

**INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS CONCERNING
LIVING MARINE RESOURCES OF
INTEREST TO NOAA FISHERIES**



**OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
AND SEAFOOD INSPECTION**

2020

**INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS
CONCERNING LIVING MARINE RESOURCES
OF INTEREST TO NOAA FISHERIES**



Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection

**National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, USA**

**Telephone: (301) 427-8350
Fax: (301) 713-2313**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I: INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS	1
ATLANTIC OCEAN	3
International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (Basic Instrument for the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT))	4
Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean (Basic Instrument for the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization – NASCO)	15
Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (Basic Instrument for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization – NAFO)	28
Convention on the Conservation and Management of Fishery Resources in the Southeast Atlantic Ocean (SEAFO)	32
Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC)	34
PACIFIC OCEAN	39
Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP)	40
Convention for the Establishment of an Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and Convention for the Strengthening of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Established by the 1949 Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica	44
Convention for the Preservation of the Halibut Fishery of the Northern Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea: Basic Instrument for the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC)	49
Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean (NPAFC)	52
Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada Concerning Pacific Salmon (PSC)	56
Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea	61
Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada on Pacific Coast Albacore Tuna Vessels and Port Privileges	64
Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada on Pacific Hake/Whiting	66
Treaty on Fisheries between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America (SPTT)	68
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention (WCPFC)	70

Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean (SPRFMO).....	75
Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean (NPFC)	78
SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE	81
Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources: Basic Instrument for the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).....	82
Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals (CCAS)	87
Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)	89
INDIAN OCEAN.....	93
Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).....	94
Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)	97
WESTERN HEMISPHERE	99
Inter-American Convention (IAC) for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles.....	100
GLOBAL	103
Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP).....	104
Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas	107
Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA).....	108
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	110
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)	115
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).....	117
International Whaling Commission (IWC).....	123
PART II: BILATERAL CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS.....	127
NORTH AMERICA.....	129
Informal Fisheries Consultations between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada	130
Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada on Fisheries Enforcement	132

United States-Mexico Fisheries Cooperation Program.....	136
SOUTH AMERICA	139
United States-Chile Fisheries Cooperation Program	140
ASIA	143
Fisheries Bilateral between the United States & China	144
Memorandum of Understanding between the American Institute in Taiwan and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States Concerning Cooperation in Fisheries and Aquaculture	145
National Marine Fisheries Service/Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency, Scientific Cooperation.....	147
EUROPE.....	149
Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Mutual Fisheries Relations (ICC)	150
Informal Fisheries Consultations between the United States and Norway	152
United States-European Union High Level Fisheries Consultation.....	154
PART III: SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS AND COUNCILS.....	157
PACIFIC OCEAN.....	159
North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES).....	160
ARCTIC OCEAN	165
Working Group for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF).....	166
ATLANTIC OCEAN	171
International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES).....	172
GLOBAL	177
Global Environment Facility (GEF)	178
PART IV: OTHER INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OF INTEREST.....	181
Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)	183
Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC)	185
Canada/Mexico/US Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management	186
Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC).....	187
Coral Disease and Health Consortium (CDHC)	188

Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF)	189
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI).....	191
Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).....	193
Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS)	194
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)	197
IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE)	199
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).....	202
International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC)	205
Joint Project Agreement between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Korean Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) For Scientific and Technical Cooperation in Integrated Coastal and Ocean Resources Management.....	207
Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region	209
Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and Their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA)(concluded under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species) ..	211
National Marine Fisheries Service/Institute of Marine Research, Norway, Scientific Cooperation.....	212
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)	214
The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).....	215
Protocol for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention)	217
United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)	219
U.S.-Canada International Joint Commission (IJC)	220
U.S.-China Marine and Fishery Science and Technology Protocol (MFSTP)	221
U.S.-Vietnam Fisheries Cooperation Program	223
World Trade Organization (WTO)	224
PART V: APPENDICES.....	225
APPENDIX I: Governing International Fishery Agreements Between the United States and Foreign Entities	227
APPENDIX II: Membership Lists for Selected Organizations / Agreements	228
APPENDIX III: List of Selected Acronyms.....	233
APPENDIX IV: Geographic Delimitations.....	235

PART I: INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL
MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

ATLANTIC OCEAN

International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (Basic Instrument for the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT))

Basic Instrument

International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (TIAS 6767), 20 U.S.T. 2887, 1969, which was signed on May 14, 1966.

