

Discussion paper on the application of electronic bluefin catch documentation (eBCD) in the pilot project for the short-term live storage of bluefin tuna

(Document submitted by the IMM WG)

(Initially submitted to the 16th Meeting of the Working Group on IMM as IMM_19A/i2023)

This discussion paper presents how Norway intends to record the catch caught in relation to the pilot study into the eBCD system. We would like to seek guidance from the eBCD Technical Working Group (eBCD TWG) regarding the viability and practicability of this proposed approach.

Background:

At the 23rd Special Meeting of the Commission in 2022, a [Resolution by ICCAT on a pilot project for the short-term live storage of bluefin tuna \(Res. 22-07\)](#) was adopted. The Resolution stipulates that CPCs whose vessels have been actively fishing for bluefin tuna North of 56°N, may conduct short-term live storage of bluefin tuna.

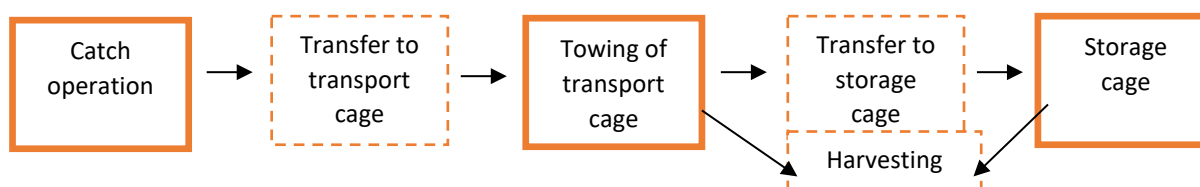
The Norwegian fishing plan, which was endorsed by Panel 2 at the [Intersessional meeting of Panel 2](#) held in March 2023, outlines the allocation of eighteen tonnes of bluefin tuna in 2023 for a scientific pilot study in line with [Res. 22-07](#). The objective of this study is to explore the feasibility of future short-term live storage of bluefin tuna in cages in Norway, while ensuring the preservation of the fish's high quality during and after purse seine catch operations. The designated quota will be assigned to a single research vessel, with the utilization of *only one storage cage*. Comprehensive control coverage will be maintained throughout the pilot study, as both inspectors from the Directorate of Fisheries and personnel from the Institute of Marine Research will be present on board the vessel at all times.

The success of the pilot study in capturing bluefin tuna, confining them within cages, and ensuring their survival under conditions that prioritize fish welfare remains uncertain. The primary focus for the current year will be on capturing and transferring the bluefin tuna to the transport cage and, ideally, to a storage cage. Should the pilot study achieve these objectives and the bluefin tuna become ready for harvest in 2023, the catch will be incorporated into the eBCD system.

During transfer and caging operations, and during the period the bluefin tuna is stored in the storage cages, sick, injured, dead and dying fish will be removed and those not yet dead will be harvested. These fish will also be entered into the eBCD system and may be traded.

Suggested approach:

The pilot study consists of five stages, visualized below:



In order to properly record these stages into the eBCD system, Norway intends to enter the following information under the different sections in the eBCD system:

2. Catch information

The catch operation will be recorded in the eBCD system as an ordinary catch by the purse seine vessel in Section 2. To denote that the capture is associated with the pilot study, we will utilize the "Notes" field located under the "Capture Description" section (see example below). Additionally, or as an alternative, we will also indicate this during the validation of the eBCD by including "Validator Notes".

▶ Catch Description

No. of Fish

Total Weight ,

AVG. Weight(Kg) ,

ICCAT Transfer Authorization Number

Notes (max 4,000 characters)

Area

Gear

Landing date Time GMT

Add Tags (if applicable)

3. Trade information for live fish trade

The next step will be to register the necessary information under Section 3: "Trade information for live fish trade".

Based on our understanding, we will need to provide a farm company in the eBCD system to properly document the transfer of tuna from the seine to the transport cage and subsequently to the storage cage. The caged fish are not fed, and Norway has provided clarification that short-term live storage differs from farming. Consequently, there are no Norwegian tuna farm companies. However, in order to accurately fill out the relevant sections of the eBCD system, our intention is to register the owner of the storage cage as a farm company. We will clarify in the notes field that the owner of the storage cage is not a farm company, see example below.

During the meeting of the (eBCD TWG), Tragsa confirmed that it would be feasible for Norway to register a farm and an operator of that farm.

► **Exporter/Seller**

Point of Exportation/Departure NORWAY (NOR) High Seas

Company NOR TRADING COMPANY 05

Farm of Destination NOR FARM COMPANY 01

CPC Norway

ICCAT FFB No. AT001NOR99995

Signature Ola Nordmann

Notes (max 4.000 characters) Catch from the scientific pilot study on short term live storage of bluefin tuna. NOR FARM COMPANY 01 is not a farm, only the owner of the live storage cage.

4. Transfer information

The catching vessel involved in the pilot study will be used to tow the transport cage to the storage cage. This will imply that this vessel will need to be registered as both a catching vessel and a towing vessel.

Response following the discussion at the 16th Meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM): As a practical approach, Norway will register the purse seine vessel as a catching vessel when the vessel is actively fishing for bluefin tuna, and as a towing vessel when the vessel is towing the transport cage to the storage cage. This will ensure that the vessel is not registered as both vessel types at the same time.

Note: It is possible that no transfer will take place from the transport cage to the storage cage this year, for example due to bad weather or other unforeseen circumstances. In such an event, some of the trials will be conducted while the bluefin tuna is in the transport cage. This may also include harvesting of bluefin tuna from the transport cage, with the possibility of subsequent commercialization. From our current understanding, it is not possible to directly conduct a harvest operation from the transport cage in the eBCD system, however it is possible to register a trade event directly after Section 4 "Transfer Information". In order to document the trade in the eBCD system in such unforeseen events, Norway will register the trade after Section 4 "Transfer Information".

One crucial aspect of the project involves using both conventional and stereoscopic cameras to keep track of the fish at all times. This is particularly important when the fish are moved from the purse seine to the transport cage, as it requires counting and measuring each individual fish. By doing so, we can ensure that we always know the number of bluefin tuna in the cage, even during transportation.

► **Exporter/Seller**

Point of Exportation/Departure Bergen, Norway

Company NOR FARM COMPANY 01

Address ADDRESS TEST

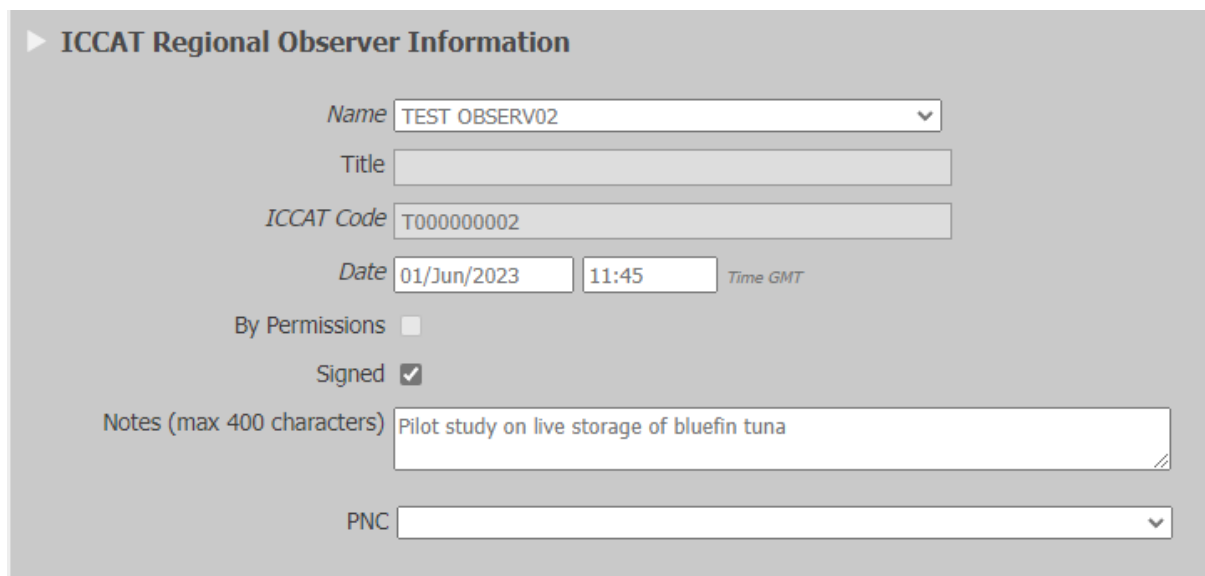
State of Destination NORWAY (NOR)

