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Annex/Annexe/Anexo 1

**MEETINGS AT WHICH ICCAT WAS REPRESENTED
FROM JANUARY 2021 TO OCTOBER 2021**

SUMMARY

This document provides basic information on the meetings of an administrative and scientific nature at which ICCAT was represented by members of the Secretariat staff or by other persons acting on its behalf. The basic information on each meeting includes the main points of the agenda as well as their major implications for ICCAT.

**RÉUNIONS AUXQUELLES L'ICCAT A ÉTÉ REPRÉSENTÉE
ENTRE JANVIER 2021 ET OCTOBRE 2021**

RÉSUMÉ

Le présent document fournit des informations de base sur les réunions administratives et scientifiques auxquelles l'ICCAT a été représentée par des membres du personnel du Secrétariat ou par d'autres personnes au nom du Secrétariat. L'information de base pour chaque réunion inclut les principaux points de l'ordre du jour ainsi que les principales implications pour l'ICCAT.

**REUNIONES EN LAS QUE HA ESTADO REPRESENTADA ICCAT
ENTRE ENERO DE 2021 Y OCTUBRE DE 2021**

RESUMEN

Este documento presenta información básica sobre las reuniones administrativas y científicas en las que ICCAT estuvo representada, ya sea por miembros de la Secretaría o por otras personas que actuaron en su nombre. La información básica que se presenta para cada reunión incluye los puntos principales del orden del día y sus principales implicaciones para ICCAT.

34th SESSION OF THE FAO COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES (COFI)

Location: By videoconference

Date: 1 to 5 February 2021

Representative: Camille Jean Pierre Manel

Agenda item: among others: reports of sub-committees, developments in global and regional processes, progress in combating IUU fishing, Proposal for a new COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management, elections

Summary: The COFI encouraged the participation of fisheries and aquaculture experts within their delegations at relevant international fora, highlighted the central role of RFMOs and RFABs, and appreciated the RSN in supporting them while calling for more cooperation on cross-cutting issues. It supported the continuation of the consultation process on the proposal of the establishment of a new sub-committee on fisheries management to be submitted at COFI 35. The COFI endorsed the [Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture](#) on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF). The COFI elected Mr. Shingo Ota (Japan) as Chairperson of its 35th Session, which will be held in Rome from 5 to 9 September 2022.

Report availability: [here](#).

8TH MEETING OF THE REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK (RSN)

Location: Online Meeting

Date: 24 February 2021

Representatives: Camille Manel, Miguel Neves dos Santos

Agenda items: The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views and discuss global fisheries management and aquaculture development issues related to regional and global processes of particular relevance for RFBs. In addition, the RSN-8 offered an opportunity to discuss the RSN development and strengthening, as well as a space for reflection on the COFI-34 outcomes and their implications for the RFBs.

Summary: This time, the meeting was not held at the margin of the COFI, due to the circumstances imposed by covid. Thirty-one regional fishery bodies attended RSN-8, as well as other eight organizations, mostly UN agencies. Among other topics discussed, the Secretariats updated on their main adopted decisions; it has been noted that the experience sharing between the organizations has been beneficial when facing the challenges posed by COVID-19. As the RSN raised the issue of possible options for a financial contribution, ICCAT observed that these possible options for a financial contribution to RSN could only be discussed at the Commission level and decided by the governing bodies of each RFB.

Future actions: The Drafting Committee of the RSN ToRs, set up in 2018, will meet virtually and propose a revised text to be considered at the next RSN physical meeting when the conditions allow. [More information](#).

Report availability: [here](#).

COMHAFAT SYMPOSIUM "FOR AN ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF MARINE LIVING SPECIES"

Location: By videoconference

Date: 3-4 March 2021

Representative: Camille Jean Pierre Manel

Agenda items: Participation in the international management of marine living species

Summary: Due to overlapping meetings, ICCAT made a video-recorded presentation the first day. Starting with an overview on ICCAT and its activities while noting that more than 75% of the Contracting Parties are classified as developing countries, the presentation stressed the importance of the topic, and aimed to share the ICCAT experience in encouraging effective participation as well as some reflections for its improvement. It was recalled that the Commission made available some mechanisms to encourage active participation of its members, such as special funds for participation in meetings and strengthening capacities. It was also underlined that in 2005, assistance to developing coastal states had become a standing item on the agenda of the Commission annual meeting, and all the relevant recommendations and resolutions were presented. In addition, the presentation called for more engagement from participants, mainly in preparation to comply with the approved guidelines and benefit from the available funds and meet the end goals of these funds.

