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COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

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Report: ICCAT

**22nd SESSION OF THE COORDINATING WORKING PARTY
ON FISHERY STATISTICS (CWP)**

Rome, Italy February 27 to March 2, 2007

Agency Programmes in Fishery Statistics

I. ICCAT

1. Developments in ICCAT Fishery Statistics

The Secretariat continues to regularly collect statistical data on Atlantic tunas.

- Nominal catch including, discards, by flag, gear, species and area;
- The catch and effort information by month and grid of 1 or 5 degrees;
- Size frequencies information and;
- Other biological information and ancillary data.

All the information is stored in a relational database and can be downloaded from our web page. Technical documentation of all ICCAT statistical database will be published this year.

The ICCAT Statistical Bulletin has been improved and published in a new format including all the times series on information available. The objective of this new layout and contents is a first step to develop an ICCAT Atlas by the Secretariat.

2. Trade documentation

To improve the quality of information on the catches, ICCAT developed the statistical documentation scheme in 1992 to monitor frozen bluefin tuna. This program was later extended to fresh bluefin, swordfish and bigeye.

In 2005 a Working Group was held in Fukuoka (Japan) to review the functioning of the ICCAT Statistical Documentation Program. Several concerns on document protection and retention, consignment identification, standardization, information exchange, conversion factors and electronic documents were raised during the meeting. Taking into account the complexity and the diversity of these issues the group agreed to hold a second meeting in 2006.

At the 2nd Meeting of the Working Group to Review the Statistical Monitoring Programs, held in Palma de Mallorca (Spain) in 2006, it was agreed that the three major objectives of the ICCAT Statistical Document were:

- Monitoring ICCAT compliance measures by Contracting Parties;
- Providing statistical information to scientists;
- Aid to fight against IUU fishing.

Discussions on the use of electronic documents were raised, but no agreement was reached to adopt another system. Nevertheless, at the Commission meeting held in Dubrovnik, in November 2006, it was recommended, on a voluntary basis, to start a new pilot program using the electronic documentation and furthermore it was suggested to use the CCAMLR's experience. Parties implementing this new system should act in conformity with national laws and take into account all the information used in the current paper system. The Commission will review the implementation of this pilot electronic system in 2007.

3. Data Improvement

Recently ICCAT was very active in developing capacity building and assisting developing member States in data collection and reporting systems. To support these parties to accomplish their obligations, the following actions were initiated by ICCAT:

- A Data Fund was established to improve data, quality assurance and supporting scientific participation in data preparatory and stock assessment meetings, *Resolution by ICCAT on improvements in data collection and quality assurance* [Res. 03-21].
- *The Japanese Data Improvement Project* (JDIP) was also initiated. This five-year data improvement Project funded by Japan aids several ICCAT Contracting Parties to meet their obligations on data collection and reporting. Training courses in South America and Africa held last year were funded by the same project.
- Another two projects, the *Bluefin Year Program* (BYP) and the *Enhanced Research Program for Billfish* started earlier and give support on data collection and reporting.

Some fisheries in developing Contracting Parties to ICCAT are artisanal in nature and capture many species, including non-ICCAT species. For this reason, it may be useful to coordinate joint efforts between ICCAT and other agencies that can provide capacity-building assistance for monitoring these multi-specific fisheries.

4. Data format for monitoring

In order to improve the control to ensure the implementation of bluefin tuna management measures, ICCAT adopted the *Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Multi-Annual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean* [Rec. 06-05]. The control measures defined in this Recommendation include the communication and reporting of catches on a regular basis, using a vessel-monitoring system in accordance with data exchange formats and protocols to be adopted in the next Commission meeting (November 2007). Experience from other fishery bodies regarding this issue will be of great assistance to ICCAT.

5. Aquaculture statistics

ICCAT aquaculture statistics includes only the information on bluefin tuna farming developed mainly in the Mediterranean Sea. This activity is not a closed cycle system, as wild-caught tunas are introduced in cages. This activity started around the year 1997 with a production of 262 t. Since then this practice continues to increase very rapidly and has reached 17,000 t in 2005 (**Figure 1**).

