

**MEETINGS AT WHICH ICCAT WAS REPRESENTED
FROM JANUARY 2022 TO OCTOBER 2022**

SUMMARY

This document provides basic information on the meetings of an administrative and scientific nature at which ICCAT was represented by members of the Secretariat staff or by other persons acting on its behalf. The basic information on each meeting includes the main points of the agenda as well as their major implications for ICCAT.

**RÉUNIONS AUXQUELLES L'ICCAT A ÉTÉ REPRÉSENTÉE
ENTRE JANVIER 2022 ET OCTOBRE 2022**

RÉSUMÉ

Le présent document fournit des informations de base sur les réunions administratives et scientifiques auxquelles l'ICCAT a été représentée par des membres du personnel du Secrétariat ou par d'autres personnes au nom du Secrétariat. L'information de base pour chaque réunion inclut les principaux points de l'ordre du jour ainsi que les principales implications pour l'ICCAT.

**REUNIONES EN LAS QUE HA ESTADO REPRESENTADA ICCAT
ENTRE ENERO DE 2022 Y OCTUBRE DE 2022**

RESUMEN

Este documento presenta información básica sobre las reuniones administrativas y científicas en las que ICCAT estuvo representada, ya sea por miembros de la Secretaría o por otras personas que actuaron en su nombre. La información básica que se presenta para cada reunión incluye los puntos principales del orden del día y sus principales implicaciones para ICCAT.

MRAG-COFREPÊCH Observer Training Course

Location: Valencia, Spain

Dates: 09-13 May 2022

Representative: Aldana Vieito, Compliance Assistant, ICCAT Secretariat

Main agenda items:

Five day training course for new observers. ICCAT and the aims and objectives of the ROP-BFT Understanding of BFT fishing, transfer and farming operations. Regulatory framework. Observer role and monitoring tasks.

Summary: MRAG instructed this course for new BFT observers before the start of the 2022 fishing season. The agenda was divided into around one to three items per day (depending on the topic) combined with some activities and questionnaire in the afternoon. Some of the exercises were corrected the following day by the consortium trainers; others shown their answers at the end of the exercise.

One of the main aims of this course was to introduce future observers to the ICCAT environment and familiarising them with its concepts and its Recommendations and Resolutions and how to use them; where to find important information on the ICCAT web site and what is expected from them once they were deployed in a vessel, farm or trap. One important point also was not only their duties as observers but their behaviour.

On the afternoon of Wednesday 11, Francisco Alemany offered a presentation about the GBYP and how to recover and manage tags. The applicants were very interested and have exchanged questions and doubts with him.

On Friday 13 May, the MRAG team has given an interesting talk about ICCAT and MRAG support to all observers regarding safety, discrimination, and harassment. The applicants sat the exam and at least fifteen of them have been allocated to ICCAT vessels. Five applicants could not be hired due to lack of language skills or administrative permissions.

Future actions: No further action by ICCAT is necessary, although the Secretariat maintained an exchange of information with the consortium, particularly in relation to the observer pool and the suggestion of amplifying such pool, given the increasing number of deployments requested the latest years.

Documentation: the training manuals, PDFs of the PowerPoints presented during the course and more relevant information has been saved in ICCAT.

15th round of Informal Consultations of States Parties (15th ICSP) to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UNCLOS relating to the Fish Stock Agreement: "Implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management"

Location: UN HQ, New York, USA

Dates: 17-19 May 2022

Representative: Camille Jean Pierre Manel, ICCAT Executive Secretary

Agenda focus items: "Implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management"

Due to Covid-19, the meeting was postponed since 2020 and was held in physical format. ICCAT was invited to share its experience in implementing the ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

In his opening words, Mr. Stephen Mathias, the Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, paid tribute to Professor Fabio Hazin of Brazil. The latter served as Chairperson of the ICSP from 2014 until his death.

ICCAT participated in the meeting as a panelist and made a presentation in Segment 2, dedicated to “*The implementation of the ecosystems approach to fisheries management at the regional level*”. Thus, ICCAT mainly reported that its mandate has been evolving since its inception in 1966 with an increasing number of species and has been implementing the elements of the ecosystem approach for fisheries management (EAFM) for more than a decade with initiatives for the conservation of seabirds, turtles, and sharks. In addition, it also conveyed that ICCAT has an explicit mandate for EAFM through its recently amended Convention. ICCAT further informed that it continues to expand and strengthen its cooperation with many organisations, including all five tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and other fisheries organisations and NGOs.

