

**REPORTS OF MEETINGS OF THE CRFM
PELAGIC FISHERIES WORKING GROUP (CRFM-
PWG) ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC
TUNAS (ICCAT) FOR 2018-2019**

CRFM Technical & Advisory Document - Number 2019 / 20

Reports of Meetings of the CRFM Pelagic Fisheries Working Group (CRFM-PWG) on the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) for 2018-2019

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CRFM Secretariat
Belize, 2019

CRFM TECHNICAL & ADVISORY DOCUMENT – Number 2019 / 20

Reports of Meetings of the CRFM Pelagic Fisheries Working Group (CRFM-PWG) on the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) for 2018-2019

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CRFM PELAGIC FISHERIES WORKING GROUP (CRFM-PWG)
REPORT OF SEVENTH MEETING ON ICCAT
Virtual Meeting, 05 November 2018

1. Meeting Registration

The list of participants is given in Appendix 1.

2. Opening and Prayer

The CRFM Secretariat's Deputy Executive Director, Susan Singh-Renton, called the Meeting to order and offered a short Prayer.

The Meeting's Agenda was adopted without change. The Agenda is given at Appendix 2.

Dr. Singh-Renton served as the PWG Chairperson for the meeting. She welcomed all to the Meeting and indicated that the discussions would be focused on the 2018 SCRS Report, and more particularly on the 2018 stock assessment reports for Bigeye tuna and Blue Marlin. The Meeting was also expected to review and discuss 2018 proposals on ICCAT measures posted to date, as well as discuss CRFM Secretariat's virtual technical support needs for the 21st Special Commission Meeting.

3. Review and discussion of ICCAT SCRS 2018 report

The Chairperson noted that the 2018 SCRS (Standing Committee on Research and Statistics) Report was a long one (469 pages), and indicated that the Meeting should spend a few minutes examining the Table of Contents, as it was important to understand the structure of the report. She explained that for the purpose of this Meeting and in the interest of time, she will do a brief overview of the first part of the report. Following this, she will present the executive summaries on species, particularly the assessments done in 2018 for bigeye tuna and Blue Marlin and will look briefly at some of the highlights of other species assessed previously. The Chairperson indicated that new assessments generally informed the development of new measures and it was important to pay particular attention to the assessments done in the current year.

The Chairperson then gave an overview of the Table of Contents. The Table of Contents (TOC) began with the usual items such as opening of the meeting, adoption of agenda, introduction of participants (contracting parties and observers) and registration of scientific documents. These were followed by an ICCAT Secretariat general report on its activities in research and statistics, national fisheries and research reports, as well as reports of inter-sessional meetings. There were also reports on various research programmes, such as the Atlantic Ocean Tropical Tuna Tagging Program under which ICCAT sought volunteers to participate in tagging research events at sea in and around the Western Central Atlantic area. ICCAT offered training to facilitate this. Other research programs included bluefin research program, small tuna year program, shark research program, and a decades-old billfish research program. The general aim of the research programs was to improve understanding of the biology and ecology of the species. The various research programs were intended to facilitate collection of data independent of fisheries operations and to provide biological information for refining the types of assessments ICCAT did.

ICCAT had a Sub-Committee on Statistics that studied the reporting of statistics, identified gaps and challenges and also identified ways for ICCAT to improve management of statistics which informed the assessments. There was also a Sub-Committee on Ecosystems and By-catch which looked at ways to incorporate issues such as climate change, the precautionary approach, and dealing with by-catch species. The Sub-Committee on Ecosystems and By-catch was also investigating an ecosystem report card prototype. The ICCAT support environment for statistics and assessment was constantly changing; for example, an online system for submission of statistical data had recently been launched. There was also a Standing Working Group on Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers. This Working Group was responsible for development of management strategy evaluation and development of harvest control rules, which were done in consultation with the stakeholders so that when incorporated into management measures, stakeholders would have already had their inputs. ICCAT was currently engaged in the development of Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for bluefin tuna, northern albacore, swordfish, tropical tunas, among others, which would lead to the development of harvest control rules.

There were also reports on the implementation of the Science Strategic Plan, Annual Work Plans for the various research programs, SCRS activities; general recommendations to the Commission; recommendations with financial implications; and responses to Commission requests. Other Matters included items such as collaboration with other organizations, update of ICCAT Glossary, and peer reviewed publications.

Following the overview of the TOC, the Chairperson drew the Meeting's attention to the first part of the SCRS Report and gave a summary of it. In this section, mention was made of the species assessed in the year (bigeye tuna and blue marlin); the Inter-sessional meetings that had taken place; and the countries that had complied with the data submission requirements and those that had not. The Report indicated that for 2017, 83% of the 75 flagged-CPCs had submitted statistical data for 2017, while 17% of CPCs had not. Grenada was listed among the countries which had not submitted 2017 data to ICCAT. It should be noted that if a country did not submit data in the approved ICCAT format, then that country was considered to have not reported. ICCAT had engaged the services of a database programming expert to collaborate with the project to explore the "online reporting process". The online system for submission of statistical data had been introduced and was available for testing in 2018. SCRS had approved use of the data fund and other ICCAT funds to support improvements in statistics, training, and support to SCRS work including attendance at SCRS meetings. The review of national fisheries and research programmes included the summaries of national reports and these appeared in alphabetical order of country name. There were no summaries for CRFM CPCs, except for the UK OTs (TCI). While Bermuda and St. Helena were the major players in terms of volume of catches in the UK OTs, mention was made of smaller catches from BVI and TCI. Mentioned was also made of the major hurricanes that affected BVI and TCI in 2017, which prevented the submission of data to ICCAT for 2017, a situation which should improve as recovery efforts continued. A number of inter-sessional meetings took place during the reporting year, including ones on blue marlin data preparatory and stock assessment, Swordfish MSE, small tunas, Stock Assessment Methods Working Group, and Shark species group.

The Chairperson reiterated that the section of the SCRS Report of greatest interest to this Meeting was the Executive Summaries on species, which contained the information on the stock assessments conducted on various species during 2018. It was important to pay attention to new assessments, as they informed development of new management measures. She reiterated that the focus would be on the assessments for bigeye tuna and blue marlin.

The executive summaries on species were snapshots of the assessment work carried out. The summaries included the following sections: preamble, biology, fishery indicators, state of the stock, outlook, effect of current regulations, and management recommendations. As an illustration, the Chairperson referred to the yellowfin tuna assessment done in 2016, which was indicated in the preamble. The biology section

typically provided information that supported the assumption of the stock structure used in the assessment. A single Atlantic Stock was assumed for the assessment. This assumption will continue unless there was strong evidence to support a different assumption. The summary indicated that the stock was overfished, but overfishing was not occurring at the time, although the TAC of 110,000 t had been consistently exceeded since 2015 and this may have caused the stock to degrade. Given this, and also the conclusion that the moratorium in the Gulf of Guinea had not been effective, it was possible that an assessment for yellowfin tuna in 2019 would be recommended.

Presentation of executive summary report for bigeye tuna

Biology - Bigeye tuna was distributed throughout the Atlantic. The species swam at deeper depths than other tropical tunas. Spawning took place in tropical waters. Catch information from surface gears indicated that the Gulf of Guinea was a major spawning ground for this species. Bigeye tuna was relatively fast growing, reaching maturity at around 3 years. Young bigeye schooled with young yellowfin and young skipjack, which posed a challenge for the health of the stock and the management measures. Stock assessments were conducted based on a single stock hypothesis for the Atlantic.

Fisheries indicators - The size of fish caught varied among the different fisheries with large and medium sized bigeye caught in the longline fishery and smaller fish caught by the purse seine and bait boat fisheries. A new fishing method used in Brazil has led to significant increases in bigeye tuna catches since 2015, with the TAC of 65,000 tons having been exceeded by about 20%. There was also concern about the large volume of fish, comprised mainly of young yellowfin, bigeye and skipjack, being sold through the local West African markets as *faux poisson* (false fish). These catches were possibly under-reported; made monitoring difficult and possibly affected the accuracy of the assessment results. The main change from the previous assessment was the development and use of a single joint longline standardized abundance index instead of individual CPCs standardized CPUE indices. The standardized abundance index was intended to reduce data conflict between the different indices and it was concluded that the joint index was an improvement over the fleet specific indices.

State of the stock – Similar assessment models as those used in the 2015 assessment were used for the 2018 assessment. A Stock Synthesis Integrated Statistical Assessment Model was used. According to the results the Atlantic bigeye tuna stock was currently overfished and overfishing was occurring.

Outlook - Projections with the current TAC level (65,000 t) were not expected to end overfishing with 50% probability until 2032. Also the probability of the stock being in the green quadrant of the Kobe Plot at the end of 2033 and the probability to end overfishing by the end of 2033 was 1% for a future constant catch at current levels of around 78,482 t. There were obvious issues with maintaining the current TAC of 65,000 t. Given this outlook, it was possible that the TAC could be changed or some other measure introduced to address the issue.

