

ICCAT NEWSLETTER

No. 28, September 2018

Note from the new ICCAT Executive Secretary

I am very happy to establish this connection with readers as the new ICCAT Executive Secretary, having recently taken up my duties in July 2018. I should also like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Mr. Driss Meski, for the immense work he has accomplished at the Secretariat. Aware that there are many challenges, I am convinced that the ICCAT staff, whose professionalism is unanimously recognised and who I am pleased to lead, will further contribute to reaching ICCAT's objectives. In fact, the staff are already committed to providing their full support to ensure the Commission's success. Moreover, allow me to assure you of my total availability to work together in close collaboration to reach our objectives. Furthermore, I should like to express my full commitment to serving in this position of Executive Secretary with fairness, loyalty, transparency and respect towards all the Parties.

Camille Jean Pierre Manel

Introduction

The Secretariat has participated in several international meetings, such as:

- Tuna Compliance Network meets to review compliance information management systems: 2nd Workshop (Extended to Other RFMOs), 15-18 February, Pacific Islands Fisheries Agency (FFA), Honiara, Solomon Islands ([link](#))
- Organizational Meeting for the Intergovernmental Conference on an International Legally Binding Instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, 16-18 April, UN Headquarters, New York, USA ([link](#))
- Fourth meeting of the 'Collective Arrangement between competent international organisations on cooperation and coordination regarding selected areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction in the North-East Atlantic', 7 May, Berlin, Germany ([link](#))
- World Trade Organization (Workshop on Stock Assessment), 11 June, Geneva, Switzerland
- OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, Meeting of the OSPAR Commission, Tour Sequoia, 26 June, Paris, France ([link](#))
- Regional Fisheries Body Secretariats' Network (RSN), Seventh meeting, 7 and 13 July, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy ([link](#))
- Committee on Fisheries (COFI), Thirty-third Session, 9-13 July, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy ([link](#))
- Kobe Steering Committee Meeting, 11 July, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy
- Fifth Project Steering Committee (PSC) of the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project, 16-18 July, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy
- 10th Conference of Ministers of ATLAFCO, 26-28 August, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire ([link](#))

RECENT MEETINGS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE THE LAST ISSUE

Commission intersessional meeting

- Panel 2 intersessional meeting, 5-7 March, Madrid, Spain ([link](#))
- Meeting of the Online Reporting Technology Working Group, 26-27 March, Madrid, Spain ([link](#))
- 12th Meeting of the IMM Working Group, 9-12 April, Madrid, Spain ([link](#))
- Meeting of the Working Group on Convention Amendment, 24-25 May, Funchal, Madeira, Portugal ([link](#))
- Panel 1 Intersessional Meeting, 23-25 July, Bilbao, Spain ([link](#))
- Meeting of the Port Inspection Expert Group for Capacity and Assistance, 18-19 September, Madrid, Spain

COM/SCRS intersessional meeting

- MSE (bluefin tuna), 16-20 April, Madrid, Spain ([link](#))
- MSE (North Atlantic swordfish), 16-20 April, Madrid, Spain ([link](#))
- Meeting of the Standing Working Group on Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers (SWGSM), 21-23 May, Funchal, Madeira, Portugal ([link](#))

SCRS intersessional meetings

- Blue Marlin Data Preparatory meeting, 12-16 March, Madrid, Spain ([link](#))
- Small Tunas Species Group Intersessional Meeting, 2-6 April, Madrid, Spain ([link](#))
- Bigeye Tuna Data Preparatory meeting, 23-27 April, Madrid, Spain ([link](#))
- Meeting of the ICCAT Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods (WGSAM), 7-11 May, Madrid, Spain ([link](#))
- Sub-Committee on Ecosystems Intersessional meeting, 4-8 June, Madrid, Spain ([link](#))
- Blue Marlin Stock Assessment Session, 18-22 June, Miami, USA ([link](#))
- Sharks Species Group Intersessional Meeting, 2-6 July, Madrid, Spain ([link](#))
- Bigeye Tuna Stock Assessment Session, 16-20 July, Pasaia, Spain ([link](#))

ICCAT Research programmes

Phase 8 of the ICCAT *Atlantic-wide Research Programme on Bluefin Tuna (GBYP)* continued activities (e.g. data recovery, biological studies, tagging trials and modelling approaches) and new studies were initiated (*i.e.* aerial surveys in the Mediterranean sea). Additional information can be found [here](#).