In 2012, ICCAT established the terms of reference for a Convention Amendment Working Group ([Rec. 12-10](#)). The work of this group was completed in 2019, when ICCAT adopted a comprehensive Convention amendment protocol to bring its Convention into line with modern fisheries management standards and principles, clarify ICCAT's mandate to manage certain shark and ray species, ensure that all key fleets targeting ICCAT species are bound by its rules, in particular by ensuring the full participation of Taiwan, and modernizing and streamlining decision making processes and procedures (see [Rec. 19-01](#); [Res. 19-13](#)). Parties that had secured their necessary signatory authority, including the United States, signed the Convention Protocol during a special session in November 2019. The final signed protocol was sent to the Convention depositary, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which will transmit it to Contracting Parties for their approval, ratification, or acceptance. The protocol must be ratified by three quarters of ICCAT Parties before it enters into force.

Implementing Legislation

Atlantic Tunas Convention Act of 1975 ([16 U.S.C. 971 et. seq.](#))

Members

There are currently 53 Contracting Parties: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Cape Verde, China (People's Republic), Côte d'Ivoire, Curaçao, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, European Union (EU), France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea (Republic of), Honduras, Iceland, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Liberia, Libya, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sao Tome and Principe, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa (Republic of), Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom (in respect of its overseas territories), United States, Uruguay, Vanuatu, and Venezuela.

Commission Headquarters

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
c/ Corazón de Maria, 8, 6th Floor
28002, Madrid, Spain

Executive Secretary: Mr. Camille Manel
Telephone (from U.S.): (011) 34-91-416-5600
Web address: <http://www.iccat.int>;
General email requests: info@iccat.int

Budget

The Commission approves a biennial budget during each regular meeting. At its 2019 Annual Meeting, the Commission adopted a budget of 4.2 million Euros for 2020 and 4.4 million Euros for 2021. The U.S. contribution for 2020 was 206,879 Euros, which includes a contribution for eBCD.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

ATCA provides that not more than three Commissioners shall represent the United States in ICCAT. Commissioners are appointed by the President and serve 3-year terms. Of the three U.S. Commissioners, one can be a salaried employee of any state or political subdivision thereof, or of the Federal Government. Of the two Commissioners who are not government employees, one must have knowledge and experience regarding commercial fishing in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico or Caribbean Sea and the other must have knowledge and experience regarding recreational fishing. Non-Government Commissioners are not eligible to serve more than two consecutive three-year terms.

B. U.S. Commissioners:

Government

Mr. Andrew Lawler
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
International Fisheries, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Recreational

Mr. Raymond Bogan

Commercial

Mr. Eugenio Piñeiro-Soler

C. Advisory Structure:

The U.S. Commissioners are required, under ATCA, to constitute an Advisory Committee to the U.S. National Section to ICCAT. This body shall, to the maximum extent practicable, consist of an equitable balance among the various groups concerned with the fisheries covered by the Convention and is exempt from the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Details on the required composition of the Committee are outlined in the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act of 1975 (16 U.S.C. 971 *et. seq.*). The Commissioners have also established four species working groups, as follows: billfish, swordfish/sharks, bluefin tuna, and BAYS (bigeye, albacore, yellowfin, and skipjack) tunas.

The Chairman of the Advisory Committee is Dr. John Graves, The College of William and Mary, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, School of Marine Science, Gloucester Point, VA. The Committee's Executive Secretary is Terra Lederhouse, Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, NOAA Fisheries. By law, the Committee must meet at least twice a year, usually in Silver Spring, Maryland or near Miami, Florida.

Description

ICCAT was established to provide an effective program of international cooperation in research and conservation in recognition of the unique problems related to the highly migratory nature of tunas and tuna-like species. The Convention area is defined as all waters of the Atlantic Ocean, including the adjacent seas. The Commission is responsible for providing internationally coordinated research on the condition of Atlantic tuna and tuna-like species, and their environment, as well as for the development of regulatory recommendations. The objective of such regulatory recommendations is to conserve and manage species of tuna and tuna-like species throughout their range in a manner that maintains their population at levels that will permit the maximum sustainable catch.

Recommendations adopted by the Commission are submitted to Contracting Parties for acceptance. These recommendations become effective for all Parties to the Convention six months after their formal submission to all Parties (unless otherwise stated) provided objections are not made pursuant to Article VIII of the Convention during that period. Objections delay entry into force of a recommendation by at least 60 days for all Parties and do not become binding on the objecting Contracting Party. Each Contracting Party accepting a recommendation has the responsibility for ensuring its implementation and enforcement. Resolutions adopted by the Commission are non-binding.

ICCAT has established five standing committees as follows: (1) the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), (2) the Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD), (3) the Conservation and Management Measures Compliance Committee (COC), (4) the Permanent Working Group for the Improvement of

ICCAT Statistics and Conservation Measures (PWG), and (5) the Standing Working Group to Enhance Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers. It also undertakes relevant work through various *ad hoc* working groups.

Panels established by the Commission are responsible for the species under their purview: Panel 1 covers tropical tunas (bigeye, yellowfin, and skipjack); Panel 2 covers North Atlantic temperate tunas (western Atlantic bluefin, eastern Atlantic/Mediterranean bluefin, North Atlantic albacore and Mediterranean albacore); Panel 3 covers South Atlantic temperate tunas (southern bluefin and South Atlantic albacore); and Panel 4 covers other species, including swordfish, billfishes, sharks, seabirds, and sea turtles.

Panel 1 - Bigeye, Yellowfin and Skipjack Tunas

Bigeye, yellowfin, and skipjack are tropical tunas most often found in the eastern Atlantic as mixed stocks in their juvenile phase. Mature fish are known to migrate across the Atlantic where they are important components of the fisheries of various countries, including the United States. The high proportion of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin catches by some surface fleets targeting skipjack and the consequent impacts on yields has remained a concern for many years.

A 2018 assessment concluded that the Atlantic bigeye stock is overfished, with overfishing occurring. Projections indicated that catch levels at the current TAC would be expected to have a 28% probability of the stock being in the Kobe plot green zone ($B > B_{msy}$, $F < F_{msy}$, i.e., no overfishing, not overfished) by 2028 (a ten-year period), and a 44% probability by 2033 (a 15-year period that constitutes two mean generation times). Yellowfin tuna was assessed in 2019; stock biomass relative to B_{msy} was estimated to be 1.17 (not overfished) while the fishing mortality rate relative to F_{msy} was .96 (no overfishing occurring). As with bigeye tuna, catches of yellowfin have exceeded the TAC in recent years. Skipjack tuna was assessed in 2014; the stocks are not overfished with no overfishing occurring.

Management measures have been in place for bigeye tuna since 2004, including a TAC and capacity limits. A time/area closure off West Africa, first adopted in 1999, has been modified several times. Management measures for yellowfin tuna were added in 2011, including an annual TAC of 110,000 t, and expanded monitoring, control, and surveillance measures in the tropical tunas fishery, including new logbook requirements for purse seine and bait boats and management plans for the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs). In 2014, the measure for tropical tunas was revised, extending management to the eastern stock of skipjack tuna ([Rec. 14-01](#)).

