

DRAFT LETTER OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN ICCAT AND WECAFC
(submitted by the Secretariat)

This letter expresses the intention of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to work cooperatively with the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) under the umbrella of the Agreement Between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

Consistent with that agreement, ICCAT intends to exchange information and documents with WECAFC and cooperate in areas of mutual interest to the respective organizations, including data collection, research, and the provision of technical assistance. In particular, ICCAT and WECAFC intend to enhance cooperation to advance our common goals with regard to the sustainable use of living marine resources and the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, within our respective mandates, governing rules, and conservation and management measures.

As voluntary participants in this work, ICCAT and WECAFC intend to strengthen collaboration and coordinate efforts, improve synergies, and avoid duplications in the context of the development of projects and programs focusing on regional priorities in order to foster improved governance and promote commonalities.

Specific activities of mutual interest on which ICCAT and WECAFC intends to work collaboratively between may include, but are not limited to:

1. Planning of and participation in Working Groups relevant to both organizations, including collaboration in the development of fishery management plans and regional plans of action as appropriate;
2. Improving data collection and access to data for use in informing stock status determinations and fisheries management, including data collection for artisanal fisheries on shared stocks, and sharing scientific analyses and expertise;
3. Enhancing communication in relation to monitoring, control and surveillance-related issues and exchanging relevant information on IUU fishing activities carried out in their respective Convention areas;
4. Continuing dialogue in view of the potential development of joint activities, including research and capacity building projects such as joint training activities, workshops, and information sessions (in-person or virtual); and
5. Coordinating engagement on the role of regional fisheries bodies in relevant international fora (e.g., the FAO-Global Environment Facility Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) project).

ICCAT and WECAFC hope that through this cooperation ICCAT and WECAFC can harmonize activities and optimize the use of resources to the extent possible.