meeting of the Working Group on Management and Integrating Monitoring Measures (IMM), April 2-6, Tokyo, Japan. The Group will assess the state of the integrated control measures currently being developed (eBCDs, Port State Measures, etc.) and will consider the development of a traceability system for bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack.*

- *ICCAT Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods, April 16-20, Madrid, Spain. The work of this Group will mainly consist on the election of criteria for selection and integration of abundance indices in assessments.*

- *Inter-sessional Meeting of the Tropical Tunas Species Group, April 23-27, Madrid, Spain. The objective of this meeting is to review the biological parameters of the three species of tropical tunas and explore methods to obtain viable abundance indices for stock assessments.*

May

- *White Marlin Stock Assessment Session, May 21-25, Madrid, Spain. During this meeting the Atlantic white marlin stock will be assessed.*

- *Third meeting of the Working Group on the Future of ICCAT, May 28-31, Madrid, Spain. The objective of this meeting is to continue the process to strengthen ICCAT in accordance with Resolution by ICCAT on a Program of Work for the Working Group on the Future of ICCAT [Res. 11-25] adopted by the Commission*

June

- Meeting to apply the Ecological Risk Analysis to shortfin mako sharks and sharks stock Assessment (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), June 11-15, Portugal. The meeting's objective will be to carry out the Ecological Risk Assessment to eighteen shark species caught as by-catch in the tuna fisheries and assess the shortfin mako sharks in the Atlantic.

July

- Inter-sessional Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Ecosystems, July 2-6, Madrid, Spain. The Sub-Committee will essentially work on preparing the assessment of the impact of tuna fisheries on sea turtles, which will be carried out in 2013.

September

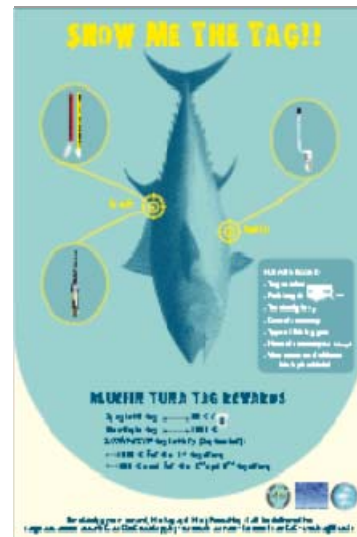
- Bluefin Tuna Stock Assessment Session, September 4-11, Madrid, Spain. During this meeting the 2010 bluefin tuna stock assessments will be updated.

All information on meetings is available on the ICCAT web site (<http://www.iccat.int/en/meetingscurrent.htm>).

Scientists who would like to present documents to the SCRS meetings can download the *Guidelines for Authors* from the ICCAT web site: (http://www.iccat.int/en/pubs_guidelines.htm).

SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES

The Secretariat has continued to support the activities of the SCRS and the Commission. In particular, during the second half of 2011, the Secretariat focused on the preparation of the SCRS and Commission meetings. As part of this work, the Secretariat prepared a series of documents that were presented to these meetings. As well as the traditional documents (reports related to research and statistics, financial report, compliance report, etc.), the Secretariat prepared working documents to support the discussion groups. All the reports prepared by the Secretariat are published, since 2011, in an independent volume (Vol. 4) of the Report for the Biennial Period. During this period the Secretariat has actively worked in the process of preparation and development of the work prior to the implementation of the eBCD system.



The Phase 2 of the ICCAT-GBYP (Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for the Bluefin Tuna, conventionally GBYP) was extended up to April 2012. The activities included data recovery, aerial survey on spawning aggregations, biological and

genetic sampling, tagging and modeling approaches and involved a total of 23 contractors, providing a considerable improvement of the knowledge on bluefin tuna. A tag awareness campaign has been recently launched and new posters and stickers are available at the Secretariat.

The ICCAT-GBYP Steering Committee is now focusing on the activities of Phase 3.

All the activities and reports are available on:

<http://www.iccat.int/GBYP/en/index.htm>



Furthermore, since the previous Newsletter, the ICCAT Secretariat has been represented in external meetings related to ICCAT's activities:

– *Seventh Meeting of the FIRMS Standing Committee*, December 12-16, 2011, Rome, Italy.

– *OSPAR: Madeira II: The second informal meeting of competent authorities on the management of selected areas in ABNJ in the North-East Atlantic*, January 7-8, 2011, Paris, France.

ICCAT played an active role in the various meetings with written and/or oral contributions.

In November 2011, the Secretariat transmitted an official announcement to hire a By-catch Coordinator. The selection process of candidates is ongoing.

Further to the meeting in Istanbul, the Secretariat has initiated the preparatory work of the forthcoming Commission meeting. The possibility of holding the meeting in Uruguay, announced during the meeting in Istanbul, was finally rejected due to logistical problems and thus, following the proposal formulated by the Moroccan delegation, the 2012 meeting will be held in Agadir (Morocco) from November 12-19.

Last January, the Secretariat restructured the vessel database aimed at optimizing the reporting and validation processes of data. Likewise, the Guidelines for Submitting Data & Information Required by ICCAT was updated and published on the ICCAT web site: (<http://iccat.int/en/SubmitCOMP.htm>).

During the first quarter of 2012, the Secretariat has programmed a series of training courses for the staff. Currently, specific IT training courses have started, which will be followed by other courses including a more general content.

Apart from the activities mentioned above, the Secretariat is responsible for the maintenance of the joint web page of tuna RFMOs (<http://www.tuna-org.org/>).

At its 22nd Regular meeting, the Commission adopted a great number of Recommendations and Resolutions that require important work by the Secretariat for the implementation of various provisions included therein. This work load will increase considerably following the entry into force of the Recommendations and Resolutions.

ASSISTANCE FUNDS

The objective of these funds is to encourage the improvement of statistics of species under ICCAT mandate. Currently, there is a budget on special funds for data improvement established by *Resolution by ICCAT on Improvements in Data Collection and Quality Assurance* [Res. 03-21], including open contributions granted by Contracting Parties. To date, specifically three Parties (European Union, Japan and United States) have contributed.

During the second half of 2011, scientists of coastal developing States were funded by these programs to participate in the SCRS meetings.

As regards these funds, the SCRS approved protocols to request and use them for the 2010 and 2011 meetings, respectively.

At its 22nd Regular meeting, the Commission established a new assistance fund by adopting *ICCAT Recommendation by ICCAT on the Establishment of a Meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties* [Rec. 11-26].

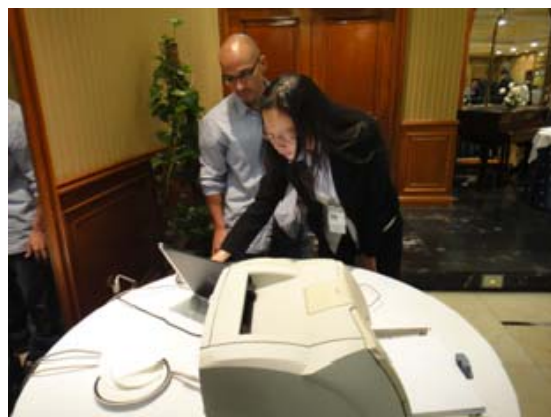
OBSERVER PROGRAMME

The Secretariat has continued to coordinate the implementation of the ICCAT Regional Observer Programme concerning transshipments and the Regional Observer Programme for bluefin tuna. In 2011, six CPCs participated in the ROP-BFT transshipment, with 23 observers onboard cargo vessels and 80 on fishing vessels. The total number of deployments on farms during 2011 was 52, with 6 deployments to date (February 15, 2012) in 2012.

The Commission agreed on the extension of contracts for the April 2012 to April 2013 period for these programs.

TAGGING LOTTERY

Established to promote the recovery of tags placed by various laboratories belonging to ICCAT Contracting Parties, the annual tagging lottery was held on October 3, 2011 during the plenary sessions of the SCRS. The reward for each lottery is €500 and corresponds to the following:



– Tropical tunas: The winning tag (CT017457) was recovered by Brazil on a yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), 594 days after tagging which had been carried out in the Uruguay fishing campaigns.

– Temperate tunas: The winning tag (TG-006703) was recovered by Italy on a bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), 1018 days after tagging which had been carried out in the Cyprus fishing campaigns.

– Billfish: The winning tag (BF-387852) was recovered by Spain on an Atlantic white marlin (*Tetrapturus albidus*), 818 days after tagging.

– Sharks: The winning tag (CR-010642) was recovered by Spain on a shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), 241 days after tagging which had been carried out in the Spain fishing campaigns.

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