



MINUTES

25th LDAC Working Group 1 Meeting Highly Migratory Stocks and Relevant RFMOs

Wednesday, 6 November 2019. 09:30 – 12:30 h
Hotel Leopold Brussels EU. Rue du Luxembourg 35, 1050 Brussels

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

1. Welcome by the Chair.

WG1 Chair, Mr. Michel Goujon, opens the meeting thanking the European Commission representatives, all experts, guests and Working Group 1 members for their attendance and participation.

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 27 March 2019.

The minutes are approved after introducing the comments received in writing from the Commission representatives regarding the content of their own contributions.

3. Approval of the agenda.

The agenda is approved including a statement by Europêche from the letter they sent with the subject "*EU action against illegal catch reporting practices of tuna vessels by Ghana and Senegal*" under item 9.

4. ICCAT – Atlantic Ocean

WG1 Chair, Mr. Michel Goujon, makes a presentation on the state of tuna stocks in the North Atlantic, which can be downloaded on the following link:

https://ldac.eu/images/LDAC-WG1-20191106_Michel_Goujon.pdf

4.1 Report from DG MARE on the preparation of ICCAT's 26th annual meeting (18-25 November in Palma de Mallorca)

The representative of the EC, Mr. Javier Vázquez, informs that this year, at the ICCAT annual meeting, they will try to reach a multilateral agreement on Atlantic tropical tuna stocks and sharks, which is going to be complicated, so a separate discussion per subject area will be considered.

In the case of tropical tuna, a TAC of 65,000 tonnes is suggested as starting point for the negotiations. Demands have been received from coastal developing countries requesting to develop their fleets, and the EC will try to fit this development in an exploitation plan. This means that they have to be transparent and report the number of tuna seiners, their capacity and have them associated to a management plan. They are aware of the fact that the inclusion of more contracting parties will be detrimental to the quota allocated to European vessels. However, the positive note would be to include the highest number of contracting parties within the TAC to improve catch reporting and control mechanisms.

This year, the EC has decided that if a reasonable agreement is not reached, they could end up requesting a ballot, even if the objectives suggested are not reached or if the measures adopted do not provide guarantees. They will try to reach a consensus but they will be firm not to cross specific red lines.

In the first fifteen days of November a discussion will be held among the EU Council of Ministers to know the mandate lines that could be accepted or not. It is worth highlighting that only the major inclusion principles of the contracting parties that were out of the TAC have been agreed so far, as well as a holistic and non-discriminatory approach for the management measures to affect all fleet segments (longliners included) and not only purse seiners (e.g. in terms of restrictions in the number of FADs or ban on transshipments on the high seas).

Regarding shortfin mako, he believes it is essential to read carefully the recommendations from the ICCAT scientific council on this regard, where an approach with little margin for negotiation has been adopted, since a ban on the retention of this species on board is promoted.

The EC will propose to allow a total catch of shortfin mako with a by-catch of about 500 tonnes that will enable to fulfil the aim of reaching the maximum sustainable yield in the year 2020. At present, the mandate of the Council limits itself to trying to achieve a by-catch quota.

Regarding sailfish, blue and white marlin, the scientific report is quite worrying, since the EU has an important level of catches. The aim is to prevent overfishing, as these stocks usually have a problem regarding data records that prevents catches from increasing. It has been observed that fleets in some contracting parties are noting down a significant increase of their catches in their logbooks in order to have a track record that enables them to be allocated more catches when the distribution is made.

Concerning the attached fins policy, he informs that the EC has received a study from the Regional Government of Galicia stating the economic and labour costs that this measure has entailed for the Galician/Spanish fleet. The EU thinks that the other contracting parties should make a similar effort so that there is no unfair competition.

Another important item to be discussed at the meeting is the bluefin tuna monitoring and control proposals that is beyond the scope of this Advisory Council.

Finally, the representative of the EC concludes by saying that the renewal of the chairs of the different ICCAT working groups or “panels” will take place.



