

Oceana's Statement to the Permanent Working Group November 2021

In advance of ICCAT's 2021 PWG and other annual Commission meetings, Oceana would like to take the opportunity to express gratitude towards CPCs, the PWG Chair and ICCAT's Secretariat for their ongoing efforts to continue the essential work of ICCAT during these past challenging years. The upcoming PWG meeting presents an important opportunity to bring ICCAT back on track towards advancing ICCAT's conservation and management measures, to ensure that ICCAT is effectively fulfilling its objective in line with international best practices in RFMOs.

Oceana wishes like to draw your attention to proposal [PWG 415](#) submitted by the European Union for a Recommendation repealing and replacing [ICCAT Recommendation 06-14](#) to promote compliance by nationals of Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or fishing Entities with ICCAT conservation and management measures. Currently, the applicability of the existing Recommendation is limited to nationals who were found to have **engaged** in IUU fishing activities. Proposal PWG_415 aims to expand the scope of this Recommendation to require that CPCs investigate and verify allegations and take **appropriate, effective and deterrent action** against nationals who **benefited from or supported the activities described** (i.e., IUU fishing) explicitly referring to the role that nationals can take as **operators, owners, including beneficial owners, logistics and service providers, including of insurance and other financial services**.

As RFMO IUU vessel lists are publicly accessible, **avoiding business contracts with IUU vessels and denying them access to services is fully achievable and has the potential to significantly impede the activities of IUU fishing vessel operators**. Furthermore, as private sector interest in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues is on the rise, the businesses concerned can seamlessly integrate checks of these lists into existing due diligence processes. Most importantly, as these businesses can screen for and avoid contracts with IUU fishing vessels, they should have a mandated responsibility to do so, ensuring they are not indirectly profiting from illicit activities that are significantly harmful to the marine environment. Through taking this approach, ICCAT can help to dismantle the global network of beneficiaries and service providers that support IUU fishing.

At the upcoming PWG meeting, **we strongly urge PWG members to support proposal PWG_415 for a Recommendation repealing and replacing ICCAT Recommendation 06-14 and to forward it to the Commission Plenary for final adoption**. Noting also that this is aligned with recently adopted measures in other RFMOs including CCAMLR, SPRFMO, SIOFA and GFCM, adopting this proposal would bring ICCAT in line with global best practices in the fight against IUU fishing.

Finally, Oceana would also like to draw particular attention to [PWG 408](#), [PWG 411](#), [PWG 414](#), [PWG 416](#) and [PWG 418](#). Each of these proposals would also help to improve ICCAT's performance in addressing IUU fishing and we encourage that CPCs support and advance these proposals as well.