

Original: English

**LETTER FROM THE COMMISSION CHAIR ON PROGRESS ON ESSENTIAL COMMISSION BUSINESS TO  
BE DISCUSSED VIA CORRESPONDENCE**

Dear colleagues,

I should like to quickly update you on the progress we have made to date, and my proposals for future action. I believe that excellent progress has been made to date, but some subsidiary bodies may finish their work earlier due to a smaller number of issues to consider, or that the issues under discussion make it easier to reach agreement.

In order to be able to ensure the effectiveness of our measures in 2021, I propose to divide the adoption process into two, or if necessary three, "blocks". I sincerely hope that under the circumstances all decisions adopted by the subsidiary bodies can be endorsed by the Commission without further debate. In order to ensure continued management regimes for our more vulnerable stocks, I would urge all CPCs to refrain from re-opening any issues already agreed until 2021.

I am pleased to inform you that Block 1 is attached to this letter and comprises the reports from Panel 3, Panel 4 and STACFAD, which I now submit for formal adoption by the Commission, together with the documents cited in those reports.

Any comments on these should be sent by **16:00 Madrid time on 11 December 2020**, after which they will be considered to be formally adopted.

I hope that Block 2 will be available mid-December for adoption before the end of the year. If necessary, Block 3, comprising those subsidiary bodies which have required more time for the issues tabled can be sent for adoption in January.

In addition to the issues being discussed in the Panels and other subsidiary bodies, please see below a brief update on the progress of Plenary issues.

**1. Review of the reports of the 2020 Intersessional Meetings, including Online meetings as appropriate and consideration of any necessary actions.**

There have been no changes since my previous letter, so from 30 November, we will consider all intersessional meeting reports to be officially adopted by the Commission. Comments in support of my previous proposal are contained in the attached Excel file.

**2. Cooperation with other organisations, including review of outstanding MoUs or determination of action plan as appropriate**

There have been no changes since my previous letter. This issue will be revisited in 2021, and letters of cooperation on specific issues can be exchanged in the interim if necessary. Comments in support of my previous proposal are contained in the attached Excel file.

**3. Review and endorsement, if appropriate, of the decisions taken by the Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD)**

The Chair of STACFAD has already provided a written report listing the decisions requiring endorsement and adoption by the Commission.

**4. Review and endorsement, if appropriate, of proposals put forward by the Panels 1 to 4**

The Chair of each Panel will make available a brief written report, listing the decisions requiring endorsement and adoption by the Commission. I understand that some Panels will conclude their business earlier than others. In fact, I have already received summary reports for STACFAD, and Panels 3 and 4. I shall therefore be seeking formal adoption of the reports before mid-December. Those which become available later may have to wait until January for formal adoption by the Commission, but this should not hinder their implementation from 1 January if agreed by the Panel or other subsidiary bodies; I will keep abreast of developments with the Chairs and update all CPCs as appropriate.

**5. Review and endorsement, if appropriate, of the decisions taken by the Conservation and Management Measures Compliance Committee (COC)**

Given the more specific needs of this subsidiary body, I believe that the report of the Chair of the Compliance Committee may need to be formally adopted with the second group of Panels in January, but I will liaise with the COC Chair and keep you abreast of developments.

**6. Review and endorsement, if appropriate, of the decisions taken by the Permanent Working Group for the Improvement of ICCAT Statistics and Conservation Measures (PWG)**

I hope that the Chair of the PWG can make his final report to the Commission soon, and I will seek the formal adoption before the end of the year, together with STACFAD and any Panels which have concluded their business.

**7. Intersessional meetings in 2021**

With my last letter I circulated a new draft ICCAT calendar for 2021 (posted as document PLE-106) and requested comments on this. I, and my fellow Chairs, have already received several comments which are contained in the attached Excel file. From these initial comments, I believe that some modification to the tentative schedule is required and I am attaching a revised proposal to this letter which will be posted as PLE-106A. I trust this is acceptable to everyone and will be forwarding this revised version to plenary in my report for formal approval.

I should also like to request at this stage that any CPC who believes they may be in a position to host any of the in-person meetings scheduled to be held in 2021, that they inform the Secretariat and myself as soon as possible. I do understand the difficulties in making any firm commitment at this stage, but expressions of interest would be welcomed.

As regards the Virtual Working Group on the Review of the Rules of Procedure (VWG-RRP) in order to proceed and conclude the works aiming at the approval of a new version of the Rules of Procedure prior to the 2021 Commission meeting, I propose that in early 2021 we start working by correspondence on a draft proposal and will convene an intersessional meeting during the first trimester after consultation with the members of VWG-RRP.

**8. Other matters**

As there were no objections to the removal of the *Resolution by ICCAT on Ecosystems that are Important and Unique for ICCAT Species* [Res. 16-23] from the active compendium within the deadline set in my last letter, I hereby instruct the Secretariat to remove this from the 2021 version of the compendium and consider it inactive.

**9. Date and place of the next meeting of the Commission**

From the comments received so far, I understand that there is some preference for the dates of 15-22 November 2021. I therefore suggest that we approve those dates, on the assumption that an in-person meeting can be held.

Turkey had originally offered to host the 2020 meeting, but unfortunately has confirmed with the Secretariat that they are not in a position to carry over this offer to 2021, and hence I should note that at this stage we have not yet received any offer to host the 2021 annual meeting. I should like to request at this stage that any CPC who believes they may be in a position to host the meeting to inform the Secretariat and myself as soon as possible, and preferably before 31 January 2021. I do understand the difficulties in making any firm commitment at this stage but expressions of interest would be welcomed so that these can be followed up as early in the year as possible, depending, on the evolution of the pandemic.

**10. Adoption of the report containing the decisions of the Commission**

I remain confident that the subsidiary bodies can make their reports to me in a timely manner. The reports under Items 4-6 will be circulated for approval by Plenary once the business of the subsidiary bodies is concluded. As the correspondence period has already closed for STACFAD and Panels 3 and 4, I will be seeking formal adoption of the attached reports by **11 December 2020 (18:00 Madrid time)**.

As there is no other business other than the endorsement of the reports of the subsidiary bodies, any CPC or observer wishing to make a final statement and/or comments to Plenary on items other than 3-6 may do so, in accordance with Circular 7324/2020 before **7 December 2020 (18:00 Madrid time)**. Such comments will not be translated but will be summarized for inclusion in the final report.

Finally, I should like to thank you all for the excellent progress to date and look forward to concluding this process in the most efficient manner possible.

*ICCAT Commission Chairman*



Raúl Delgado