

Contribution of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to the Report of the United Nations Secretary General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea on the Ocean as a Source of Sustainable Food

This report is a brief summary of the main recent developments of the Commission in relation to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 78/69.

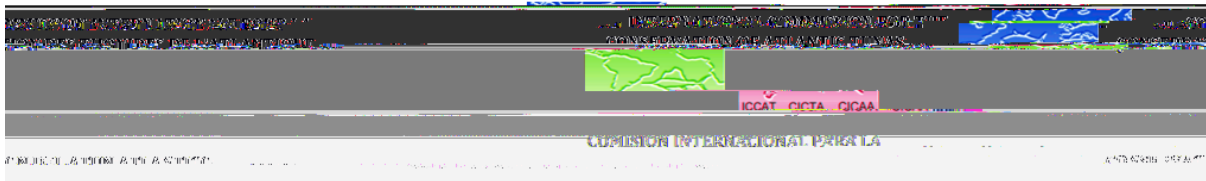
It should be noted that the main aim of the ICCAT Commission under the current International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas is to co-operate in maintaining the populations of tuna and tuna-like fishes found in the Atlantic Ocean at levels which will permit the maximum sustainable catch for food and other purposes. The ratification of the newly adopted Protocol to Amend the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas is ongoing with the FAO.

As of 19 November 2023, the total catches in 2022 of ICCAT and associated species was 877,029 t, of which 171,281 t were small tuna species that are often taken by small scale and/or artisanal fisheries.

In 2023, The Commission convened in a hybrid format (in person with the possibility of participating online) in New Cairo (Egypt) to evaluate the current status of the application of the regulatory measures in force and to establish the conservation and management measures for the future. In 2023, full scientific stock assessments were carried out for four species: Atlantic Albacore (northern and southern stocks), sailfish and blue shark. In total, nineteen new Recommendations, four Resolutions and two Reference documents were adopted covering relevant issues on Atlantic tuna and tuna-like species conservation and fisheries management (see list attached). All ICCAT Conservation and Management measures are available on the [ICCAT website](#).

In addition to updating measures on the major ICCAT commercial species, the Commission also adopted measures relating to several shark species associated with ICCAT fisheries. Most importantly, decisions were taken in relation to identifying the potential effects of Climate Change on ICCAT Fisheries, and also in cooperating with the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement, and in monitoring the development of other effective area-based conservation measures. Further measures were also adopted by the Commission to prevent, deter, and eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU).

Science continues to underpin the basis of Commission decisions, and in addition to the stock assessments carried out, seven research programmes are ongoing, including the ICCAT Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (ICCAT/GBYP), a special scientific programme that was launched in 2010. This aims to improve basic data collection and further develop current knowledge of the key biological and ecological processes of tunas and tuna-like species, as well as to refine assessment models, to s



One of the main tools of ICCAT to manage important fisheries is the setting of Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and quotas. ICCAT has adopted a *Resolution by ICCAT on Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities (Res. 15-13)*, criteria which include, inter alia, *the contribution of the fisheries for the stocks regulated by ICCAT to the national food security/needs, domestic consumption, income resulting from exports, and employment of qualifying participants.*

In addition to measures on quotas and catch levels, ICCAT has many management measures aimed at ensuring compliance with these. Among the measures taken previously are those relating to the swordfish and bigeye tuna statistical document program (SBDs), and the ICCAT electronic bluefin tuna catch data system (EBTDS). ICCAT has also implemented measures to strengthen cooperation with other fisheries organizations, such as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

