

Original: English

**PROPOSAL FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE
24TH REGULAR MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT)**

(Proposed by Canada)

An ecosystem approach to fisheries management requires that management decisions consider the impact of the fishery not only on the target species, but also on non-target species, seafloor habitats, and the ecosystems of which these species are a part. This approach requires that management decisions take into account changes in the ecosystem which may affect the species being fished. This includes the effects of weather and climate, and the interactions of target fish stocks with predators, competitors, and prey species.

Article 119 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) obliges member states to implement certain aspects of the ecosystem based approach when establishing measures to conserve marine living resources in the high seas. Article 5 of the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement also details certain features of the ecosystem approach, including the need to preserve marine biodiversity and to maintain the integrity of marine ecosystems.

The UN General Assembly has called upon States, directly and through regional fisheries management organizations, to apply, in accordance with international law, an ecosystem approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of fish stocks, and in adopting and implementing conservation and management measures in relation to by-catch, pollution, overfishing, and protecting certain habitats [A/RES/67/79 at paragraph 8].

While the ecosystem approach is not explicitly referenced in the ICCAT Convention, there is nothing in the Convention which prevents the Commission from applying this approach. Indeed, ICCAT has implemented certain aspects of an ecosystem approach, for example, in relation to species caught in association with ICCAT fisheries - see Recommendation [10-09] on sea turtles and Recommendation [10-06] on sharks. The establishment of the Subcommittee on Ecosystems of the SCRS is another example of the Commission's efforts to better implement this approach. Canada believes the Commission must continue to build on these efforts. In order to support the Commission's actions in this regard, Canada proposes the following draft recommendation.

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF
AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

NOTING that provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement reflect certain elements of an ecosystem approach to the conservation and management of marine living resources;

RECALLING that certain aspects of the ICCAT Convention reflect components of an ecosystem approach, particularly with regard to the research activities of ICCAT;

FURTHER RECALLING that ICCAT has taken decisions, such as Rec. [10-06] and Rec. [10-09] that take ecosystem considerations into account;

ACKNOWLEDGING the ongoing work of the Subcommittee on Ecosystems which provides valuable information and advice concerning ecosystem related issues and questions facing the Commission;

DESIRING to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of ICCAT species and in so doing safeguarding the marine ecosystems in which the resources occur;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the discussions taking place within the Convention Amendment Working Group on the incorporation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management in the proposed amendments to the ICCAT Convention; and

NOTING that this recommendation is without prejudice to any discussions or decisions made by the Working Group in this regard;

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

1. When making recommendations pursuant to Article VIII of the Convention, the Commission shall apply an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management,
2. In implementing an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, the Commission shall, *inter alia*:
 - a) consider the interdependence of stocks and species belonging to the same ecosystem or associated with or dependent upon target stocks;
 - b) consider the impacts of fishing, other relevant human activities, and environmental factors on target stocks, non-target species and species belonging to the same ecosystem or associated with or dependent upon target stocks in the Convention area; and
 - c) minimize negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem.