

**MEETINGS AT WHICH ICCAT WAS REPRESENTED
FROM JANUARY 2024 TO OCTOBER 2024**

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 2024 ET OCTOBRE 2024**

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 2024 Y OCTUBRE DE 2024**

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.

PREMIERE SESSION DU SOUS-COMITE DE LA GESTION DES PECHEES DE LA FAO

Lieu : En ligne

Dates : 15-18 janvier 2024

Représentant : Camille Jean Pierre Manel, Secrétaire exécutif

Principaux points de l'ordre du jour : *Pratiques actuelles en matière de gestion des pêches, pêche illicite, non déclarée et non réglementée dans le contexte d'une gestion efficace des pêches, Intégration de la biodiversité dans la gestion des pêches, Changement climatique et gestion des pêches, Mises à jour méthodologiques de l'évaluation de la FAO concernant l'état des ressources halieutiques dans le monde.*

Le Sous-Comité sur la gestion des pêches a tenu sa première réunion suite à sa création lors de la 35^{ème} Session du COFI. Reconnaissant le rôle important que joue la pêche dans les économies des pays, le Sous-Comité a fait noter que sa création offrait un nouveau forum spécifiquement dédié à l'amélioration de la gestion des pêches à travers (les échanges sur les questions prioritaires). L'apport attendu de ce nouvel organe du COFI a aussi été apprécié à l'aune de l'adoption et de la mise en œuvre des nouveaux instruments internationaux pertinents pour la pêche.

Au cours de la réunion, les participants ont souligné, en le magnifiant, le rôle important que jouent les ORGP tout en les appelant à renforcer leur coopération. Dans ce même élan, le rôle de la FAO a aussi été reconnu et les participants ont demandé à la FAO de poursuivre son appui aux États membres aux fins de renforcement de leurs capacités en matière de collecte et d'analyse de données et d'informations, en particulier pour la pêche artisanale et la pêche hauturière.

Les questions de la pêche INN et de l'impact du changement climatique ont aussi attiré l'attention du Sous-Comité qui a appelé à des actions plus concrètes et à la mise en œuvre des instruments pertinents dans le sens de la coopération pour des réponses plus cohérentes et plus efficaces aux échelles pertinentes.

La deuxième réunion du Sous-Comité aura lieu en personne à une date qui sera annoncée ultérieurement.

[Rapport](#)

FAO- WORKSHOP ON OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES

Location: Roma, Italy

Date: 22- 24 January 2024

Representative: Dr. Nathan G. Taylor, Bycatch Coordinator, Mr. Camille Manel, Executive Secretary

Agenda items:

- Presentation of the workshop background, objectives, scope and expected outcomes
- Introduction to the concept of other effective area-based conservation measures
- Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- Introduction to the OECM concept
- ABMTs in the BBNJ agreement
- Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction and benefits of recognizing OECMs
- Context and implementation of OECMs in areas beyond national jurisdiction
- Advances on OECMs by NEAFC
- Advances on OECMs by NAFO
- Advances on OECMs by GFCM
- SEAFDEC and the potential role in assisting in OECM process
- In-depth analysis of OECM criteria

- Introduction to the process of identification, evaluation and reporting of OECMs
- Reporting to the World Database on OECMs
- Reflecting on the OECM concept - difficulties in interpreting the criteria and certain aspects of the criteria (data, governance, monitoring, etc.)
- Contribution of Regional Fisheries Bodies to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- Initial reflections on the OECM concept and the potential of OECMs in the high seas Introduction to case studies of area-based fisheries management measures
- Working groups - analysis and discussion of potential fisheries OECMs into breakout groups
- Opening of the third day, final reflections on the OECM concept and way forward

Summary: The meeting was intended to educate and involve RMFOs about **Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures**. The meeting reviewed [the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework \(CBD\)](#). Among these targets is [target 3](#), to “Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and **other effective area-based conservation measures...**” - OECMs are defined in Decision 14/8 of the [Convention on Biodiversity](#). It was noted that people attending CBD do not have fisheries backgrounds; It is therefore important that fisheries bodies engage with CBD and ABNJ processes because these may impinge on fisheries mandates. The meeting identified the following benefits to OECMs: protect habitats and contribute to biodiversity conservation; achievement of global and national goals and commitments; recognition of the contribution to maintaining biodiversity; access to financial resources; reinforce management, monitoring and surveillance; and better and more efficient fisheries management. The meeting noted that RMFOs could define their own OECMs and register them in the world database of OECM.

The meeting then reviewed progress in defining OECMs RMFOs. RMFOs that are in the process of implementing OECMs include: the Northeast Atlantic Fish Commission (NEAFC), the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), and the General Fish Commission of the Mediterranean (GFCM). Finally, the workshop had breakout sessions where participants walked through applying the OECM criteria; the breakout sessions reviewed if the ICCAT tropical tuna closure would qualify as an example of an OECM.

Future steps:

RMFOs, including ICCAT, may wish to review if they have any management measures that qualify as OECM on the High Seas and register them in the OECM database.

Report availability:

FAO intends to publish a summary of feedback that they have received from tRMFOs on matters related to the CBD in December 2024.

On the afternoon of the last day, the RSN held a hybrid format session attended by Manuel Barange, FAO Assistant Director-General and Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division. The RSN appreciated the conclusions of the first meeting of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management while noting that the online format was not optimal.

The RSN also drew participants' attention to the major events on the international calendar, inviting them to participate and further strengthen their cooperation in these fora.

GENERAL FISH COMMISSION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN FISH FORUM, 2024

Location: Antalya, Türkiye

Date: 19- 23 February 2024

Representative: Dr. Nathan G. Taylor, Bycatch Coordinator, Mr. Camille Manel, Executive Secretary

Agenda items:

- Better science for better advice
- Assessing fisheries under changing climate and productivity
- Management strategy evaluation for fisheries advice
- Advancing fisheries management through marine spatial planning
- Assessing fisheries under changing climate and productivity
- Innovation and adaptation in building resilience to climate change impacts
- Effective measures for protecting vulnerable species
- Using economic data and engaging stakeholders to support fisheries livelihoods
- more detailed information on the event can be found [here](#).

Summary: The event, organized by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), is the most important scientific gathering dedicated to fisheries and related issues for GFCM. The 2024 edition was hosted by Türkiye's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and funded by the European Union. Across five days of lectures, panels, workshops and exhibitions, the conference provided a space for experts from 47 countries to discuss the latest developments in fisheries science, along with environmental, oceanographic, and socioeconomic research, and how best to apply this growing body of knowledge and tools to the real-world challenges facing the sector. ICCAT provided a keynote presentation entitled "The evolution of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna's mandate: from single species to EAFM".

ICCAT was also part of a panel on "What science do we need to address international agreements?" The BBNJ, the Global Biodiversity Framework, and the role of the RFMOs were the main topics discussed. ICCAT insisted, in particular, on the participation of fisheries experts in meetings related to these instruments and stressed the importance of future clarification of the nature of the cooperation, collaboration, coordination, and consultation upon which RFMOs are called.

Many discussions were held on the margins of the Forum with the ICES Executive Secretary regarding the discussions on an MoU between the two organizations.

Future steps:

Follow up on the discussions with the GFCM for the potential activities we plan to work on, and with the ICES for the preparation of the MoU.

Report availability:

[GFCM Fish Forum 2024 proceedings](#)

CITES WORKSHOP ON CITES LISTING CRITERIA

Location: Geneva, Switzerland

Date: 22- 23 April 2024

Representative: Dr. Nathan G. Taylor, Bycatch Coordinator

Agenda items:

- Welcoming remarks - Ivonne Higuero, CITES Secretary-General
- Conduct of the workshop - CITES Secretariat
- Objectives of the workshop and overview of processes to date on Criteria for amendment of
- CITES Appendices I and II - CITES Secretariat
- Presentation on Document [CoP19 Doc. 87.2](#) with a Q & A session- Senegal

- Presentation on scientific information on life history parameters of aquatic species with a Q & A session
- Moderated discussion to agree on topics to be covered in breakout groups
- Decision 19.189 – consider the application of [Resolution Conf. 9.24 \(Rev. CoP 17\)](#) and its footnote 2, with regard to relevant commercially exploited Elasmobranchii and other aquatic species, taking into account available scientific information and data.
- Breakout groups (Facilitated by Party to be nominated by each group)
- Discussions in breakout groups
- Presentation from each breakout group
- Observations and recommendations

The Bycatch coordinator attended the CITES Workshop on CITES Listing Criteria in Geneva Switzerland, April 23-26, 2024. The workshop was about reviewing the adequacy of the Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II.

This workshop was motivated [a CITES decision](#) to “convene a technical workshop to consider the application of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) and its footnote 2 (found in annex V), with regards to relevant commercially exploited Elasmobranchii and other aquatic species, taking into account the information provided in document CoP19 Doc 87.2 and available scientific information and data”. Currently, the CITES definitions, explanations, and guidelines of the decline criteria to justify listing of commercially exploited aquatic species on CITES appendices are documented in Annex 5, footnote 2 of [Conf. 9.24](#). These criteria include:

In marine and large freshwater bodies, a narrower range of (declines of) 5-20 % is deemed to be more appropriate in most cases, with a range of 5-10 % being applicable for species with high productivity, 10-15 % for species with medium productivity and 15- 20 % for species with low productivity.

The workshop was motivated in part by [CoP19 Doc. 87.2](#) that argues that revision of the CITES guidelines for the listing of marine species is needed urgently, to allow for appropriate management of the global trade in sharks. [CoP19 Doc. 87.2](#) argues that contentious debates and apparently higher requirements being applied to listing proposals for sharks under CITES compared to most other taxa has led a situation where species are subsequently listed when their conservation status has already deteriorated to a point where sustainable offtake may no longer be possible. These criteria are particularly important for ICCAT fisheries in that they define if ICCAT species could be listed on CITES Appendices.

There was considerable debate about the need to revise the sharks’ listing criteria. This was expressed in two broad categories: the first was a review by the CITES Secretariat noting that there have [been years of debate about the CITES criteria and that they already allow for flexibility in their application](#); the second was a [document](#) arguing that at a taxonomic level, productivity vary extensively in elasmobranchs along a continuum and that grouping all species in a single productivity category and corresponding decline threshold [is not supported by the data](#). The workshop participants generally agreed that the current criteria have sufficient flexibility to be effectively applied to commercially exploited aquatic species. They forwarded the matter for continued consideration at the CITES Animal Committee. It was further suggested that previous discussions on this matter be collated for future guidance.

Future steps:

Changing any listing criteria for sharks could have a significant impact on ICCAT shark fisheries. ICCAT may wish to remain engaged with CITES and with its parties who are also represented at ICCAT at CITES Animal and Standing Committees to understand how any modification to these criteria will affect ICCAT fisheries and the objectives it defines for stock state.

Report availability:

CITES published a brief workshop news article [here](#). The conclusions of this workshop will be submitted for consideration to the 33rd Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee scheduled to take place from 12 to 19 July 2024. Further recommendations and comments will be submitted to the CITES Standing Committee at its 78th Meeting in 2025.

CITES WORKSHOP ON CITES NON-DETRIMENT FINDINGS

Location: Geneva, Switzerland

Date: 24- 25 April 2024

Representative: Dr. Nathan G. Taylor, Bycatch Coordinator

Agenda items:

- Welcoming remarks - Ivonne Higuero, CITES Secretary-General
- Conduct of the workshop - CITES Secretariat
- Objectives of the workshop - CITES Secretariat
- Presentations on background information with a Q & A session
- CITES requirements for non-detriment findings (NDFs) for specimens taken from areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), including the role of “international scientific authorities” - CITES Secretariat
- draft guidance on the making of NDFs for aquatic species (outcomes of the international expert workshop on NDFs) - Julian McAlpine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Chair of the working group on aquatic species at NDF workshop
- level (current and anticipated) of trade in CITES-listed species taken from ABNJ - Glenn Sant, TRAFFIC & Samantha Sherman, Deakin University
- overview of the workshop background document - CITES Secretariat
- summary of NDFs that have been made for specimens taken from ABNJ (including data used, process followed, etc.)
- difficulties encountered by Parties when making NDFs for specimens taken from ABNJ;
- current role, if any, of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMO) and other Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) in making data and information available to CITES Scientific Authorities making non-detriment findings
- Presentations from Parties on experience
- Presentations from RFMOs with a Q & A session
- Video presentation by DOALOS
- Scientific data and information needed to make NDFs for specimen taken from ABNJ, including those that may be held by international scientific authorities
- Mechanism of cooperation between national Scientific Authorities and international scientific authorities, including sharing of data, determining the total numbers of specimens to be introduced per year, monitoring off-take, etc.
- Discussions in breakout groups
- Presentation from each breakout groups
- Observations and recommendations

The Bycatch coordinator attending a CITES workshops held in Geneva Switzerland, April 23-26, 2024 on NDFs on in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The workshop (April 25 and 26, 2024) was about non-detriment findings (NDFs). He presented a background summary of ICCAT's stock assessment and management of sharks as well as issues germane to sharks (Elasmobranchs) listed on CITES Appendices.

Summary: The NDF workshop followed the workshop in the listing criteria. The two-day workshop featured plenary and breakout group discussion sessions. Presentations were made by CITES Parties on their experiences in making NDFs for specimens taken from areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). The IATTC and ICCAT Secretariats presented the scientific processes under each Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO), as well as the data and information available to CITES Authorities as it relates to CITES-listed species. The participants discussed the taxonomic level at which NDFs should be made as well as the scientific data that could be used to support drafting these documents. The workshop recommended that i) NDFs should be made at a stock level, if stocks are defined for the species, and ii)

collaboration between CITES and fisheries authorities should be encouraged, while engagement with RFMOs to access crucial data should be promoted.

Future steps:

ICCAT may wish to remain engaged with CITES and with its parties in the drafting of Non-Detriment Finding to ensure that they are consistent with ICCAT recommendations.

Report availability:

CITES published a brief workshop news article [here](#). The conclusions of both workshops will be submitted for consideration to the 33rd Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee that is scheduled to take place from 12 to 19 July 2024. Further recommendations and comments will be submitted to the CITES Standing Committee at its 78th Meeting in 2025.

SEVENTEENTH ROUND OF INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS OF STATES PARTIES TO THE FISH STOCK AGREEMENT

Location: UN HQ, New York, USA

Dates attended: 15-17 May 2024

Representative: Camille Jean Pierre Manel, Executive Secretary

Main agenda items: “Sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change”

Following the invitation of the Director of the Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) in consultation with Professor Joji Morishita (Japan), the Chairperson of the 16th round of informal consultations to serve as a panelist, ICCAT made a presentation in the Segment 4: Challenges and opportunities for strengthening sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change. ICCAT highlighted the firm direction taken by the Commission to better address the impact of climate change on its fisheries. The presentation detailed the various actions taken by ICCAT, in particular, the road map and the resolutions adopted, the setting up of the expert group on climate change, the meetings held and planned, and the development of the Plan of Action.