Report availability: [here](#)

FAO-GFCM CoC - Working group on VMS and related controls system (WGVMS)

Location: By videoconference

Date: 20 May 2021

Representatives: Camille Jean Pierre MANEL, Executive Secretary; Valérie Samedy, VMS Manager

Agenda item: GFCM VMS Pilot project

Summary: GFCM proposed a technical cooperation with ICCAT on Regional VMS Systems, via a pilot VMS, aiming to learn from ICCAT VMS' experience. In the absence of a formal operational mechanism of cooperation between the two organisations at the time being, and considering GFCM schedule to progress with this pilot, ICCAT informed that the request needed to be reviewed by the ICCAT IMM meeting in June 2021, where GFCM will be able to present the ToRs of this pilot.

Future steps: The IMM meeting later agreed with sharing the ICCAT experience with the GFCM, as far as non-confidential information is not concerned. As a result, a set of information of the VMS was shared with the GFCM.

IOTC: 25TH SESSION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION (IOTC)

Location: By videoconference

Dates: 7-11 June 2021

Representative: Camille Jean Pierre Manel (Executive Secretary), Jenny Cheatle (Head of Compliance Department)

Agenda items: Reports of organs, adoption of measures, cooperation, elections of Chair and Vice-Chair persons

Summary: The main objective of the participation was to learn from the experience of organizing and conducting the annual meeting of this sister organization in this virtual format, given the novelty of this experience forced by COVID-19. It should be noted that the scale of such meetings allows for a better appreciation of the challenges of using the available electronic tools and platforms as well as their limitations.

Participation also provided the opportunity to experience the electronic voting that took place to adopt a measure. In addition, this online meeting offered an opportunity to gain insight into the functioning of the Compliance committee of a sister organization.

Report availability: [here](#)

REGIONAL COORDINATION GROUP ON LARGE PELAGICS (RCG LP) 2021

Location: Online

Dates: 28-30 June 2021

Representatives: Carlos Palma (Biostatistician), Francisco Alemany (GBYP Coordinator), and Carlos Mayor (Database expert)

Main agenda items:

The main agenda items were:

- Feedback from Commission/STECF: Update on revision of EU-MAP, content and timing
- RCG LP global structure evolution: new structure presentation (global and ISSGs); global ISSG organisation; implication of non-EU partners and relation with other RCG; discussion about common Rules of Procedures between RCGs.
- Summaries on RCG LP subgroups (tropical tunas, longline fisheries outside Mediterranean, Mediterranean LP fisheries, bluefin tuna, baitboat/pole and line, recreational fisheries)
- tRFMOs feedback on data transmission: Summarise of data needs and gaps regarding LP data
- Data transmission failures
- RCG LP regional database: development status
- Med&BS Regional Database: development status
- ICES RDBES: presentation and potential link with the LP data (others: database hosting, etc.)
- Other projects with potential RCG LP linkage (Secweb project, FishnCo project)
- RCG LP levels of ambition and next steps

Summary: The RCG LP 2021 annual meeting focused on reviewing the progress of inter-sessional work since 2020 and discussing around the key areas of regional coordination in fisheries data collection, including: governance, regional sampling plans, identifying end-user needs and data quality control. Participants included scientist, experts and/or National Correspondents from various EU Member States as well as DG MARE (European Commission), ICCAT, IOTC and ICES representatives. The meeting dealt with topics such as: data transmission failures to tuna RFMOs, developments status of various regional data bases, priorities in terms of data needs, feasibility for the collection of biological variables and the presentation of a new structure of the RCG LP including the expansion to further sub-groups (e.g.: recreational fisheries). The Group re-opened the discussion on the database model to be adopted by the RCG LP and considered the creation of a technical Sub-Group on data management to study the various options and recommend the best long-term option.

