

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, 25 January 2024

ICCAT CIRCULAR # 00692/ 2024

SUBJECT: INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF BLUEFIN TUNA SPECIES GROUP
(hybrid/ Sliema, Malta from 15 to 18 April 2024)

Following the adoption by the Commission of the SCRS meetings scheduled for 2024, I would like to inform you that the Intersessional Meeting of Bluefin Tuna Species Group has been scheduled from 15 to 18 April 2024. The in-person meeting will have a hybrid format and will be held at the **Waterfront Hotel**, Sliema, (Malta). The local organizers are offering a special rate (per night) for the following five nights' accommodation at the Waterfront Hotel (14-19 April 2024):

- Single room (incl. breakfast): **€150**
- Double room (incl. breakfast): **€160**

Should any delegates wish to be guaranteed a side sea view room, a supplement of €10 per room per night will apply. For a full sea view room, a supplement of €20 per room per night will apply.

Delegates that wish to benefit from the above special rate shall notify the Secretariat by **18 February 2024** (18:00 Madrid time) at the latest.

This announcement and additional details will be published shortly on the ICCAT meeting webpage. Please find attached the Tentative agenda of the meeting and other relevant information about the organization. I would appreciate it very much if you could distribute this announcement to scientists who may contribute by participating in the meeting.

In order to organize the hybrid meeting in advance of the session, in particular, regarding the number of in-person participants, you are kindly requested to send to the Secretariat a list of delegates who will participate in the meeting by **5 April 2024**, at the latest. Any late submission of the official delegation may cause a delay in providing access to participants to the meeting and the related documents. All participants (online and in-person) must also register for the meeting using the online registration form which is/will be available on the ICCAT meeting webpage by **5 April 2024**.

Funding is available to cover travel and subsistence expenses for a limited number of national scientists from developing States that are Contracting Parties and that can provide information relevant to the meeting objectives. According to the [Rules of Procedure for the Administration of the Special Meeting Participation Fund](#) adopted at the 2023 Commission meeting, requests should be sent to ICCAT-Travel@iccat.int at least **45 days** in advance (**1 March 2024**) of the start of the meeting. Requests for financial assistance cannot be accepted after that date. All the information related to the [Special funds for participation in ICCAT meetings and capacity building](#) is available on the ICCAT website. It is highly recommended to visit this website in advance and to strictly follow the protocols. In particular, it is necessary to fully complete the invitation form including **explanations of the expected contribution to the meeting** and how it relates to the meeting objectives.



COMISION INTERNACIONAL PARA LA
CONSERVACION DEL ATUN ATLANTICO

Please receive the assurances of my highest consideration.

Executive Secretary



Camille Jean Pierre Manel

DISTRIBUTION:

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Chairs Panels 1-4	
SCRS Chair: C. Brown	

- **Head Delegates / Head Scientists**
- **Cooperating Parties, Entities, or Fishing Entities**

Attachment: Tentative Agenda and other relevant information for participants.



Intersessional Meeting of Bluefin Tuna Species Group
(Hybrid/Sliema, Malta from 15 to 18 April 2024)

Objectives

The SCRS will hold an intersessional meeting in 2024 focused on the elaboration of a proposal for the implementation of the close-kin mark recapture (CKMR) methodology for the eastern bluefin tuna, in coordination with the ongoing CKMR study on the western bluefin tuna. The meeting will focus on a) progress of modeling and genetic studies, b) sampling needs and identifying sampling opportunities to obtain the necessary biological samples and age information, c) coordination of sampling across CPCs and d) identifying financial resources to support a pan-Atlantic CKMR implementation. CPCs should send staff who are knowledgeable in their domestic bluefin tuna sampling and about how such programs could support CKMR. The meeting will also take scientific papers on any of the topics included in the tentative agenda below.

Tentative Agenda*

1. Opening and meeting arrangements
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Assignment of rapporteurs
4. CKMR modeling. Initial concepts and developments
 - a) Initial framework
 - b) Modeling requirements
 - c) Preliminary sample size and location requirements
5. CKMR genetics. CKMR Technical Sub-group report
 - a) Genotyping approaches discussion
 - b) Epigenetic aging results
 - c) Other matters
6. Sampling to support implementation of CKMR
 - a) Major sampling programs for BFT-E and eventual adaptation to CKMR modelling needs
 - b) Current sampling program for the BFT-W
 - c) Potential sampling coordination to implement a pan-Atlantic CKMR
 - d) Other possibilities (CPCs research programs, etc.)
7. Breakout sessions
 - a) CKMR sampling logistics and protocols
 - b) CKMR modeling
 - c) CKMR genetics
8. Funding sources for CKMR
 - a) GBYP contribution to CKMR implementation
 - b) US Bluefin Tuna Research Program (BTRP) contribution
 - c) Other sources
9. Abundance indices. Updates and consideration of habitat/spatiotemporal modelling
10. GBYP Strategic directions
 - a) Model-based approaches for aerial survey. Consideration of biannual aerial surveys to save costs
 - b) Diversification of e-tagging program (acoustic tags, internal archival tags)
 - c) Coordination with BTRP and Regional Coordination Group Large Pelagics (RCG LP)
 - d) Coordination with SCRS Strategic plan
11. Other matters
12. Adoption of the Report and closure

* An annotated agenda will be circulated by the Chair during the week before the start of the meeting, which will include the schedule for the different Agenda items.



Additional information for participants

1. Date and venue

The meeting will be in a hybrid format between 15 and 18 April 2024. The in-person meeting will be held at the **Waterfront Hotel**, Sliema, (Malta). The meeting hours will be from **9:00 - 18:00 UTC (GMT+1)**.

2. Contact information

Co-Chairs of Bluefin Tuna Species Group:

Dr. Enrique Rodríguez-Marín (enrique.rmarin@ieo.csic.es)
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Local organizers:

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Fort San Lucjan, Triq il-Qajjenza,
Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Malta Aquaculture Research Centre
MRS 3303 Marsaxlokk, Malta

3. Language

The working language for the meeting will be English, following the decision and Recommendations from the Commission and SCRS in 2022. No interpretation will be provided during the meeting, therefore scientific documents and presentations should be preferably provided in English.



4. Call for scientific papers and presentations

Participants are encouraged to submit relevant scientific papers. Following the latest SCRS deadlines for the submission of SCRS documents and presentations, for this meeting, they should be provided to info@iccat.int and/or ai.kimoto@iccat.int by **8 April 2024**. Documents and presentations provided after the latter deadline will not be accepted unless previously authorized by the Chair(s). Authors are reminded to closely follow the [Guidelines for Authors of Scientific Documents for the ICCAT SCRS and Collective Volume Series](#). Furthermore, the original documents (text, tables, and figures) should be prepared in WORD or compatible software.

5. Registration

Participants are kindly requested to register for the meeting by **5 April 2024** at the latest. Early registration is essential for the Secretariat to ensure the setting up of the online platform. **Online registration** must be completed through the [ICCAT meetings page](#) or the Registration form. All delegates from CPCs wishing to attend the meeting must notify in advance their Head Delegate or Head Scientist to ensure that they are included in the official list that must be sent to the Secretariat by **5 April 2024**.

6. Online settings

The Secretariat is using the Zoom application for the online meeting. You can find the hardware requirements to join an online meeting at the following link: [Zoom Hardware requirements](#). We strongly suggest using headphones with a microphone to be able to hear and speak comfortably during the meeting.

A brief and clear introduction of the application can be found in [Zoom overview](#), if you have further questions, please contact the Secretariat for support. All participants duly registered **will receive an e-mail** through the online platform **with a link to join the meeting**.