FAO organized a Side Event “Mainstreaming climate change into international fisheries governance: the case of regional fisheries bodies” in which ICCAT informed about the series of recent developments of its ongoing work on climate change with the resolutions adopted and the development of the Plan of Action and the meetings of the Joint Experts Working Group on Climate Change.

On the margins of the meeting, ICCAT met the Executive secretary of the ICES about the preparation of the MoU between the two organizations. Both Secretariats agreed to work on a draft ICES proposal, before submitting it to the SCRS for review.

[Report](#)

MRAG-COFREPÊCHE OBSERVER TRAINING COURSE

Location: Hammamet, Tunisia

Dates: 20-25 May 2024

Representative: Valérie SAMEDY, VMS Manager/Technical Officer, ICCAT Secretariat

Main agenda items:

Five days training course for new observers in order to provide the objectives of the ROP-BFT program, the management of BFT and role of ICCAT, the role of observers with monitoring tasks.

Summary: Since 2010, the ICCAT Regional Observer Programme for Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna e ROP-BFT has been operated on behalf of ICCAT by a consortium between MRAG and COFREPECHE. For this training, Cofrepeche instructed this course for new observers (DZA, LBY, MAR and TUN) before to start the 2024 Bluefin tuna fishing season in the Mediterranean Sea. The ICCAT representatives of these CPC were invited to assist to the training. Due to some timing constraints, only TUN and MAR were represented. This training is aimed to establish a multi-annual management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean (rec. 22-08) to ensure 100% coverage by observer.

All this monitoring helps to evaluate the effectiveness of the observer program in relation to its objectives, by providing recommendations and by set up a mechanism for reassessment and continuous improvement for ICCAT in order to optimize fisheries compliance. One of the main aims of this course was to introduce to future observers the ICCAT environment and familiarising them with its concepts: its Recommendations and Resolutions and how to use them; where to find important information on the ICCAT website 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. This intensive course was a very interactive divided into around different items per day combined with some activities and questionnaire, with numerous exchanges based in the form of questions and answers. The exercises helped to understand the objectives and to review complex or sensitive topics.

With other representative CPC, we were invited by the Tunisian CPC to visit the different authorities including the inspection vessel which shared his experience about the Bluefin tuna season but also vessels involved in the BFT fisheries. At the end of the day, we were able to visit the Tunisa Tuna premises.

The applicants finished this training by passing an exam (40 questions with a multiple-choice answers) that all passed with success. A ceremony was organized where I was able to present a certificate of attestation and success to each observer.

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.

TUNA COMPLIANCE NETWORK

Location: Seychelles

Dates: 20-23 June 2024

Representative: Jenny Cheadle and Alberto Thais Parrilla Moruno (Compliance Department)

Main Agenda items: Updates from tRFMOs and IMCS regarding novelties since 2023, e.g., Updates made to tRFMO vessel lists, progress on eSystems, management, use of port inspection data, etc.; consideration of the next steps for the IUU Vessel List Utility work; Review of TCN and future work plan.

Summary: Those responsible for compliance representing the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) attended the 5th meeting of the Tuna Compliance Network (TCN). Apologies were received from the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT).

The main topics discussed included the challenges related to Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) vessels cross-listing and potential solutions; recent developments in transshipment programmes and possible joint efforts with the Pan Pacific Fisheries Compliance Network (PPFCN), if deemed appropriate; the work carried out by the Network to develop a consolidated list of vessels authorized by the RFMOs,

which renders further support to the existing Consolidated List of Authorized Vessels (CLAV) unnecessary; and the content and potential use of the PEW questionnaire.

The meeting was hosted by IOTC, and the Executive Secretary opened the session, acknowledging the value of the TCN and the work of those responsible for compliance within the respective tuna RFMOs. All participants agreed on the usefulness of the Network and recognized the need for its continuation in the future.

Members of the TCN warmly thanked Ms. Jenny Cheatle for her contributions over the past years and wished her well in her retirement and future endeavors.

Future actions: Mr. Ricardo Belmontes from the IATTC was elected as Chair. It is expected that two members of the department will attend the next meeting, which was agreed upon by correspondence after the conclusion of the last meeting, to be held in Tokyo, Japan, from 8 to 15 June 2025. The Commission is also invited to consider providing funding to support future initiatives aimed at reducing the burden of IUU cross-listing and the Consolidated RFMO (Regional) Vessel Authorization Application

Report availability: Not available.