Under [Rec. 15-01](#), ICCAT reduced the bigeye TAC to 65,000 t and implemented a quota reduction. Minor harvesters without a specific quota, including the United States, that are not developing coastal States "shall endeavor" to maintain their annual catch at less than 1,575 t. Rec. 15-01 also specified that if the catch of bigeye tuna of any developing coastal CPC without a specified catch limit exceeds 3,500 t, a catch limit will be established. In 2016, ICCAT's *Ad Hoc* Working Group on FADs produced its findings on the use and impacts of FADs, as well as its recommendations on data reporting and analysis. The tropical tuna management measure was amended again in 2016, adopting some of the recommendations of the FAD working group to improve data reporting and adopt some controls on the FAD fishery (Rec 16-01). Under [Rec. 17-01](#), discards of tropical tunas from the purse seine fishery were prohibited with some limited exceptions. In 2018, the United States called for a further TAC reduction for bigeye tuna to end overfishing as soon as possible and allow rebuilding within ten years, as well as effective measures to reduce fishing effort on FADs in order to reduce catches of small bigeye and yellowfin. Competing proposals were presented by the EU, Guatemala, and South Africa, but there was no consensus and the existing measure was extended for one year.

In 2019, negotiations focused on the nature and extent of the time/area closure, FAD deployment limits, observer provisions, and bigeye TAC and allocation, including the treatment of small harvesters, developing States, and small-scale, artisanal fishermen. [Rec. 19-02](#) established the TAC for bigeye tuna at 62,500 t for 2020 and 61,500 t for 2021. An interim catch limit scheme for 2020 requires CPCs with bigeye tuna catch limits greater than 10,000 t to reduce catches by 21%. Other CPCs must reduce by a certain percentage tied to recent catches: 17% for those with recent catches > 3500 t and 10% for those with recent catches >1,000 t. CPCs with recent catches <1,000 t are encouraged to keep their catch and effort at recent levels. The measure includes an Atlantic-wide FAD closure for two months in 2020 (Jan-Feb) and three months in 2021 (Jan-March), as well as FAD deployment limits of 350 FADs per vessel in 2020 and 300 in 2021. 100% observer coverage is required on purse seine vessels. Observer

coverage was raised to 10% on longline vessels > 20m, to be implemented by 2022 using human observers or electronic monitoring systems, with electronic monitoring protocols to be developed by 2021. Future discussions are expected to focus on the bigeye TAC needed for rebuilding, a longer term allocation scheme, FAD data availability and supply vessel limits and controls, among other issues.

Panel 2 - North Atlantic Bluefin Tuna and Albacore

Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna: At its 1998 meeting, ICCAT adopted a rebuilding program for western Atlantic bluefin tuna with the goal of reaching MSY in 20 years. The TAC of 2,500mt, inclusive of dead discards, was initially shared by the United States, Japan, and Canada; later allocations were specified for three minor harvesters: the United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda), France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), and Mexico. The 2014 assessment showed an improvement in the status of the stock, with overfishing no longer occurring. [Rec. 14-05](#) increased the annual TAC to a level within the range of scientific advice, allowing for continued growth of the spawning stock biomass under either a high recruitment scenario or low recruitment scenario.

A 2017 stock assessment provided advice based on fishing mortality reference points rather than biomass based reference points given the significant uncertainties in some population characteristics, such as the stock-recruit relationship, that resulted in highly divergent stock status estimates in previous assessments. The United States tabled a proposal to establish interim conservation and management measures for western Atlantic bluefin tuna (2018-20) that was responsive to the scientific advice while recognizing the need for a transition between the 20-year rebuilding program adopted in 1998 and a future approach to managing the stock that relies on management procedures to meet Convention objectives. ICCAT adopted a modified version of the U.S. proposal that rolled over most existing provisions of the rebuilding program while increasing the annual TAC to 2,350 t for 2018-20 ([Rec. 17-06](#)).

