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COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

Nineteenth Session

Noumea, New Caledonia, 10-13 July 2001

AGENCY REPORT

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Agency Programmes in Fishery Statistics
ICCAT

Agenda Item 6

1. Modifications since CWP-18

Since the last CWP meeting in 1999, a Biostatistician has been hired (September 2000), whose first task is to review and re-design the ICCAT data bases. While no major changes have yet been introduced in the ICCAT data collection system, work is now well advanced on the new relational data base (SQL). Once this base becomes operational, several changes will be introduced into the system. *Inter alia*, it is proposed to collect annual statistics in kilograms, rather than metric tons, in order to ensure greater accuracy. The methods of submission of data will be streamlined to include an automatic verification process. Submission of data will be requested, where possible, in electronic format, which will reduce possible errors in data entry. The new data base will greatly facilitate the extraction of data at any level of aggregation requested by ICCAT scientists and Working Groups. Separate bases will also be designed for shark data and tuna trade statistics.

In order to ensure that data is not lost in case of system failure, backup of the current flat file data bases have been made and deposited in a bank strong box, rented for this purpose.

2. Main purpose and usage of statistics

The main purpose of statistics collected by ICCAT is to carry out stock assessments and other scientific research on mandated species. Recognizing the scientific importance of maintaining reliable and accurate statistics, the Commission has decided that the Task 1 (annual catch) statistics submitted for scientific purposes not be used for assessing compliance. Separate reporting forms for compliance purposes have been designed. This allows the entry of scientific estimates in the base, when no official data are available.

3. Catch data structure

The ICCAT data base contains reported data, and also best scientific estimates where no precise catch data are available. The majority of the data are landing data, but the base also contains discards, which are distinguished from landings by special codes. However, not all countries/entities/fishing entities report discards, and these statistics are still far from complete. Recreational statistics are included where known, and in many cases estimates are made by national scientists with knowledge of this sector.

Concerns have recently arisen regarding data from fish farming (fish on-grown in pens), and studies are underway to assess the effects of bluefin tuna farming on the collection of catch statistics.

The Commission continues its policy of requesting documentary evidence and justification for changes to historical data, other than preliminary data. Several countries have requested assistance from the

Secretariat in order to revise their catch data. Such technical assistance helps to ensure the verity of data and improve the reliability of the ICCAT data base.

4. Reporting policy in relation to nationality of catch

The nationality of the catch is presumed to be that of the flag vessel making the catch. Care is taken to ensure that no double entries are made where countries report landings in their ports made by other flag vessels. Exceptions to this rule are the joint venture programmes, exemplified by Brazil, where the Brazil charters flag vessels from other states. These catches are landed and monitored at Brazilian ports, and included in Brazilian catch statistics.

IUU catches estimated from trade data are distinguished from reported catches by classifying them as NEI (not elsewhere included), together with a numeric code which identifies the flag state.

5. Observer programmes

Several of the Cooperating Parties operate on-board observer programmes. In 2000, a questionnaire was sent to all parties, entities and fishing entities believed to be fishing for Atlantic tuna and tuna like species, in order to obtain more complete information on observer programmes in operation. The results of this survey are attached as Table 1.

6. Vessel Monitoring Systems

At its 1996 meeting, the Commission adopted a recommendation concerning a Vessel Monitoring System, requiring all Contracting Parties to install VMS on at least 10% of its vessels greater than 24 m length fishing for ICCAT species on the high seas. Progress on the implementation of this recommendation is shown in Table 2.

7.Fishery-independent data

Trade Data and Statistical Document Programs

Trade data are currently used to estimate, where possible, unreported catches. The establishment of the ICCAT Bluefin Statistical Document Program, previously reported to the CWP, has greatly assisted in making these estimates more accurate. There are now plans to cross check individual documents with the semestral reports, in order to ensure the greatest level of accuracy possible. At its 12th Special Meeting, the Commission adopted a recommendation to establish similar statistical documents for bigeye tuna and swordfish. It is expected that this will become operational in 2002, and will greatly improve the reliability of statistics for these species.

Other Agenda Items

8. Elasmobranch studies

ICCAT continues to collect shark statistics. This year, not only by-catch statistics have been requested, but also statistics from targeted fisheries of blue shark, mako shark and porbeagle shark in the Atlantic. A data preparatory meeting will be held in September 2001 to assess the level of data available and study the possibility of carrying out future stock assessments of these species.

9. Data implications of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing

ICCAT has adopted several measures in order to try to combat IUU fisheries and obtain catch data from these fisheries. The Action Plans adopted by the Commission have so far rendered good results, although the issue is still problematic. As noted above, estimates of catches by these fisheries are made from

trade data where available, and it is hoped that the new statistical documents and other recent measures will improve the accuracy of statistics for at least some species.

The ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Statistical Document Program requires than all imports of bluefin tuna by a Contracting Party be accompanied by a statistical document, showing the amount imported and the origin (flag) of the catch. This information must be validated by the authorities of the exporting country. This has led not only to an improvement in statistics through the estimation of catch data on the basis of these documents but, in some cases, to the identification of IUU activities, and in many cases the removal of a number of vessels from the registers of some countries, following warning letters from ICCAT. It is expected that the future implementation of statistical documents for bigeye tuna and swordfish will lead to similar improvements.