Signature Ola Nordmann

Notes (max 4.000 characters) Fish harvested from the transport cage in line with the live storage project

6. Farming information

As stated earlier, short term live storage of bluefin tuna differs from farming. However, to adequately document the storage procedures, from our understanding it is essential to utilize the "Farming Information" section within the eBCD system. Consequently, we must designate the owner of the storage cage as a farming facility, despite there being only one storage cage employed in the pilot project this year. In order to explicitly denote that the fish is not subject to farming, a concise description will be entered in both the notes field and the government validation notes. The regional observer should also describe this in the observer notes:



The screenshot shows a web form titled "ICCAT Regional Observer Information". The form contains the following fields and options:

- Name:** A dropdown menu with the value "TEST OBSERV02".
- Title:** An empty text input field.
- ICCAT Code:** A text input field containing "T000000002".
- Date:** Two input fields for date and time. The date is "01/Jun/2023" and the time is "11:45". A label "Time GMT" is positioned to the right of the time field.
- By Permissions:** A checkbox that is currently unchecked.
- Signed:** A checkbox that is currently checked.
- Notes (max 400 characters):** A text area containing the text "Pilot study on live storage of bluefin tuna".
- PNC:** A dropdown menu that is currently empty.

7. Harvesting information

To properly document the harvesting of bluefin tuna from the storage cage, any harvest from the storage cage will be recorded in Section 7 "Harvesting information". Consistent with our previously proposed methodology, we will indicate in both the notes field and the validator notes field that the harvesting is being carried out from a live storage cage, as opposed to a farm.

Questions to the Working Group

1. Is it possible to enter the owner of the storage cage as a "farm operator"?

Response from the discussions during the meeting of the eBCD TWG: Tragsa confirmed that it would be feasible for Norway to register a farm and an operator of that farm within the eBCD system. With regards to the correctness of giving the role as farm operator to the owner of the storage cage, one member of the IMM pointed out that certain aspects of the short-term live storage project don't align with the current design of the eBCD system, and in that regard some compromises need to be made. Hence, designating the owner of the storage cage as the "farm operator" within the eBCD system presents a viable resolution to this matter. Norway intends on doing so, and the owner of the storage cage will be registered as a farm operator in the eBCD system. This is a practical approach as the project at this stage is in an early phase, but modifications to the eBCD system may be needed in the future if the pilot project on short term live storage is successful.

2. We kindly request the eBCD TWG to confirm whether entering trade information immediately after the transfer information, without a preceding harvest report, would suffice.

At the IMM-meeting, Norway was asked to clarify their intended use of stereoscopic cameras in the pilot project, and to provide the clarification in this paper. One crucial aspect of the project involves using both conventional and stereoscopic cameras to keep track of the fish at all times. This is particularly important when the fish are moved from the purse seine to the transport cage, as it requires counting and measuring each individual fish in the transport channel. A stereoscopic camera will be used when the fish is moved from the purse sein net to the transport cage. By doing so, we can ensure that we will know the number of bluefin tuna in the storage cage directly after transfer from the purse seine to the transport cage.

3. And lastly, we would like the view from the eBCD TWG regarding the viability and practicability of this proposed approach, keeping in mind that the pilot project on the live storage of bluefin tuna is on a limited scale.

The IMM Working Group acknowledged that this is a pilot project within a limited scale and a project that is experimental in its nature. The Working Group also pointed out that the project must be conducted within the frames of [Res. 22-07](#). They further stressed that it is important to remove any ambiguity and that Norway clearly shows how the project will be conducted. The Working Group asked Norway to reflect this in the document. In response, Norway has made revisions to the discussion paper eBCD-05/i2023 to address the concerns raised by the members of the IMM Working Group. A revised version of the discussion paper was submitted for discussion and clarification to the 16th Meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM).