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COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

Intersessional Meetings of Aquaculture and Fisheries Subject Group

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ICCAT activities report to CWP

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I. Introduction

The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) is an intergovernmental organization responsible for the conservation of tunas and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean and its adjacent seas. To accomplish their objectives, ICCAT compiles fishery statistics from its Contracting Parties (CPCs) and other entities fishing for these species in the ICCAT convention area, coordinates the research including the stock assessments, and develops scientific based management advice and the required mechanisms that allows the Commission to establish Conservation and Management Measures.

Currently, ICCAT assesses 10 major tuna and billfish species, 3 pelagic sharks, and jointly 13 small tuna species (ecological risk assessment approaches). In addition, it also compiles by-catch information of more than 100 additional species (including seabirds, sea turtles, and, mammals).

Overall, the information associated to about 170 ICCAT data requirements (science, management, monitoring/control) is managed by the ICCAT-DB system (about 40 relational databases, each with several frontend/backend tools and applications). Fisheries statistics and biological samples (Task I annual nominal catches, Task II catch and effort and Task II size frequencies) are among those data collection obligations.

This report summarizes the ICCAT relevant activities that support SDG14, since CWP-25 in 2016.

II. Review of relevant ICCAT activities since CWP-25 (2016)

ICCAT (Secretariat, Scientific Committee and corresponding bodies, CPC experts) has ongoing several projects and specific tasks (some started more than 10 years ago) related to the various aspects of the fisheries information management field (data collection systems, automation processes, validation processes,

harmonization, historical recoveries, etc.), all foreseeing data improvements and faster availability. The major ones with relevance to SDG14 are:

- a) Overall improvement (through standardization/harmonization) of the ICCAT data collection system, aiming to systematize data integration, validation, storage, and, availability.
 - Templates and electronic forms (now with SCRS filtering criteria)
 - Tools for unattended/automated data integration (30% of 50 forms, as of today)-
 - Optimization (integration, normalization, etc.) of ICCAT database system for IOMS (3)
 - Geo-referencing several datasets (nominal catches, catch & effort, conventional tagging)
 - GIS system (server, layers, etc.) is under development

- b) Nominal catches improvements:
 - Historical catch series rebuild (sharks and small tunas)
 - Species discrimination (reducing unclassified/grouped species like TUN, YOU, BIL, etc.)
 - Gears discrimination (reducing unclassified/grouped gears like UNCL, SURF, SPOR)
 - Small scale fisheries catch series discrimination (using fishing flag activities, gears, etc.)
 - Gap analyses and completeness.

- c) Improvements to higher detailed fisheries data (Task II: catch & effort, size frequencies):
 - Dataset recoveries aiming harmonization of:
 - time (all monthly based), and
 - area harmonization (5x5 for longline fisheries / 1x1 for surface gears)
 - effort measures by gear

In addition, the SCRS Working Group on stock assessment methods (WGSAM) adopted recently the “SCRS scorecard on ICCAT fisheries data availability” (a complement to ICCAT Res.11-14). It contains quantitative benchmarks that informs/compares in a systematic way the level of fisheries data available of 26 ICCAT major fisheries (species-stock combinations). The methodology is published in document SCRS/2019/045 (for publication in the 2019 ICCAT Red Books).

The Secretariat started recently the development of the ICCAT Integrated Online Management System (IOMS). The Commission established the Online Reporting Technology Working Group (ICCAT [Rec. 16-19](#)) mandated to study, specify and supervise the IOMS full development. The IOMS will change the way of working of all ICCAT players (bodies, CPCs, users, etc.) and will have implications in way of reporting will require structural changes to ICCAT-DB. The ICCAT has planned in this revision the integration of the CWP standard coding system in the ICCAT-DB.

In relation to capacity building activities, ICCAT has special funds for the participation in ICCAT meetings and for capacity building activities with ICCAT CPCs. All the information related to this subject is published in the ICCAT website (<https://www.iccat.int/en/meetingsFunds.html>). The capacity building activities are often made through workshops, training courses, meetings, and, involves areas such as data collection workflows, biological sampling schemes, species identification, modelling approaches (CPUES standardization, SS3, MSE process, etc.). The collaborators involved were, the Secretariat professional staff, invited experts often associated with ICCAT special programs (e.g.: GBYP, AOTTP) or, CPC scientists. In

addition, the ICCAT Secretariat staff maintains a continuous CPC support on various areas of data collection systems.