The rapid growth of this practice had a negative impact on the quality of bluefin statistical data reported to the ICCAT Secretariat and consequently was a source of uncertainty in the bluefin stock assessment.

Noteworthy during these activities were the difficulties to report catch data, conduct size sampling, identify the origin of the catch and estimate the gain in weight of the fish during the fattening period.

Taking into account all the above-mentioned concerns raised by the Scientific Committee, the ICCAT Commission adopted several recommendations to better monitor the information needed for assessment and management.

An *Ad Hoc* GFCM/ICCAT was created to develop guidelines on sustainable bluefin tuna farming practices in the Mediterranean. Conclusions of this Working Group were published in the FAO Fisheries Report No. 779. Detailed conclusions of this important document on capture fisheries, transport, transfer of fish, farming, harvesting, marketing and statistical issues could be very useful for the CWP.

To conduct the bluefin tuna assessment and to manage the stock an estimate of the amount of catch removed from the wild and transferred to the cages is required. It is also required to estimate the size of the fish for those catches. However, new technologies will be required to collect the information concerning the overall conditions of the fish when alive and swimming in the water.

6. Vessels and port classification

Shortly ICCAT will start to develop a port database which includes fishing vessels that target bluefin tuna which might land or transship their catch. The UNLODE will be used as a template in the codification on the information as recommended by the last CWP meeting held in Copenhagen in 2005.

7. Internet domain

During 2006 the ICCAT domain name changed from iccat.es to iccat.int and all the email addresses have been modified accordingly.

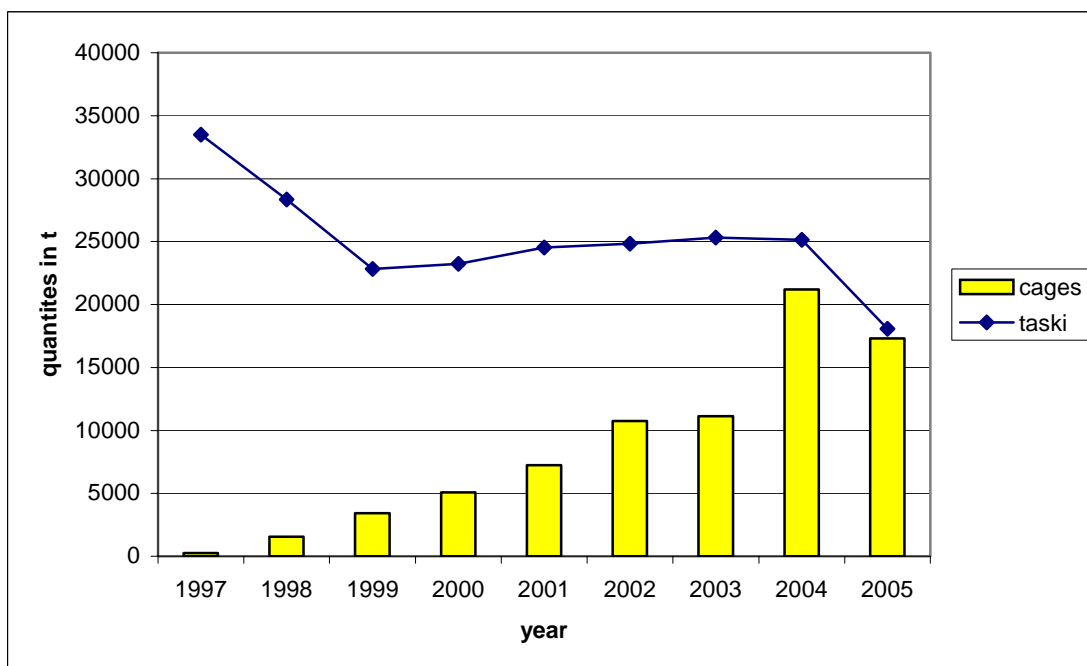


Figure 1. Estimated bluefin catches (in t) exported from cages.