



The Pew Charitable Trusts'

Position Statement for the 23rd Special Meeting of ICCAT

November 2023

The Pew Charitable Trusts welcomes this opportunity to participate in the 28th Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. We understand that this meeting has been especially difficult to convene due to extenuating circumstances and we appreciate the efforts of the Secretariat and chairs to make progress on a very busy agenda. Building on the advancements from last year and the intersessional discussions among members this year, we highlight the following 10 opportunities to improve fisheries management in the Atlantic - most of which is expanded upon in our opening statements to each panel or committee:

1. **Adopt a merger of [PA4 817](#) and [PA4 819](#) for a management procedure (MP) for North Atlantic swordfish.** Pew would like to commend the SCRS Swordfish Species Group and Panel 4 for progressing this important work over the past several years. Now, Panel 4 must adopt a final management procedure, ensuring a 60% minimum probability for the status objective and 5% maximum probability for the safety objective.
2. **Adopt [the Recommendation to establish minimum standards and program requirements for the use of electronic monitoring systems \(EMS\) on ICCAT Fisheries](#).** After a two-year delay due to the global pandemic, the Commission EM working group - through the EU's leadership - has now finalized EM standards for adoption. We urge members not to further delay the adoption of this critical tool so that CPCs gain the option to use EM to meet their ICCAT observer coverage.
3. **Endorse the [Climate change plan of action](#) and adopt the Resolution by ICCAT on the creation of a standing joint experts group on climate change.** There is an urgent need for a more coordinated approach to incorporating climate change considerations in the management of Atlantic fisheries, so climate change should be added as a standing item to the Commission, STACFAD and SCRS agendas. The experts working group will be critical to implementing the plan of action; coordinate climate change related discussions and activities across ICCAT; and engaging with external stakeholders such as other RFMOs and the FAO. The group can also advise on how to use existing tools like

management strategy evaluation, MPs and the ecosystem approach to fisheries management to make ICCAT fisheries climate-ready.

4. **Adopt the [IMM endorsed Recommendation for a joint international inspection scheme in the convention areas beyond national jurisdiction](#).** This proposal should be adopted along with the [Resolution to establish a working group](#) to support the equitable participation and implementation of an HSBI scheme, as proposed by the EU.

5. **Adopt the Exceptional Circumstances Protocol for Atlantic bluefin tuna.** ICCAT must finalize the Atlantic bluefin tuna management procedure by adopting an exceptional circumstances protocol (ECP) for this iconic species. Panel 2 has worked closely with the SCRS to develop a plan for how to identify and respond to rare or unforeseen events that may warrant reconsideration of the MP. Pew urges members to adopt this ECP for Atlantic bluefin tuna, by finalizing and adopting the proposal submitted by the Chair of Panel 2.

6. **Adopt a merger of proposals [PA1 508](#) and [PA1 509](#) for a multi-annual conservation and management program for tropical tunas.** Both proposals provide elements that could strengthen management of these species, including improved FAD management and relaunching the regional observer program.

7. **Strengthen and adopt [updates to Resolution 18-09 on port State measures](#).** To further improve the measure, members should develop an ICCAT-managed electronic information exchange system that includes information on denials of port access and inspection results.

8. **Adopt the [Resolution on core principles on labour standards in ICCAT fisheries](#).** ICCAT can also continue to strengthen these labour standards by closely aligning it with those included in relevant international instruments, such as the ILO Work in Fishing Convention (C188) and the IMO Cape Town Agreement on fishing vessel safety, in the future.

9. **[Adopt the Resolution to establish a Standing Catch Document Scheme Working Group \(CDS WG\)](#).** As discussed at IMM, CPCs should engage in a CDS working group to expand the scheme to more

and eventually to all species.

10. Improve management of non-tuna species caught in ICCAT fisheries.

- CPCs should work to improve data reporting, including by better estimating and reporting of dead and live discards. Members should also update Recommendation 16-14 which has been due for review since 2019 – to increase observer coverage on longline vessels to ensure that interactions with rare species are sufficiently observed.
- Pew urges members to reduce the TACs for both blue shark populations to target a 60 to 70% chance of being in the green zone. Furthermore, Panel 4 should adopt an allocation mechanism for the southern TAC as a high priority.

And finally recognizing ICCAT's efforts to improve compliance, Pew recommends that ICCAT host a compliance capacity building workshop in 2024 to improve CPCs data submission by identifying and addressing any specific needs, and how to build the necessary legal domestic framework to ensure that their fleets are following the Commission's rules. With the above actions, ICCAT can be assured of yet another successful annual meeting, despite the difficult circumstances surrounding the meeting location.