10. Discard data availability and dissemination

Discard data are collected where available, and several regulatory measures are in place to try to improve discard statistics. These data are included in the ICCAT database, and are used in the assessments of the status of several stocks.

11. Joint dissemination of fishery statistics

Last year, the first ICCAT files for the integrated tuna data base were made available. This task is extremely time consuming particularly as ICCAT is still using ASCII flat files. Data files are submitted in a variety of formats, which need to be standardized, and in many cases broken down by 5° x 5° area and raised to the total catch. In some cases, substitutions have to be made where no data is available. In some cases, data are submitted in number of fish, which must then be converted to weight. However, ICCAT will make every effort to continue to provide this data in a timely manner for joint dissemination, until the new relational data base is finalized, although there may be some delays.

12. Other business (Agenda item 19)

ICCAT boundaries

The FAO entry in the *International Fisheries Bodies Information* shows the ICCAT area terminating at 30° E, but the boundary of the ICCAT Convention Area is at 20° East. The region from 20°-30° E is considered to be the Indian Ocean. No tuna catches are made in the areas below 50° S and 70° N.

ICCAT has still not fully resolved the problem of defining the Mediterranean area, which has implications for data collection (area definition) and for research and stock assessments, for species which are deemed to comprise separate stocks in the Mediterranean. Further work needs to be carried out in order to agree on an official boundary limit for the Mediterranean with the Atlantic Ocean.

TABLE 1. Summary of responses to questionnaire regarding availability of observer data.

flag	fishery	ob. data	%	available	level/part
MEMBERS					
Angola					
Brazil	surrounding net	yes	100%	yes	catch and size data
Canada	longline	yes	5% dom, 100% foreign	yes	set level
Cape Verde	artisanal	no	-	-	-
China PR					
Cote D'Ivoire					
Croatia					
EC-France	PS (Trop)	yes	2-10%	yes	size, strata to be defined
EC-Fr.Martinique	artisanal	no	-	-	-
EC-Ireland	MWT (alb)	yes	>90%	yes	all data
EC-Portugal	all gears mainland	no	-	-	-
EC-Spain	surface LL (swo)	yes	c. 5%	yes	limitations, not specified
EC-Spain	BB, TROL (alb)	no			some data available with conditions
EC-Spain	BBF (east Atl.)	yes	100%	yes	not by boat. Must be revised by industry
EC-Spain	TROP	yes	very small	yes	limitations, not specified
France (St. P & M)					
Gabon					
Ghana					
Guinea Equ.					
Guinea Rep					
Japan	LL	yes	1-2%	yes	5X5 or 1x1
Korea					
Libya					
Maroc					
Namibia	BB/LL	yes	0-30%	yes	all, but only for ICCAT use
Panama					
Russia	PS (Trop)	yes	15%	yes	all
Sao Tome					
South Africa	LL	yes	<10%	yes	fleet by 1º grid, not vessel specific
Trinidiad & T					
Tunisia					
UK-Bermuda	longline	no			trip
UK-Falklands	none	no		yes	bycatch
UK-Sta Helena		no			
Uruguay					
USA		yes	5% (target %)	yes	year-area-quarter (no vessel info)
Venezuela	LL (Swo)	yes	13-18%	yes	all
Venezuela	LL (Tuna)	yes	15-20%	yes	all
Venezuela	PS, BB, LL	in vias		yes	some at aggregated level in the future
flag	**fishery**	**ob. data**	**%**	**available**	**level/part**
OTHERS					
Barbados	none	no			
Benin	artisanal	no	-	-	-
Chi Taipei	longline	yes	0.50%	no	-
Grenada	multispecies	no	-	-	
Iceland	BFT	yes	100%	yes	all, but not during same fishing year
Kenya	-	no	n/a	?	annual, but not for use (!)
Malta	BFT	yes	10%	to fao/copemed	
Mexico	Tuna	yes	100%	yes	
Singapore	none	no	-	-	-
St. Lucia	artisanal	no	-	-	-

Table 1

Summary of information from National Reports or reported to the Compliance Committee regarding the 1997 *Recommendation Concerning a Vessel Monitoring System Pilot Program*, collected at the 1999 Commission meeting and updated to include information received from National Reports presented at the 2000 Commission meeting.

Contracting Party	***System established***	***Comments***
South Africa	Yes	Longliners.
Brazil	Yes	Pilot system in place. Negotiations taking place regarding a more complete program. No new information was reported in 2000.
Canada	Yes	9 vessels fishing on High Seas have been equipped, in accordance with the Recommendation. 5 vessels were operating in 1999 with VMS.
European Community	Yes	System installed in 1999 on almost all vessels fishing on the High Seas. From January 1, 2000, all Community vessels more that 24m will be equipped. This has been delayed in some Member States
Japan	Yes	Almost all longliners equipped. 130 vessels reported in November 2000.
Panama	Yes	45% of vessels equipped to date; 100% by January 2000. No update was received from Panama, it is unknown whether this target was met.
United States	Yes	The United States has been delayed in implementing the Recommendation, but the program will be 100% operative by June 1, 2000. This has again been delayed pending a legal action, but more than 10% have been equipped.
United Kingdom (OT) -Bermuda	Yes	All domestic vessels fishing for tuna are equipped with VMS
Venezuela	No	It is planned to establish the system for the whole fleet soon. No further information is available
Others	No information given	