




MESSAGE FROM THE ICCAT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The ICCAT Secretariat has the pleasure to present its readers with **ICCAT Newsletter No. 17**, informing of the latest events and activities of our Organization.



RECENT MEETINGS

 **2013 Meeting of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS).**



The SCRS held a meeting from October 1 to 5, 2012 in Madrid, Spain. The Report of the meeting is published in the ICCAT Biennial Reports and will be printed in February 2013. The electronic version is available from the ICCAT web site.

The SCRS carried out stock assessments in 2012 on Atlantic white marlin, western and eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna, North and South Atlantic shortfin mako. Likewise, the Committee carried out Ecological Risk Analysis (ERA) for different shark species.

The Sub-Committee on Ecosystems carried out preparatory work on sea turtles required to assess the impact of ICCAT fisheries on populations. This assessment should be carried out this year. The Sub-Committee continued its work regarding issues on by-catch and measures to mitigate the impact of tuna fisheries on by-catch.

The Group on assessment methods developed generic protocols for the inclusion and/or use of CPUE series in assessment models.

The Committee also revised protocols to carry out peer revisions of the work of SCRS. These revisions were resumed in 2012 during the blue marlin assessment. Likewise, a calendar was established to develop a SCRS science strategic plan including aspects such as the development of a strong policy of quality control, improvement as regards to training and capacity building within the SCRS, etc.

As usual, the Committee evaluated the presentations carried out during the meeting and Basque berets (*Chapelas*) were awarded to the winning rapporteurs.



18th Special Meeting of the Commission

The 18th Special Meeting of the Commission was held in Agadir (Morocco) from November 12 to 19, 2012. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Masanori Miyahara. The support of the European Union and excellent work of the Government of Morocco guaranteed its success.



The following ten Recommendations and two Resolutions were adopted by the Commission at its 18th Special Meeting:

Recommendation by ICCAT on South Atlantic Swordfish Catch Limits [Rec. 12-01]

Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Rebuilding Program [Rec. 12-02]

Recommendation by ICCAT Amending the Recommendation by ICCAT To Establish a Multiannual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean [Rec. 12-03]

Recommendation by ICCAT to Further Strengthen the Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Stocks [Rec. 12-04]

Recommendation by ICCAT on Compliance with Existing Measures on Shark Conservation and Management [Rec. 12-05]

Recommendation by ICCAT on a Programme for Transshipment [Rec. 12-06]

Recommendation by ICCAT for an ICCAT Scheme for Minimum Standards for Inspection in Port [Rec. 12-07]

Recommendation by ICCAT Supplementing the Recommendation on an Electronic Bluefin Tuna Catch Document (eBCD) Programme [Rec. 12-08]

Recommendation by ICCAT on a Process Towards the Establishment of a Catch Certification Scheme for Tuna and Tuna-like Species [Rec. 12-09]

Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Working Group to Develop Amendments to the ICCAT Convention [Rec. 12-10]

Resolution by ICCAT Regarding the Presentation of Objections in the Context of Promoting Effective Conservation and Management Measures Adopted by ICCAT [Rec. 12-11]

Resolution by ICCAT on the Sargasso Sea [Rec. 12-12]

The Recommendations will enter into force on June 10, 2013.

The full texts of the Recommendations and Resolutions are available on the ICCAT web page: www.iccat.int.

To note that ICCAT has taken a new step regarding the fishery control and bluefin tuna commerce in deciding to implement the electronic BCD. This measure, which will be tested in 2013, will be obligatory from 2014.

During the meeting the Commission decided to extend the mandate of the Executive Secretary for another two years.

CALENDER OF EVENTS - 2013

Twelve SCRS meetings, two training courses (one which has already been held, January 21-25) and five Commission meetings, as well as several coordination meetings within the framework of the GBYP and a meeting of the eBCD Technical Working Group which took place on January 28-31 in Madrid (Spain).

Below is a list of the meetings scheduled up to the distribution of the Newsletter which will be published in September.

February

- *Intersessional meeting of the Compliance Committee and Panel 2*, February 18-21, Seville, Spain. The objective of this meeting is to approve the East Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishing, inspection and capacity control plans. The report of this meeting is available on the ICCAT web site.

March

- *ICCAT Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods*, March 11-15, Madrid, Spain. The work of this Group will mainly consist on the development and presentation of assessment model diagnostics, definition of limit reference points and management strategy evaluation and the revision of TORs for Peer review, including identification and selection of invited experts.