WG1 Chair, Mr. Goujon, thanks Mr. Vázquez for his comprehensive summary and opens up a round of questions for the members of the group:

- Mr. Morón asks whether it would be possible to consider effort based management for the three tropical tuna stocks (SKJ, YFT, BET). Mr. Vázquez replies that the EU will only consider TAC and quota based management.
- Mr. García enquires what the red lines are in the negotiation. Mr. Vázquez answers that anyone creating de facto discrimination between the European and non-European fleets when complying with the rules or standards. In this case, they would have to react and vote against.
- Mr. Goujon asks how they could collaborate in a constructive way. Mr. Vázquez highlights the importance of working all together, which is why he hopes that data and ideas are contributed at the annual meeting, being flexible and collaborating in an honest way.
- Mr. Ulloa enquires about the scientific opinion regarding shortfin mako and the differences established by the scientific council for the North Atlantic and the South Atlantic. Mr. Vázquez replies that, even if the South stock is in a better state than the North stock, it is important that similar management measures are adopted for both. In fact, the inclusion of this species in ICES Annex II already recommends the adoption of urgent measures. In January a meeting will be held with scientists where priorities will be set. In addition, he informs that they are aware of the efforts and initiatives aiming to improve data and reports made by the Spanish fleet, example that has not been followed by other ICCAT contracting parties.
- Mrs. Parada enquires about how to protect the increase in biomass of blue shark juveniles in June and July in the Sole Bank area and in the French coast and about the presence of Chinese and Asian vessels catching them with no control whatsoever. Mr. Vázquez, from the EC, replies that that information was unknown to him and that he will convey it to his supervisors for it to be taken into account.
- As for the comment made by some members about tropical tuna management and the development of third countries' fleets that are being increased with no control, especially Ghana's and Senegal's (as it is stated by Europêche in the letter sent to the EC), Mr. Vázquez shares this concern and says that the European Commission has contacted these countries through the unit against IUU fishing in order to prioritise the implementation of audits regarding the card process.

4.2- Discussion about the LDAC draft opinion on tropical tuna stocks and sharks in the Atlantic Ocean

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, LDAC General Secretary, explains the draft opinion coordinated by him with the contribution of several members representing tuna purse seine and surface longline fleets, as well as pole and line fleets and NGOs.

Then, the members make a series of precise comments to the draft opinion on a paragraph by paragraph basis, which are integrated in the document.

For its part, IPLNF (International Pole and Line Foundation) and OPAGAC request their minority positions regarding bigeye tuna management (BET) be included as annexes.

After a comprehensive review of the document, the following action was agreed:



ACTION:

The final LDAC draft opinion for ICCAT, reviewed with the comments received in writing during the consultation phase and the contributions made in this Group, shall be sent to the Executive Committee for adoption following the fast-track procedure (8 calendar days). If approved, it shall be submitted to the EC so that they can analyse it prior to the beginning of the 26th annual meeting.

EX POST NOTE: The opinion was adopted at the ExCom and sent to the European Commission on 15 November. It is available on the following link:

https://ldac.eu/images/LDAC_Advice_ICCAT_Annual_Mtg_2019.pdf

5. Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)

5.1. Presentation of scientific initiatives and research projects aimed to improve the use and management of FADs / ISSF Guide for best practices regarding FADs - Josu Santiago

Dr. Josu Santiago, AZTI-Technical, made a presentation available on:

https://ldac.eu/images/201911_Scientific_initiatives_J._Santiago_presentaci%C3%B3n.pdf

5.2. Analysis of the European Commission's reply to the LDAC guidelines for best practices on the use and management of FADs for tropical tuna purse seine fisheries

The document and the reply from the EC can be found on these links:

- LDAC opinion:

https://ldac.eu/images/EN_LDAC_Guidelines_on_Best_Practices_FADs_May2019.pdf

- EC reply:

https://ldac.eu/images/Commission_reply_opinion_on_Best_Practices_Fad_management_R.02.19.WG1.pdf

6. IOTC - Indian Ocean

6.1 DG MARE report on key outcomes from the 23rd IOTC annual session (India, June 2019)

The annual meeting report is available on the following link:

https://ldac.eu/images/IOTC_Report_23Session_June2019FINAL.pdf

6.2- Discussion about work areas and identification of priority issues.

This item was not addressed owing to lack of time, since the whole meeting was devoted to the ICCAT opinion.

7. IATTC- Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

7.1. Report on the 94th IATTC Annual Meeting (Bilbao, 22-26 July 2019)

The information related to the IATTC annual meeting is available on:



<https://www.wcpfc.int/meetings/wcpfc16>

7.2. Discussion about work areas and identification of priority issues.

This item was not addressed owing to lack of time, since the whole meeting was devoted to the ICCAT opinion.

8. WCPFC - Central and Western Pacific

8.1. DG MARE presentation in preparation for the 16th WCPFC Ordinary Session (Papua New Guinea, 5-11 December 2019)

8.2. Discussion about work areas and identification of priority issues.

Since there was no time to address this issue as the whole meeting was devoted to the preparation of the ICCAT opinion, the representative of the EC, Mr. Orlando Fachada, sent the following information in writing to be recorded in the minutes:

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) will hold its 16th Annual Meeting from 5 to 11 December 2019. The next meeting will mainly deal with issues related to management and control measures and with compliance for tropical tuna, swordfish and sharks. On 10 October 2019 a technical coordination meeting was held in Brussels with Member States and representatives of the fisheries sector.