During the discussions, in replying to a question about the role of RFMOs in better implementation of the Agreement, ICCAT stressed the importance of more coordination and inclusion of fisheries experts in delegations participating in regional processes.

On the item relating to the Status of the Part VII Assistance Fund, FAO informed that it is not fully operational; it also mentioned the European and FAO donor agreement for a “Project of Assistance to Strengthen Participation in, and implementation of, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement” to be jointly implemented by FAO and DOALOS over a three-year period. DOALOS informed that additional details would be provided.

As for the resumption of the Review Conference on the Agreement, a meeting will take place in 2023. In order to prepare the updated report of the Secretary-General to the resumed Review Conference, a Draft Voluntary Questionnaire will be circulated.

Report:

https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/ICSP15/22/ICSP15final_for_website.pdf

FAO-GFCM CoC – Working group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (WGIUU), Working group on VMS and related controls system (WGVMS) and Compliance Committee (CoC)

Location: Hybrid (Larnaca, Chypre and online)

Date: 24- 27 May 2022

Representatives: Valérie Samedy - VMS Manager (Larnaca, Chypre) and Jenny Cheatle, Alberto Parrilla, M’Hamed Idrissi (online)

Agenda item: Progress in the implementation of VMS pilot projects by the GFCM with other RFMOs

Summary: As encouraged during the Working group on VMS and related controls system (WGVMS) (online, 20 May 2021) and at the same time, in the line with the continuing spirit of cooperation between ICCAT and the GFCM, the GFCM Resolution 43/2019/3 called upon the launching of pilots to the establishment of the future GFCM VMS. GFCM presented progress towards the implementation of joint VMS pilots to learn from legal requirements in relation to the establishment of a centralized/decentralized VMS, rules on information reporting and sharing, characteristics of respective VMS platforms, rules regulating the use of data stored in control systems for the preparation of derivative information (i.e. aggregated datasets) for scientific purposes, and technical specificities pertaining data security provisions. A close cooperation had been established with ICCAT, NEAFC and IOTC:

- The ICCAT and NEAFC Secretariats organized respectively meeting at their headquarters with GFCM and showed an overview of their approaches adopted to establish the VMS system. Each Secretary presented a summary of these collaborations.
- A project pilot between GFCM and IOTC sounds fundamental given that both RFMOs belong to the FAO framework.

Future steps: Given the similarities and a partial overlap in the areas of application for the two RFMOs, the ground would exist for more common work on VMS between ICCAT and GFCM beyond the cycle of the ongoing joint VMS pilot.

Report availability: To be made available.

Workshop of the GFCM-MAVA project towards a region-wide legal framework for the conservation of Mediterranean living marine resources and ecosystems (GFCM-Lex)

Location: Hôtel Fleur de Lys Plateau, Dakar, Senegal

Dates: 14-15 June 2022

Representative: Camille Jean Pierre Manel, ICCAT Executive Secretary

Agenda items: GFCM Regional Repository (GFCM-Lex)

The workshop aimed to present the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean Regional Repository (GFCM-Lex, which is being piloted in three countries in the Mediterranean) and its methodology for disseminating and sharing the experience of the project beyond the Mediterranean region. It also intended to share best practices to support access to legal information on fisheries. It was noted that access to relevant national legislation on the management and conservation of marine living resources and ecosystems is generally limited, and information can be hard to find. GFCM-Lex is available in English in addition to the national language and aims to facilitate this access to various stakeholders.

The GFCM invited ICCAT and funded its participation, as all targeted countries are members of ICCAT.

Report availability: To be made available

Regional Coordination Group on Large Pelagics (RCG LP) 2022

Location: Online

Dates: 15-17 June 2022

Representatives: Francisco Alemany (GBYP Coordinator), and Carlos Mayor (Database Expert)

Agenda items: The main agenda items were the following:

- Feedback from Commission on DFC
- Reports from ISSG Tropical Tunas; ISSG Longline Fisheries outside Mediterranean Sea; ISSG Mediterranean Sea large pelagics fisheries; ISSG Bluefin tuna; ISSG Baitboat/pole and line; ISSG Regional databases
- Feedback from ICCAT, IOTC, SecWeb, Fish'co
- Output from projects STREAMLINE and MedBYCATCH
- Med&BS Regional Progress regarding RCG-LP
- Feedback on the DCF questionnaire regarding RCG LP
- RCG LP moving forward