EVENT: EU RCG-LP ANNUAL MEETING

Location: Olhão (Portugal)

Dates: 24-26 June 2024

Representative: Miguel Neves dos Santos (Assistant Executive Secretary)

Main agenda items relevant to ICCAT:

- State of play and genetic sampling for CKMR
- ICCAT vs DCF sampling
- ICCAT data needs and gaps regarding LP data

Summary: the Secretariat representative provided a presentation focusing on different aspects on the ICCAT biological sampling activities carried out within the ongoing Research and Data Collection programs. The issues noted from the ICCAT perspective on the EU DCF Database were listed, including the lack of a DB integrating the information contained in the Annual Reports, the lack on precise information on the location of the samples collected under DCF, and the lack of geographical representativeness of the DCF sampling aiming stock assessments. Consequently, some recommendations were suggested aiming the development of a functional information system (use data standards, interoperability, database, handbook, etc.), and the implementation of a system to store and keep updated information on samples collected in the past, including on their availability and storage (who and where).

It was highlighted the importance of keeping a cooperative and coordinated relationship between ICCAT and RCG LP, to overcome the issues and enhance the efficiency on the use of EU resources allocated to the DCF related to the ICCAT fisheries and species. It was reiterated the need the possibility of launching a data Call to get more precise info on existing DCF samples of interest for ICCAT, that the DCF sampling scheme on large pelagics to be updated and optimized to match the ICCAT needs. Furthermore, highlighted the importance that the new DCF information system on DCF, that is still under development, to include more detailed metadata on the storage of DCF samples and its analyses (results). It was also mentioned that in case ICCAT decides to implement the Close Kin Mark Recapture approach to improve the management of some stocks, it will require the design and implementation of new sampling schemes that should be carried out by the ICCAT contracting Parties, particularly the EU, given that the available resources at ICCAT cannot assume the massive genetic sampling required by this methodology.

Future actions:

- Maintain the collaboration between ICCAT and the EU RCG LP

- Monitor the development of RCG LP database, providing advice and feedback about ICCAT data needs
- Provide feedback to RCG LP about biological sampling requirements for ICCAT managed species

Report availability: The meeting report is available [here](#).

TENTH MEETING OF THE REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK (RSN-10), ROME, ITALY, 5, 6 AND 12 JULY 2024

Location: FAO, Rome, Italie, Hybrid

Dates: 5, 6 and 12 July 2024

Representative: Camille Jean Pierre Manel, Executive Secretary

Main agenda items: *climate change into international fisheries governance; updates on OECMs and RFBs; updates on BBNJ, GBF and WTO fisheries subsidies; data and analysis (stock assessment work, FIRMS, CWP); RSN visibility and profile; UNOC 25 and the RFB focused Side Event*

Dr. Manuel Barange, Assistant Director-General of the FAO and Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, made opening remarks, recalling the first steps of the network and its importance, its main achievements since then, and the need to further reinvigorate it. On this last point, he noted that the pressure on RFMOs was increasing, and that a particular focus should therefore be placed on them, such as preparing a narrative accordingly, and giving greater prominence to fishing. Mr. Barange concluded by recalling the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) to be held in June 2025 in Nice (France), co-organized by France and Costa Rica, and called on RFBs to participate widely.

The two Co-Chairs of the RSN, Dr Manumatavai Tupou-Roosen (FFA) and Dr Darius Campbell (NEAFC), welcomed this session, which was well attended by regional fisheries bodies.

The Secretariat of the RSN, provided by FAO, presented the coordination and cooperation between RFBs, emphasizing COFI's encouragement to strengthen these aspects for greater efficiency in the implementation of international fisheries instruments.

The RSN also welcomed the implementation of the ABNJ Common Oceans Programme, whose activities support cooperation between RFBs.

During its presentation, the World Trade Organization (WTO) called for wider dissemination of the agreement on fisheries subsidies, as well as awareness-raising among States.

The meeting encouraged Fisheries Bodies to participate in the Honiara Summit to be held in Solomon Islands 24-27 February 2025 ahead of next year's UN Ocean Conference. The summit will address all aspects of SDG14.4 implementation.

A representative from the French Government informed the RSN that, during the UNOC3, they expect to hold a high-level event to communicate on RFMOs' work. The RSN Secretariat informed that it will coordinate questions and comments from RSN members with the UNOC3 organizers in preparation for the conference.

The RSN could not make its oral [Statement](#) as planned to COFI Agenda item 12 (*The implications for fisheries and aquaculture of global biodiversity frameworks and agreements*) and could only post it. However, it welcomed COFI's conclusions, in particular the support expressed by many member states and the constant calls for greater cooperation.

