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**INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS  
(ICCAT)  
2014 Annual ICCAT Meeting Press Release**

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**17 November 2014**

**GENOA, ITALY**

The continued maritime importance of Genoa was demonstrated through her acting as host city to the 19th Special Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The meeting was honoured by the presence of the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture in Italy, the Prefect of Genoa and the Mayor of Genoa at its opening session. Forty two Contracting Parties and three Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities were present, and the increasing importance of ICCAT was evident from the attendance of two non-Contracting Parties, six intergovernmental organisations and twenty one non-governmental organisations, totalling well over 500 delegates in all.

As usual, the flagship species *bluefin tuna* captured much of the attention of participants, remaining a high priority issue on the 2014 agenda, although other important species, such as *tropical tuna species, sharks and by-catch species* were not overlooked.

The success of heeding scientific advice was reflected in the encouraging signs shown for *bluefin tuna*, in particular the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock during the last assessment update, and the Commission showed prudence in allocating the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) within the limits indicated by its scientific Committee.

The Commission also considered the management of tropical tunas, including skipjack, which had been assessed in 2014 by ICCAT Scientific Committee. The Commission created a working group to better evaluate the effects of a fishing technique that utilizes fish aggregating devices (FADs) on tropical tuna species with a view to improving management advice.

Increased attention to science and *scientific activities* is also demonstrated by welcoming the new five year strategic plan presented by the Scientific Committee, as well as through the approval of an Atlantic Ocean Tropical Tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP) with a total budget of almost 20 million euros over the next 5 years. Other existing research programmes, particularly the Atlantic-wide bluefin year programme, will be continued.

With catch levels for 2015 for many ICCAT species having already been determined in 2013, the Commission had some time to reflect on other important matters, particularly those relating to *Monitoring, surveillance and control (MCS)* issues in the continued fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities. The implementation in 2015 of the electronic bluefin catch document scheme (eBCD) placed this issue at the top of the list.

Recognising that a few technical difficulties with the system remained, the Commission determined that paper documents would be allowed until such difficulties could be resolved. At the same time, the Commission reiterated its commitment to the full implementation of the electronic system as soon as all core functionalities were fully operational. Inter-sessional work will continue to resolve technical issues. The Commission also took a step to strengthen its vessel monitoring system requirements by increasing the transmission rate from six hours to four hours.

Discussion also centred on improving and strengthening the organisation, with more in-depth proposals for Convention Amendment, and a stock taking of actions taken in response to the ICCAT 2008 Performance Review.

In 2014, ICCAT spent around €30,000 in **assistance to developing States** for capacity-building activities, and for 2015 a similar level of overall funding is expected in addition to the new fund created for the implementation of port States measures.

The deliberations of the Compliance Committee once again ensured that Contracting Parties and cooperating non-members remained vigilant in the implementation of adopted ICCAT **conservation and management measures**, and none of the Contracting Parties were identified as having any compliance deficiencies of serious concern.

Atlantic tuna scientists and managers will again have a full agenda for 2015 with seven inter-sessional scientific meetings scheduled in addition to the inter-sessional meetings of Panel 2 to discuss bluefin tuna management plans back-to-back with an Integrated Management Measures (IMM) meeting, the Standing Working Group to Enhance Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers (SWGSM) back-to-back with the Working Group of Fisheries Managers and Scientists in Support of the WBFT Stock Assessment and the Working Group on Convention Amendment. The outcomes of these meetings will be the basis for the deliberations at the **next annual meeting** of ICCAT which is expected to be held from 9 – 16 November 2015 in Malta. For updates, details on venues and other information, check out [www.iccat.int](http://www.iccat.int), under "Meetings".

The Commission has also approved the initiation of the second performance evaluation of ICCAT. The Kobe process was also discussed and the Commission views this as an ongoing process.

In general the Commission expressed great satisfaction with what had been achieved in terms of both management and compliance with the adopted measures.

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## Recommendations adopted during the meeting:

- Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish an Ad Hoc Working Group for Preparing the Next Performance Review
- Recommendation by ICCAT Amending the Recommendation by ICCAT for Enhancing the Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers
- Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 11-26 on the Establishment of a Meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties
- Resolution by ICCAT Establishing Guidelines for the Cross-Listing of Vessels Contained on IUU Vessel Lists of Other Tuna RFMOs on the ICCAT IUU Vessel List in Accordance with Recommendation 11-18
- Recommendation by ICCAT to Harmonize and Guide the Implementation of ICCAT Vessel Listing Requirements
- Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation [03-14] by ICCAT Concerning Minimum Standards for the Establishment of a Vessel Monitoring System in the ICCAT Convention Area
- Recommendation by ICCAT to Support Effective Implementation of Recommendation by ICCAT for an ICCAT Scheme for Minimum Standards for Inspection in Port (Rec. 12-07)
- Recommendation by ICCAT on Access Agreements
- Recommendation by ICCAT on a Multi-Annual Conservation and Management Program for Tropical Tunas
- Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Implementation of an Atlantic Ocean Tropical Tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP)
- Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish an Ad Hoc Working Group on Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)
- Recommendation by ICCAT Amending the Recommendation 13-07 by ICCAT to Establish a Multi-Annual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean
- Recommendation by ICCAT Amending the Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Rebuilding Program
- Recommendation by ICCAT on Shortfin Mako Caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries