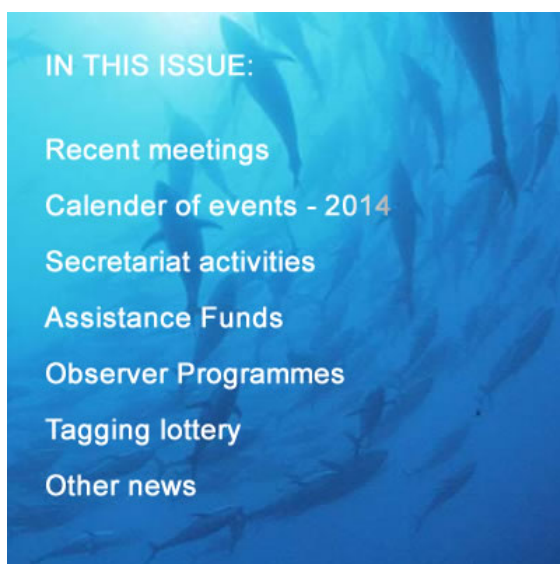




MESSAGE FROM THE ICCAT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The ICCAT Secretariat has the pleasure to present its readers with **ICCAT Newsletter No. 19**, informing about the latest events and activities of our Organisation.



RECENT MEETINGS

2013 MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND STATISTICS (SCRS)

The SCRS held its meeting from 30 September to 4 October 2013, in Madrid, Spain. The report of the meeting was published, in print version, in February 2014, as part of the ICCAT Biennial Reports. The electronic version is available on the ICCAT website.

In 2013, the SCRS carried out assessments of North and South Atlantic albacore and North and



South Atlantic swordfish. Moreover, the Committee reviewed the biological parameters and assessment methods for bluefin tuna stocks. The Committee also defined the terms of reference for a large-scale Atlantic tropical tuna tagging programme and developed a shark research programme.

The Sub-Committee on Ecosystems continued its work on bycatch related matters and the mitigation measures of tuna fisheries on bycatch.

The Group on Assessment Methods defined diagnostic elements of stock assessment models and evaluated limit reference points using MSE.

The Committee also reviewed the development of the strategic science plan, which is intended to guide the work of the SCRS up to 2020.

As usual, the Committee assessed the presentations made at the meeting and the winning rapporteurs were awarded Basque berets (*chapelas*) and the Secretariat received a special beret.



23rd Regular Meeting of the Commission

The 23rd Regular Meeting of the Commission was held in Cape Town, South Africa, between 18 and 25 November 2013. The meeting was opened by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of South Africa and chaired by Mr. Masanori Miyahara. The hospitality and the excellent organisation by the

South African government ensured the smooth running of the meeting.

The meeting was characterised by the presence of numerous dignitaries from the different Contracting Parties, and in particular, the participation of the ministers of fisheries from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, the European Commissioner for Fisheries and the heads of Russia's and Egypt's Fisheries Agencies.



At its 23rd Regular Meeting, the Commission adopted the following 18 Recommendations and a Resolution:

Recommendation by ICCAT Amending the Recommendation on a Multi-annual Conservation and Management Program for Bigeye and Yellowfin Tunas [13-01].

Recommendation by ICCAT for the Conservation of North Atlantic Swordfish [13-02].

Recommendation by ICCAT on South Atlantic Swordfish Catch Limits [13-03].

Recommendation by ICCAT for Management Measures for Mediterranean Swordfish in the Framework of ICCAT [13-04].

Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the North Atlantic Albacore Rebuilding Program [13-05].

Recommendation by ICCAT on the Southern Atlantic Albacore Catch Limits for the Period 2014 to 2016 [13-06].

Recommendation by ICCAT Amending the Recommendation 12-03 by ICCAT to Establish a Multi-annual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean [13-07].

Recommendation by ICCAT Complementing Recommendation 12-03 which Established a Multi-annual Recovery Plan for Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna [13-08].

Recommendation by ICCAT Amending the Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Rebuilding Program [13-09].

Recommendation by ICCAT on Biological Sampling of Prohibited Shark Species by Scientific Observers [13-10].

Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 10-09 on the By-Catch of Sea Turtles in ICCAT Fisheries [13-11].

Recommendation by ICCAT on the Rules of Procedure for the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) [13-12].

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 [13-13].

Recommendation by ICCAT on Vessel Chartering [13-14].

Resolution by ICCAT to Complete the Standardization of the Presentation of Scientific Information in the SCRS Annual Report [13-15].

Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Annex 1 of Recommendation 11-20 on an ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Catch Documentation Program [13-16].

Recommendation by ICCAT Supplementing the Recommendation for an Electronic Bluefin Tuna Catch Document (eBCD) System [13-17].

Recommendation by ICCAT for Enhancing the Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers [13-18].

Recommendation by ICCAT on the Establishment of a Scientific Capacity Building Fund for Developing States which are ICCAT Contracting Parties [13-19].

The Recommendations will enter into force on 10 June 2014, except [Rec. 13-07], for which an objection has been lodged and which will therefore become effective on 8 August 2014.

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

The Commission officers were elected at the meeting. Mr. Stefaan Depypere (European Union) was elected as Chair of the Commission and Mr. Raul Delgado (Panama) and Mr. Andrey Krainiy (Russia) were elected First and Second Vice-Chairs, respectively. Moreover, Mr. Derek Campbell (United States) was elected as Chair of the Compliance Committee and Ms. Sylvie Lapointe (Canada) and Mr. Taoufik El Ktiri (Morocco) were reelected as Chairs of the STACFAD and the PWG, respectively. Regarding the Panels, Japan was elected as Chair of Panel 2 and Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa and Brazil were reelected to chair Panels 1, 3 and 4, respectively. All the officers were unanimously elected and will serve a two-year term of office.

The Commission expressed its sincere gratitude to Mr. Masanori Miyahara, the outgoing Chair, and Dr. Christopher Rogers, the outgoing Chair of the Compliance Committee for their services to the Commission.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2014

In 2014, the following events are scheduled to be held: eight SCRS intersessional meetings, a training course and five Commission meetings, in addition to several coordination meetings within the framework of the GBYP and a working meeting of the Technical Group on electronic BCD which took place between 21 and 24 January, in Madrid, Spain.

Below are the meetings scheduled until the publication of the next issue of the *Newsletter* which will come out in September.

March

✓ *Joint Meeting of the Compliance Committee/Panel 2 and Special Intersessional Meeting of the Permanent Working Group (PWG), 3-7 March, Madrid, Spain.* The main focus of the joint meeting is to adopt bluefin tuna fishing and capacity plans, adjust the quotas for this species, review the development of the eBCD system and the terms of extension of the development contract and review the Regional Observer Programs for bluefin tuna and tropical tunas.

✓ *Intersessional Meeting of the Shark Species Group, 10-14 March, Piriápolis, Uruguay.* The aim of this meeting is to collect and analyse available information on shark biology and fisheries under the ICCAT mandate in order to establish the feasibility of carrying out stock assessments in the future.

April

✓ *Meeting of the ICCAT Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods, 7-11 April, Dublin, Ireland.* Among other objectives, the Group will continue with the assessment of scientific advice through management strategy evaluation (MSE) and will study the establishment of criteria for reconciling the results on the state of the stocks when using different assessment models.

✓ *Meeting of the Working Group for the Development of the SCRS Science Strategic Plan, 14-16 April, Madrid, Spain.* The purpose is to draft a proposal for a science strategic plan for 2015-2020, which will be submitted to the SCRS for consideration, and subsequently to the Commission.

May

✓ *Bluefin Data Preparatory Meeting, 5-10 May, Madrid, Spain.* At this meeting, a review will be made of Tasks I and II which resulted from the inclusion of new information from the GBYP, observer programmes and other sources, as well as the findings of research on biology which was started at the 2013 intersessional meeting. Moreover, inputs and scenarios will be established for the updating of the 2012 assessment. In

addition, the criteria will be defined for generating the new CAS.

✓ *2nd Meeting of the Working Group on Convention Amendment, 19-21 May, Barcelona, Spain.* The group will identify the measures that require a revision of the Convention and will establish a work plan to carry this out.