In order to strengthen the fight against IUU fishing, the EU will present a proposal amending the WCPFC conservation and management measure (CMM) for fighting against IUU fishing to allow to cross reference the lists of IUU vessels with other RFMOs and to strengthen actions against national vessels involved in IUU fishing activities. These provisions are already in force in other RFMOs.

A comprehensive CMM for sharks will be discussed once again, with the consolidation of existing measures, the clarification of ambiguities in the definitions and the rationalisation of reporting obligations. This measure also puts forward temporary alternative options to monitor the implementation of the fins naturally attached policy (FNAP).

Although the EU should support the full implementation of the FNAP, we should not go against any possible consensus to be reached by the rest of WCPFC members on the alternative options presented by Japan, provided that the conditions are clear and the scheme is subject to clear and strict monitoring, with compliance rules and also limited in terms of time.

The existing conservation and management measure (CMM) for tropical tuna will be in force until 2021, but there are some provisions to be discussed this year, particularly those related to definitions of FADs and possibly to the limits and allocations on the high seas among WCPFC members. The EU will support the best available scientific advice.

The EU will also present a document requesting the WCPFC Intersessional Working Group on FADs to advise the WCPFC members on the recommendations issued by the Joint Working Group on tuna RFMOs on FADs.

WCPFC will discuss the harvest strategies (management objectives, yield indicators and target reference points (TRP), particularly provisional rules for TRP and harvest control for skipjack and TRP for bigeye tuna, yellowfin tuna and other species like billfish. Given the good state of



the main stocks discussed affecting EU fisheries, the EU should support these options for the implementation of harvest strategies that safeguard the interests of the EU fleet and that do not imply a reduction of current catches.

The Pacific bluefin tuna (PBFT) and North Pacific striped marlin have a poor conservation status and will be subject to discussion. As in previous years, the EU should not support any significant increase of PBFT before the stock has been recovered within safe biological limits. In the case of the North Pacific striped marlin, the EU should support the adoption of a recovery plan based on the best available scientific advice.

The current Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) expires at the end of 2019 and the recommendation of the last Technical Committee on Compliance was to extend its duration another year. The CMS will probably be restarted, but some amendments could be agreed on to rationalise the existing compliance assessment process while keeping its main elements and principles.

9. Any other business

The member organisation Europêche (Daniel Voces and Javier Garat) explained the letter sent with the subject "EU action against illegal practices by Ghana and Senegal". This issue was dealt with under item 4.1.

With no other issues to address, the session is adjourned.



(Annex I) List of participants

LDAC Working Group 1 - Brussels, 6 November 2019

MEMBERS WG1

1. Michel Goujon. ORTHONGEL
2. Julio Morón. OPAGAC
3. Anertz Muniategi. ANABAC
4. Despina Symons. EBCD
5. Edelmiro Ulloa. Anapa / Anamer / Acemix / Agarba
6. Francisco Portela Rosa. VIANAPESCA
7. Marc Ghiglia. UAPF
8. Yvon Riva. ORTHONGEL
9. José Manuel Beltrán. OPP-Lugo
10. Javier Garat. CEPESCA
11. Juan Manuel Liria. CEPESCA
12. Iván López. AGARBA/CEPESCA
13. Luis Vicente. ADAPI
14. Beatrice Gorez. CFFA-CAPE
15. Michael Earl. CFFA-CAPE
16. Erik Olsen. Danish Society for a Living Sea
17. Raúl García. WWF
18. Antonia Leroy. WWF
19. Daniel Voces. EUROPECHE
20. Katarina Sipic. CONXEMAR
21. Haydeé Fernández. CONXEMAR
22. Juana Parada. ORPAGU
23. Paula Alfonso. ORPAGU
24. Dana Miller. OCEANA
25. Yaiza Dronkers. International Pole & Line Foundation

OBSERVERS

1. Xavier Vazquez. EC DG MARE Unit B2 (ICCAT)
2. Ester Alaez. EC DG MARE Unit B2 (ICCAT)
3. Björn Stockhausen. Greens/EFA Group – European Parliament
4. Sophia Kochalski. GIZ
5. Carmen Paz. SGP - Ministry of Fisheries - Spanish Government
6. Janne Posti. MSC
7. Alexandre Rodríguez. LDAC
8. Manuela Iglesias. LDAC
9. Marta de Lucas. LDAC
10. Sonia Doblado. LDAC - FARFISH Project