

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



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Bangkok (Thailand), 3-14 March 2013

MANAGEMENT MEASURES TAKEN BY THE ICCAT ON EASTERN BLUEFIN TUNA

This document has been submitted by the Secretariat at the request of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), in relation to agenda item 13 on *Cooperation with organizations and multilateral environmental agreements* .

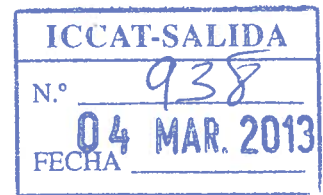
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COMISION INTERNACIONAL PARA LA
CONSERVACION DEL ATUN ATLANTICO

4 March 2013

The Secretary General
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Dear Sir,

At the last CITES 15 COP meeting the Chair of the ICCAT promised that CITES would be kept informed on the progress made on Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin (BFT-E). This note summarises the outcome of the assessment review conducted by the SCRS in 2012 and discussions that subsequently took place in the Commission meeting.

Management

The Commission has established a total allowable catch (TAC) for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna at 13,500 t and 12,900 t in 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively [Rec. 09-06, 10-04]. Additionally the Commission required that the SCRS provide the scientific basis for establishing a three-year recovery plan for 2011-2013 with the goal of achieving BMSY through 2022 with at least 60% probability. In 2012, control measures were strengthened and the TAC maintained in line with scientific advice [Rec. 12-03]. Although this measure will not officially enter into force until June 2013, CPCs have undertaken to implement it on a voluntary basis during the earlier purse seine season.

Enforcement and compliance

Significant efforts have been made by ICCAT on improving enforcement of and compliance with BFT-E conservation and management measures. The BFT-E management plans contains many controls and cross checks, and such control begins even before the fishery starts. A full list of reporting requirements is attached. At the annual meeting of the Commission, the Compliance Committee reviews in detail compliance by each Contracting Party with the measures in force, and suggests actions to be taken in the case of serious infractions being found. Potential non-compliance issues and/or alleged IUU fishing can also be reported by NGOs to the Commission for consideration by the Compliance Committee, in accordance with the procedures established in Rec. 08-09.

BFT-E management includes the following measures:

- Fishing, inspection and capacity plans

Each year, CPCs which have been allocated a quota for BFT-E must submit a fishing, inspection and capacity plan to the Commission for endorsement. If the Commission finds serious fault with the plans, suspension of fishing may be decided. Non-submission of the plans referred to above shall automatically lead to suspension of bluefin tuna fishing in that year. In February 2013, a joint meeting of the Compliance Committee and Panel 2 was held in Seville, Spain, in order to review the plans. All fishing plans presented were endorsed except two. As these two Contracting Parties were not present, further information has been requested for possible endorsement by correspondence. One Contracting Party did not submit a plan and has been informed that its fishery for 2013 has been suspended by the Commission. The report of the meeting is available on the ICCAT web site at http://iccat.int/Documents/COC_PA2_REP_ENG.pdf.

- Observer programmes

All purse seiners must carry an ICCAT observer aboard. ICCAT observers are also present at all caging and harvesting events. Rec. 12-03 has strengthened the observer programme through the adoption of minimum standards for video recordings, to assist the observer in making an accurate count of the fish. National observers are required on 20% of active pelagic trawlers over 15m; 20% of active longline vessels over 15m, 20% of active baitboats over 15m; 100% of towing vessels and 100% of harvesting operations from traps.



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- Inspection

The ICCAT Scheme of Joint International Inspection allows mutual inspection of vessels fishing in the high seas. VMS data is made available to those CPCs participating in the inspection scheme to enhance effectiveness of this measure.

- eBCD

In accordance with Rec. 12-08, in 2013, the bluefin tuna catch document scheme will become electronic, initially on a trial basis to become fully electronic in 2014. This scheme will help to control catch, caging and trade in real time. This major project is being developed by an external agency and is already in test phase, to be implemented on a trial basis during the forthcoming purse seine fishing season.

- ICCAT Records

All CPCs involved in BFT-E fishery must send to the Secretariat in advance of the fishery, for publication on the web, the list of vessels authorised to fish BFT-E; the list of vessels authorised to support such fisheries; the list of authorised farming (fattening) facilities; the list of authorised traps and the list of ports in which BFT-E may be landed and or transhipped. Transhipment at sea is prohibited.

- Reporting

CPCs fishing for BFT-E must send weekly and monthly catch reports during their fishing season. All vessels over 15 m must also send VMS messages to the ICCAT Secretariat at least every 6 hours.

Stock Assessment

A review of the situation of the stock was conducted in 2012 to examine the success so far of these measures, which showed that the status of the stock has improved and that fishing mortality on both younger and older fish has declined. The SCRS also concluded that although catches prior to 2008 were higher than the TACs, reported catches from 2008 onwards largely reflect the TACs based on estimates using vessel capacity measures.

CPUE indices have also displayed positive trends in recent years, although these will have been affected by changes in targeting due to management. Fisheries-independent aerial surveys i.e. those performed on juvenile fish in the North-western Mediterranean Sea provide similar indications.

ICCAT is developing methods, under the GBYP, to improve assessment models for the provision of scientific management advice.

As can be seen from the above, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin provides a clear example of how ICCAT management can lead to success in the conservation of species under its mandate.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours faithfully,



Masanori Miyahara
Commission Chairman