Summary: The RCG LP 2022 annual meeting focused on reviewing the progress of inter-sessional work since 2021 and discussing the key areas of regional coordination in fisheries data collection, including governance, regional sampling plans, identifying end-user needs and data quality control. Participants included scientist, experts and/or National Correspondents from various EU Member States as well as DG MARE (European Commission), ICCAT and IOTC representatives. The meeting dealt with topics such as data transmission failures to tRFMOs and the development status of various regional databases. The

Group reopened discussion on the database model to be adopted by the RCG LP. The ICCAT Secretariat participated in the European Union (EU) Regional Coordination Group on Large Pelagics (RCG LP) 2022 Annual Meeting as one of the potential beneficiaries of the outcomes planned by the RCG LP on the provision by EU Member States of fisheries and biological data, through the EU data collection framework (DCF). The Secretariat presented again to the group the various aspects of the ICCAT data collection system to the Group, namely the data call process, the types of fishery statistics and biological data compiled together with the corresponding formats, the submission and validation process using some of the developed SCRS instruments (filtering criteria, report cards, catalogues, scorecard, etc.). Special attention was given to the way that data transmission failures (due to errors and/or incompleteness in the reported datasets) are handled by the EU and ICCAT in relation to EU Member State data provision. The important role of GBYP (Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna) and other ICCAT Data Collection and Research Programmes was also discussed, focused on the best scientific knowledge on ICCAT species and the provision of advice to the Commission. Specifically, as in previous RCGLP meetings, potential synergies between ICCAT Programmes and EU DCF sampling activities were highlighted. GBYP Coordinator highlighted the current problems affecting large pelagics sampling within the framework of DCF, and stressed the importance of coordinating GBYP and DCF sampling efforts, and of building up centralized data base to manage the information generated by the analysis of these samples.

Future actions: Participate in future meetings. Keep contacts with relevant RCG LP subgroup chairs to coordinate DCF and ICCAT large pelagic sampling programs. Follow the development of RCG LP database system. Give advice on the best database model to be chosen by the RBG LP.

Report availability: To be made available

Improving synergies between Regional Fishery Bodies and CITES Authorities: an initiative to identify opportunities to strengthen sustainable catch, trade and management measures for sharks and rays

Location: Online

Date: 13th July 2021

Representative: Nathan G. Taylor

Main topics of the symposium:

Shared objectives between CITES and RFMO communities

Cooperation to avoid species decline to a level justifying CITES listings

Cooperation with a CITES listing in place

Comments: The Bycatch Coordinator was asked to moderate the discussion for this meeting. This meeting was sponsored by the Government of Germany. Their objective is to find ways to improve collaboration between CITES authorities and RMFOs in order to improve the overall management of sharks and rays. This workshop was the second in a series of three which are planned to culminate in an in-person summit in Hamburg, Germany some time in 2023 or 2024.

Report Availability: None

**Eighteenth session of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC)
(virtual)**

Location: Managua, Nicaragua

Dates attended: 26-29 July 2022

Representative: Camille Jean Pierre Manel, ICCAT Executive Secretary

Agenda items: annual meeting / MoU with ICCAT

In a call for strengthening the cooperation with ICCAT, the WECAFC updated its members on the development of the memorandum of understanding in preparation. The meeting was informed of the preparation of a letter of cooperation under the umbrella of the agreement between FAO and ICCAT. This letter will serve as a formal channel of cooperation between ICCAT and WECAFC in the absence of agreement on the language of the draft MoU text that had been proposed and adopted by the Commission in 2019. This draft letter of cooperation will be exchanged between the two Secretariats in order to identify the lines of cooperation between the two organisations.

9th Meeting Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN) / 35th meeting of the Committee of Fisheries (COFI)

Location: FAO HQ, Rome, Italy

Dates: RSN 2-3 and 9 August 2022, and COFI 5-9 August 2022

Representative: Camille Jean Pierre Manel, ICCAT Executive Secretary

Agenda items: RSN ToRs and Rules of Procedure,

RSN participants updated the meeting with the latest developments in their respective organisations. They had the opportunity to exchange views, information, and experiences between the different secretariats concerning issues of common concern. In this regard, FAO made presentations on regional fisheries bodies and small-scale fisheries, RFBs and climate change, area-based fisheries management in the Post-2020 with the Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), safety at sea and decent working conditions in fisheries, CITES listing of commercial aquatic species. Many participants welcomed the informal exchanges that continued to help to adapt to the consequences of COVID.

The RSN mainly revised and adopted its Terms of References and Rules of Procedure, concluding a process started in previous years. These two documents aim to strengthen the network by adopting clearer rules. The RSN also elected a new Chair (Darius Campbell, Secretary, North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission) and a Vice-Chair (Manu Tupou-Roosen, Director General at Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency).

