

Cooperation between ICCAT and CITES

Capacity building in West Africa



The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) is a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) responsible for the conservation of tunas and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean and its adjacent seas.

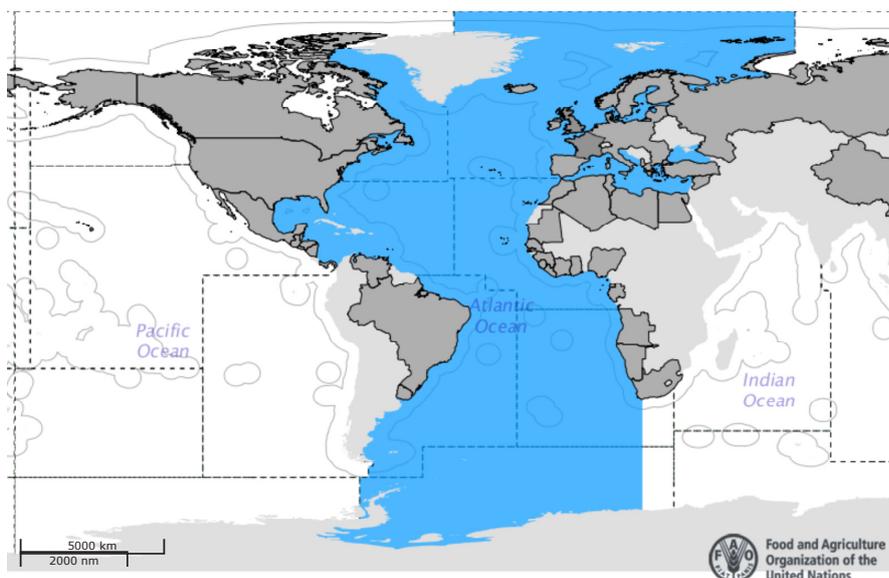
In recent years, tuna RFMOs have increasingly addressed by-catch issues, particularly for long-lived marine megafauna such as sharks. Despite ongoing efforts, the current knowledge on many fisheries and basic biology is still limited – which leads to much uncertainty in stock assessments, and causes constraints to the provision of scientific advice.

In 2015, CITES and ICCAT agreed on a joint activity for capacity building to improve the ability of the countries in West Africa to improve shark data collection and research, under the ICCAT Shark Research and Data Collection Programme (SRDCP).

ICCAT and CITES have organised a training course for government and research institute staff and other relevant stakeholders for the West Africa region (English and French), from 12-16 September 2016. Several countries in this region were identified as priority countries for assistance under the EU-CITES project with regard to implementing the new CITES listings for sharks and rays.

The training curriculum covers: species identification (including the provision of ID cards); biological and fisheries sampling techniques; data reporting requirements; and, information regarding the implementation of CITES shark listings on Appendix II.

Two internationally recognised shark experts have signed on to assist the ICCAT Secretariat in presenting these courses. The course is conducted at the ICCAT Secretariat headquarters in Madrid, Spain, and participation has been confirmed for almost 40 scientists from 13 different West African countries.



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source: <http://www.fao.org/figis/geoserver/factsheets/rfbs.html>



Outcomes and lessons

- ✓ Improved understanding of the concept of Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs)
- ✓ Improved identification of and data collection for pelagic shark species landed in the region with a particular focus on those recently included in CITES Appendix II
- ✓ Elevated level of fisheries data submission to ICCAT regarding pelagic shark species

Looking into the future...

- Future collaborative opportunities between CITES and ICCAT in other regions around the Atlantic Ocean where data deficiencies are an issue
- Make use of the utility of collaboration between CITES and ICCAT in capacity building on shark management, in particular identification and data collection, which contributes both to ICCAT by-catch research and CITES implementation
- Potential to expand similar collaboration to other tuna RFMOs with similar elasmobranch by-catch programmes

For more information about ICCAT and its activities:

- ICCAT: www.iccat.int/en/
- ICCAT SRDCP: www.iccat.int/Documents/SCRS/ExecSum/SRDCP_ENG.pdf



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