- *Intersessional Meeting of the Tropical Tuna Species Group*, March 18-21, Tenerife, Spain. The objective of this meeting is to establish the TORs to design the Atlantic Ocean Tropical Tagging Program (AOTTP).

April

- *Intersessional Meeting of the Shark Species Group*, April 8-12, Mindelo, Cape Verde. During this meeting the Special Research Programme on Sharks will be developed framed within the SCRS Science Strategic Plan foreseen for the period 2015-2020.

- *ICCAT Albacore Data Preparatory Meeting*, April 22-26, Madrid, Spain. The objective of the meeting is to review and prepare the data required to carry out stock assessments on North and South Atlantic stocks.

May

- *2013 Bluefin Meeting on Biological Parameters Review*, May 7-13, Tenerife, Spain. During this meeting the results of research on biology and other stock parameters carried out within the framework of the GBYP will be assessed. This meeting will be followed by a three-day meeting (May 14-16) where reference parameters of the operating model will be defined for bluefin tuna.

June

- *ICCAT Atlantic Swordfish Data Preparatory Meeting*, June 3-10, Madrid, Spain. The objective of the meeting is to review and prepare the necessary data to carry out North and South Atlantic swordfish stock assessments.

- *Atlantic Albacore Stock Assessment Session*, June 17-24, Sukarrieta, Spain. During this meeting the assessment of the Atlantic albacore stock will be updated.

- *Working Group on Fisheries Managers and Scientists in support of the W-BFT stock assessment*, June 25-28, Canada. The Group will review different aspects (recruitment, stock structure and mixing rate, etc.) related to science and management of this stock).

July

- *Intersessional Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Ecosystems*, July 1-6, Madrid, Spain. The Sub-Committee will essentially work on preparing the assessment of the impact of tuna fisheries on sea turtles and will continue in the implementation of fishery management based on the ecosystem.

- *8TH Meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM)*, July 7-9, Sapporo, Japan. The Group will continue with its work on Integrating Monitoring Measures in an extensive management framework.

- *First meeting of the Working Group on Convention Amendment*, July 10-12, Sapporo, Japan. The Group will identify measures that will require a revision of the Convention and will establish a work plan to carry this out.

- Bluefin Stock Assessment Methods Meeting, July 20-22, Boston, USA. The Group will identify the assessment methods which better adjust to the characteristics of the stocks and data availability.

September

- *Atlantic Swordfish Stock Assessment Session*, September 2-10, Olhão, Portugal. During this meeting the Atlantic swordfish stocks assessments will be updated.

All information on meetings is available on the ICCAT web site (<http://www.iccat.int/en/meetingscurrent.htm>).

Scientists who would like to present documents to the SCRS meetings can download the *Guidelines for Authors* from the ICCAT web site: (http://www.iccat.int/en/pubs_guidelines.htm).

SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES

The Secretariat has continued to support the activities of the SCRS and the Commission. In particular, during the second half of 2012, the Secretariat focused on the preparation of the SCRS and Commission meetings. As part of this work, the Secretariat prepared a series of documents that were presented to these meetings. As well as the traditional documents (reports related to research and statistics, financial report, compliance report, etc.), the Secretariat prepared working documents to support the discussion groups. All the reports prepared by the Secretariat are published, since 2011, in an independent volume (Vol. 4) of the Report for the Biennial Period. During this period the Secretariat has actively worked in the process of preparation and development of the work prior to the implementation of the eBCD system.

Phase 3 of the ICCAT-GBYP (Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for the Bluefin Tuna, which was carried out during 2012 has continued with the activities of data recovery, biological and genetic sampling, tagging and modeling approaches.

The ICCAT-GBYP Steering Committee held a meeting in Sète, France, in December 12-14, 2012 to review the research activities carried out in Phase 3 of the Project and define the research priorities for Phase 4 of the Project, which will be carried out in 2013.

All the activities and reports are available on: <http://www.iccat.int/GBYP/en/index.htm>

Furthermore, since the previous Newsletter, the ICCAT Secretariat has been represented in external meetings related to ICCAT's activities:

– 8TH Meeting of the FIRMS Standing Committee, January 4-6, 2013, Rome, Italy.

– 24th Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP), January 4-6, 2013, Rome, Italy.

ICCAT played an active role in the various meetings with written and/or oral contributions.