Since last February the ICCAT *Atlantic Ocean Tropical tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP)* has continued to tag tuna, most recently off South Africa, Brazil, Uruguay, USA Atlantic coast, and the Madeira archipelago. To date more than 91,500 tropical tunas have been tagged and more than 13,500 recovered with their valuable associated metadata. Otolith reading and general tag data analytical workshops are also scheduled ([tagging progress](#)).

Small Tunas Year Programme (SMTYP) continued a series of biological studies. For that purpose, the Secretariat issued a contract to a consortium of 13 institutions (11 CPCs), aiming the collection of biological samples for the main small tuna species. This will enhance biological knowledge on those species, aiming at future small tuna stock assessments. Preliminary results of the research conducted in the previous year were presented during the annual meeting of the Small Tunas Species Group.

Enhanced Programme for Billfish Research (EPBR) continued its activities, namely in terms of biological studies. In that regard, a contract was issued to a consortium of 4 institutions (3 CPCs) by the ICCAT Secretariat in 2018, aiming a study on age and growth. The objectives of EPBR have recently been expanded to evaluate adult billfish habitat use, spawning patterns and population genetics, as these studies are essential to improve billfish assessments. In addition a contract was issued for a *Comprehensive study of strategic investments related to artisanal fisheries data collection in ICCAT fisheries of the Caribbean/central American region*.

Shark Research and Data Collection Programme (SRDCP) continued to focus its efforts on four major activities, which are essential for shortfin mako and porbeagle sharks assessments, including the following aspects: pan-Atlantic age and growth study; population genetics to investigate stock structure and phylogeography; stock boundaries, migrations and habitat use; and, post-release mortality on pelagic longline fisheries.

In addition to the above mentioned activities, in support of the work of the SCRS, the Secretariat has recently signed 5 contracts with Consortia and/or individual experts to: i) help developing the current four Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) processes currently ongoing in ICCAT (bluefin tuna, northern albacore, northern swordfish and Atlantic tropical tuna); ii) develop biological studies of northern albacore (on reproduction) and swordfish (reproduction, age and growth and genetics); iii) migrations and stock boundaries of northern albacore and swordfish; and iv) development of joint longline fisheries CPUE for Atlantic bigeye tuna.

2018 Calendar for remaining events

September

- Sub-Committee on Statistics, 24-25 September, Madrid, Spain
- SCRS Species Groups meetings, 24-28 September, Madrid, Spain

October

- Meeting of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), 1-5 October, Madrid, Spain

November

- Meeting of the Compliance Committee (COC), 10-12 November, Dubrovnik, Croatia
- 21st Special Meeting of the Commission, 12-19 November, Dubrovnik, Croatia

(for additional information on these meetings [click here](#))

OTHER NEWS

Between March and June 2018 the Secretariat organized three capacity building courses to enhance participation of scientists in MSE processes - training workshops in MSE development. These courses involved two external experts (Dr. Rishi Sharma and Dr. Iago Mosqueira), and a total of 18 participants from 13 ICCAT CPCs.

The ICCAT/Japan Capacity-Building Assistance Project (JCAP) has continued to fund the Restructuring and Recovery of the Statistical System in São Tomé and Príncipe. In addition, a similar project funded by JCAP has been implemented in Liberia.

The former By-catch Coordinator, Dr. Paul de Bruyn handed in his resignation in June 2018. Through this Newsletter, his colleagues from the Secretariat would like to wish him every success in this new stage of his life.

The new Executive Secretary, Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel started his mandate in July 2018. In addition, the following positions were recently filled: Dr. Ai Kimoto was hired as Population Dynamics expert. Dr. Nathan Taylor was appointed as the new By-catch Coordinator and Dr. Lisa Ailloud was appointed as the new ICCAT AOTTP Assistant Coordinator. The Secretariat would like to wish them a warm welcome.

We are also pleased to account for our new web site <https://www.iccat.int>

Should you detect any errors or wish to provide any suggestions for improvement, please inform us by e-mail.