In its last session, the RSN welcomed the discussions during the COFI with positive views from participants about the role of fisheries organisations while calling for more cooperation between them. In this regard, FAO informed about the meetings held at sub-regional levels to strengthen this cooperation further.

In the margins of the meeting, IATTC, WCPFC, IOTC and ICCAT met informally to discuss some common issues and how to better coordinate. Potential activities in the framework of ABNJ2 and the improvement of the Tuna-org website were also discussed in a meeting with the former Tuna-ABNJ1 coordinator and the new ABNJ2 coordinator.

The COFI was chaired by Mr. Shingo Ota (Japan). Among other relevant topics, COFI members celebrate the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA), continue to call to combat IUU fishing with the implementation of the various relevant instruments, to mainstream biodiversity in

fisheries and aquaculture, for more progress in the work on fisheries and aquaculture in relation to climate change, and broadly support the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management. They also stressed the importance of cooperation among fisheries bodies and appreciated the work of the RSN. Furthermore, the COFI highlighted the developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries. At the same time, many delegates called for more participation of fisheries experts in the processes while calling for more coordination within delegation at the country level.

Report availability: To be made available

Fifth session: Intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

Location: UN HQ, New York, USA

Dates attended: 15-26 August 2022

Representative: Camille Jean Pierre Manel, ICCAT Executive Secretary

Agenda items: Continued consideration of the revised text of an agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

The meeting was held in a hybrid format (physical and online participation) with a reduced physical presence. I attended the first week physically and followed several online sessions during the second part of the meeting.

The meeting continued to discuss the content of the revised text the Chair of the Conference drafted, relating to the topics identified in the package agreed in 2011: the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, in particular, together and as a whole, marine genetic resources, including questions on the sharing of benefits, measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

The conference format allowed facilitator-led discussions on each identified topic and small groups on specific questions gathering interested delegates. However, the multiplication of small groups had limitations according to some delegations who could not follow the discussions in parallel.

While considering various provisions of the draft text, many delegations stressed that this new Agreement should not undermine the existing instruments, mechanisms, and regional bodies.

There seemed to be a general feeling that progress was made, and an agreement was now closer than ever. In the meantime, given the impossibility of reaching an agreement on the draft text despite the progress noted, the Intergovernmental Conference decided to suspend this fifth session and resume it at a date to be determined, aiming to conclude the negotiations with a new instrument.

It is worth noting the importance of more coordination and inclusion of fisheries experts in delegations participating in these BBNJ negotiation processes.

FAO-Regional Coordination Meeting for Africa, Near East and the Mediterranean on the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA)

Location: Dakar, Sénégal

Date: 3- 7 October 2022

Representatives: Valérie Samedy - VMS Manager

Agenda item: Status of the 2009 FAO Agreement PSMA, Outcomes of the Third Meeting of the Parties, Regional Implementation, Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities, Preparation of following meetings

Summary: The 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) entered into force in June 2016. The Parties to the PSMA agreed on the importance of convening regional meetings to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Agreement, and to contribute to the process of drawing up a strategy to improve the effectiveness of the Agreement. After the three first meetings for other regional areas (for Asia from 11 to 15 July 2022, Seoul, Korea and for Latin America and the Caribbean from 20 to 24 June 2022, Panama City, Panama and for the South West and East Pacific from 2 to 6 May 2022, Nadi, Fiji), more than 80 delegates attended the fourth and final regional coordination meeting to discuss the implementation of the 2009 FAO PSMA for Africa, Near East and the Mediterranean area in Dakar, Senegal (3 to 7 October, 2022).

During these days, the main goal of the meeting was to address the challenges in implementation of the PSMA in the region and to discuss regional port State measures implementation strategies including through relevant Regional Fishery Bodies.

The first days were focused on the reminder of:

- the Status of the PSMA with the 72 Parties are already engaged in the Agreement
- the main objectives specifically to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing by preventing vessels engaged in IUU fishing from using ports and landing their catches
- the functioning (Meeting Of Parties, Strategy ad hoc Working Group, Technical Working Group on Information Exchange, Regional Working Group)
- the complementary international instruments and collaborative tools (PSMA Apps, GIES, FAO Global Records).

Moreover, three RFMOs (IOTC, GFCM and ICCAT) and countries have presented the achievements, challenges, and opportunities in the implementation of the PSMA with plenary discussions in following.

