

Recreational Fisheries in ICCAT

Objective: Identify issues related to recreational fishing that could benefit from engagement through or by ICCAT and consider mechanisms or approaches to advance them.

Background:

ICCAT established a Working Group on Sport and Recreational Fisheries and adopted Terms of Reference through [Res. 06-17](#). The first and only meeting of the Working Group was held in 2009, in Recife, Brazil, chaired by Mr. Abdou Diouf (Senegal). The working group recommended that the Commission establish a methodology to collect reliable data from CPCs and requested that CPCs submit reports on domestic management and monitoring measures in these fisheries. The United States was the only CPC to submit such a report for the meeting in 2009 and spent the majority of its time defending how it monitors and controls its recreational fisheries. The working group also spent a considerable amount of time discussing the definition of sport and recreational fishing. The definitions put forward were inconsistent with U.S. definitions in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and the United States was alone in its position that ICCAT-agreed definitions were not necessary to carry out the work of this group. The European Union and the United Kingdom on behalf of their overseas territories provided reports on their sport and recreational fisheries in 2010. In addition, some CPCs have included such information in past annual reports (Angola, Belize, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela).

Another meeting of the working group was proposed in 2014; however, the United States noted that such a meeting could only be useful if CPCs submitted relevant data and fishery management information well in advance. No new information was provided by CPCs and no working group meeting was held in 2014. At the 2014 ICCAT annual meeting, the Chair of the working group circulated a letter noting the importance of recreational issues and calling on the Commission to convene a second intersessional meeting of the working group in 2015. The letter, however, was not translated during the meeting and the request was not discussed by the Commission.

ICCAT's panel of independent experts who conducted the 2nd ICCAT performance review in 2016, noted that ICCAT has not adopted any measures to directly address recreational and sport fisheries, in particular, in relation to billfishes and other species which are targeted by this sector. They further noted that the Working Group on Sport and Recreational Fisheries had appeared to make little progress. The expert panel recommended that, considering the important role played by sport and recreational fisheries in a number of key fisheries, notably billfishes, the Working Group on Sport and Recreational Fisheries be reactivated to complete its mandate and that mechanisms be developed by ICCAT to engage the recreational fishing sector in deliberations on management and control measures for these fisheries^[1].

Discussion questions for SWG consideration:

What should be the scope of ICCAT's engagement on recreational fisheries issues?

1. From a U.S. perspective, what benefits has or could ICCAT provide on recreational issues?
 - 1.1. Are there specific recreational fisheries issues U.S. stakeholders believe could be appropriately addressed by ICCAT?
 - 1.2. What outcomes would U.S. stakeholders like to see from ICCAT engagement on recreational issues?
2. What are the potential obstacles/objections and/or risks associated with ICCAT engagement in recreational fisheries issues? How might these be addressed?

3. 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?
 - 3.1. 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?
 - 3.2. Are there other methods/approaches that should be considered?

^[1] Recommendation 58 in [Report of the 2nd Independent Performance Review of ICCAT](#)