The Secretaries and Directors of the tuna RFMOs met in the margins of the meeting to see how to improve their coordination and exchange of information and experience on subjects of common interest, as a continuation of regular informal exchanges. In particular, at the request of the WCPFC, they discussed the planning of meetings between their different organizations, with the aim of avoiding, as far as possible,

scheduling conflicts. They also discussed the possibility of meeting face-to-face once a year, after informing their Commissions and receiving their approval. The secretariats plan to hold an online meeting in September 2024 to discuss, among other things, potential topics to be covered and the format of the meetings, while keeping in mind the recent context with the newly adopted global instruments (GBF and BBNJ, and Fisheries Subsidies Agreement) which imposed a better coordination

36^{EME} SESSION DU COMITE DES PECHEES (COFI) DE LA FAO

Lieu : FAO Rome, Italie, hybride

Dates : 8 au 12 juillet 2024

Représentant : Camille Jean Pierre Manel, Secrétaire exécutif

Principaux points de l'ordre du jour : rapport SOFIA, rapports des sous-comités, lutte contre la pêche INN, implications des instruments mondiaux

Le Comité des pêches de la FAO (COFI) a une fois de plus réuni de nombreux États membres et observateurs, des agences des Nations unies, des observateurs d'organisations intergouvernementales et d'ONG pour discuter des questions actuelles de pêche dans le cadre de ce plus grand forum sur la pêche.

La FAO a noté que La production halieutique et aquacole mondiale a atteint en 2022 un niveau record de 223,2 millions de tonnes, et l'aquaculture a dépassé pour la première fois la pêche de capture. Toutefois, la FAO alerte pour des actions urgentes pour accélérer la conservation et la reconstitution des stocks dont la part marine exploitée à un niveau biologiquement durable est en baisse.

Sur la lutte contre la pêche INN, les États ont salué les progrès réalisés au niveau global tout en appelant à les renforcer, et ont magnifié le rôle de la FAO ainsi que celle des ORGP.

Le changement climatique a été un sujet récurrent et a amené les membres à exprimer leur soutien pour le travail qui est en train d'être mené dans les ORGP afin de mieux prendre en charge cette question préoccupante tout en les appelant à une meilleure incorporation de la dimension du changement climatique dans les mesures adoptées. À cet égard, et en tenant compte de la surcharge de travail dans ces organisations, le Comité a invité la FAO à faciliter les échanges de données et d'informations sur le changement climatique.

Faisant référence au BBNJ et au Cadre mondial pour la Biodiversité de Kunming-Montréal, des appels ont été lancés pour le renforcement de capacités et la coopération en vue d'une mise en œuvre plus efficace de ces instruments. Aussi, les ORPG ont été invitées à s'engager déjà dans la mise en œuvre de ces derniers ; dans la même veine, le Comité a encouragé la FAO à jouer un rôle plus stratégique sur ces questions.

Magnifiant le rôle du RSN, des appels du Comité à l'appuyer ont été aussi enregistrés.

Le Comité tiendra sa 37^{ème} réunion au cours du troisième trimestre de 2026 à Rome.

[Rapport](#)

SECOND COMMON OCEANS TUNA PROJECT STEERING (PSC) MEETING

Location: FAO Rome, Italie, hybrid

Dates: 16 – 18 July 2024

Representative: Camille Jean Pierre Manel, Executive Secretary; Nathan Taylor, Bycatch Coordinator

Main agenda items: *project progress, Knowledge Management and Communication, and Gender mainstreaming, annual work plan and budget, election of chair*

ICCAT informed about the progress on the four activities it is responsible of (MCS, development of EAFM including climate change in five t-RFMOs. (ECOTest), joint tuna RFMO Working Groups, Port Inspection training courses, electronic systems to improve fisheries monitoring and two tools in support of traceability developed and tested for possible upscaling. The progress was welcomed by the PSC.

However, the Steering Committee noted the difficulties of scheduling the workshops planned as part of the coordination activity between the t-RFMOs; indeed, it took note that the amount allocated to cover the three planned workshops will significantly limit the number of participants in person. Initial proposals were made to cover 4 to 5 participants per tuna RFMO, prompting discussions on the nature of these meetings (technical or bringing together scientists and managers) and potential difficulties in choosing participants. At the suggestion of the Chairman, the Committee therefore asked the ICCAT Secretariat and the PMU to coordinate and propose to the other Secretariats a scenario for agreeing on the format of the various workshops that ICCAT is responsible for organizing.

The Steering Committee elected ICCAT, in the person of its Executive Secretary, to hold the chairmanship until the next ordinary meeting, the duration of which is approximately one year.

In parallel with the meeting, ICCAT held a meeting with the Pacific Forum Fisheries Organization (FFA) to discuss the possibility of replicating the MCS certification training program in the Atlantic, initiated under the ABNJ2 tuna project and already implemented in the Pacific. Discussions will continue with a view to proposing this initiative to the ICCAT CPCs.

Report: Not yet available

REGIONAL COORDINATION MEETING FOR EUROPE ON THE AGREEMENT ON PORT STATE MEASURES (PSMA)

Location: London, Great Britain

Dates: 23-27 September 2024

Representative: Valérie SAMEDY, VMS Manager/Technical Officer, ICCAT Secretariat

Main agenda items:

- Take stock of the status of the PSMA and its application in the region
- Address the challenges in implementation of the PSMA in the region
- Address the usage of the PSMA global information Exchange System
- Discuss regional port states measures implementation strategies, including through relevant Regional Fishery Bodies
- Draw up recommendations, including on improving the effectiveness of the PSMA, for consideration by the PSMA Strategy and Monitoring Working Group

Summary: Senior officials and technical experts from Europe, representing intergovernmental organizations and Parties and non-Parties to the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), met in the United Kingdom, in the fifth and final session of a series of PSMA Regional Coordination Meetings (RCMs). The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has this year convened several Regional Coordination Meetings that discussed, on a regional level, the implementation of the PSMA and follow up on the 'Bali Strategy' adopted by the Parties to the Agreement in May 2023. Delegates from 9 countries and/or Parties (ESP, FRA, GBR, HRV, ISL, MLT, NOR, POL and EU) and three regional fishery bodies (GFCM, ICCAT, NEAFC) had participated to this meeting. The meeting was hosted by NEAFC with the technical contribution of the United Kingdom, and the Executive Secretary opened the session.

It was a great opportunity for progressing on the coordination and implementation of the PSMA at regional level whilst advancing discussions on various aspects of the Bali Strategy. This meeting took stock of the status of the Agreement and its application in the region, addressed challenges in the implementation of the PSMA and the usage of the PSMA Global Information Exchange System (GIES). The PSMA Secretariat presented also a methodology to quantify Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the absence of a compliance committee, to build indicators, to understand the scale and potential impacts of the problem, and to determine whether the right MCS elements are in place and whether they are working.

At the same time, some points of concern were raised as the viability of the Secretariat without regular contributions by Parties or other funds, the workload and the availability of the parties with the overlapping of other meetings, the reduction or the duplication of tools to transmit information, the importance of the presence and participation of RFMOs in these meetings.

For two days, the implementation of the PSMA and the identification of means to strengthen its effectiveness in the region within the context of the "Bali Strategy" had been reviewed by breakout group to finally consolidates outcomes and recommendations for consideration by the PSMA Strategy and Monitoring Working Group.

Future actions: Fifth Meeting of the Parties (MoP) to the PSMA (2025 - Ecuador)

Documentation: <https://www.fao.org/port-state-measures/meetings/regional-coordination/en/>

CONSULTATION AFRICAINE EN PREPARATION DE LA 3E CONFERENCE DES NATIONS UNIES SUR LES OCEANS (UNOC-3)

Lieu : Tanger, Maroc

Dates : 9 octobre 2024

Représentant : Camille Jean Pierre Manel, Secrétaire exécutif

Principaux points de l'ordre du jour : gouvernance, renforcement de capacités, recherche, coopération, et mobilisation de fonds

La rencontre, qui avait pour objectif global de promouvoir les efforts de collaboration en matière de gouvernance des océans, a rassemblé de nombreux ministres (la plupart d'États membres de l'ICCAT), des observateurs d'organisations intergouvernementales et d'ONG ainsi que de la société civile. Elle a été co-présidée par le Ministre en charge de la pêche du Maroc et l'Envoyé spécial du Secrétaire général des Nations unies pour les océans.

Les ministres, qui ont fait des déclarations lors des différentes sessions de la réunion, ont notamment fait le point sur les actions dans leurs pays respectifs, de même que sur leur engagement dans la coopération avec d'autres pays et au sein des organisations internationales auxquelles ils sont parties. De même, ils ont lancé des appels pour le renforcement de la coopération et la lutte contre la pêche INN ainsi que la promotion d'une gouvernance durable des océans. Les thèmes du renforcement des capacités ainsi que du financement ont aussi été des sujets récurrents.

La réunion a été l'occasion pour l'ICCAT de rencontrer et d'échanger avec des ministres pour les sensibiliser davantage aux questions de l'ICCAT, notamment sur les contributions en souffrance et l'appui à leur délégation aux fins de facilitation de leurs démarches pour la participation aux réunions de l'ICCAT.

L'ICCAT a aussi rencontré l'Envoyé spécial du Secrétaire général des Nations unies pour les océans qui a apprécié le rôle des ORGP et a rappelé le Sommet de Honiara (Iles Salomon) en février 2025 qui adressera l'ODD 14.

Les consultations ont consigné leurs conclusions dans le document : [AFRICA TO UNOC-3 MESSAGES](#).

EUROPEAN TRACKING NETWORK SYMPOSIUM 2024**Location:** Palma de Mallorca (Spain)**Dates:** 16-18 October 2024**Representative:** Francisco Alemany (GBYP Coordinator)**Main agenda items:**

Day 1:

- Key talks and presentations
 - Session I: Acoustic Tracking for Monitoring Pollution, Human-Made Infrastructure Effects, and Aquatic System Restoration
 - Session II: Tracking Animals to Monitor Climate Change Effects on Aquatic Environments
- Meeting with manufacturers
- Poster session

Day 2:

- Key talks and presentations
 - Session III: Sustainable Fisheries and Protected Areas Management via Acoustic Tracking
- Project Meetings: MOVE, STRAITS and DTO-track & NORTRACK; METARAO
- Open Workshop: Theoretical & Applied Research WG of the ETN I

Day 3:

- Key talks and presentations
 - Session IV: Advancements in Collaborative Tracking Networks and the Open Protocol
- Open workshops
 - Exploring Collaborative Synergies between the ETN and ICCAT
 - Theoretical & Applied Research WG of the ETN II
- Project meetings: MOVE and STRAITS, DTO-track & NORTRACK
- Poster session

ICCAT representative attended all the Key talks, presentations and poster sessions to gather information about the state of the art in acoustic telemetry applied to the study of large pelagic species. ICCAT representative also attended the project meetings and open workshops that could be of interest for ICCAT, it is those involving acoustic receivers networks that could be relevant for the study of large pelagic movements. Bilateral talks were maintained with ETN project responsible to concretize the potential collaborations between ICCAT and ETN, as regards both data management systems and field tagging activities; with the representatives of the companies manufacturing acoustic tags, to inform them about ICCAT needs regarding tags performance and to get info about future technical improvements; and also with the representatives of the research teams working on large pelagics telemetry, some of them not attending regularly SCRS ICCAT meetings, to look for further potential synergies and to promote the submission to ICCAT of relevant information. Finally, the ICCAT representative organized and chaired an ad hoc open workshop to explore the potential synergies between the ETN and ICCAT, which was attended by most of Symposium participants, giving an introductory presentation on ICCAT structure and functioning, focusing on ICCAT tagging programs. The agenda points tackled during this workshop were:

- General information from ICCAT about plans regarding acoustic tagging
- Discussion on the best approach to create an "ICCAT module" within the ETN database, regulating data access for the ICCAT Secretariat and collaborating teams
- Feedback from ETN on future plans (improvement of the receivers network, database hosting institution, etc.)
- Feedback from teams already deploying or planning to deploy acoustic tags in ICCAT species
- Development of links between ICCAT and ETN data management systems
- Feedback from manufacturers on potential improvements in acoustic tracking technologies

Future actions:

- Maintain the contacts with research teams working on telemetry of species managed by ICCAT
- Follow up the development of the EU STRAITS project, under which arrays of acoustic receivers have been deployed in strategic areas for ICCAT managed species migrations, as the Strait of Gibraltar
- Concretize the collaboration with the European Tracking Network to share the available metadata of tagging activities available at both institutions and to use the existing ETN acoustic etags information system to manage the ICCAT acoustic tagging activities

Report availability: Not available

MEDITERRANEAN ADVISORY COUNCIL MEDAC

Location: Hybrid Meeting (Rome/Online)

Dates: 17 October 2024

Representative: George Tserpes (SCRS officer, Mediterranean swordfish rapporteur), Ai Kimoto, Mauricio Ortiz (ICCAT Secretariat)

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 Management Procedure for Atlantic bluefin tuna.

The Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC) prepares a report 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 and SCRS scientists were invited to attend the meeting and Drs George Tserpes (Mediterranean swordfish Species Group rapporteur), Ai Kimoto, and Mauricio Ortiz provided a presentation on the recent findings of the SCRS on the status of the stocks of Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna, Mediterranean Albacore, and Mediterranean Swordfish. The presentations included the status of the Atlantic Bluefin tuna Management Procedure (BFT MP), 2024 BFT Exceptional Circumstances evaluation, and TAC recommendations for 2023-2025.

It was informed that the ICCAT Commission adopted the Management Procedure for Atlantic Bluefin tuna Rec 22-08 and a TAC recommendation of 40,570 t for the 2023-2025 period calculated based on the adopted BFT MP. It was also indicated that in 2024 the SCRS concluded that no exceptional circumstances exist that would warrant deviating from the TAC advice under the BFT MP. In 2025 the SCRS will estimate the TAC recommendations for the 2026-2029 period following the BFT MP. It was further noted that for 2025 the SCRS will focus on the application and implementation of the Close-Kin Mark-Recapture (CKMR) program for the East stock of bluefin tuna following the successful results from a similar program in the West Bluefin tuna stock.

For the Mediterranean Albacore, it was indicated that the SCRS conducted a stock assessment in 2024. Regrettably, the substantial uncertainties in the assessment precluded the provision of specific TAC advice at this time. However, the Committee noted that the current TAC (2,500 t) based on the Rebuilding Plan for this stock [Rec 21-06] would allow ICCAT to meet the management objectives to recover the stock above B_{MSY} with a probability higher than 60%. It was emphasized that the uncertainty in total catch and indices of abundance is of paramount importance in models and was not adequately addressed in the assessment in 2024. To the extent that the reported catches are inaccurate or incomplete, the ability of these models to reflect the stock dynamics accurately is undermined.

With regards to the Mediterranean swordfish, it was indicated that ICCAT 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 2023 was 7,314 t.

Stakeholders reiterated that the increase in bluefin tuna populations in several areas of the Mediterranean has augmented their predation impact on the small pelagic stocks and their effects on local fisheries. They reiterated the need for studies that consider the trophic 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 associated with catch and transfer to 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.

Finally, several participants commented on the need to consider climate change and its impact on fish stocks in the Mediterranean.