✓ *9th Meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures, 22-24 May, Barcelona, Spain.* The group will continue its work on integrating monitoring measures in an extensive management framework.

✓ *1st Meeting of the Standing Working Group to Enhance Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers (SWGSM), 26-28 May, Barcelona, Spain.* In this first meeting, the Group will review its objectives and establish the lines within which the scientists and managers should work together.

June

✓ *Intersessional Meeting of the Billfish Species Group, 2-6 June, Veracruz, Mexico.* The aim is to review existing information on fisheries data (Tasks I and II), tagging and biological parameters as well as other relevant data for future assessments of the stocks of these species.

✓ *Atlantic Skipjack Stock Assessment Session, 23 June-1 July, Senegal.* The assessment of Atlantic skipjack stocks will be updated at this meeting. Moreover, a review will be made of the feasibility study for an Atlantic tropical tuna tagging programme, which will be prepared in the months prior to the meeting.

July

✓ *Meeting of the Working Group of Fisheries Managers and Scientists in Support of the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Stock Assessment, 10-12 July, Prince Edward Island, Canada.* The group will continue with the review of different aspects related to the science and management of this stock.

✓ *Mediterranean Swordfish Stock Assessment Session, 21-25 July, Crete, Greece.* The group will carry out the assessment of the Mediterranean swordfish stock.

September

✓ *Intersessional Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Ecosystems, 1-5 September, Madrid, Spain.* The Sub-Committee will carry out the assessment of the impact of tuna fisheries on sea turtles and will continue to make progress on the implementation of fisheries management based on the ecosystem.

All the information on these meetings is available on the ICCAT website.

(<http://www.iccat.int/en/meetingscurrent.htm>)

Scientists wishing to submit documents to the SCRS meetings can download the guidelines for authors from the ICCAT website.
(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 2013, the Secretariat focussed its efforts on preparing the SCRS and the Commission meetings. As part of this work, the Secretariat prepared a number of documents which were submitted to these meetings. In addition to the standard documents (reports on research and statistics, financial report, compliance report, etc.), the Secretariat prepared working documents to support the discussions of the groups. Since 2011, all the reports prepared by the Secretariat have been published in an independent volume (Vol. 4) of the Biennial Report. During this period, the Secretariat has actively worked to implement the electronic BCD system.

Phase 4 of ICCAT-GBYP (Atlantic-wide Research Programme on Bluefin Tuna), developed over the course of 2013, has continued with the activities related to data recovery, genetic and biological sampling, aerial surveys for spawning individuals, modelling and tagging.

Due to an unforeseen problem, with the funding for Phase 5, Phase 4 has been extended until September 2014. Accordingly, activities related to data recovery, data processing and modelling will continue, and, to a lesser extent, the activities of the biological and genetic and tagging programmes.

All the activities carried out and reports are available at <http://www.iccat.int/GBYP/en/index.htm>.

Moreover, since the publication of the last *Newsletter*, the Secretariat has been represented in external meetings related to ICCAT activities:

- ✓ 15th Session of the IOTC Working Party on Tropical Tunas (WPTT), 23-28 October 2013, San Sebastián, Spain.

ICCAT played an active role in the different meetings with oral and/or written presentation of documents.

Following the Cape Town meeting, the Secretariat began the preparatory work for the next Commission meeting which will be held between 10 and 17 November 2014.

The Secretariat has restructured the vessel databases and updated the Guidelines for Submitting Data and Information Required by ICCAT.
(<http://iccat.int/en/SubmitCOMP.htm>)

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

At its 23rd Regular Meeting, the Commission adopted a large number of recommendations and a resolution which, for the purposes of implementation of the different provisions, require extensive work by the Secretariat. The workload will increase exponentially following their entry into force.

ASSISTANCE FUNDS

These funds aim to promote improvement in the statistics of ICCAT species. Currently, there is a special funds budget for data improvement. It was established by *Resolution by ICCAT on Improvements in Data Collection and Quality Assurance* [Res. 03-21], and is open to contributions from the Contracting Parties. Specifically, three Parties have contributed to date, namely, Japan, United States and the European Union.