Effect of current regulation – As indicated before, catches exceeded TAC by 20%. However, not all countries that fish bigeye tuna were affected by the TAC as some countries had open catch limits. The efficacy of the area-time closure in the Gulf of Guinea was assessed and it was concluded that the measure had not been effective in reducing bigeye tuna mortality.

Management recommendations – The probability of achieving Convention objectives by 2033 if catches continued to exceed the established TAC of 65,000 tons will be reduced to about 1%. Urgent effort to ensure that catches were reduced to end overfishing should be considered. Time- area closure and changes to fleet allocation alone could not reduce fishing mortality enough to end overfishing. Effective measures needed to be put in place to reduce young bigeye mortality.

Following her review of the executive summary, the Chairperson went through the proposed recommendation for tropical tunas including bigeye, which had several sections. The Chairperson reminded the meeting that the TAC had been exceeded and the stock was no longer considered safe. There was a possibility that the TAC could be reduced. Also as part of the measure, the percentage of underages that could be taken over to the next year may also be reduced. Other measures could include changes in the penalty for excess harvest; reduction of capacity and reduction in number of FADs (the current limit was 500 FADs deployed and active at any one time). With regard to reporting obligations on FADs, the recommendation spoke to: the need to develop fully bio-degradable and non-entangling FADs; countries should authorize vessels to fish and submit the list of authorized vessels to ICCAT; report catches and fishing activities; identify IUU; implement scientific observer programs and port sampling programs; and make data available to SCRS in a timely manner.

Presentation of executive summary report for blue marlin

Blue marlin was assessed in 2018, and the Caribbean has been mentioned a lot in the report.

Biology – Historically, central and north Caribbean Sea and northern Bahamas were spawning grounds for blue marlin. Spawning can also occur north of Bahamas in an offshore area near Bermuda. There were also feeding areas in coastal areas of West Africa. Blue marlin were mostly found in waters warmer than 17°C, and spent most of their time very close to the surface at nights; and at depths of 40 to 100+ metres during daylight hours. The level of oxygen in the water could limit the range of the water column in which blue marlin swam.

Fishery indicators - Catches for 2013, 2014 and 2016 had exceeded the recommended TAC of 2,000 tons. There had been an increase in the use of moored FADs and catches of blue marlin around MFADs were significant and increasing in some areas; however, reports of blue marlin catches to ICCAT were incomplete as many CPCs did not report their discards. Mention was made of WECAFC's (possibly effected through the Billfish Consortium) efforts to help countries improve their reporting, and ICCAT will support WECAFC in these efforts.

State of stock – The assessment, which used both surplus production and age-structured models, showed that the stock was overfished and was also subjected to overfishing. Since mid-2000s biomass had ceased to decline and fishing mortality had also reduced. The probability of being in the red, yellow and green quadrants of the Kobe Plot were 54%; 42% and 4% respectively. Mention was made throughout of the high uncertainty with regard to data and the productivity of the stock.

Outlook – Catches of 2000 t will provide a 46% probability of being in the green quadrant by 2028. A TAC of 1750 t will allow the stock to rebuild with more than 50% probability by 2028. The Chairperson said that this should be noted because it was possible that a new measure will be introduced and a TAC of 1750 t could be put in place to be compliant with the scientific advice.

Effect of current measures – The report noted concern about the significant increase in catches by non-industrial fisheries to the total blue marlin harvest. The use of non-offset circle hooks, which had not affected the rates of catches of target species, but had reduced the mortality of billfish, was noted. New measures could include the use of non-offset circle hooks being made mandatory. Regarding the release of live marlin, there was not enough data regarding the proportion of fish being released alive for all fleets to evaluate the effectiveness of the ICCAT recommendation.

Management recommendations – The Committee was recommending that: the TAC be reduced to 1750 t, which would provide at least a 50% chance for the stock to rebuild; and that fishermen should be required to always release marlins that were alive at haul, using methods that maximized their survival.

Discussion by PWC

Valerie Lanza of Belize referred to the TAC for yellowfin tuna of 110,000 t and informed the Meeting that, with regard to the documentation they had, it showed a TAC longline fishery for Belize of 279 metric tons and queried if this was across the board for all countries or just the countries that targeted yellowfin for the past nine years? By way of response, the Chairperson explained that no country had a catch limit for yellowfin tuna; however it was important that countries reported yellowfin catches correctly, so that any adjustments to the overall TAC could be properly informed. The Chairperson opined that the TAC for yellowfin was not likely to change this year as an assessment was proposed for 2019. The Chairperson however encouraged countries to consider their fisheries needs in a holistic way and to evaluate what adjustments to their catches could be made in keeping with any new measures proposed for a species, as sometimes it may be necessary to trade off cuts in the quota of one species for another species.

Patricia Hubert-Medar of Saint Lucia queried how the use of the off-set circle hook assisted in management of the marlin fishery; how did it result in lower catches? In her response, the Chairperson said that the use of circle hooks had been promoted to reduce billfish mortality. Studies have been done to prove that the design of the circle hook was such that if the billfish took the bait, the hook would not be able to retain the fish, thus reducing capture. The Chairperson further explained that the use of the off-set circle hook was an important measure in fisheries that claimed that billfish was by-catch, such as the large-scale longline fisheries for bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna, which wanted to limit the by-catch of billfishes but not interfere with the catch rate of the target species. Studies have proven that the use of circle hooks did in fact reduce billfish mortality, while the catch rates for several target species remained the same or were greater than with the conventional J hooks. The SCRS had working documents that would provide more detail about these hooks, and ICCAT had asked some CRFM countries to test the circle hook. The Chairperson noted that 4 CPCs encouraged/mandated the use of the circle hook in their pelagic longline fleets and said that if enough CPCs encouraged/mandated use of the circle hook, then ICCAT could make it compulsory.

Ms. Hubert-Medar noted the explanation provided with regard to the use of the circle hook in reducing the bycatch of billfish, and further queried if there were any recommendations for reducing catches in fisheries where billfishes were target species. The Chairperson responded no, there were no recommendations in this regard other than the TAC. Countries targeting billfish had to devise ways to regulate their billfish catches, possibly through limiting the number of anchored FADs (determine optimal number); issuing of licences to fish for billfishes; FAD management plans; FMP for billfishes; and improving monitoring around FADs. What was important was for countries to show to ICCAT that they were managing their billfish fisheries and not allowing billfish catches to increase unchecked.

Crafton Isaac of Grenada informed the Meeting that Grenada had tested the circle hook under the FAO/World Bank Caribbean Billfish Management and Conservation Project and preliminary results indicated that the circle hook did not affect the catch rate of the main target species. The advantage of the circle hook with respect to billfish mortality was that it hooked the fish at the edge of the mouth rather than deeper in the back of the throat like the J hook; hence release from the circle hook was easier and the chances of survival higher than with J hooks. However, there appeared to be a problem with the quality of the circle hooks tested. Fishermen testing circle hooks on the longline have lost fish as a result of the hooks being straightened by the tunas. Circle hooks from several different manufacturers were tested and they all had some flaw in that regard - straightening. There was one other brand from a Japanese manufacturer to be tested.

The Chairperson inquired as to whether Mr. Isaac would be attending the ICCAT meeting and suggested that he should share the information about Grenada's experience with the circle hooks at the ICCAT meeting when blue marlin was being discussed.

The Chairperson queried if there were any concerns about the proposed reduction in the TAC to 1750 t. Sarita Peter of Saint Lucia noted that the TAC appeared to be divided up among the Contracting Parties. Saint Lucia was in discussions with its Cabinet to make a decision on becoming a Contracting Party or a Cooperating Party to ICCAT formally and Ms. Peter expressed concern about: (i) how non-Contracting Parties would be dealt with given the potential to reduce the TAC; and (ii) how would a country be dealt with if it became either a Contracting Party or a Cooperating Party after the proposed TAC was accepted - how would the TAC be redistributed to include new CPCs.

The Chairperson asked if Saint Lucia currently took more than 10 t of blue marlin and if any of this was exported. Ms. Peter said that Saint Lucia took more than 10 t, but all of it was consumed locally. The Chairperson pointed out that the current measure for blue marlin provided quotas for particular CPCs and stated that all other CPCs should limit their landings to a maximum of 10 t for Atlantic blue marlin and 2 t for white marlin/spearfish combined. The Chairperson sought confirmation from Saint Lucia as to whether they had received correspondence from ICCAT about their marlin catches. Saint Lucia confirmed that they had. The Chairperson then advised Saint Lucia to document their blue marlin fishery and to consider developing a Fisheries Management Plan for the fishery and to share these with ICCAT, particularly if Saint Lucia was contemplating membership in ICCAT. Saint Lucia should also begin to think about what management actions could be put in place – licensing fishers, proper record-keeping, etc. The Chairperson added that what was important to ICCAT was to see that countries were actively managing their fishery and to keep constant dialogue with ICCAT.

