

Report from the CCSBT Observer to the 24th Regular Meeting of
International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
(10 November – 17 November, St. Julian's, Malta)

CCSBT Observer (Japan)

At the 2015 annual meeting, 45 Contracting Parties, 2 Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities, 6 intergovernmental organizations and 25 non-governmental organizations were present, totaling over 500 delegates.

The meeting mainly discussed two species, bigeye tuna and blue shark, which were subject to a full scientific stock assessment. The bigeye tuna stock was a major focus of attention as the current stock status was over-exploited. Based on the scientific advice provided by the SCRS (Standing Committee on Research and Statistics), the meeting adopted the “Recommendation on a Multi-annual Conservation and Management Programme for Tropical Tunas” with a complete set of provisions on catch limits, fishing capacity limitations, FAD fishing regulation, area/time closure, control and surveillance, etc. In particular, the bigeye annual Total Allowance Catch (TAC) was set at 65,000 t for 2016, 2017 and 2018, a large reduction from the previous level (85,000 t). And the yellowfin TAC was maintained at 110,000 t for 2016 only and it will be revised in the light of the 2016 stock assessment.

The meeting adopted two resolutions, aiming to strengthen ICCAT decision making instruments; one for the application of an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management, and another concerning the use of Precautionary Approach in Implementing ICCAT Conservation and Management Measures.

The meeting decided the full implementation of the electronic Bluefin catch document scheme (eBCD). Given the nature and complexity of this project, some flexibility was provided to the implementation of the eBCD, by extending to 2017 the complete development of this project.

There was no discussion on SBT.

The next annual meeting of ICCAT will be held in November 2016 in Vilamoura, Portugal.