



CCSBT-ERS/1308/05

**Tuna RFMO Responses to ERSWG9's offer to lead to lead global work on assessment
of the impacts of fishing for tunas on seabirds and porbeagle sharks**

Background

CCSBT 19 endorsed the recommendation of ERSWG 9 that the ERSWG approach other tuna RFMOs with an offer to lead global work on assessment of impacts of fishing for tunas on seabirds and porbeagle sharks.

The Secretariat wrote to the other tuna RFMOs with this offer on 4 March 2013. This letter is provided at Attachment A. Responses have been received from ICCAT, IATTC and IOTC. These responses are provided at Attachments B, C and D respectively for consideration by the ERSWG. A revised version of this paper will be distributed if a response from WCPFC is received prior to ERSWG 10.

Commission for the Conservation of
Southern Bluefin Tuna



みなみまぐろ保存委員会

Mr Alejandro Anganuzzi
Secretary
Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

Mr Driss Meski
Executive Secretary
International Commission for the Conservation of
Atlantic Tunas

Dr Guillermo Compeán
Director
Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

Mr Glenn Hurry
Executive Director
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission

4 March 2013

**Offer to lead global work on assessment of the impacts of fishing
for tunas on seabirds and porbeagle sharks**

Dear Tuna RFMO Secretaries and Directors,

At the October 2012 annual meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), the CCSBT endorsed a recommendation from its Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG) that the ERSWG approach the other tuna RFMOs with an offer to lead global work on assessment of the impacts of fishing for tunas on seabirds and porbeagle sharks. This offer was made recognising the relatively wide geographical coverage of the CCSBT in the southern hemisphere and the desire for cooperation and harmonisation amongst the tuna RFMOs.

The ERSWG's next meeting will be held from 28-31 August in Canberra, Australia. At this meeting, the ERSWG will (amongst other things) be considering a plan for progressing such assessments, including the scope of the work (such as which seabird species/groups to include), lead agency, data that needs to be provided, timeframe and consultation process.

I would appreciate it if you could advise me in advance of the ERSWG's August meeting as to whether or not your organisation supports the ERSWG's officer in principle, subject to further details from the ERSWG and further discussion within your organisation and between the tuna RFMOs in general.

The ERSWG's Chair (Mr Alexander Morison) will be informing the joint tuna RFMO Bycatch Technical Working Group of this offer in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Kennedy
Executive Secretary

CC: Mr Alexander Morison, Chair, CCSBT ERSWG

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS



COMISIÓN INTERNACIONAL PARA LA
CONSERVACIÓN DEL ATÚN ATLÁNTICO

COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA
CONSERVATION DES THONIDES DE L'ATLANTIQUE



Madrid, March 5, 2013

Robert Kennedy
Executive Secretary
Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna

Dear Bob,

Regarding the offer from the CCSBT's Ecologically Related Species Working Group to lead global work on assessment of the impacts of fishing for tunas on seabirds and porbeagle sharks, we would like to provide you with an update on the current status of ICCAT's efforts regarding this matter as ICCAT has already expended considerable time and effort towards assessing and managing the impacts on these species by the fleets fishing under its mandate.

Porbeagle research and management

Since 1995, the ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) has a permanent Species group on sharks and the statistics of sharks are included in the ICCAT general statistics request (Task I and Task II) and DB (Art. IV of the ICCAT Convention).

Regarding porbeagle, in 2009, the SCRS attempted a joint ICCAT-ICES assessment of the four porbeagle stocks in the Atlantic Ocean: Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast (Anon. 2010). Both porbeagle stocks in the northwest and northeast Atlantic were estimated to be overfished, with the northeastern stock being more highly depleted. In addition, porbeagle received a high vulnerability ranking in the 2008 and 2012 Ecological Risk Assessments which were conducted for all impacted shark species. The main source of fishing mortality on these stocks is from directed porbeagle fisheries which are not under the Commission's direct mandate. Those fisheries are managed mostly by ICCAT Contracting Parties through national legislation which includes quotas and other management measures. Based on these findings, the Committee recommended that the Commission work with countries catching porbeagle, particularly those with targeted fisheries, and relevant RFMOs (e.g., NAFO, CCSBT) to ensure recovery of North Atlantic porbeagle stocks and prevent overexploitation of South Atlantic stocks. ICCAT also put in place recommendation [07.06], calling on CPCs to reduce fishing mortality in fisheries targeting porbeagle and to follow the advice of the 2009 stock assessment.

The SCRS is planning to conduct ERAs for all impacted shark species on a regular basis.

Seabird research and management

In 2002, recognizing the FAO IPOA for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries, and the need to evaluate the incidental mortality of seabirds in their fishery, ICCAT passed a resolution (Res. [02-14]) that (i) urged member nations to implement national plans of action for seabirds, (ii) encouraged them to collect and provide information on interactions with seabirds in all fisheries under the purview of ICCAT, and (iii) initiated an assessment of the impact of the incidental catch of seabirds taken by all vessels fishing for tunas and tuna-like species in the Convention Area.

In anticipation of further improvements on completion of the assessment, a recommendation (Rec. [07-07]) was implemented that, inter alia, required longline vessels south of 20°S to use bird-scaring lines.