During the second half of 2013, these funds were used to finance the participation of scientists from developing coastal States at the SCRS meetings. Moreover, other activities to support SCRS work were funded, based on the protocols on the request and use of these funds approved by the SCRS in its 2010 and 2011 meetings.

In its 22nd Regular Meeting, the Commission set up a new assistance fund through the adoption of the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Establishment of a Meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties* [Rec. 11-26].

OBSERVER PROGRAMMES

The Secretariat has continued to coordinate the implementation of the ICCAT Regional Observer Programme for At-Sea Transshipments and the Regional Observer Programme for Bluefin Tuna. In 2013, six CPCs participated in the ROP for transshipments and eight CPCs in the ROP-BFT, with a total of 16 observers embarked on cargo vessels and 99 on fishing vessels. The total number of deployments in farming facilities in 2013 was 52, with 7 deployments to date (21 February 2014) in 2014.

The Commission agreed to extend the contracts for the period April 2014 to April 2015 for these two programmes.

The Secretariat also signed in October 2013 a contract with Cofrepeche for the implementation of the Regional Observer Programme for bigeye and yellowfin tuna in 2014. However, the Commission, at its November meeting, decided to suspend this programme for one year. The contract remains in force and will be implemented during the 2015 closed season.

TAGGING LOTTERY

The annual tagging lottery, created to promote the recovery of tags attached by different laboratories of the ICCAT Contracting Parties, was held on 30 September 2013, during the SCRS sessions. The €500 prizes were awarded in the categories of:



✓ Tropical tunas/small tunas. The winning tag carried the number SEC001826 and was recovered from an Atlantic black skipjack (*Euthynnus alletteratus/LTA*) by a Spanish national. The tagging was carried out during the campaigns in Spain.

✓ Temperate tunas. This year, there were only recoveries from bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus/BFT*) in this category. Since 2012, this species has been included in the draw associated with the ICCAT Atlantic-wide Research Programme on Bluefin Tuna (GBYP); hence, the category had no winner.

✓ Billfish. The winning tag carried the number BF499028 and was recovered from an Atlantic blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans/BUM*) by a Venezuelan national.

✓ Sharks. The winning tag carried the number CR007670 and was recovered from a blue shark (*Prionace glauca/BSH*) by a Spanish national 1,405 days after it had been tagged. Tagging was carried out during the campaigns in Spain.

Again this year, an additional draw was held supported by the ICCAT Atlantic-wide Research

Programme on Bluefin Tuna (GBYP). There were three prizes in the draw, two for €500 and one for €1,000 exclusively for recoveries of bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus/BFT*) tags. The winning tags and the prizes were as follows:

✓ €1,000: The winning tag carried the number BYP007209 and was recovered by a Spanish national 11 days after it was attached. Tagging was carried out during the campaigns in France.

✓ €500: The winning tag carried the number BE023159 and was recovered by a Spanish national 117 days after it had been attached. Tagging was carried out during the campaigns in Spain.

✓ €500: The third prize awarded by the GBYP was for tag number BYP008637. However, on confirming the data, it was observed that the electronic tag associated with this tag had been recovered, but not the conventional tag. Accordingly, another tag was drawn at the Secretariat offices under the supervision of the staff and the Coordinator of the GBYP. The winning tag carried the number BYP007352 and was recovered by a Spanish national 56 days after it had been attached. Tagging was carried out during the campaigns in France.

OTHER NEWS

Since the last *Newsletter*, the Secretariat has circulated two post announcements. The first announcement was to cover the newly created post of ICCAT Compliance Officer. And the second announcement was to fill the vacancy of English Translator, which will be left by Mrs. Philomena Seidita who is soon to retire. She has proven to be an excellent professional, combining, for years, translation tasks and the editing of ICCAT publications.

Following a selection process, Dr. M'Hamed Idrissi, the current Research Assistant to the GBYP Coordinator, will be the new Compliance Officer while Mrs. Karen Donovan will be the new English translator. Dr. Idrissi will take up his new office in March.

All recent ICCAT publications can be downloaded from <http://www.iccat.int>

To obtain copies of older publications please contact INFO@ICCAT.INT