The ICCAT Secretariat has participated in the European Union (EU) Regional Coordination Group on Large Pelagics (RCG LP) 2021 Annual Meeting, as one of the potential beneficiaries of the outcomes planned by the RCG-LP on the provision by EU Member States of fisheries and biological data, through the EU data collection framework (DCF). The Secretariat presented to the Group the various aspects of the ICCAT data collection system, namely the data call process, the types of fisheries statistics and biological data compiled together with the corresponding formats, the submission and the validation process using some of the SCRS instruments developed (filtering criteria, report cards, catalogues, scorecard, etc.), among others. Special attention was given to the way the data transmission failures (due to errors and/or incompleteness in the datasets reported) are handled by the EU and ICCAT in relation to EU Member State data provision. The RCG-LP recognised that the existing practice of sending a yearly report to the EU (DG-MARE) (prepared by the ICCAT Secretariat around October) on the "EU reporting status" is a good instrument used to track with some level of detail the data provision failures of EU Member States. The Secretariat noted that the report

still has potential for improvements in the future. It was also discussed the important role of GBYP (Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna) and other ICCAT Data Collection and Research Programmes, aiming the best scientific knowledge on ICCAT species and the provision of advice to the Commission. Specifically, as in previous meetings of the RCG-LP, the potential synergies between ICCAT Programmes and EU DCF sampling activities were highlighted. As an example, it was emphasized the role that GBYP could play in contributing to the design and implementation of a standardized and efficient BFT sampling scheme, coordinated not only at EU but at global level.

Future actions: Participate in future meetings. Keep contacts with relevant RCG LP subgroup chairs to coordinate DCF and ICCAT large pelagic sampling programs. Follow the development of RCG LP database system. Give advice on the best database model to be chosen by the RBG LP.

Report availability: To be made available.

REGIONAL COORDINATION GROUP ON LARGE PELAGICS (RCG LP) 2021 ANNUAL MEETING

Location: Online

Dates: 23-24 September 2021

Representatives: Francisco Alemany (GBYP Coordinator) and Carlos Palma (Biostatistician)

Main agenda items:

The main agenda items were:

- RCG LP global structure: approval of the RCG LP current structure; focal points for each stage/subgroup; global overview of the data collection process by countries/fisheries and discussion about a list of large pelagic species and by-catch species associated.
- Summaries on RCG LP subgroups (tropical tunas, longline fisheries outside Mediterranean, Mediterranean LP fisheries, bluefin tuna, baitboat/ pole and line)
- Organization of further RCG LP meetings
- RCG LP administration and coordination with other RCG
- RFMO feedback (data needs, data transmission failures and data calls)
- RCG LP regional database
- Global overview of LP sampling programs

Summary: The RCG LP 2020 annual meeting focused on reviewing the progress of inter-sessional work since 2019, and discussing around the key areas of regional coordination in fisheries data collection, including: governance, regional sampling plans, identifying end-user needs and data quality control. Participants included scientist, experts and/or National Correspondents from Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain as well as DG MARE (European Commission), ICCAT, IOTC and ICES representatives. The meeting dealt with topics such as: data transmission failures to tuna RFMOs, regional data base, priorities in terms of data needs, feasibility for the collection of biological variables and the current structure of the RCG LP including the expansion to further sub-groups. The Group approved by consensus that a common database should be used and agreed that the RDBES hosted by ICES will be the selected option, pending approval by the NCs.

The ICCAT Secretariat participated as one of the potential beneficiaries of the outcomes planned by the RCG-LP on the provision by EU Member States of fisheries and biological data, through the EU data collection framework (DCF), which has the potential to be used in ICCAT by EU Member States to fulfil their data obligations. The Secretariat presented to the Group the various aspects of the ICCAT data collection system, namely the data call process, the types of fisheries and biological data and respective formats, the submission and the validation process using some of the SCRS instruments recently developed (filtering criteria, report cards, catalogues, and scorecard). A special attention was given to the way the data transmission failures are handled by EU and ICCAT in relation to the EU Member States data provision. The Group recognised that the existing practice of sending to EU (DG-MARE) a yearly report on the "EU reporting status" is a good instrument used to track with some level of detail the data provision failures of

EU Member States. The Secretariat noted that the report still has potential for improvements in the future. ICCAT representatives also stressed the importance of the coordination between EU-DCF and ICCAT special programmes that include sampling activities. In addition, it was noted that current sampling needs to be reviewed in lieu of the requirements for the stock assessment. It was highlighted the importance of the interaction with the users of data, in the case of the SCRS to coordinate an effective sampling and data provision to support the scientific evaluations of the stock of interest for ICCAT.

