

Report from the CCSBT Observer to  
the 23rd Regular Meeting of  
International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)  
(18 November – 25 November, Cape Town, South Africa)

CCSBT Observer (Japan)

43 Contracting Parties and four Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities, two non-Contracting Parties, ten intergovernmental organizations and twenty non-governmental organizations attended the 23<sup>rd</sup> Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

While *bluefin tuna* has captured most of the attention in recent years, and was still a high priority issue on the 2013 agenda, the Commission continues its work on other commercially important species such as swordfish and albacore. Shark management and compliance performance were again high priorities for the Commission.

In recent years, the Commission has taken ever more seriously its commitment to heed the advice of its scientific community and once again bluefin tuna quotas were maintained at levels which would allow sustainable growth and recovery of the stock, while recognising the right of coastal states to catch their quotas within their own waters through a change in the time/area closure for purse seine fishery in Norwegian waters. This commitment to science was also reflected in the Total Allowable Catches (TACs) of other species up for review, including *bigeye*, *albacore* and *swordfish*.

Progress on strengthening *Monitoring, surveillance and control (MCS)* continues, with an extension of the coverage of the bigeye tuna statistical document, some fine-tuning of the electronic bluefin catch document scheme, and additional measures on access agreements and chartering arrangements.

The deliberations of the Compliance Committee once again ensured that Contracting Parties remained vigilant in the implementation of adopted ICCAT *conservation and management measures*, with only three of the Contracting Parties being identified as having some compliance deficiencies of serious concern.

While the current economic situation did not allow permanent budgetary allocations for the funding of *scientific activities* requested by the Scientific Committee, it was agreed that some of these important activities could be funded from the funds on hand from previous years until such time that budget increases could be entertained.

On the other hand, in 2013, ICCAT spent around 500,000€ in *assistance to developing States* for

capacity-building activities. These funds have been used to facilitate participation in meetings, training workshops, sampling and observer programs, and to recover historical logbook data. A further 200,000€ has been pledged for 2014 from the Working Capital Fund, in addition to voluntary contributions, to ensure continued participation of developing States at ICCAT meetings and sustain the Commission's policy of inclusiveness. A new fund to provide assistance in the form of training for scientists from developing countries in order to allow them to fully participate in the scientific debates has also been adopted.

Although no matter related to cooperation between ICCAT and CCSBT was discussed in the meeting, following two items may draw the attention of CCSBT. Technical specifications for use of *stereoscopic cameras systems in caging operations*, including the sampling intensity (20% of the amount of fish being caged), the way of sampling (if possible sequential, by measuring one in every five specimens), etc. were agreed. Full implementation of the *electric bluefin tuna catch document (eBCD)* system was postponed one year, from March 2014 to March 2015.