



MINUTES

26th LDAC Working Group 1 Meeting Highly Migratory Stocks and Relevant RFMOs

**Tuesday, 20 October 2020, 10:00-13:00h
Videoconference**

**Chair: Mr. Michel Goujon
Vice Chair: Mr. Julio Morón**

1. Welcome by the acting Chair.

WG1 Chair, Mr. Michel Goujon, opens the meeting thanking the European Commission representatives, all invited experts and Working Group 1 members for their attendance and participation in this meeting held by videoconference.

The list of members and observers attending is included in Annex I.

2. Approval of the minutes of the last WG1 meeting held in Brussels on 6 November 2019.

The minutes are approved with no changes or comments.

3. Approval of the agenda.

The agenda is approved including under item 6, Any other business, the suggestion put forward by Mr. Julio Morón, OPAGAC, to give an update on work progress by the following RFMOs: Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

4. ICCAT – International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas

4.1- EC Report on Process and Main Priorities for ICCAT 2020: state of play of ongoing rounds of consultation by correspondence procedure – time plan and proposals.

EU lead negotiator and DG MARE representative, Mr. Jessen, briefly summarises this year's priorities for ICCAT. For the first time in history there will be no annual plenary session, but rounds of consultations will take place in writing in each panel. The deadline for contracting parties to submit proposals for discussion was last Thursday. The chair of each panel will act as coordinator. In principle, a time plan of three one-week rounds of consultations will be set. In the event that no agreement is reached by consensus on a proposal after two rounds, the decision to terminate the panel may be taken.



PA1 – Tropical tunas

The issue of the redistribution of fishing opportunities in favour of developing countries is still to be solved. It is not possible to do it following the written procedure, so the recommendation issued the year before will almost certainly be extended, as there are no proposals.

The EU position is also supported by the Member States and involves backing the roll-over of current control and management measures for 2021 with the adjustments proposed by the Panel Chair.

PA2 – Bluefin tuna and albacore tuna

There are no serious difficulties regarding bluefin tuna (BFT), with adjustment measures recommended by the Scientific Committee (SC) and put forward by the Chair involving a TAC adjustment and roll-over. Moreover, an extension of the EBCD derogation for the EU is proposed.

As for the North Atlantic albacore tuna, it is a more complex issue, and it is proposed that harvest control rules (HCR) should only be reviewed upwards as recommended by the SC and that a proportional adjustment should be made to the individual distributions on the table.

PA3- Southern albacore.

Pure technical adjustments with no novelties worthy of mention.

PA4 – North Atlantic Shortfin Mako

A complex discussion is expected to be held due to the numerous irreconcilable proposals regarding shortfin mako management, that range from a total retention ban for all individuals (living or dead) by Canada and Senegal; to setting a catch limit for dead individuals combined with observer coverage and technical measures to release living individuals by the EU; to the recreational fisheries exemption with a TAC of 700t the first year and 500t for the second provided that a considerable catch reduction of 80% is proved (USA).

The EU has submitted a similar proposal to that of last year, making a bigger effort to present an explanatory note regarding the technical measures proposed in addition to a 500t TAC. The idea is to be consistent with the scientific advice and the aims of the ICCAT Convention by introducing a series of complementary technical measures to avoid overfishing (including time-area closures) as well as guidelines for safe individual handling and releasing practices. Regarding Canada's proposal, Mr. Jessen insists on the fact that returning dead individuals to the sea will not improve fishing mortality, as it was confirmed by the Vice Chair of the ICCAT Scientific Committee.

He says that the Spanish surface longline fleet has proved its capacity to reduce its catches in 50%, as well as its availability to have scientific observers on board, improving data reporting and the identification of spawning areas and hotspots.

As for the scientific assessment time frame, no review of this stock assessment is expected in the short term but there is a proposal for SCRS to identify hotspots and spawning areas in order to consider future time-area closures to avoid individuals in that period.



4.2- LDAC members' feedback on Atlantic tropical tunas and Northern Shortfin Mako.

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, General Secretary, gives some context in this regard summarising that last year the LDAC issued an advice in preparation for ICCAT 2019 annual meeting that managed to be adopted by consensus after a comprehensive consultation process, in spite of initial discrepancies concerning the conservation and management measures proposed for tropical tunas and sharks. The Secretary thanked the members for their availability and flexibility to reach agreements with a common text.

This year, since the meeting will mainly focus on discussions on tropical tunas (due to the situation of bigeye tuna) and shortfin mako, he volunteers to prepare the first draft based on the positions of the member organisations that have an interest in these fisheries that were individually presented at the technical preparatory meeting that DG MARE held with stakeholders in September, that the Secretary attended in his capacity as observer.

Insofar as the round of consultations is still going, he enquires whether the members are interested in creating a specific focus group to work on the preparation of an advice on tropical tunas and shortfin mako.

The DG MARE lead negotiator at ICCAT, Mr. Anders Jessen, adds that it would be very interesting and useful to have an advice with the different opinion elements in the EU proposals, precisely regarding shortfin mako, since he doubts there will be modifications to or discussion on the roll-over of ICCAT recommendation 19-01 on tropical tunas.

Messrs. Javier Garat, CEPESCA, Raúl García, WWF, and Ms. Juana Parada, ORPAGU, show their support for the creation of a focus group and their interest to be part of it.

After some discussion, the following **ACTION** is agreed:

To set up a specific focus group to analyse the EU position on North Atlantic shortfin mako in order to prepare an advice. To this end, the Secretariat will send a call for interest to WG1 members suggesting dates for the meeting, and a draft advice will be prepared analysing the elements that make up the EU position.

All ICCAT preparatory documents and proposals may be accessed on the following link:
<https://www.iccat.int/com2020/index.htm#es>

4.3- Presentation of the position of the EU coalition of NGOs to tackle IUU fishing and increase transparency in ICCAT.

Ms. Antonia Leroy, WWF, sums up the relevant normative provisions in force regarding the fight against IUU fishing, as well as the main recommendations summarised in:

- Amendment to Rec. 06/14 on beneficial ownership on the IUU vessel list, aligned with good practices in RFMOs.
- Amendment to Rec. 13/13 to expand the IMO numbering scheme to all vessels over 12 metres long (versus current limit on 15 m).
- Adoption of a new recommendation to promote decent living and working conditions for crew members and observers. It could also be a resolution to develop a new normative framework.



The presentation is available on the following link: https://ldac.eu/images/ICCAT-EU-IUU-Coalition-policy-brief20_June2020.pdf

The specific action is detailed under point 5.3 of the minutes.

The document can be consulted by clicking here:

<https://ldac.eu/en/meetings/working-group-1-20-10-2020>

ACTION

- **The Secretariat will distribute the document on the position of the NGO coalition to tackle IUU fishing and increase transparency in ICCAT among WG1 members via email, requesting its approval so that it can be supported and setting a minimum period of two weeks for comments to be submitted.**



5. IOTC – Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

5.1- DG MARE report on proposals ahead of the IOTC annual meeting (2-6 November 2020).

The representative of the EC and DG MARE lead negotiator for IOTC issues, Mr. Marco Valletta, highlights that this year the meeting will take 5 days and will be held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The decision not to propose new management measures has been taken and TACs and quotas will be updated.

Even though discussion took place via email, the November meeting will be limited to existing management measures without further room for manoeuvre.

Some of the issues to be addressed are the following:

- Management measures for yellowfin tuna (YFT):

The measures adopted in 2019 have proved that they are not effective or ambitious enough, and the situation of the stock has not improved. It is hoped that a work schedule for at least the beginning of 2021 will be agreed at the annual meeting, where more strict measures will be identified for this species and covering all fleets, regardless of the size of vessels or the volume of catches, with regard to the next annual meeting on 2021.

Mr. Valletta recalls the importance of CPCs adequately implementing and effectively complying with the rules. He says that last year's FAD proposal was successful and that progress has been made. In addition, there is the possibility to establish an electronic communication system and a centralised VMS in the future.

- Schedule: most likely 2021 meetings will be held virtually, so a realistic schedule shall be set, bearing in mind the need to have a face-to-face meeting for ambitious issues. It is essential to identify fundamental subjects for discussion.

Then there is a round of discussion and questions:

Mr. Michel Goujon, ORTHONGEL, highlights that the EU fleet has made efforts to reduce yellowfin tuna catches and sees that other contracting parties have not met the objectives and so wish to change them. Therefore, he requests that attention be focused on these contracting parties redirecting their position and doing everything possible to meet the objectives. To this end, he suggests that the LDAC should work on a draft advice in order to identify and study how all fleets can achieve the established objectives, highlighting that European fleets have done their job.

The representative of the EC, Mr. Marco Valletta, agrees on the fact that more emphasis must be given to complying with the rules. In 2021 measures will be discussed so that they can be fairer. The EC finds it unacceptable that only EU countries comply, so they will try to collaborate and work with other contracting parties.

The following action is suggested:

- **To support the EC in its strategy and in achieving a level playing field regarding tropical tuna management in the Indian Ocean.**

Ms. Yaiza Dronkers, International Pole & Line Foundation, notes that she participates on behalf of the EU value chain companies that buy raw material in the Indian Ocean. She



declares that purse seiners have doubled in number since 2015, as well as the increase in the use of FADs with significant catches of juveniles. She mentions the need to redistribute catches in a fair and balanced way. She asks the EU if they are planning to request a special virtual session be held in 2021.

Mr. Marco Valletta, representative of the EC, says that they are aware of the impact of purse seiners, with overcapacity being a problem for fleets fishing in the Indian Ocean. He is open and receptive to the idea of requesting a special session for the beginning of 2021, and to try to make progress regarding work and discussions in the first half of next year.

Mr. Julio Morón, OPAGAC, agrees with Yaiza on the proposal to call a special session at the beginning of 2021 and highlights the need for the scientific council to carry out an assessment on yellowfin tuna, since the actual state of the stock in the Indian Ocean remains unknown, and so asks the EC to convey this request to the IOTC at the next meeting. He suggests that the three species of tropical tunas that are jointly caught be globally and jointly analysed. He insists on Mr. Goujon's idea, that the problem is the effective implementation and compliance with the rules rather than exogenous market forces and pressure.

5.2- - Draft LDAC advice for IOTC annual meeting 2020 (prepared by the Focus Group).

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, General Secretary, summarises the Focus Group meeting held on 7 October, as well as the content of the advice proposal to be distributed among all members.

After some comments made by the rapporteurs of this proposal and some discussion among attendees, the following **ACTION** is agreed:

- **The Secretariat will distribute the draft advice prepared by the Focus Group among WG1 members and Executive Committee members for them to submit comments and to adopt it, if so agreed. The consultation will follow the fast-track procedure (8 calendar days) so that it can be sent to the DG MARE prior to the beginning of the IOTC Annual Meeting (2-6 November).**
- **The draft advice will include comments made by participants in this WG1 meeting concerning the request for a more holistic approach for management measures of three tuna stocks, promoting a level playing field for yellowfin tuna recovery measures, requesting a Special Session at the beginning of 2021 to make progress regarding work on tropical tuna, to introduce technical modifications and amendments (e.g. the term "sales notes" instead of "sales slips") and to require the viability of further research so that 100% of planted FADs are biodegradable in the future.**

The representative of the EC, Mr. Marco Valletta, points out that he finds the LDAC draft advice very interesting, and finds it very much in line with the EC position.

5.3- Presentation of the position of the EU IUU coalition of NGOs to tackle IUU fishing and increase transparency in IOTC.

Ms. Antonia Leroy, WWF, makes a presentation on European coalition proposals to fight against IUU fishing with the following basic proposals:



- To strengthen compliance mechanisms
- To delve into discussions on catch documentation schemes
- To report on incidents relating to the violation of human, social and labour rights for crew members and observers.

The presentation is available on the following link:

https://ldac.eu/images/IOTC-IUU-Coalition-policy-brief2020_FINAL_June2020.pdf

After some discussion, the following **ACTION** is agreed:

- The Secretariat will distribute the document on the position of the NGO coalition to tackle IUU fishing and increase transparency in IOTC among WG1 members via email, requesting its approval so that it can be supported and setting a minimum period of two weeks for comments to be submitted.

NGOs' proposals on ICCAT and IOTC can be found on the following links:

<https://ldac.eu/en/meetings/working-group-1-20-10-2020>

http://www.iuuwatch.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/IOTC-IUU-Coalition-policy-brief2020_FINAL.pdf

6. Any other business.

Mr. Julio Morón, OPAGAC, puts on the table the need to address a specific item on IATTC and WCPFC at the following meeting to summarise novelties regarding yellowfin tuna supplies, since the Scientific Council will be meeting soon. He observes that the situation of yellowfin tuna at IATTC and WCPFC is good, so he requests a roll-over for 2021, taken the current circumstances.

ACTION:

- **To send a document with reflections on the good biological state of yellowfin tuna in the areas of IATTC and WCPFC, requesting measures be renewed for 2021.**

And, with no other issues to address, the Chair adjourns the session thanking attendees, interpreters and the Secretariat for their work.



(Annex I) LIST OF WG1 PARTICIPANTS

MEMBERS

1. Michel Goujon. ORTHONGEL
2. Julio Morón. OPAGAC
3. Anertz Muniategi. ANABAC
4. Rosalie Crespín. CNPMEM
5. Rob Banning. DPFA
6. Edelmiro Ulloa. Anapa / Anamer / Acemix / Agarba
7. José Beltrán. OPP-Lugo
8. Javier Garat. CEPESCA
9. Juan Manuel Liria. CEPESCA
10. Iván López. AGARBA/CEPESCA
11. Beatrice Gorez. CFFA-CAPE
12. Erik Olsen. Danish Society for a Living Sea
13. Rosalie Tukker. Europêche
14. Daniel Voces. Europêche
15. Julien Daudu. EJF
16. Roberto Alonso. ANFACO-CECOPECA
17. Stavroula Kremmydiotou. EBCD
18. Antonia Leroy. WWF EU
19. Raúl García. WWF Spain
20. Alexandre Cornet. WWF EU
21. Juana Parada. ORPAGU
22. Yaiza Dronkers. International Pole & Line Foundation
23. Xavier Leduc. UAPF

OBSERVERS

1. Marco Valletta. European Commission – DG MARE (IOTC)
2. Anders C. Jessen. European Commission – DG MARE (ICCAT)
3. Anika Mackensen. GIZ - Germany
4. Anna Gruszczynska. Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation. Poland
5. Teresa Molina. Secretariat General for Fisheries (SGP), Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA) - Spain
6. Alberto Martín. MSC Spain
7. Jesús Iborra. Secretariat Committee on Fisheries – European Parliament
8. Fredrik Arrhenius. Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
9. Jeanne Delor. Earthworm Foundation
10. Florie Hovine. Earthworm Foundation
11. Ignacio Fresco Vanzini. Pew Europe
12. Nikolas Evangelides. Pew Europe
13. Sonia Doblado. FARFISH H2020
14. Alexandre Rodríguez. LDAC
15. Manuela Iglesias. LDAC
16. Marta de Lucas. LDAC