

## Bluefin Tuna Species Working Group

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### Current ICCAT measures:

[Rec 17-06](#): WBFT Interim Conservation and Management Plan (Rec 17-06):

[Rec 17-07](#): (amends Rec 14-04): EBFT Recovery Plan

### Excerpts from 2017 SCRS Report

[http://iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2017\\_SCRS\\_REP\\_ENG.pdf](http://iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2017_SCRS_REP_ENG.pdf)

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Other relevant info (related to management objectives and performance indicators)

- [Rec 17-04](#): NALB HCR
- [Rec 16-06](#): NALB

# **Bluefin Tuna Species Working Groups 2018 Agenda**

## **1. Introductions**

## **2. Status of the stocks and update on relevant SCRS activities**

## **3. Recreational fisheries**

- A. What should the scope of ICCAT's engagement on recreational fisheries issues be?
  - i. From a U.S. perspective, what benefits has or could ICCAT provide on recreational issues? What specific outcomes would U.S. stakeholders like to see from ICCAT engagement on recreational issues?
  - ii. What are the potential obstacles/objections and/or risks associated with ICCAT engagement in recreational fisheries issues? How might these be addressed?
  - iii. What method(s)/approach(es) can/should be taken to best achieve any identified outcomes and who may be like-minded partners in other ICCAT members?
    - 1. What role should ICCAT's Working Group on Sport and Recreational Fisheries play, if any? Would the terms of reference for the working group need to be revised?
    - 2. Are there other methods/approaches that should be considered?

## **4. Management Strategy Evaluation and Harvest Control Rules**

- A. Management objectives
- B. Performance indicators
- C. Other issues and next steps
  - i. Ranking exercise

## **5. Conservation and Management**

- A. Actions at the 2017 ICCAT meeting
  - i. Measures adopted
  - ii. Measures proposed but not adopted
- B. Other relevant conservation and management measures already in force
- C. Review of relevant [2017 BFT SWG conservation and management recommendations](#)
- D. Consideration and development of 2018 conservation and management recommendations, including relevant matters from agenda items 3 and 4 above

## **6. Research and Data Collection**

- A. Research needs identified by the SCRS
- B. Recent research (domestic and international)
- C. Review of relevant 2017 SWG research and data collection recommendations
- D. Consideration and development of 2018 research and data collection recommendations, including any relevant matters from agenda items 3 and 4 above.

## **7. Other Business**

## **8. Adoption of the report and adjournment**

## **2017 BFT SWG Recommendations**

### **Conservation and Management**

1. At the June 2017 Standing Working Group on Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers (SWGSM) meeting, the United States should advocate for the adoption of management objectives for Atlantic bluefin tuna to be used for evaluation of candidate harvest control rules via MSE per Rec. 15-07 and Appendix 2 of Res. 16-21 to ensure the objectives of the Convention is met. Stakeholder consultations are critical in this effort.
2. The United States should encourage eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean nations to adopt a TAC (including any allowable catch outside the allocation table) in line with the scientific advice, taking into consideration the greater than 70% increase in TAC since 2014, continued uncertainty in the stock assessment results, mixing of the eastern and western stocks, potential implications of increased supply on prices, and recognizing that an HCR is scheduled to be adopted in 2018 following completion of a full MSE.
3. Understanding the need to address the eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna allocation scheme, including to prevent the setting of autonomous quotas, the United States should seek to structure the Panel 2 agenda to ensure that the allocation key is renegotiated prior to discussing the TAC. This effort would address any dangers of combining allocation negotiations and science-based quota setting.

### **Research**

1. NMFS scientists should pursue cooperative research within emergent North Atlantic spawning grounds, including the Slope Sea as a priority to investigate the persistence and importance of this area as a spawning ground. Research should include larval surveys and reproductive, genetic, and microconstituent analyses.
2. Any changes made to the Atlantic bluefin tuna assessment models, assumptions, and indices of abundance for the 2017 bluefin tuna stock assessment should be clearly described and thoroughly vetted by the SCRS and implications of these changes to the assessment results should be clearly elucidated in the working group report.
3. NMFS scientists should continue to be active in the development of an MSE tool for bluefin tuna, with an aim to present the MSE results to the Commission in 2018 or 2019. The MSE operating model should be constructed to inform robust management in light of uncertainty, including stock mixing, spawning fraction and recruitment scenarios.
4. NMFS should prioritize its efforts to conduct a close-kin mark recapture study of the western population. NMFS should also expand programs to collect young-of-the-year bluefin tuna for the close-kin study as well as a potential recruitment index.
5. NMFS should support studies of the linkages between bluefin tuna availability and forage species.
6. The United States (SEFSC) should maintain close communications with Mexico on the methodology and preliminary results of any research Mexico pursues related to paragraph 23 of Rec. 16-08.