

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS



COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA
CONSERVATION DES THONIDES DE L'ATLANTIQUE

COMISION INTERNACIONAL PARA LA
CONSERVACION DEL ATUN ATLANTICO

Madrid, 18 March 2026

ICCAT CIRCULAR # 01857/ 2026

SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF ROP-BFT FOR THE 2026 SEASON (REVISED DATES)

Following ICCAT Circular #01769/26 of 16 March 2026, it has been brought to the attention of the ICCAT Secretariat that some start dates of the fishing season for vessels participating in the programme, as stated in the original ICCAT Circular, required further alignment with the [Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 24-05 establishing a multi-annual management plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the mediterranean \(Rec. 25-04\)](#).

In light of the above, the ICCAT Secretariat has prepared this amended ICCAT Circular to clarify this matter. Please note that the rest of the information provided remains the same. I have, therefore, the honour to inform you that, following the extension of the contract with the Consortium selected to implement the ICCAT Regional Observer Programme for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna (ROP-BFT), the cost of Observers will be as shown in the attachments (**Attachment 2: Vessels**; **Attachment 3: Farms/Traps**). We should be grateful if all CPCs could bring this to the attention of the owners and operators of bluefin tuna purse seiners, farms and/or traps.

As always, the Consortium will make every effort to embark Observers, including ensuring as far as possible that these are of different nationalities to the flag State of the vessel.

Please note that there is no change in the procedures nor any increase in the prices from the previous year.

Please read carefully the attachments below and make the full required payments within the deadlines. It is of the utmost importance that the vessel/farm/trap for which the lodgement is being made is identified on the bank transfer.

Please note that a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), downloadable from the [ICCAT website](#), has been drawn up by the Consortium and should be signed by all Operators for those vessels, farms or traps participating which did not participate in the programme in 2025. For those Operators who signed the MoU in 2025, it is sufficient to sign the extension to the agreement, provided that it lists the vessels, farms or traps concerned. Please see **Attachment 1** for further details.

Many vessels participating in the ROP-BFT have positive balances at the ICCAT Secretariat carried over from the 2025 fishing year. These balances are available on request and can be deducted from the total payment required for 2026 in the case they have been paid by the same Operator. Please cite the ICCAT serial numbers of the vessels for which you request the balances, and please **also cite these numbers when making payment**. The ICCAT Secretariat is currently finalising the accounts for the farms/traps and will be informing you of the available amounts as soon as possible. Meanwhile, farms/traps are requested to make the first payment, and if positive balances are found on account closure, such amounts can be deducted from the next deployment following receipt of the information.

We should be grateful if all Request Forms could be filled out **fully**, to include the dates and ports of embarkation/disembarkation, as well as details of the bank account to which any remaining balances should be paid, in the event that any excess is not carried over to the next year. Please note that it may not be possible to accommodate late changes to initial requests, particularly regarding the port of embarkation, due to visa restrictions.

In order to avoid delays in the importation of equipment, the Consortium will need to know well in advance the exact number of vessels that intend to operate. It is therefore of vital importance that the deadlines are respected and the information in the request is accurate and definitive.



COMISION INTERNACIONAL PARA LA
CONSERVACION DEL ATUN ATLANTICO

With my highest regards.

P.O. Executive Secretary

M. Neves

Miguel Neves dos Santos
Assistant Executive Secretary

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Attachments: Instructions for extension agreement of MoU and payment instructions for vessels and/or farms/traps.



Attachment 1

The MoU is essential to ensure the safety and adequate living and working conditions of the Observer while deployed. The MoU can be found [here](#). Alternatively, those Operators who had signed the MoU in either 2023, 2024 or 2025, may wish to sign a two-page agreement of extension found [here](#).

For those Operators signing either the MoU or the agreement, they must include the Operator's name on the line shown below:

(BFT Purse Seiner /Farm/Trap Operator) (hereafter the Operator)

And the names of the vessel/s, farm/s and/or trap/s for which they are responsible on the line below:

being responsible for the following vessels, farms and/or traps

Please note that one Operator may sign on behalf of any number of vessels, farms and traps for which they are responsible.

Please sign, together with name, position of the signatory, and date on page 8 of the MoU, or on the second page of the agreement as relevant, for the Operator.

For the Supplier

Signed _____

Name _____

Position _____

Date _____

For the Operator

Signed _____

Name _____

Position _____

Date _____

For those Operators signing the MoU, it is important that each page (14 in total) is initialled.

Please ensure that the correctly signed MoU or two-page agreement as appropriate is provided to the consortium no later than 2 weeks before the expected start date of the fishing season. The deployment of the Observer shall not commence before this MoU, signed by the Operator, has been received by the Supplier. It is the responsibility of the Operator to send the signed copy of the MoU to the Supplier. The supplier will not be responsible for any delays to the deployment of an observer due to late signing of the MoU.