Future actions: Participate in future meetings. Keep contacts with relevant RCG LP subgroups chairs to coordinate DCF and ICCAT large pelagics sampling programs. Monitor the development of RCG LP database as a tool

Report availability: To be made available.

18TH LIAISON MEETING BETWEEN THE CHAIRS OF RCGS, STECF MEETINGS ON DCF, RDB STEERING GROUPS, KEY END USERS (ICES, STECF, RFMOS), JRC AND THE COMMISSION

Location: Online

Dates: 23-24 September 2021

Representatives: Francisco Alemany (GBYP Coordinator) and Carlos Mayor (Biostatistician)

Main agenda items:

The main agenda items were:

- Future legislative developments
- End user needs and interaction: presentations from end users (ICES, ICCAT, CECAF, GFCM, STECF/JRC)
- Covid-19 consequences for scientific advice and proposed remedial actions
- Planned changes to ISSG on end user needs
- Questions and discussion in plenary
- Highlights in progress achieved in 2020 - 2021 in the Regional Databases for RCGs in 2021 and problems identified (end users) (RDBES and RDBFIS)
- Highlights in RCG activities (relevant to end users and other RCGs) (RCG Large Pelagics, RCG Long Distance Fisheries, RCG MED&BS, RCG NANSEA/BAL, RCG ECON)
- The 2021 RCGs - specific recommendations to be discussed at the Liaison Meeting and proposal for future intersessional work. Follow-up of Decision Making meeting (if any) and streamlining work between RCGs (RCG Large Pelagics, , RCG Long Distance Fisheries, RCG MED&BS, RCG NANSEA/BAL, RCG ECON)
- RCG Data calls overview how MS responded
- Announcement of new chairs, next meeting(s) and venues. Discussion on availability of chairs and possible solutions.
- Future steps in RCG pan-regional and intersessional work (Streamline, Fish&Co)
- Follow-up on RCG RoP developments in each of the RCGs (RCG Large Pelagics, , RCG Long Distance Fisheries, RCG MED&BS, RCG NANSEA/BAL, RCG ECON)
- SECWEB input on Structure of RCGs and cooperation.
- Structure of RCGs and cooperation. Lessons learned from combined RCGs. Experiences Decision Meeting. Conclude on set-up for 2022)

Summary: 18th Liaison Meeting between the Chairs of RCGs, STECF meetings on DCF, RDB steering groups, key end users (ICES, STECF, RFMOS), JRC and the Commission focused on reviewing the progress of intersessional work of the different RCG since 2020 and coordinating future actions among them. Special attention has been paid also to Regional Databases development. Participants included Chairs of all the RCG, RCG Secretariat, representatives from projects developing RDB and projects supporting RCG development, as well as DG MARE (European Commission), ICCAT, CEFAS, ICES, GFCM and STECF/JRC representatives.

The ICCAT Secretariat participated as one of the potential beneficiaries of the outcomes planned by the RCGs, specially the RCG-LP, on the provision by EU Member States of fisheries and biological data, through the EU data collection framework (DCF), which has the potential to be used in ICCAT by EU Member States to fulfil their data obligations. The Secretariat presented to the attendants the various aspects of the ICCAT data collection system, namely the data call process, the types of fisheries and biological data and respective formats, the submission and the validation process using some of the SCRS instruments recently developed (filtering criteria, report cards, catalogues, and scorecard). A special attention was given to the way the data transmission failures are handled by EU and ICCAT in relation to the EU Member States data provision. ICCAT Secretariat representatives also presented the sampling activities carried out under GBYP program and the initiatives to improve the coordination between ICCAT and EU DCF sampling activities.

The attendants recognised the necessity of involving the ICCAT DBs specialists in the process of design and implementation of Regional Databases including data on ICCAT species, as well the importance of the coordination between EU-DCF and ICCAT special programmes that include sampling activities. To this end, it was agreed that ICCAT representatives would be invited to future relevant meetings on these topics, and that representatives from relevant RCGs would be invited to participate in GBYP workshop on LP sampling coordination.

Future actions: Participate in future meetings. Keep contacts with relevant RCG groups chairs, specially RCG LP, to coordinate DCF and ICCAT large pelagics sampling programs, inviting representatives from these groups to GBYP workshop on international coordination of BFT sampling. Monitor the development of Regional Databases integrating data on ICCAT Species (RDBES and RDBFIS).

Report availability: To be made available.

MEDITERRANEAN ADVISORY COUNCIL (MEDAC)

Location: Online Meeting

Date: 6th October 2021

Representative: Mauricio Ortiz

Agenda items: Presentation on the status of the Mediterranean large pelagic species according to the results of the ICCAT Scientific Committee meeting and Presentation of the Exploitation Strategy for bluefin tuna in the East Atlantic and Mediterranean in view of the ongoing process at ICCAT to adopt Exploitation control rule for this stock.

The Mediterranean Advisory Council, MEDAC role includes the preparation of opinions on fisheries management and socio-economic aspects in support of the fisheries sector in the Mediterranean, to be submitted to the Member States and the European institutions to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the European Union Common Fisheries Policy. The ICCAT Secretariat was invited to attend the meeting and Dr. Mauricio Ortiz provided presentations on the recent findings of the SCRS on the status of the stocks of Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna, Mediterranean Albacore, Mediterranean Swordfish, and Mediterranean Billfish stocks. And a second presentation on the BFT-MSE process updates and future workplan.

It was informed that in 2021, ICCAT conducted an updated assessment for West Bluefin tuna to provide TAC management advice for 2022, but not for the East Bluefin tuna stock. In 2021 the SCRS concluded that for East bluefin tuna biomass indicators did not provide any evidence to alter the management advice provided in 2017 projections, which indicated a TAC of 36,000 t would maintain the stock at fishing mortality below the target $F_{0.1}$ with a probability of 60% or higher in 2022. Nonetheless, the SCRS considers the BFT-MSE as the best process for developing robust management advice for the Bluefin tuna stocks given their complexities and interactions, highlighting the advances achieved in 2021 towards the development of the BFT-MSE process and the work plan for its implementation in 2022.

A stock assessment was conducted in 2021 for the Mediterranean Albacore by ICCAT. And the Committee advice indicates that catches on the order of 2,700 t or lower would allow the stock to recover to the green quadrant of the Kobe plot with a greater than 50% probability by 2032. However, it was noted the high uncertainty in the assessment results and the need for improvement in the fisheries statistics, indices of abundance, and biological information for Mediterranean albacore to provide more robust advice in the future.

With regards to Mediterranean swordfish, it was indicated that ICCAT had conducted an assessment in 2020, of which the results indicated that the stock was overfished but not experiencing overfishing. The Mediterranean swordfish is currently under a rebuilding plan and projections indicated that TACs of 10,000 t or lower will allow the recovery of the stock by 2028 with at least a 60% probability.

An update on the BFT-MSE current status and workplan schedule for its implementation was presented at the MEDAC Large Pelagics meeting. A summary of the Bluefin operating models for both eastern and western stocks was provided, noting the main feature of mixing and migration movements between stocks and the spatiotemporal structure of the model. It was noted the key milestones accomplished in 2020/21, including the adoption of the reference grid and weighting scheme, development, test and tuning of Candidate Management Procedures (CMPs), reconditioning of the OM with data until 2019, and the creation of a Communication Team with the objectives of facilitating and promoting the dialogue between scientist, managers, and stakeholders. The Secretariat invited participants to participate in the series of informative MSE webinars scheduled in October 2021. Furthermore, it was clarified, that the BFT-MSE decisions and discussion will take place at Panel 2 of the ICCAT Commission, and stakeholders are welcome to participate through their official delegation(s) in ICCAT.

Stakeholders noted the recent increases of bluefin tuna in several areas of the Mediterranean highlighting their predation impact on the small pelagic stocks such as sardines and anchovies and their effects on local fisheries. It was indicated the need for studies that take into account the interactions among species and wider ecosystem approach evaluation for better management of the Mediterranean fisheries resources. Also, it was noted the high mortality of bluefin tuna inside the transfer cages of fish destined for farming operations. It was requested a scientific analysis of the maximum density of fish in transport cages to reduce this mortality, and the need to report such mortalities. It was indicated that catches of juvenile swordfish are high, requesting an evaluation of their impact on the stock recovery. Finally, the group noted the limited information of recreational and sport fisheries for the Mediterranean albacore and the need for this data for better management of this important fishery component.