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Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

### Twentieth Session

Victoria, Seychelles, 21-24 January 2003

### Report by ICCAT

#### 1. Developments in ICCAT programmes in fishery statistics (Item 6)

##### *Relational data base*

Since the hiring of a Biostatistician whose task was to review and re-design the ICCAT data bases, as reported at the last CWP, the processes of Task I (nominal annual catch) data is now operative in the new relational database (ICCAT-RDB). Outputs of tables and figures generated by this new procedure is almost fully automatic. Progress has also been made on the historical updates tracking process. At present, the system can track backwards the last 4/5 updates made over time. The new Task II catch and effort base is also operational, and input routines for size data are under development, while major output routines have been implemented. As regards catch-at-size (CAS), a temporary database is planned to collect for each species, as far as possible, historical substitutions and raising processes made over the years, with the aim of developing a mechanism to automate this process. In parallel, various routines for CAS estimates will be under development and testing. Catch-at-age estimates (CAA) can also be included here, if slicing algorithms used by ICCAT are integrated into the ICCAT-RDB engine.

##### *Proposed data exchange protocol*

The ICCAT Secretariat every year processes a wide variety of file formats submitted. Due to the various formats currently transmitted to ICCAT, data processing and validation of fishery statistics take up a lot of work time. In 2002, the Secretariat processed almost 1000 electronic

files (preliminary and final versions) with a total of around 70 MB. This has several implications, namely delays in data integration, possible increase in hand typing errors, impossibility of automating input procedures and delays in validation and quality control work, all of which lead to a workload beyond the Secretariat human resources capacity. To improve this protocol, the Secretariat has proposed formalizing this process through an ICCAT data exchange protocol, whose main objective is to govern efficiently data submissions and information requested.

### *Cooperation with FAO*

There is continued collaboration between FAO and ICCAT. In 2002, FAO submitted tables to ICCAT showing discrepancies between FAO and ICCAT annual catch databases. These data were analysed by ICCAT and data for small tuna species which had not been reported to ICCAT were entered in the ICCAT data base.

### *New staff position*

In September 2002, a Scientific Editor was hired by the Secretariat, responsible for ICCAT publications.

### *Proposed ICCAT Atlas*

The SCRS has proposed the publication of an Atlas which summarises the information available in the ICCAT data bases, including catch, effort, tagging, size data and environmental data). Work by the various species groups will begin in 2003, in order to define priorities for each species.

### *CATDIS*

ICCAT continues to collaborate with other regional fisheries agencies in the integrated data base. At the time of writing, CATDIS (catch distribution by 5 x 5 area), adapted to FAO area, is being updated to 2000.

## **2. Elasmobranch statistics (Item 7)**

A workshop was held in Canada in September 2001 to evaluate the availability of data for shark species. On the basis of this workshop, assessments for two species - blue shark and shortfin mako shark - have been scheduled for 2004. Work on integrating shark data into the ICCAT RDB is still underway.

The SCRS recommended further coordination and collaboration with other international organisations, especially ICES and GFCM for the assessment of Atlantic and Mediterranean stocks of porbeagle, blue and shortfin mako sharks.

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The SCRS also recommended that all conversion factors related to sharks be provided to the Secretariat by national scientists, so that the ICCAT database can incorporate these, and that Contracting Parties develop and conduct observer programs for their own fleets to collect accurate data on shark catches by species (including discards).

### **3. National data collection methodologies and data quality criteria and indicators.**

In 2001, ICCAT developed and circulated a survey on data collection systems. Responses to this survey continue to be collected. A summary of the responses received to date is attached as Table 1.

The new data exchange protocol, currently being developed, will include several elements to improve the quality of data, as follows:

- submission rules (formats allowed, ICCAT standard codes)
- standard submission forms
- deadlines and tolerance limits
- data validation rules for acceptance
- rules applied to datasets revised (updates)
- minimum limits of data granularity (aggregation on time, area, etc.)
- Secretariat confirmation actions (reception and data processing)

### **4. Catch and trade certification schemes (Item 10)**

The ICCAT Bluefin Tuna Statistical Document Program continues to be in operation. At the 2001 Commission meeting, the Commission also adopted similar programs for bigeye tuna and swordfish. Some Contracting Parties also submit trade data relating to other species. These data are used to estimate unreported catches of tuna and tuna-like species.

Conversion factors are currently applied to all bluefin tuna products, converting product weight to round weight, although there is still some uncertainty involved in these conversion factors. Furthermore, there is a danger of double-counting, as various products from the same fish may be converted.

The SCRS has requested that copies of the individual documents be submitted, as the bi-annual report required by the Commission is not sufficiently detailed.

### **5. Catch terminology (Item 11)**

The new ICCAT-RDB now incorporates identifiers for the type of data reported:

- 1- landings = catch retained and unloaded
- 2- discards = catch not retained but discarded either dead or alive
- 3- catch = total landings + total dead discards

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However, such indicators will apply to new data entered, and no revision to historical data has been made to date.

The Commission, at its 2002 meeting in November, also Recommended that farming statistics be reported, and that this information include the number of cages used by each party, and the estimated quantity (in kgs) of the catches which enter and leave the cages, both in weight and size. It is hoped that this will help to eliminate possible double reporting from trade data, and also improve knowledge about the implications of this technique.

The terminology for farming remains problematic, as, following discussions at the joint ICCAT/GFCM meeting, and at the SAC of the GFCM, it had been agreed to use the term “tuna farming” rather than “tuna fattening”. However, documents presented in the other official languages continue to make distinctions between these terms, and there is a need to align terminology among the multi-lingual organizations.

## **6. Vessel identifiers (Item 12)**

At its 2002 Commission Meeting, ICCAT adopted two Recommendations regarding the listing of vessels fishing for tuna and tuna-like species in the Convention Area. The first list would be a “positive list”, comprising all those vessels, greater than 24 m length overall, which are licenced to fish tuna and tuna-like species. The Commission also recommended that ICCAT collaborate with FAO and other regional fisheries organisations in this endeavor. On the basis of this list and available documentary evidence, a second list of vessels would be created, comprising vessels believed to be engaged in IUU fishing.

A list of vessels targeting northern albacore continues to be maintained.

## **7. FIRMS partnership (Item 13) and FIRMS / FIGIS developments (Item 14)**

The Secretariat was represented at the FIGIS/FIRMS METHODOLOGICAL WORKSHOP, held in Rome, 1-5 July 2002.

ICCAT together with other regional fisheries organizations has collaborated with FAO in the development of a prototype of FIRMS. The Secretariat presented a paper (document available on request) to the SCRS *On a Proposed Partnership Between ICCAT and FIGIS-FIRMS* (SCRS-2002-055). The SCRS endorsed the Secretariat’s proposal that ICCAT put the Executive Summaries of the SCRS in FIRMS.

## **8. Agency data collection programs (Item 17)**

In addition to the proposed data exchange protocol for catch, catch and effort, size and catch at size data previously collected by ICCAT on tuna and tuna-like species, it is proposed to develop similar protocols for shark data. Initial structures for the collection of data on other types of by-catch, including sea birds and turtles, will also be implemented.