Attachment 2

Vessels

For an equitable distribution of costs, the recruitment, training and equipment (start-up) fee for vessels which are participating for the first time, or which participated for the last time in 2022 or prior to 2022, will be **€8,900**. The amount for returning vessels (i.e. those which participated in 2023 or later) will be **€4,900**.

The rates for mobilisation fees and sea days will be as follows:

Mobilisation fee (vessels): **€4,970**

Vessels - Sea days: **€260** per day

The forms for requesting Observers are available on the ICCAT website [here](#).

Completed forms for Vessels, **together with proof of full payment**, must be received, at the latest by:

- 14 April 2026 for vessels starting 1 May
- 21 April 2026 for vessels starting 15 May
- 21 April 2026 for vessels starting 19 May
- 28 April 2026 for vessels starting 26 May
- 19 May 2026 for vessels starting 25 June
- 10 June 2026 for vessels starting 1 August onward

Please ensure that vessel request forms are filled out fully, including start and end dates and **port of embarkation/disembarkation**.

Please note that the logistical management costs produced by the Observer placement process will be passed on to the vessels that have made such requests to the ICCAT Secretariat, even if the requests are cancelled.

All lodgements should be made to the ICCAT ROP-BFT account:

- Name of the bank: Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria (BBVA)
- Address of branch: Pso. Recoletos, 10 ala sur pl. 1, 28001 Madrid (Spain)
- Exact name of the account holder: Comisión Internacional para la Conservación del Atún Atlántico (ICCAT)
- Full account number (including bank codes): 0182 2370 46 0201518869
- IBAN (or BIC code if not applicable): IBAN: ES91 0182 2370 4602 0151 8869 / BIC: BBVAESMM

When making the lodgement, please indicate the **ICCAT Record number of the vessel for which the payment is being made**. A copy of the swift receipt should be sent to the Secretariat together with the request forms.

Please also ensure that a signed copy of the [latest MoU](#) (version 2026) or the [extension agreement](#) if applicable, is sent to the ROP implementing Consortium.



Attachment 3

Farms/Traps

For farms or traps which are participating for the first time or for which the last year of participation was 2022 or years prior to 2022, the recruitment, training and equipment (start-up) fee will be **€8,900**. Lodgements of these amounts for new farms/traps should be paid to the Secretariat by **30 April 2026**. The amount for returning farms/traps will be **€4,900**. These payments should be made by **15 April 2026**, or at the time of first request for new farms.

The rates for mobilisation fees and farm/traps days will be as follows for all deployments starting after **7 April 2026**:

- Mobilisation fee (farms and traps) **€4,970.00**;
- Farm/trap days (no accommodation provided) €396 per day (minimum 5 days);
- Farm/trap days (accommodation provided) €305 per day (minimum 5 days).

For deployments of less than 5 days, the minimum charge for 5 days at standard rates will apply.

The forms for requesting Observers are available on the ICCAT website [here](#).

Please note that normally, completed forms for farms must reach the ICCAT Secretariat **at least 96 hours** before the deployment is required. This same minimum period of 96 hours is also required for requests for extensions; the Secretariat and CPC authorities should be in copy to all such requests if sent directly to the Consortium, as the Consortium cannot approve such extensions without confirmation from the ICCAT Secretariat. **Notwithstanding, we would kindly ask that all farms submit requests as far in advance as possible, and preferably not less than two weeks in advance, in order to try to ensure coverage and reduce travel costs. This is particularly important in peak travel seasons.**

All lodgements should be made to the ICCAT ROP-BFT account:

- Name of the bank: Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria (BBVA)
- Address of branch: Pso. Recoletos, 10 ala sur pl. 1, 28001 – Madrid (Spain)
- Exact name of the account holder: Comisión Internacional para la Conservación del Atún Atlántico (ICCAT)
- Full account number (including bank codes): 0182 2370 46 0201518869
- IBAN (or BIC code if not applicable): IBAN: ES91 0182 2370 4602 0151 8869 / BIC: BBVAESMM

When making the lodgement, please indicate the **ICCAT Record number of the farm/trap for which the payment is being made**. A copy of the swift receipt should be sent to the ICCAT Secretariat together with the request forms. The initial request should cover the full period required when known. Please note that while the Consortium will attempt to fulfil requests for extensions to the dates initially requested, this cannot be guaranteed in all cases as Observers will be selected according to their availability for the dates initially requested.

Please also ensure that a signed copy of the [latest MoU](#) (version 2026), or a copy of the [extension agreement](#) is sent to the ROP implementing Consortium.