Further to the meeting in Agadir, the Secretariat has initiated the preparatory work of the forthcoming Commission meeting which will be held in Cape Town (South Africa) from November 18-25.

The Secretariat restructured the vessel database and the Guidelines for Submitting Data & Information Required by ICCAT was updated (<http://www.iccat.int/en/SubmitCOMP.htm>).

Apart from the activities mentioned above, the Secretariat is responsible for the maintenance of the joint web page of tuna RFMOs (<http://www.tuna-org.org/>).

At its 18th Special meeting, the Commission adopted a great number of Recommendations and Resolutions that require important work by the Secretariat for the implementation of various provisions included therein. This work load will increase considerably following the entry into force of the Recommendations and Resolutions.

ASSISTANCE FUNDS

The objective of these funds is to encourage the improvement of statistics of species under ICCAT mandate. Currently, there is a budget on special funds for data improvement established by *Resolution by ICCAT on Improvements in Data Collection and Quality Assurance* [Res. 03-21], including open contributions granted by Contracting Parties. To date, specifically three Parties (European Union, Japan and United States) have contributed.

During the second half of 2012, scientists of coastal developing States were funded by these programs to participate in the SCRS meetings. Likewise, other activities were financed to support the work of the SCRS following the protocols to request and use

these funds approved by the SCRS in its 2010 and 2011 meetings.

At its 22nd Regular meeting, the Commission established a new assistance fund by adopting ICCAT *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Establishment of a Meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties* [Rec. 11-26].

OBSERVER PROGRAMME

The Secretariat has continued to coordinate the implementation of the ICCAT Regional Observer Programme concerning transshipments and the Regional Observer Programme for bluefin tuna. In 2012, nine CPCs participated in the ROP-BFT transshipment and six CPCs in the ROP-BFT, with 18 observers onboard cargo vessels and 86 on fishing vessels. The total number of deployments on farms during 2012 was 50, and in 2013, 6 deployments to date (February 26, 2013).

It has been agreed to extend contracts for the April 2013 to April 2014 period for these programs.

Since the last issue of this Newsletter, the Secretariat distributed an announcement of an expression of interest to complete an ICCAT regional observer programme for surface fleets targeting yellowfin and bigeye in accordance to Recommendation 11-01. The offers received were assessed by an *ad hoc* Committee during the Commission meeting. The four proposals pre-selected by the Committee have presented implementation tenders which are currently being assessed. The ROP-TROP will be implemented in January 2014 during the time-area closure period on FAD fishing.

TAGGING LOTTERY

Established to promote the recovery of tags placed by various laboratories belonging to ICCAT Contracting Parties, the annual tagging lottery was held on October 1, 2012 during the plenary sessions of the SCRS. The reward for each lottery is €500 and corresponds to the following:



– Tropical tunas: The winning tag (SEC005667) was recovered by Brazil on a yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacores/YFT*), 82 days after tagging which had been carried out in the Uruguay fishing campaigns.

– Temperate tunas. Due to the limited number of tags recovered during the year, a lottery was not carried out for this category. However, the award corresponding to this category was assigned later to tag number FF001729, recovered by Spain on a bigeye (*Thunnus obesus/BET*), 1285 days after tagging. This tag had been notified incorrectly as being recovered on a bluefin tuna.

– Billfish: The winning tag (BF-406079) was recovered by Venezuela on an Atlantic blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans/BUM*), 1638 days after tagging.

– Sharks: The winning tag (APB-319850) was recovered by the United States on a blue shark (*Prionace glauca/BSH*), 744 days after tagging.

In 2012 the first tagging lottery recovered within the GBYP was carried out. Three tags were awarded on bluefin tunas.

– The first winning tag (AAB000162), awarded with €500, was recovered by Italy one day after tagging. Tagging was carried out in the fishing campaigns in Italy.

– The winning tag (AAB002116), awarded with €1000, was recovered by Italy. Tagging was carried out in the fishing campaigns in Italy.

– The third winning tag awarded by the GBYP was BF434055. However, when confirming the information an error was detected in the identification of the

species carrying the tag recovered which corresponded to a bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*/BET) and not to a bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*/BFT). Thus, a new lottery was carried out at the Secretariat offices supervised by the staff and the GBYP Project Coordinator. In this second lottery the winning tag (FF001729), awarded with €500, was recovered by Spain, 1493 days after tagging. Tagging was carried out in the fishing campaigns in France.

All recent ICCAT publications can be downloaded from <http://www.iccat.int>

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