Chris Parker of Barbados acknowledged the issues with blue marlin and ICCAT's position and the need to reduce the catches. However he emphasised the issue of food security and noted the need to capture these marlins, which were not discarded. He added that it was unfair that most of the countries which received quotas did not use marlin; the quota was just to cover their discards. As a result, countries which used/ate the resource could not get quotas. Further Mr. Parker remarked that although this argument was an old one it was still a very relevant one for the region and should be repeated to ICCAT. The Chairperson agreed with Mr. Parker's position and queried whether Barbados would be attending the ICCAT Meeting this year and if the position was expressed in Barbados' national report to ICCAT. Mr. Parker said that Barbados would not be attending the ICCAT Meeting. The Chairperson agreed that it was an argument that should be repeated and further suggested that maybe a study could be done that looked at the contribution of marlin to food security and this study could be shared with ICCAT. The Chairperson also concurred with Mr. Parker's view that it was unfair that countries using the resource were not given quotas, while countries with big commercial fisheries targeting other tunas were given quotas because of the amount of marlin they took as bycatch. It was an old argument that remained unresolved, despite explanations about the abundance of billfish in the Caribbean and the opportunistic nature of the region's fisheries, and more recently the emerging role of anchored FADs in the fishery. It was therefore important that as FAD fisheries developed in the region that Management Plans for these FAD fisheries were also developed. The Chairperson also suggested that it may be possible for Barbados, although not attending the ICCAT meeting, to submit to ICCAT a statement that reiterated Barbados' position regarding the capture of blue marlin and the role it played in national food security and also, as a CPC, request a quota allocation for Barbados for food security purposes.

4. Review and discussion of 2018 proposals on ICCAT measures posted to date

For this item, the Chairperson informed the Meeting that she had downloaded from the ICCAT website the proposals, resolutions and recommendations posted to date. The Chairperson then drew the Meeting's attention to each of the proposals and gave a brief overview of each, starting with a letter from the Commission's Chair, Raul Delgado.

Commission Chair's letter

In his letter the Chair addressed the following:

- Amendments to the ICCAT Convention Agreement – The two final issues had been sorted out, specifically a definition of ‘fishing entity’ and provisions on dispute resolution. An amended Convention would either be adopted at the upcoming meeting or the meeting would define a process towards adoption possibly through a Special Meeting.
- Review of progress on the Second Performance Review and consideration of any necessary actions – SCRS had already been considering how to address the recommendations pertaining to the work of the SCRS, as evidenced by the SCRS report.
- Approval of the Budget – There had been an increasing number of requests for financial assistance to attend the SCRS and Commission Meetings. The budget for meeting participation would be discussed.
- Management of stocks/species – Mentioned was made of bigeye tuna and blue marlin and drafting management plans for tropical tuna stocks, which were of major importance for amendments to the annual recovery plan. If not yet being done, ICCAT would be requesting the submission of management plans for tropical tuna stocks in the future. There would also be discussions on ICCAT Management Strategy Evaluation process in an effort to encourage greater stakeholder consultation and development of harvest control rules as well as try to make consistent the approaches taken with all species. The work of MSE was intended to develop a rigid scientific process and a rigid process by which the Commission proposed and adopted measures.
- Compliance issues and operations of the Compliance Committee.

Japan's letter to ICCAT Commission

The letter raised the issue of the IMO's Resolution [A 1117 (30)] which amended the IMO number scheme to expand fishing vessels' eligibility for IMO numbers from vessels of 100 GT or more to motorized inboard vessels below 100 GT down to 12 meters in length overall authorized to operate outside of waters under national jurisdiction of the flag state. Japan was seeking clarification regarding ICCAT recommendation 13/13 that required CPCs to register fishing vessels 20 metres in length overall or greater with the IMO number, given the IMO Resolution. Japan was requesting that the IMO number application be applied to vessels of 12 meters length overall or above. Countries must notify ICCAT of these vessels and vessels without IMO numbers should not be included in the ICCAT record.

Recommendation to amend reporting deadlines

ICCAT was recommending that the deadline for submission of the complete report should be September 15, to aid the compliance process. This issue would be discussed under Compliance (COC) at the upcoming ICCAT Commission meeting.

Recommendation to amend the 17-07 recommendation for bluefin tuna

No CRFM country was listed in the quota allocation table. A stepwise increase had been agreed on for Eastern-Atlantic Bluefin. The recommendation was to adjust the TAC and quota allocations for 2018-2020.

Recommendation on Sharks

The proposal was submitted by a number of countries including Belize. In the preamble reference was made to the International Plan of Action for Sharks and called on states to cooperate with regional organizations to improve on catch and landings data and monitoring. Concern was expressed about the fin-to-carass weight ratio, as it was not considered an adequate means of ensuring that shark fins were not removed at sea and the shark discarded. There had been some abuse of the use of this ratio which also had implications for identifying shark species. Reference was made to the UN General Assembly and a number of resolutions that called for more a responsible approach to bycatch and shark catches. The following were the main points of the recommendation:

- ✓ Annually report Task I and Task II data for catches and report any historical Task I and Task II data not previously submitted to ICCAT.
- ✓ Prohibit the removal of shark fins at sea and require that all sharks be landed with their fins naturally attached (fully or partially) through the point of first landing of the shark.
- ✓ Encourage the release of live sharks, to the extent possible, that are caught incidentally or are not used for food and/or subsistence.
- ✓ Undertake research to identify ways to make fishing gear more selective for the protection of sharks and to provide this information to SCRS.
- ✓ Conduct research on key biological and ecological parameters to assist with the assessment process.
- ✓ The Commission to consider appropriate assistance to developing CPCs for the collection of data on shark catches.
- ✓ This recommendation to apply only to sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT.

Recommendation to provide a listing of species for inclusion in the amendment to the Convention

The recommendation was a listing of the species for inclusion in the amendment to the ICCAT Convention. The Chairperson pointed out that *Scomberomorus cavalla* and *Scomberomorus brasiliensis* were missing from the list.

Resolution to establish a Pilot Program for the voluntary exchange of inspection personnel in fisheries managed by ICCAT

There was a general scheme of Joint International Inspection and a joint international scheme for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin. The objective was to facilitate sharing of information and expertise needed to strengthen at-sea inspection capabilities and capacities, enhance cooperation and collaboration among CPCs on MCS and to inform future discussions on the issue within ICCAT. The Chairperson explained that the intention of the scheme was to encourage collaboration and cooperation among CPCs and to allow developing states to participate in the program. It was a way of providing transfer of skills, but at the same time opened up developing countries to greater scrutiny by other countries. Notwithstanding, the Chairperson encouraged countries to read through the resolution thoroughly as there may be more advantages than disadvantages.

ICCAT Recommendation on Establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities

This recommendation was an amendment to a previous recommendation, and sought to give greater structure to the development and maintenance of the IUU list. The main additions included:

- A specific format for CPCs to submit available information on vessels and IUU fishing activities.
- An increase in the number of days (to 55) before the annual meeting that the Secretary should provide the IUU list to CPCs and non-CPCs which have vessels on the list.
- More specific procedures to be followed to facilitate removal of a vessel from the IUU list. If a single party objects the vessel cannot be removed from the list.
- Specific procedures for inter-sessional removal of vessels from the list, including a deadline of July 15 each year for submission of the request for removal.
- Responsibility for CPCs to monitor vessels included in the IUU list and to promptly submit any information to ICCAT related to their activities and possible changes to name, flag, call sign and/or registered owner.

Recommendation on Reporting Requirements relating to lost, abandoned or otherwise discarded fishing gear

The proposal was submitted by Norway. The proposal referred to the UN SDG14 and took into account that discarded fishing gear constituted a significant part of marine pollution; ghost fishing led to

undesirable mortality of marine life; fishing industry could contribute significantly to reducing the amount of discarded fishing gear; and made reference to other ICCAT recommendations [03-12] regarding marking of fishing gear and [16-01] regarding reporting of FADs. The specific provisions outlined in the proposal for CPCs include:

- ✓ Ensure that its fishing vessels authorized to fish species managed by ICCAT in the Convention area are prohibited from abandoning and discarding fishing gear;
- ✓ Ensure that vessels have equipment on board to retrieve lost gear;
- ✓ Ensure that the master of the vessel that has lost gear make every reasonable attempt to retrieve it as soon as possible; and
- ✓ Ensure that no master deliberately abandon fishing gear except for safety reasons.

If lost gear cannot be retrieved, the master should notify the flag state within 24 hours and provide certain information regarding the type of gear, the amount retrieved, where it was retrieved, etc. Likewise, following retrieval of lost gear, the master should notify the Flag State and provide the requisite information about gear type, etc. The Flag State should notify ICCAT accordingly and ICCAT should post the information provided by the CPCs. The Chairperson noted that the proposal will increase CPCs reporting obligations, particularly with regard gear deployed at sea and introduced a responsibility for CPCs to ensure that every effort was made to reduce loss of gear and not to leave gear in the water.

