



Contribution of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to the Report of the United Nations Secretary General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea on the Ocean as a Source of Sustainable Food

This report is a brief summary of the main recent developments of the Commission in relation to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 78/69.

It should be noted that the main aim of the ICCAT Commission under the current International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas is to co-operate in maintaining the populations of tuna and tuna-like fishes found in the Atlantic Ocean at levels which will permit the maximum sustainable catch for food and other purposes. The ratification of the newly adopted Protocol to Amend the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas is ongoing with the FAO.

As of 19 November 2023, the total catches in 2022 of ICCAT and associated species was 877,029 t, of which 171,281 t were small tuna species that are often taken by small scale and/or artisanal fisheries.

In 2023, The Commission convened in a hybrid format (in person with the possibility of participating online) in New Cairo (Egypt) to evaluate the current status of the application of the regulatory measures in force and to establish the conservation and management measures for the future. In 2023, full scientific stock assessments were carried out for four species: Atlantic Albacore (northern and southern stocks), sailfish and blue shark. In total, nineteen new Recommendations, four Resolutions and two Reference documents were adopted covering relevant issues on Atlantic tuna and tuna-like species conservation and fisheries management (see list attached). All ICCAT Conservation and Management measures are available on the [ICCAT website](#).

In addition to updating measures on the major ICCAT commercial species, the Commission also adopted measures relating to several shark species associated with ICCAT fisheries. Most importantly, decisions were taken in relation to identifying the potential effects of Climate Change on ICCAT Fisheries, and also in cooperating with the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement, and in monitoring the development of other effective area-based conservation measures. Further measures were also adopted by the Commission to prevent, deter, and eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU).

Science continues to underpin the basis of Commission decisions, and in addition to the stock assessments carried out, seven research programmes are ongoing, including the ICCAT Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (ICCAT/GBYP), a special scientific programme that was launched in 2010. This aims to improve basic data collection and further develop current knowledge of the key biological and ecological processes of tunas and tuna-like species, as well as to refine assessment models, to support the provision of scientific advice on stock status and ICCAT fisheries management.



One of the main tools of ICCAT to manage important fisheries is the setting of Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and quotas. ICCAT has adopted a *Resolution by ICCAT on Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities (Res. 15-13)*, criteria which include, inter alia, *the contribution of the fisheries for the stocks regulated by ICCAT to the national food security/needs, domestic consumption, income resulting from exports, and employment of qualifying participants.*

In addition to measures on quotas and catch levels, ICCAT has many management measures aimed at ensuring compliance with these. Among the measures taken previously are those relating to the swordfish and bigeye tuna statistical document programmes, and the ICCAT electronic bluefin tuna catch document programme (eBCD), which monitors all steps of the market chain from catch to final export of bluefin tuna (catch, caging, transfer, harvesting, transshipment and trade).

Cooperation has continued with regular contacts with sister organizations in order to further strengthen cooperation, as well as the signing of Memorandums of Understanding and Letters of Agreement with other intergovernmental organisations. A Letter of Agreement has been signed with the FAO Common Oceans Project which supports efforts to keep the oceans healthy through the sustainable management of marine resources and the conservation of biodiversity.



List of Recommendations, Resolutions and Other Decisions adopted in 2023

Key	Title
Rec. 23-01	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT extending and amending Recommendation 22-01 on a Multi-annual Conservation and Management Programme for tropical tunas</i>
Rec. 23-02	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on Brazil's bigeye tuna payback plan</i>
Rec. 23-03	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on Senegal's bigeye tuna payback plan</i>
Rec. 23-04	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 22-03 extending and amending Recommendation 17-02 for the conservation of North Atlantic swordfish</i>
Rec. 23-05	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 21-04 on conservation and management measures, including a management procedure and exceptional circumstances protocol, for North Atlantic albacore</i>
Rec. 23-06	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 22-08 establishing a Multi-annual Management Plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean</i>
Rec. 23-07	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 22-09 establishing a management procedure for Atlantic bluefin tuna to be used for both the western Atlantic and eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean management areas</i>
Rec. 23-08	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT for a pilot project for farming bluefin tuna (<i>Thunnus thynnus</i>) in the Cantabrian Sea</i>
Rec. 23-09	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on Curaçao's blue marlin payback plan</i>
Rec. 23-10	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT to replace Recommendation 19-07 on management measures for the conservation of North Atlantic blue shark caught in association with ICCAT fisheries</i>
Rec. 23-11	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT to replace Recommendation 19-08 on management measures for the conservation of the South Atlantic blue shark caught in association with ICCAT fisheries</i>
Rec. 23-12	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT for the conservation of whale sharks (<i>Rhincodon typus</i>) caught in association with ICCAT fisheries</i>
Rec. 23-13	<i>Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 22-12 on the bycatch of sea turtles caught in association with ICCAT fisheries</i>
Rec. 23-14	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on mobulid rays (family Mobulidae) caught in association with ICCAT fisheries</i>
Res. 23-15	<i>Resolution by ICCAT on cetaceans encirclement</i>
Rec. 23-16	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 21-13 on establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities</i>
Rec. 23-17	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 18-09 on Port State measures to prevent, deter, and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing</i>
Rec. 23-18	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT to establish minimum standards and programme requirements for the use of Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) in ICCAT fisheries</i>
Res. 23-19	<i>Resolution by ICCAT on next steps on the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change in 2024</i>
Res. 23-20	<i>Resolution by ICCAT on core principles on labour standards in ICCAT fisheries</i>
Rec. 23-21	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT amending and replacing Recommendation 18-13 on an ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Catch Documentation programme</i>
Rec. 23-22	<i>Recommendation by ICCAT on establishment of a Standing Catch Document Scheme Working Group (CDS WG)</i>
Res. 23-23	<i>Resolution by ICCAT on the implementation of biodiversity conservation instruments</i>
Ref. 23-24	<i>Revised Guidelines for the Preparation of Annual Reports</i>
Ref. 23-25	<i>Rules of procedure for the administration of the special Meeting Participation Fund</i>