The second part of the meeting focused on the identification of means to strengthen the effectiveness of the PSMA from the PSMA questionnaire at regional level where all participants were divided into small groups. Each group reported the general achievements, the challenge and key proposals for each article of the PSMA Agreement in a matrix. The results from the breakout groups were resumed in one matrix and the conclusions will be presented for the Fourth Meeting of the Parties to the PSMA.

Future steps: Technical working for the development of a PSMA global information exchange system (GIES) with one day dedicated to RFMOs (13-15 December 2022, in Roma, Italy) and the Fourth Meeting of the Parties to the PSMA (8 -12 May 2023, in Bali, Indonesia).

Report availability: No report.

Mediterranean Advisory Council, MEDAC

Location: Online Meeting

Dates: 17th October 2022

Representative: Ai Kimoto, Mauricio Ortiz

Agenda items: Presentation on the status of the Mediterranean large pelagic species according to the results of the ICCAT Scientific Committee meeting and Presentation of the Update and status on the MSE for Atlantic bluefin tuna.

The Mediterranean Advisory Council, MEDAC role includes the preparation of opinions on fisheries management and socio-economic aspects in support of the fisheries sector in the Mediterranean, to be submitted to the Member States and the European institutions to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the European Union Common Fisheries Policy. The ICCAT Secretariat was invited to attend the meeting and Drs. Ai Kimoto and Mauricio Ortiz provided presentations on the recent findings of the SCRS on the status of the stocks of Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna, Mediterranean Albacore, Mediterranean Swordfish, and Mediterranean Billfish stocks, with a second presentation on the BFT-MSE process updates and current status.

It was informed that in 2022, ICCAT conducted an updated assessment for Eastern Bluefin tuna to review the current stock status. The SCRS recommendation is that the management advice for 2023 and forward be based on the adoption of a Management Plan for the Atlantic BFT MSE process. However, in case the Commission will not adopt a Management Plan, the SCRS concluded that East bluefin tuna stock assessment results and indices of abundance indicators did not provide any evidence to alter the management advice of the current TAC of 36,000 t. Nonetheless, the SCRS considers the BFT-MSE as the best process for developing robust management advice for Bluefin tuna stocks given their complexities and interactions, and that the presented four CMPs are robust, reliable, and tested to be adopted.

For the Mediterranean Albacore, it was indicated that in 2022 ICCAT implemented a Rebuilding Plan for this stock [Rec 21-06] with the specifications that the stock will recover with a 60% probability of being in the green quadrant of the Kobe plot by 2032. It was indicated that catches on the order of 2,500 t will reach this objective, however, catches in 2021 were 2,901 t. Finally, it was informed that the SCRS will conduct a stock assessment of this stock in 2023.

With regards to Mediterranean swordfish, it was indicated that ICCAT had conducted an assessment in 2020, of which the results indicated that the stock was overfished but not experiencing overfishing. The Mediterranean swordfish is currently under a rebuilding plan and projections indicated that TACs of 10,000 t or lower will allow the recovery of the stock by 2028 with at least a 60% probability, the reported catch for 2021 was 7,493 t. ICCAT is planning the next stock assessment of Mediterranean swordfish in 2024.

An update and current status on the BFT-MSE were presented, with a summary of the Operating Models structure, Management Objectives, and the Statistical Performance indicators used for the evaluations of proposed Candidate Management Procedures (CMPs). It was noted that during 2021/2022 the SCRS finalized the testing of CMPs and considers the MSE to be completed. Based on the results, the SCRS is providing to the Commission two CMPs that consider viable and robust options for providing management advice (TACs) for Atlantic bluefin tuna in 2023 and beyond. It also presented a summary of 4 decision points still pending from the meetings of Panel 2 and the SCRS for which stakeholders can make recommendations through their CPCs for the upcoming Commission meeting in November 2022 where it is expected that a Management Procedure will be adopted for implementing the Atlantic BFT MSE.

Stakeholders noted the recent increases of bluefin tuna in several areas of the Mediterranean highlighting their predation impact on the small pelagic stocks and their effects on local fisheries. It indicated the need for studies that take into account the interactions among species and wider ecosystem approach evaluation for better management of the Mediterranean fisheries resources. Also, it was noted the high mortality of bluefin tuna inside the transfer cages of fish destined for farming operations. It was requested a scientific analysis of the maximum density of fish in transport cages to reduce this mortality, and the need to report such mortalities. It was indicated that catches of juvenile swordfish are high, requesting an evaluation of their impact on the stock recovery.