The Chairperson noted that no recommendations/proposals in relation to blue marlin or bigeye tuna had been posted yet. The Chairperson said she will continue to monitor the ICCAT site and download and share proposals, as well as her views on these, as they were posted. She also suggested that meeting participants could monitor the ICCAT website for these postings.

Discussion by the PWG

No queries or comments were made by the PWG.

5. CRFM Secretariat Virtual Technical Support Needs for 21st Special Meeting of ICCAT

The Chairperson advised that Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada were expected to attend the Commission meeting and asked that these countries confirm their attendance. The Chairperson also indicated that there was an arrangement in place where she was available via Skype (text messaging) to provide support to CRFM country delegations during the Commission meeting. She suggested that those countries that were participating should advise of the arrangements so that, if necessary, she could share her Skype details with them prior to the meeting.

6. Any Other Business

The Chairperson noted that the Secretariat was short staffed at present and she was the only staff member working on ICCAT matters. The Chairperson pointed out that several Member States were now CPCs and suggested that in 2019 the PWG could meet more regularly to improve the interactions about ICCAT matters. She further suggested that countries could copy the Secretariat on their data submissions as well as on submission of their national reports to ICCAT. The Chairperson also recommended that the PWG convened meetings to discuss the outputs of ICCAT Inter-sessional Meetings, once the reports became available. This would help to reduce to load of items to be discussed just prior to the Commission meeting.

Ms. Lanza said that Belize was in agreement with the suggestions in moving forward and also appreciated the opportunity of this meeting as well as the Skype arrangement in place for provision of support during the Commission meeting. She also confirmed that Belize would be participating in the upcoming Commission meeting.

There were no objections to the suggestions advanced by the Chairperson.

7. Adjournment

The Chairperson thanked all those who joined the meeting and said that she would investigate how to share the meeting recording with participants. She also indicated that she could share the SCRS Report with all the highlights with meeting participants.

Ms. Peter, Saint Lucia, expressed appreciation for this meeting and thanked the Chairperson for pointing out such an efficient way to get through such a large document. Ms. Peter also expressed thanks for the explanations provided and said that she better understood the science and statistics behind the decisions and recommendations.

There being no further interventions, the Chairperson once again thanked all for their attention.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Appendix 1:List of Participants – Seventh CRFM-PWG Meeting on ICCAT

Country	Name of Representative	Affiliation	Email Address
Barbados	Christopher Paker <i>Senior Fisheries Biologist</i>	Fisheries Division	fishbarbados.fb@caribsurf.com
Belize	Valerie Lanza <i>Director</i>	Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit	director.bhsfu@gmail.com
	Delice Pinkard <i>Senior Fisheries Office</i>		delice.pinkard@bhsfu.gov.bz
Grenada	Crafton Isaac <i>Chief Fisheries Officer (Ag)</i>	Fisheries Division	crafton.isaac@gmail.com
Guyana	Seion Richardson <i>Fisheries Officer</i>	Fisheries Department	Seion_richardson2000@yahoo.com
Jamaica	Andre Kong <i>Director of Fisheries</i>	Fisheries Division	gakong@micaf.gov.jm andre_kong@yahoo.com
Montserrat	Alwyn Ponteena <i>Chief Fisheries and Ocean Governance Officer</i>	Fisheries Department	ponteena@gov.ms
Saint Kitts & Nevis	Nikkita Browne <i>GIS and Oceanography Officer</i>	Department of Marine Resources	Nikkita.browne@yahoo.com
Saint Lucia	Sarita Williams-Peter <i>Chief Fisheries Officer</i>	Department of Fisheries	sarita.peter@govt.lc chieffishslu@outlook.com
	Patrica Hubert-Medar <i>Fisheries Assistant</i>		patricia.medar@govt.lc
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	Shamal Connell <i>Fisheries Officer</i>	Fisheries Division	volcanicsoils@hotmail.com
Suriname	Tania Tong Sang <i>Policy Officer</i>	Department of Fisheries	iccatsuriname@gmail.com
Turks & Caicos Islands	Kathy Lockhart <i>Scientific Officer</i>	Department of	klockhart@gov.tc
CRFM Secretariat	Susan Singh-Renton <i>Deputy Executive Director</i>	CRFM Secretariat	susan.singhrenton@crfm.int

Appendix 2: Agenda - Seventh CRFM-PWG Meeting on ICCAT

Item	Title	Date & Time (Eastern Caribbean Time)
1	Meeting registration	9:30 -10:00 a.m.
2	Opening and prayer	10:00 - 10:05 a.m.
3	Review and discussion of ICCAT SCRS 2018 report	10:05 – 11:00 a.m.
4	Review and discussion of 2018 proposals on ICCAT measures posted to date	11:00 – 12:00 p.m.
5	CRFM Secretariat Virtual Technical Support Needs for 21st Special Meeting of ICCAT	12:00 – 12:30 p.m.
6	Any Other Business	12:30 – 1:00 p.m.
7	Adjournment	1:00 p.m.

CRFM PELAGIC FISHERIES WORKING GROUP (CRFM PWG)
REPORT OF EIGHTH MEETING ON ICCAT
Virtual Meeting, 10 October 2019

1. Registration of attendance

The list of participants is given in Appendix 1.

2. Opening and Prayer

The CRFM Secretariat's Deputy Executive Director, Dr. Susan Singh-Renton, called the Meeting to order at 9:19 a.m. and offered a short Prayer.

The Meeting's Agenda was adopted without change. The Agenda is given in Appendix 2.

3. Review of national data and national report submissions

The Chairperson presented this item. She said that CRFM Member States, both CPCs (Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities) and non-CPCs, should endeavour to submit annual statistics to ICCAT by the stipulated deadlines. Additionally, CPCs were also expected to submit a national report every year. The Chairperson noted that in the past, the CRFM Secretariat prepared and submitted a CARICOM annual report to ICCAT. However, submission of this joint report was discontinued as ICCAT requested specific information, which the Secretariat was unable to provide. Hence it was important for Member States that were CPCs to submit their annual reports and statistical data and for the non-CPCs to ensure that they submitted statistical data, using the relevant forms provided by ICCAT. The Chairperson then asked the Member States present to confirm if they had met their reporting obligations for the year or if there were issues in this regard for consideration by the Working Group.

Saint Lucia – Annual statistical data up to 2018 had been submitted. Saint Lucia had received a separate request for verification of data for the last 5-10 years; and updated data had been re-submitted. Saint Lucia was also in receipt of a letter dated 18 September 2019 from ICCAT regarding request for further cooperation with ICCAT, and was working on a response, which would include conservation and management measures for billfish and pelagic species, for submission by the stipulated deadline of 18 October 2019. The Chairperson indicated that if necessary, there could be further discussions about preparation of the response to ICCAT at Agenda Item 6.

Dominica – Dominica had also received a letter from ICCAT and was working on a response for submission by the deadline of 18 October 2019. The Chairperson then queried if the annual statistical data had been submitted. The Dominica representative said that he was aware that the data had been prepared, but was unsure if it had been submitted. The Chairperson thanked the Dominica representative for the update, and noted that the letter received by Dominica was of a more serious nature than the one received by Saint Lucia and encouraged the Dominica representative to try to confirm if the statistical data for the year had been submitted and if there were any gaps in the data submissions and if so, for which years. The Chairperson remarked that while Dominica was not a member of ICCAT, international law dictated cooperation with RFMOs operating in the region, particularly if the country was a harvester of the resources being managed by the RFMO and, in this case, Dominica did have a substantive pelagic fishery. The Chairperson also said that there could be further discussion at Item 6, if necessary.

Trinidad & Tobago – Statistical data and annual national report had been submitted for the year. The annual report (part 1) for the previous year had been submitted a little late. Trinidad & Tobago had received a letter from the Compliance Committee regarding failure to fully implement conservation and management measure: there was no information about a scientific observer programme data, no authorized ports submitted, measures for turtle and marlins not yet implemented, no legally binding domestic measures adopted to implement shark requirements, and overharvest of blue and white marlin. A response was being prepared and will be submitted by the 18 October 2019 deadline. All data and reporting obligations for this year had been met and Trinidad and Tobago had been commended by the Compliance Committee Chair on both the timing and quality of its submission.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines – National report and statistical data for 2018 had been submitted on time and an acknowledgement of receipt had been received from ICCAT.

The Chairperson thanked the countries for the updates and reminded the Meeting that it was important to receive an acknowledgement of receipt from ICCAT for the reports, statistical data and responses to ICCAT correspondences.