In 2006, the ICCAT requested an assessment of the threat from their fisheries to all seabirds that breed or forage within its jurisdiction. Methods were developed to assess the potential consequences of fishing for more than 60 populations of seabird. The assessment framework involved the identification of at-risk populations, overlap analyses, estimation of total bycatch, and an evaluation of the impact of the bycatch on key selected populations for which there were sufficient data on bird distribution and demography. The assessment was conducted in collaboration with Birdlife International.

The ICCAT seabird assessment demonstrated the advantages of undertaking an ERA, as highlighted by Small et al. (2010). Succinctly, it identified gaps in both fishery and seabird data (e.g. in spatio-temporal distributions and observer coverage), identified the species most at risk from fishing using a semi-quantitative framework that is readily updateable as new information becomes available, identified fisheries, seasons, and areas of high bycatch, and provided a unified and focused study that enabled issues to be discussed and addressed with fishery managers in a more systematic manner than would have been possible otherwise.

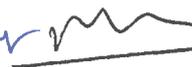
Participation in joint technical Tuna RFMO by-catch working group

ICCAT has also been integrally involved in the joint technical Tuna RFMO by-catch working group, participating in all meetings held to date (La Jolla, California - 2011 and Sukarrieta, Spain - 2012) as well as the Kobe II By-catch Meeting that resulted in the formulation of the technical working group (Brisbane, Australia – 2010). ICCAT has used the recommendations from these groups to improve the work conducted on by-catch species, including work on the harmonisation of by-catch observer databases between t-RFMOs as well as the adoption of minimum standards for observer programme data collection. ICCAT has volunteered to lead the efforts towards achieving the latter issue in longline fisheries. ICCAT along with the WCPFC are also leading efforts to harmonize guidance for shark identification, in collaboration with the IUCN shark specialist group and others. ICCAT was also recognised by the working group as the only t-RFMO to date to have conducted a fully quantitative assessment for porbeagle sharks.

Of course ICCAT welcomes any opportunity to collaborate with other RFMOs to improve and harmonise research efforts on species impacted by fisheries which would be also considered under the By-catch Joint Technical WG. ICCAT is also open to share the information we have on these issues and our own experience. However, regarding the assessment of the impact of tuna fisheries on sea-bird populations, ICCAT has devoted huge effort in the past and has advanced quite a long way towards assessing this impact and thus does not consider it an urgent priority at this time. We would of course like to stay in contact regarding any developments along these lines both to be informed of any novel approaches as well to provide any expert advice from our experience tackling these complex issues.

Best regards,




Eniss Meski
Executive Secretary

COMISION INTERAMERICANA DEL ATUN TROPICAL INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

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8 July 2013
Ref: 0359-700

Robert Kennedy
Executive Secretary
CCSBT
P.O. Box Deakin West,
ACT 2600
Deakin,
Australia

Dear Mr. Kennedy,

In reference to your letter dated for March 2013, please receive my apologies for this delayed answer.

I wish to confirm our support in principle to the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG) offer to lead global work on assessment of the impacts of fishing for tunas on seabirds and porbeagle sharks, subject to further details from the ERSWG and further discussion in the IATTC and between the tuna RFMOs in general.

I wish you great success in the upcoming meeting of the ERSWG in August, and look forward to be informed on its outcome.

Yours sincerely,



Guillermo Compeán,
Director

C.C. Mr. Alexander Morison, Chair, CCSBT ERSWG.

Bob Kennedy

From: David Wilson [david.wilson@iotc.org]
Sent: Thursday, 18 July 2013 9:58 PM
To: Bob Kennedy; rondolph.payet@iotc.org
Subject: RE: Offer to lead global work on assessment of the impacts of fishing for tunas on seabirds and porbeagle sharks

Dear Robert

Thank you for forwarding the letter on to Rondolph and I. In principle we would support any work on seabird interactions with IOTC fisheries (and other RFMO's), as the Commission has directed us to do so via paragraph 1 and 8 of IOTC Resoluion12/06:

1. CPCs shall record data on seabird incidental bycatch by species, notably through scientific observers in accordance with Resolution 11/04 and report these annually. Observers shall to the extent possible take photographs of seabirds caught by fishing vessels and transmit them to national seabird experts or to the IOTC Secretariat, for confirmation of identification.

8. The Scientific Committee, based notably on the work of the WPEB and information from CPCs, will analyse the impact of this Resolution on seabird bycatch no later than for the 2016 meeting of the Commission. It shall advise the Commission on any modifications that are required, based on experience to date of the operation of the Resolution and/or further international studies, research or advice on best practice on the issue, in order to make the Resolution more effective.

The current difficulty we would face in supporting analysis by the CCSBT ERSWG is that we have almost no data. While some CPCs have commenced their observer programs, most have not.

That said, I imagine that there wouldn't be a problem supporting the CCSBT ERSWG in undertaking analysis. Please forward any information arising from your meeting next month so that we may discuss it at the IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch, which will meet in September.

Kind regards
Dave

Dr David Wilson
Deputy Secretary / Science Manager

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