

Report from the CCSBT Observer to the 26th Regular Meeting of
the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
(18-25 November 2019, Palma de Mallorca, Spain)

CCSBT Observer (Japan)

1. Introduction

The 2019 ICCAT annual meeting was attended by over 600 delegates from 47 Contracting Parties, two cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities and observers from six non-Contracting Party, ten international organizations and 25 NGOs.

2. Convention amendment

The meeting agreed to a draft protocol to amend the ICCAT convention. The main amendments are: (i) to formally include sharks and rays in the scope of the convention; (ii) to establish a procedure for dispute settlement; and (iii) to add an annex for granting the status of a fishing entity. The protocol will enter into force 90 days after three-fourth of Contracting Parties ratify it.

3. Management Measures

(1) Atlantic bluefin tuna (ABT)

The meeting endorsed the TAC for 2020 (36,000 t) for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock of ABT.

(2) North Atlantic albacore

The meeting discussed actions to be taken by the Commission when exceptional circumstances occur in the harvest control rules applied to this stock, but deferred discussion to intersessional meetings.

(3) Tropical tunas

The meeting agreed that the TAC for bigeye tuna would be reduced, given the current status of the stock.

(4) Blue shark

The meeting agreed to introduce a TAC as well as allocations for the northern stock of Atlantic blue shark.

4. Other matters

Namibia reported that its longline fishing vessels operating in the South Atlantic occasionally bycaught Atlantic bluefin tuna when targeting albacore. The Chair of the scientific committee pointed out, however, that the fish was likely to be southern bluefin tuna. The meeting concluded that this should be addressed by the CCSBT.

5. Next meeting

There will be no Commission meeting in 2020 due to COVID-19.