4. Consideration of Selected ICCAT Inter-sessional Meeting Reports

The Chairperson presented this item and said that ICCAT, both the Commission and the scientific body, usually held a number of inter-sessional meetings during the year, and the reports of some of these were of interest to CRFM Member States and should be noted. Some meetings listed were convened to discuss particular issues, such as the meeting of the Technical & Legal Editing Group. The Chairperson indicated that Ms. Louanna Martin would present a summary of the report of this meeting. The Chairperson then gave a brief overview of some of the inter-sessional meetings and their objectives.

Inter-sessional meeting of the Bluefin MSE Technical Group – Discussed various issues needed to inform development of Management Strategy Evaluation and required agreement from the countries on particular issues that underpin a management strategy evaluation. If there were disagreements about issues such as use of a stock assessment model, data sources to be used, etc., then development of the MSE would not proceed until agreement was reached. A Technical Report was prepared by the Group.

Inter-sessional Species Group Meetings (Bluefin tuna Species & Swordfish Species Groups) – Species Group meetings discussed matters in preparation for the assessments - data inputs for assessments, assessment models to be used, etc.

Inter-sessional meeting of Panel 2 (Inter-sessional Meeting for the Commission Meeting) - Addressed issues pertaining to directives given by the previous Commission meeting.

Data Preparatory Meetings – Data preparatory meetings examined in greater detail the data sources, CPUE series, catches (adjustments, etc.), etc. to be included in the stock assessments. Various criteria were looked at to determine which CPUE series should be included and also how CPUE series should be grouped depending on the assessment models being used.

13th Meeting of the IMM (Integrated Monitoring Measures) Working Group – This WG reported directly to the Commission Meeting and dealt with matters that supported compliance review and discussion.

J-tRFMO WG Meeting – This was a joint meeting of tuna RFMOs. The tRFMOs met to discuss common issues of concern and to cooperate to find common solutions. The decisions that were taken could have consequences for CRFM Member States, especially those with FAD fisheries, even though the focus had been more on drifting FADs rather than anchored FADs.

There were also assessment meetings, which completed assessments and these reports were sometimes updated again at the SCRS. The SCRS (Standing Committee on Research and Statistics) Meeting was ICCAT's annual scientific meeting. The 2019 SCRS meeting recently concluded and the Meeting Report should be available shortly.

Report of the Meeting of the Technical & Legal Editing Group of Contracting Parties¹

Ms. Louanna Martin, Trinidad & Tobago presented this item. In her presentation, Ms. Martin said that the meeting, which took place in January 2019, was convened to firm-up arrangements regarding the adoption of the amended Convention of the ICCAT Commission. The meeting was chaired by the Commission Chair Mr. Raul Delgado (Panama), while Mr. Bernal Chavarria (Honduras) served as rapporteur. Participants were drawn from 18 CPCs, but served as either technical or legal experts rather than country representatives. The Chair of the Working Group on Convention Amendment was Ms. Deirdre Warner-Kramer (USA), who participated in the meeting via Skype. Text on the amended convention was presented as a package of three documents: (1) proposal for amendment of the ICCAT Convention; (2) draft recommendation by ICCAT on fishes considered to be tuna and tuna-like species or oceanic pelagic, and highly migratory elasmobranchs; and (3) draft resolution by ICCAT regarding participation by fishing entities under the amended ICCAT convention; this was particularly related to the participation of Chinese Taipei, which was not recognized as a country on its own and hence participated as a fishing entity.

The January 2019 meeting focused on the Proposal for Amendment of the ICCAT Convention and addressed consistency in use of terminology, formatting issues (punctuation, spelling, etc.); and correct and consistent use of language among the various ICCAT languages – English, French and Spanish. The first suggested change was for Article IV - principles to be adopted by the Commission, to be incorporated into Annex 2 (at para. 4 and para. 7), which was the Annex that gave recognition to Chinese Taipei. It was anticipated that this proposed change would be agreed upon at the future Plenipotentiary Meeting (Commission Meeting). Regarding *Consideration of future actions*, the Commission Chair reminded the Group that the next steps as outlined in the Work Plan had to be carefully followed so there would be no further amendments to the amended Convention. The Technical & Legal Editing WG Chair also reminded participants of the procedure which had been adopted by the Commission whereby CPCs had 45 days to review the text and emphasized that any additional suggestions which may arise should be kept to the absolute minimum strictly necessary to ensure correct understanding of the text. No further substantial amendment to the text would be considered.

PWG Discussions

The Chairperson recalled that the *principles clause* was introduced early, and remarked that it was interesting that it had been omitted from the paragraph about fishing entity. Also, the Chairperson opined that paragraph 7 was severely discriminatory and queried the rationale behind paragraph 7 in Annex 2. In her response, Ms. Martin explained that Annex 2 dealt only with Chinese Taipei; paragraph 4 gave the conditions under which Chinese Taipei operated, and paragraph 7 legally excluded any other entity from claiming similar recognition as Chinese Taipei.

The Chairperson acknowledged Ms. Martin's explanation and reiterated that paragraph 7 was discriminatory since it dealt not only with fishing entities but also with non-Contracting Parties that obtained cooperating status after 2013. This paragraph restricted the level of participation of the non-CPCs in decision-making and diminished the benefits of cooperating status. There were possibly pros and cons to this arrangement and the agreed formulation was perhaps based on the experience of ICCAT in dealing with non-Contracting Parties. The negotiations have been ongoing for a while and the editing

¹ ICCAT. (2019). Report of the Meeting of the Technical and Legal Editing Group of Contracting Parties. Madrid, Spain. ICCAT Secretariat. 20 pp.

process was taking quite a long time. The Chairperson also observed that no CRFM member country participated in the Technical & Editing Working Group Meeting.

Joyce Leslie of Barbados noted that review of the Convention had been ongoing for a while, and requested if the key amendments proposed or particular articles that should be referred to could be highlighted. Ms. Martin in her response referred to the package of 3 documents that had informed the amendment process – the first document was the actual proposal for amendment of the Convention; the draft recommendation for fishes considered to be tuna and tuna-like species or oceanic pelagic, and highly migratory elasmobranchs – these species would now be considered ICCAT species and included sharks; and the Resolution regarding fishing entities' participation in the Convention and this was specifically to address participation by Chinese Taipei under the Convention. Ms. Leslie thanked Ms. Martin for her response and queried if the text was a complete text of the amendment. Ms. Martin confirmed that the latest text to be adopted was in the Proposal.

Ms. Leslie then further queried if there were any concerns in terms of the shark listing; was it a comprehensive listing? Ms. Martin said that the recommendation listed sharks mainly by families, but noted that for species such as blue shark, oceanic white-tip and hammerheads, ICCAT already had recommendations with management measures, but management of these species was not within ICCAT's official mandate. Inclusion of the recommendation in the amended Convention would *legalize* sharks as ICCAT species. The Chairperson added that ICCAT had been adopting management measures for sharks associated with ICCAT fisheries. Ms. Martin also pointed out that the list may be amended upon the advice of the SCRS. In the amended Convention ICCAT species would now read as tuna and tuna-like species or oceanic pelagic, and highly migratory elasmobranchs.

The Chairperson noted that this work was continuing and would likely come up again at the Commission Meeting. She encouraged Member States to study the text of the amended Convention, bearing in mind that extensive negotiations had already taken place and countries would have had opportunity to provide inputs; hence proposing further amendments would have to be carefully considered. Ms. Martin pointed out that at this stage substantive changes to the document will not be considered. She added that the plan was to have the Amended Convention signed at the upcoming Commission meeting in November 2019. All countries attending the 2019 Commission Meeting were expected to sign. It was noted however, that only seven (7) countries were required to sign for the amended Convention to enter into force. There were 53 ICCAT Members.

Report of 13th Meeting of the IMM Working Group²

The Chairperson presented this item. The Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM) Group was an important working group in the ICCAT structure as it looked at the protocols, the forms, and the various procedures that informed compliance measures and determined what was practical for monitoring, control and compliance. The April 2019 meeting looked at several documents and forms supporting programmes such as catch documentation programme, statistical documentation programme, etc. – these were all works-in-progress. No CRFM country was represented at the meeting. Issues considered included:

ICCAT overall strategy for catch documentation system (CDS) & Statistical Documentation Programmes (SDP) for bigeye tuna and swordfish

- The existing statistical programmes for bigeye tuna and swordfish were considered outdated. The entire catch documentation system required updating; and the meeting also looked at the possibility of expanding it to include other species, but this too was a work-in-progress. The meeting agreed on the possibility of expanding the CDS, and also agreed that the statistical documentation programmes required updating, but was not entirely agreed on the process for doing this.

² ICCAT (2019). Report of the 13th Meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM). Madrid, Spain. ICCAT Secretariat. 39 pp.

- The FAO Voluntary Guidelines for tracking catch had also been developed and was finalized in 2017. The meeting also considered further development of the eBCD (electronic bluefin catch documentation) system which would also help to inform the updates of the statistical documentation programmes. The EU had pointed out that the FAO Voluntary Guidelines fell below the standard established by EU-IUU certification and the EU had stated at the meeting that it required EU standards be met for imports. While ICCAT acknowledged that it would be better if there was one common document for the countries to follow, even if the FAO Guidelines were used, ICCAT would aspire to meet the more stringent standard – the EU standard.
- There were also discussions about a risk assessment to consistently identify priority candidates for the new CDS; which would likely look at the practicality for other species; IUU fishing, where it was occurring, etc. that required ICCAT to put a priority on creating an updated statistical documentation programme and expand it to include particular species. It was agreed that bigeye tuna be considered a priority species and several CPCs were pushing for swordfish, particularly Mediterranean swordfish to be considered a priority species also for tracking of catch.
- Several CPCs noted that the Group should proceed cautiously and it required thorough analysis of the factors discussed; these were sometimes stalling tactics, but also in some cases helped to rationalize the excessive pressures that can burden countries unnecessarily. There was a call for the new system to be in sync with agreed management measures and to be part of the usual suite of MCS measures.
- Some CPCs suggested that the new CDS should start out as a paper system and then progress to an electronic one.
- Brazil proposed that the chartering arrangements present in the SDP be retained in any new programme or system to be proposed.
- Although there was considerable discussion on the updating of the CDS, no clear decision on moving forward was taken. The Chairperson however noted that activities and discussions on this matter were ongoing among Members of ICCAT and it was important for CRFM countries to pay attention, particularly if the new CDS was expanded to include statistical documentation programmes for species such as swordfish, yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna. The Chairperson added that CRFM countries were not present at the IMM WG meetings, so it was very important that CRFM countries paid attention to what was being proposed and to make interventions and propose alternatives that were suited for developing countries. The Chairperson added that when the proposed new CDS was presented as a recommendation, countries might also be able to request a phased approach for their particular situation, if necessary, or some other alternative that would take into account their particular situation.

Progress of eBCD and consideration of any further actions

- Regarding the eBCD system, there was a special Technical Working Group for this system. The system was also being updated and the TWG had been discussing how to accommodate changes in operations such as intra-farm transfers and how this could be included in the system without creating undue burden. The TWG proposed approach was to create a new section in the eBCD system, which also had a new report function but did not require an expansion of the eBCD grouping function.
- There were also proposals for specifying minimum size derogations and vessel specific derogations and how these situations could be accommodated in the system.
- Addition of a bycatch quota requirement to the eBCD was discussed and it was agreed not to proceed to include this function at the current time.
- The issue of vessels 20m< that had no registered ICCAT number and how these vessels could be accommodated in the system was looked at. It was noted that CPCs needed to authorize these vessels.
- How to monitor by-catch limits at sea and issues of transshipping and how these could also be captured in the electronic system were being discussed and there would be further consultations on this matter and would likely be tabled for discussion at the PWG meeting scheduled for November 2019.

- Another issue discussed by the TWG was access to the eBCD system by inspectors operating under a JSIS scheme and there was agreement that inspector access could be endorsed contingent upon certain conditions.
- Also discussed was the time period for the paper-BCD to be converted to the electronic form and a 7-day period was agreed to.
- Extraction of data from the system for reporting to ICCAT was also looked at and there was likely to be further discussions. There were several issues raised in this section for which a time-cost estimate could be requested. CPCs were also encouraged to review information being submitted under Rec. 06-13 to better understand what was most relevant for reporting. TRAGSA was the firm working with the TWG on the eBCD.

Regional VMS

There was a desire to move towards a regional VMS system and there was some discussion on exactly what regional system was required - was it to be a fully centralized system. The IMM WG meeting agreed that the purpose, goals and scope of such a centralized system would need to be agreed before any forward movement. No formal agreement on this issue was reached. It was however agreed that VMS was important and was useful in parallel with specific management measures and as part of a general MCS suite. There were concerns about access to VMS data and it was noted that any use of the system in national waters would be governed by the coastal State domestic laws. Although there was no agreement on the regional VMS system at this time, it was agreed that ICCAT Secretariat would consult with other RFMOs to gather information regarding VMS implementation.

Inspection Scheme & Observer Programmes

- *Health and safety of observers*- Concern was expressed regarding sending Observers onboard vessels, particularly vessels on the High Seas and this issue was discussed. The US had prepared a recommendation on this issue which it tabled for consideration at the IMM WG meeting. There was consensus by the IMM WG and it was expected that the recommendation will go forward to the Commission Meeting.
- *Regional Bluefin Tuna Observer Programme* - There was some discussion about this observer programme; some of the issues mentioned included (i) carry-over of non-harvested tuna in farms and general consensus on a way forward was reached; (ii) observer sharing among farms; it was agreed that there should be no sharing of Observers for caging operations except in a *force majeure* situation; (iii) Observer access to stereoscopic video camera; it was agreed that Observers would be allowed to view the video at the same time as the CPCs' authorities, but it did not necessarily mean that the Observers would receive a copy of the video.
- *Voluntary at-sea inspector exchange* – Developed countries such as the USA and Canada had offered to deploy inspectors to help developing countries with at-sea inspection processes. Some African countries have been in cooperation with Canada and the US about this. Both USA and Canada have re-affirmed commitment of their time and resources to support this capacity building activity. It was agreed that point of contact information for voluntary inspector exchanges will be posted on the ICCAT Website. The Chairperson suggested that CRFM Member States could examine the Resolution if they were interested in this exchange.

Performance review follow-up

- US raised recommendation 6bis to remind CPCs to fully implement their reporting requirements for by-catch and discards. Other CPCs agreed with the spirit of this point, but lamented the burden of ICCAT reporting, and expressed interest in the ongoing efforts to streamline and simplify reporting. This issue will be discussed again at the PWG in November. The online reporting tool was also mentioned but this would likely be addressed in the new CDS.

- The US referred recommendation 73 and expressed concern that observer coverage reporting requirements for CPCs were not currently being met. This issue was likely to be raised again at the Commission Meeting as the Compliance Committee planned to review a Secretariat's analysis of compliance with observer programme requirements. The Chairperson noted that Member States should prepare their responses as at the Compliance Meeting each country was asked to speak on the issues. The Chairperson said the CRFM Secretariat could assist countries with preparation of their responses, if necessary.

Other matters

Vessel sighting – Certain vessel sighting procedures had been agreed under Resolution 94-09. The USA had introduced a proposal that sought to combine Res 94-09 and Recommendation 97-11 and an updated Proposal was given at this IMM meeting. The IMM endorsed the proposal and it was expected that the proposal will go forward to the Commission Meeting.

The role of IMM in ICCAT control measures – This was an organizational issue related to the different mandates of different groups within ICCAT. The specific issue was whether additional measures to further strengthen the traceability of live bluefin tuna as laid down in para 116 Rec 18-03 should be discussed by the IMM or the informal technical working group. It was agreed that fisheries specific measures will continue to be discussed by their relevant panels.

New IMO numbers – This was in relation to the interpretation of Recommendation 13-13 that commercial vessels should obtain IMO numbers; this should be read more narrowly and hence it would be reviewed by the Compliance Committee. The Chairperson opined that ICCAT was perhaps moving to make it more stringent and encouraged CRFM Member States to examine Recommendation 13-13 and the reference to IMO numbers and to study the likely implications of moving to this new interpretation.

Appendix 3 - eBCD Technical Working Group points for IMM Group - Looked at the number of points discussed – intra farm movements, derogation of minimum size, by-catch considerations, transshipment issues, inspector access, the 7-day provision, data extraction, and reporting obligations (reporting obligations other than the usual annual reports). Regarding the list of potential non-compliances the regional observers were seeking particular clarification to enable them to better understand what were considered instances of non-compliance. There were new requirements under Recommendation 18-02 and the regional observers were seeking clarifications on the interpretation of the requirements. The Chairperson observed that these were fairly serious issues as countries could be accused of IUU fishing.

Appendix 4 - Recommendation on Health and Safety for Observers – The preamble highlighted that safety of life at sea was a longstanding objective of international maritime governance; observers collected data essential to the functioning of the Commission; and observers' health, safety and welfare was critical to performance of their duties, and recalled that the ICCAT recommendation establishing the Regional Observer Programmes (ROP) did not yet include requirements that adequately addressed observers' health, safety and welfare. The Commission acknowledged the need for comprehensive and consistent requirements to protect the health, safety and welfare of observers; to provide the necessary safety equipment and training; and to establish emergency procedures, taking into account international standards and commitments in international law, including provisions of the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue with regard to the development of an international maritime search and rescue plan; and existing contracts between ICCAT and ROP Observer Providers, which include health and safety requirements. Key recommendations/actions include:

- Ensure observers were trained in safety procedures prior to deployment on a vessel for the first time and at appropriate intervals thereafter. Training programmes should have minimum standards in keeping with IMO training standards.
- Provide observers with requisite safety equipment.

- Obs
- Server providers should provide observers with a designated contact point to be used in cases of emergency.
- Observer providers must have an established procedure for contacting and being contacted by the observer and the vessel. This procedure must provide for regularly scheduled contact with observers to confirm their health, safety and welfare status and clearly describe the steps to be taken in emergencies situations such as: the observer died; was injured; assumed to have fallen overboard; was seriously ill; was assaulted or if the observer requested to be removed prior to conclusion of the trip.
- CPCs and non-CPCs to ensure that vessels that carry observers under the ICCAT ROP were outfitted with appropriate safety equipment for the entirety of each voyage. These should include: lift raft of sufficient capacity for all on-board, with certificate of inspection; life jackets for all on-board; properly registered Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) and a Search and Rescue Transponder (SART) that will not expire until after the observer deployment ends.
- CPCs may choose to exempt their vessels less than 12m in length overall and operating within 5nm of the baseline from the requirements to have an EPIRB.
- The observer provider should not deploy an observer unless and until the observer was allowed to inspect all vessel safety equipment and document and report the status to the observer provider. Observers should not be deployed on vessels with outstanding safety discrepancies. Also, if during deployment there was determination of serious risk the observer should be removed.
- Vessels carrying observers under the ICCAT ROP should develop and implement an Emergency Action Plan (EAP). The EAP should be submitted to ICCAT Executive Secretary as soon after the recommendation was adopted as was possible. The EAPs would be posted on ICCAT website. If the recommendation was adopted this year, then from January 2020, vessels which have not submitted EAPs would not be eligible to participate in the ICCAT ROP. Also, if a vessel's EAP was not consistent with ICCAT standards, deployment of an observer could be delayed until such discrepancies were addressed.
- The Commission may also decide that a vessel was ineligible to carry an ICCAT regional observer if the CPC or non-CPC had previously not investigated reported instances of observer interference, harassment, intimidation, assault or unsafe working conditions. Also, the observer provider should submit to the Executive Secretary for onward transmission to the Commission, reports of observer incidents that triggered provisions of the EAP. For countries involved in ICCAT ROP this would be another reporting obligation.
- CPCs and non-CPC should cooperate in search and rescue operations and investigation of any cases of misconduct and mishaps.
- CPCs and non-CPCs would be notified that a condition of participation in the ROP was the development, implementation and submission of an EAP.

Appendix 5 – Requests for clarification from the ROP-BFT Implementing Consortium - The Appendix detailed the clarifications requested by the company that managed the ROP for Bluefin tuna and the responses provided by the eBCD Technical Working Group. It was reviewed and agreed to by the IMM. The Chairperson invited the Meeting to review the Appendix and noted that some of the issues such as carry-over of non-harvested tuna, sharing of observers, and access to/viewing of video footage had been discussed earlier in the Meeting.

Appendix 6 – Potential Non-Compliance - This appendix provided a useful reference list to guide observers and CPCs involved in the ROP regarding potential non-compliance issues.

Appendix 7 – Follow-up of ICCAT Performance Review – Particular recommendations coming out of the ICCAT performance review were forwarded to the IMM for review. The Chairperson noted some of these issues (which were presented in a very long table) such as observers' health and safety at sea, had been covered in earlier discussions. The Chairperson encouraged participants to review the entire table of

information and determined if they had any particular issues for further discussion either with the Chairperson and/or the PWG.

Appendix 8 – Draft Recommendation by ICCAT on Vessel Sightings – The proposal referred to efforts by ICCAT and its CPCs to combat IUU fishing and noted that those efforts were informed and supported by an effective mechanism for CPCs and their flagged vessels to gather and report information on sightings of foreign-flagged vessels or vessels without nationality that may be acting in a manner contrary to ICCAT conservation and management measures. Recommended actions in the proposal include:

- CPCs shall collect through enforcement and surveillance operations conducted by their competent authorities in the Convention area as much information as feasible.
- Upon sighting a vessel, the CPC shall notify and provide recorded images of the vessel to the appropriate authorities of the flag CPC or flag non-CPC of the sighted vessel and (a) the flag CPC shall take appropriate action. Both the sighting CPC and the flag CPC of the sighted vessel shall provide information on the sighted vessel to the Executive Secretary, including details of follow-up actions taken; and (b) the sighting CPC shall provide to the Executive Secretary as appropriate information related to the sighting.
- If there were reasonable grounds to suspect a sighted vessel was without nationality, a Contracting Party was encouraged to board the vessel to confirm its nationality and to inspect the vessel consistent with international law and take action in accordance with international law. If a boarding of the vessel was conducted the Executive Secretary should be so notified.
- CPCs were encouraged, upon the consent of the flag state or vessel master to board and inspect vessels of non-CPCs conducting fishing for tuna and tuna-like species and to record and report appropriate information collected to the Executive Secretary.
- CPCs should encourage their fishing and support vessels operating in the Convention Area to collect and report relevant information to their appropriate domestic authorities.
- The Executive Secretary shall promptly forward any information received pursuant to this recommendation to all CPCs and report it to the Commission for consideration.
- CPCs were encouraged to notify the Executive Secretary of their points of contact to facilitate cooperation and other appropriate actions under this recommendation.

The Chairperson concluded her presentation on the report of the IMM Working Group with a brief review of the Sighting Information Sheet which was provided for collection of information on vessel sightings and was included as an Annex to the Recommendation. The Chairperson then asked if there were any questions or comments.

PWG Discussions

Ms. Joyce Leslie of Barbados made reference to sharing of observers, and queried if this meant that the same observers were used by different CPCs. In her response, the Chairperson said that this was an issue at the CPC level, not a regional observer programme level. There appeared to have been instances when the same observer was shared by different caging operations or farms and this was not tolerated.

Ms. Leslie sought further clarification about the US & Canada Voluntary At-Sea Inspector Exchange. The Chairperson said that this was a capacity building activity that facilitated at-sea inspector exchange. Under the exchange, developing countries' inspectors would be allowed on-board vessels of the developed countries (US and Canada) for training in the conduct of at-sea inspections and likewise inspectors from the US and Canada would be allowed on-board vessels of developing countries to provide training. Caribbean countries appeared to have had an issue with allowing US and Canada inspectors on board their vessels and so have not participated in the exchange program. Some countries (African) have participated.

Ms. Leslie noted that management measures were applied to species whether within the EEZs or outside and queried whether observers were specifically for vessels fishing on the high seas. The Chairperson responded that it was mostly done for vessels fishing on the high seas and for transshipment operations, but there was a ROP for Bluefin Tuna which were harvested mostly in the Mediterranean and included different activities, even observation at farms.

Ms. Leslie said that Barbados had received a letter from ICCAT mainly regarding compliance issues related to data submission and missing information, and indicated that Barbados would like to discuss this further with the Chairperson. The Chairperson acknowledged this request and took the opportunity to again encourage Member States to go through the ICCAT Performance Matrix that was reviewed by the IMM (Appendix 7 of the IMM Report), which included issues related to monitoring control and compliance, and to pay particular attention to the status of the recommendations and next steps to be taken by ICCAT. Robert Robinson of Belize concurred with the Chairperson and added that the Commission had delegated the particular recommendations made by the Performance Review Panel to the various ICCAT bodies. There were lead bodies taking charge of each of the recommendations and were responsible for reporting to the Commission on implementation of the recommendations. Some of the recommendations were fairly simple, some were to be noted and incorporated into the process, while some were a bit more elaborate and extensive. The Chairperson thanked Mr. Robinson for his intervention and remarked that some of the recommendations also had implications for adjustments to ICCAT operations, which would be felt by all, particularly in relation to data collection and reporting to ICCAT. In relation to data collection, Mr. Robinson referred to an earlier query about reporting on activity within a country's EEZ, and said that regardless of membership status in ICCAT, efforts were made to collect data from all countries within the Convention Area. This was national data and hence reflective of jurisdictional waters activities as well as high seas activities.

Ms. Leslie sought confirmation that the at-sea inspection programme and reporting of vessel sightings were specifically related to high-seas fleets. Mr. Robinson confirmed this and added that there was need to separate the high-seas boarding and inspection programme from the observer programme and the Regional Observer Program. Mr. Robinson explained that the high-seas boarding and inspection scheme had been proposed for many years by the US, but had met with opposition primarily because only developed countries had the capacity to perform at-sea inspections and it was felt that it would create a situation of the 'developed countries policing developing countries' and only countries that stood to benefit were willing to participate in this programme. As a result, it was adopted as an optional programme. The Regional Observer Program (ROP) was done for longline vessels as well as for the bluefin tuna fishery. There was a ROP in place for tropical tunas, which mandated longliners desirous of transshipping their catches on the high seas to do so under the purview of the ROP. It was a fairly simple process to become a member of the tropical tuna ROP by paying dues based on the level of transshipment. Vessels not involved in transshipment did not necessarily have to be part of the ROP. Regarding the Observer programme, there was a minimum requirement to have 5% observer coverage on tuna fishing vessels whether purse seine or longline fleets. This observer coverage had to cover a minimum of 5% of activity measured against effort (days at sea or trips, etc.).

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Robinson for his explanations, and noted that there were different observer programmes; the last programme mentioned by Mr. Robinson was a national observer programme, which was intended to cover a country's fleets wherever the fleets operated.

Ms. Leslie acknowledged the explanations provided and further stated that it had been argued that the vessels used by Barbados and other OECS countries for longline fishing, due to their sizes, were not amenable to having observers on board in addition to the crew, and queried how much longer this argument would hold. The Chairperson in her response said that this issue had been raised a few years before and countries such as the US felt that all vessels, not just large-scale ones, should be subjected to

an observer programme. It had been suggested that other vessels with observers could go alongside the fishing vessels, but this was not accepted at the time. The Chairperson suggested that Mr. Robinson may be able to give an update.

Mr. Robinson acknowledged the concern about the observer programme and artisanal vessels (the size of the vessels, the capacity of the vessels, the type of operations they engaged); and said that under the observer programme it was intended that the observer would be onboard the vessel and go fishing for long periods of time. The artisanal vessels often did not go very far off the coast and fished for short periods of time (less than 5 days). However for the high-seas vessels that fished for weeks at a time, having a scientific observer onboard was a more practical solution. Concerns had been voiced about the artisanal fleet and even if this measure was applied to those vessels, being a persistent objector under international law exempted one from fulfilling that particular obligation of the recommendation. Mr. Robinson said that the objection had been repeatedly voiced, but he was not sure a formal reservation had been made regarding the particular provision. Notwithstanding, being a persistent objector meant that an alternative solution needed to be found regarding observer coverage for artisanal vessels. The Chairperson thanked Mr. Robinson for the important information he had shared and remarked that it was very important that the region should consider how best to have independent monitoring; what could be a practical way forward on this issue, as this issue would likely be raised again.

5. Next Steps

The Chairperson drew the Meeting's attention to the ICCAT list of inter-sessional meetings and again encouraged PWG Members to read all the reports. The Chairperson reminded that some meetings dealt with specific issues that were leading up to assessments and queried if PWG members would be available for 1 or 2 more meetings in the near future, so that plans could be made for the meeting(s). After some discussions on availability, it was agreed to hold one (1) more meeting in early November 2019. Referring again to the inter-sessional meetings' list, the Chairperson said that since only one more meeting was to be held, she was considering review of the items listed at 11 (J-tRFMO FAD Working Group Meeting), 18 (Meeting of the SCRS); and 21 (Joint tRFMO Bycatch Working Group Meeting), and proposed that a summarized overview of each of these 3 items be presented and issues for CRFM countries' attention be highlighted. In addition to those 3 items, the Chairperson suggested that the meeting also discuss any recommendations that were available on the ICCAT website. Mr. Robinson agreed with the Chairperson's proposal, particularly item 18. Mr. Robinson said that the SCRS meeting focused heavily on the stock assessment for bigeye tuna and several proposals would be forthcoming this year regarding management of tropical tunas because of the critical nature of the bigeye tuna stock. He added that it would be useful to review this section of the report in preparation for the Commission Meeting as it was expected that much of the discussions would be focused on negotiating a new management measure to reduce overfishing and rebuild the stock. The Chairperson said that in dealing with the SCRS report, special attention would be given to bigeye tuna.

Ms. Martin pointed out that the meeting at item 21 was slated for December, so a report would not be available. She also noted that a yellowfin stock assessment was done, so some attention should be paid to yellowfin and further added that an inter-sessional meeting of Panel 1 to discuss this was scheduled for just before the Commission Meeting. The Chairperson took note of this, and also asked if PWG members present could confirm which of them would be attending the Commission Meeting. Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago indicated that they expected to attend. The Chairperson said that she was not sure if Barbados had ever attended a Commission meeting, but suggested that given the issues to be discussed, Barbados should perhaps consider attending.

Ms. Leslie asked if a country had to be a member of the Panel to participate in the meeting. The Chairperson said that a country could sit in as an observer at the Panel meeting. Ms. Leslie then queried if

ICCAT would fund an observer to attend the Panel meeting. The Chairperson replied that the country would not just attend the Panel 1 meeting, but also the Commission meeting. Barbados was not a member of any panel, but was a member of the Commission. Many recommendations went straight to plenary at the Commission meeting, including recommendations from the Panel Meetings. All recommendations had to be reviewed and approved during the plenary sessions. Hence all Commission members had a chance to provide their inputs during the plenary sessions.

Ms. Martin advised that Trinidad and Tobago had attended the blue marlin and white marlin panel meeting last year with funding from ICCAT. She added that there was a procedure for this; countries desirous of attending the Commission meeting would need to apply about 60 days prior to the meeting and 45 days in advance of the scientific meetings. Information on applying for funding to attend the meetings was available on ICCAT website. Ms. Martin said that if countries applied on time, once funds were available, ICCAT would fund one person from a country to attend.

Regarding the next PWG Meeting on ICCAT, the Chairperson said that the meeting would focus on 11 (J-tRFMO FAD Working Group Meeting), 18 (Meeting of the SCRS) and any recommendations posted on the ICCAT website. She suggested that the next meeting be held on Tuesday, 12 November 2019. There was general agreement with these suggestions.

6. Any Other Business

The Chairperson noted that several CRFM countries had received letters from ICCAT and she urged those countries to respond by the indicated deadline. If a country received a letter of identification and did not respond, punitive measures could be instituted against that country. The Chairperson then invited countries which had received letters from ICCAT to raise any concerns they had with regard to preparation of their responses. She also suggested that she may be contacted directly for assistance.

Ms. Yvonne Edwin of Saint Lucia said that Saint Lucia's letter was asking for information regarding conservation and management measures in place. The information was being gathered and efforts were being made to prepare a response for submission by the deadline.

Ms. Leslie said that Barbados' letter raised the following two issues: no information on sea turtle mitigation measures; and no legally binding domestic measures adopted to implement species-specific shark requirements. The Chairperson noted that there could be challenges with providing this information; a good understanding of the situation on the ground was needed and if a reasonable information system was in place this may be acceptable. The Chairperson remarked that it may not always be possible to be fully compliant, but it was important to indicate what our efforts were and how they were advancing.

7. Adjournment

There being no further interventions, the Chairperson thanked all for their time and attention and reaffirmed that when the Group met on 12 November 2019, it would review the SCRS Report, the Joint FAD Working Group Report and any recommendations available from the ICCAT website.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:10 p.m.

Appendix 1: List of Participants - Eighth CRFM-PWG Meeting on ICCAT

Country	Name of Representative	Affiliation	Email Address
Barbados	Joyce Leslie <i>Deputy Chief Fisheries Officer</i>	Fisheries Division	fishbarbados.dcfo@caribsurf.com joye.leslie27@gmail.com
Belize	Robert Robinson <i>Deputy Director</i>	Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit	deputydirector.bhsfu@gmail.com
Dominica	Derrick Theophile <i>Fisheries Officer</i>	Fisheries Division	derkjt@gmail.com
Guyana	Ingrid Peters <i>Senior Fisheries Officer</i>	Fisheries Department	Ingrid.o17@hotmail.com
Saint Lucia	Yvonne Edwin <i>Fisheries Officer</i>	Department of Fisheries	Yvonne.edwin@govt.lc
	Allena Joseph <i>Fisheries Officer</i>		Allena.joseph@govt.lc
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	Kris Isaacs <i>Senior Fisheries Officer</i>	Fisheries Division	Kris.isaacs@yahoo.com
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Trinidad & Tobago	Elizabeth Mohammed <i>Senior Fisheries Officer</i>	Fisheries Division	Emohammed.2fdtt@gmail.com
	Louanna Martin <i>Fisheries Officer</i>		lmartin@gov.tt lulumart@hotmail.com
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CRFM Secretariat	Susan Singh-Renton <i>Deputy Executive Director</i>	CRFM Secretariat	susan.singhrenton@crfm.int

Appendix 2: Agenda - Eighth CRFM-PWG Meeting on ICCAT

Item	Title	Date & Time (Eastern Caribbean Time)
1	Meeting registration	9:00 – 9:05 a.m.
2	Opening and prayer	9:05 – 9:10 a.m.
3	Review of national data and national report submissions	9:10 – 9:30 a.m.
4	Consideration of selected ICCAT inter-sessional meeting reports	9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
5	Next steps	11:30 – 11:45 p.m.
6	Any Other Business	11:45 – 12:00 noon.
7	Adjournment	12:00 noon

The CRFM is an inter-governmental organization whose mission is to “Promote and facilitate the responsible utilization of the region’s fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region”. The CRFM consists of three bodies – the Ministerial Council, the Caribbean Fisheries Forum and the CRFM Secretariat.

CRFM members are Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

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