

**RESOLUTION BY ICCAT ON IMPROVEMENTS
IN DATA COLLECTION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

(Transmitted to Contracting Parties: **December 19, 2003**)

RECOGNIZING that collection and submission of accurate fishery data is a fundamental obligation of Contracting Parties to the Convention;

KNOWING that these data collection and submission requirements are clearly stated in Article IX (paragraph 2) of the ICCAT Convention, Rule 13 (paragraph 2) of the Rules of Procedure, the *Resolution on the Collection of Statistics on the Atlantic Tuna Fisheries* [66-01], and the *Resolution by ICCAT on the Deadlines and Procedures for Data Submission* [01-16];

NOTING that in 2002, the Commission resolved to convene a Data Workshop [02-30] in response to concern that the quality of such fishery data continues to deteriorate for some fisheries and that for some fisheries relevant required data have never been available to the Commission;

CONSIDERING the recommendations held within the Report of the Data Workshop which included, among other items, provision of training and funds to build capacity of Parties not yet capable of meeting their fundamental obligations, updating the *ICCAT Field Manual for Statistics and Sampling*, and elevating or instituting scientific sampling in some fisheries with inadequate levels;

FURTHER CONSIDERING the results of ICCAT's Survey on Statistic Collection Systems indicating that many Parties with important tuna fisheries do not have the data collection programs in place that are required or recommended by ICCAT, although of the more than 90 Parties believed to be fishing for tuna or tuna-like species in the Convention Area, only 17 have so far completed questionnaires and;

ALSO DESIRING to improve capacity of various Parties to the Convention in their ability to collect, quality assure, and report the required data;

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RESOLVES THAT:

- 1 Parties should respond to the ICCAT Survey on Statistic Collection Systems at the earliest possible date;
- 2 Parties with sufficient capacity for meeting fundamental data collection, quality assurance, and reporting obligations should make voluntary contributions in proportion to their catch level, to a special fund, managed at the Secretariat. These funds will be used for training in data collection and for supporting of scientific participation in SCRS data preparatory and stock assessment sessions by scientists from Parties with insufficient capacity to meet data collection, quality assurance, and reporting obligations. For 2004, this special fund should be initially established at 40,000 Euros and activities undertaken with these funds should be reviewed by the Commission at its 2004 meeting and annually thereafter.
- 3 A plan for reinstating ICCAT port sampling should be developed by SCRS, including expected costs associated with this sampling, and presented to the Commission at its 2004 meeting for further consideration.