The Commission and the SCRS have been working on developing management strategy evaluation (MSE) for bluefin tuna. In 2018, ICCAT adopted a Resolution on the Development of Initial Management Objectives for Eastern and Western Atlantic bluefin tuna ([Res. 18-03](#)). The SCRS will continue to work on the creation and testing of candidate management procedures as part of the MSE process, but in the meantime, a stock assessment update in 2020 will be used to provide TAC advice for 2021 (and beyond, if needed) for both the western and eastern Atlantic stocks.

Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna: ICCAT began adopting measures to limit harvests of eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna, including TACs and country specific quotas, in the mid to late 1990s due to concerns about the status of the stock. In light of growing evidence of stock mixing, the United States urged the adoption of strong conservation measures in the east. However, for many years, eastern harvesters failed to follow scientific advice on TAC levels and other actions and largely failed to implement ICCAT recommendations effectively despite adopting a “rebuilding plan” in 2006. Between 2008-2010, ICCAT began to take more serious steps to strengthen monitoring and control measures in the eastern bluefin tuna fishery and to establish measures that more closely aligned with scientific advice. Since that time, compliance has improved, with total reported catches remaining at or below the TAC in recent years. Improved management and compliance has also led to improvements in the status of eastern bluefin tuna.

In 2017, the eastern stock was assessed, and similar to the assessment for the western stock, advice was provided based on fishing mortality reference points rather than biomass based reference points given the significant uncertainties in some population characteristics, particularly the stock-recruit relationship. The assessment indicated that overfishing of the eastern bluefin stock was not occurring, but the SCRS could not advise on whether or not the stock was overfished as this determination depends on assumptions made for longer term future recruitment. At the 2017 annual meeting, negotiations on a measure to substantially revise the rebuilding plan ICCAT, including transitioning it from a recovery plan to a management plan, broke down. Instead, the Commission adopted a Chair’s proposal for a one year measure that rolled over many of the provisions of the recovery plan to allow discussions for more ambitious changes to continue. The Chair’s proposal did provide for stepped increases in the TACs (28,200 t for 2018; 32,240 t for 2019 and 36,000 t for 2020), an adjustment to Algeria’s allocation, and establishment of a small unallocated reserve quota for 2019-20. Given dissatisfaction with the allocation arrangement in the 2017 measure, an intersessional meeting was held to consider some reallocation of the reserve quota.

In 2018, ICCAT returned to work on the more comprehensive revision to the eastern bluefin tuna rebuilding plan. After extensive negotiations ICCAT adopted [Rec. 18-02](#). Agreed revisions included numerous changes to provisions such as minimum size, fishing and farming capacity limits, rules for vessels harvesting eastern bluefin tuna as bycatch, and open seasons. Many of the agreed changes loosened management requirements and complicated their implementation and enforcement, but eastern harvesters argued that such changes were needed in order to be able to catch the increasing TAC. The new Recommendation also included a revised allocation arrangement that distributed the unallocated reserve portion of the previously-agreed TAC, consistent with recommendations from the 2018 Panel 2 intersessional meeting. This measure was extended with minor changes in [Rec. 19-04](#).

In 2019, ICCAT also established a Working Group on Bluefin Tuna Control and Traceability Measures ([Res. 19-15](#)). The group met in March 2020, just before the Panel 2 intersessional meeting and made a number of suggestions aimed at strengthening control and traceability of bluefin tuna fisheries, particularly with respect to eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna destined for farms, to help prevent IUU fishing activities and the trading of illegal bluefin tuna. Notably, the Working Group identified various provisions of Recommendation 19-04 and other relevant ICCAT instruments, that could potentially benefit from being clarified, combined, streamlined, or otherwise improved. The Working Group presented its suggestions to Panel 2 for appropriate action. Panel 2 endorsed many of the suggestions. Based on this work, EU is expected to provide a revised version of Rec. 19-04 to ICCAT in November 2020 updating many of the monitoring and control elements of that recommendation. A revision to ICCAT's BCD program recommendation may also be tabled in 2020.

North Atlantic (Northern) Albacore: Based on a 2009 assessment indicating that the stock was overfished with overfishing occurring, the Commission adopted a rebuilding program that included a 28,000 t TAC aimed at stock recovery by 2020. [Rec. 15-04](#) defined the management objectives for northern albacore and outlined the process by which SCRS would identify and test candidate biological reference points (i.e., threshold and limit biomass levels and the target fishing mortality rate) and associated harvest control rules (HCR). In 2016, the stock was found to be rebuilt with no overfishing occurring.

ICCAT adopted an interim HCR for 2018-2020 in [Rec. 17-04](#), with established reference points ($B_{\text{thresh}}=B_{\text{msy}}$; $B_{\text{lim}}=0.4B_{\text{msy}}$; $F_{\text{tar}}=0.8F_{\text{msy}}$; and $F_{\text{min}}=0.1F_{\text{msy}}$, the last of which is to ensure scientific monitoring). The 3-year constant annual TAC resulting from application of the interim HCR is 33,600 t for 2018-2020. The SCRS was asked to develop criteria for the identification of exceptional circumstances, initiate a peer review of the MSE, and test several variants of the interim HCR. Rec. 17-04 called for the Commission to consider refinements of the interim HCR based on that peer review with a view to adopt a long term HCR. A Chair's proposal on exceptional circumstances was introduced intersessionally and a number of comments were made on it. The proposal and comments have been forwarded to SCRS for input and the issue is expected to be considered further during the 2020 ICCAT annual meeting. A new stock assessment will also inform negotiations related to northern albacore at the 2020 annual meeting.

Mediterranean Albacore Tuna: ICCAT adopted a first-ever measure for Mediterranean albacore in 2017 with the goal of maintaining catches below MSY, consistent with SCRS advice. It limits the number of vessels authorized to fish for Mediterranean albacore and establishes a closed fishing season ([Rec. 17-05](#)). A stock assessment is planned for 2020.

Panel 3 - South Atlantic Bluefin and Albacore Tunas

South Atlantic (Southern) Bluefin Tuna: No management measures have been established by ICCAT for southern bluefin tuna. This stock is distributed among the Indian, Pacific, and Atlantic Oceans. Stocks are assessed and managed by the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tunas (CCSBT). Given the overlap of distribution of this species, ICCAT collaborates with CCSBT, as appropriate.

South Atlantic (Southern) Albacore: A 2016 stock assessment found that the stock is likely not overfished, nor undergoing overfishing. The TAC was set at 24,000 t through 2020, when a stock assessment is planned ([Rec. 16-07](#)).

Panel 4 - Swordfish, Billfish, Sharks, and Other Species

North Atlantic Swordfish: Concern about the status of North Atlantic swordfish led ICCAT to begin management of this stock in the early 1990s, including catch limits and a minimum size. When the stock was found to be overfished with overfishing occurring, ICCAT adopted a rebuilding program designed to rebuild the stock within 10 years. A U.S. closed area in the Florida Straits, implemented to complement ICCAT measures, offered additional protection to juvenile swordfish. ICCAT adopted adjustments to its rebuilding program in the late 2000s, including greater access to the resource for some ICCAT members—largely due to U.S. flexibility given its quota underharvest. A stock assessment in 2009 concluded that the stock was fully rebuilt. In 2010, ICCAT adopted a new recommendation that provided several developing States with an allocation from the TAC (rather than fishery access based on available underharvest).

The 2017 stock assessment for North Atlantic swordfish indicated that the stock remains rebuilt but has lower productivity than previously estimated. [Rec. 17-02](#) reduced the TAC slightly while maintaining existing allocations and quota carryforward provisions through 2021. Some quota transfers were codified in [Rec. 19-03](#). ICCAT also adopted [Res. 19-14](#), which provides a basis for development of initial operational management objectives for North Atlantic swordfish, with the goal of adoption them in 2022. MSE development is underway; the next stock assessment for North Atlantic swordfish is planned for 2021.

South Atlantic Swordfish: ICCAT established management measures for South Atlantic swordfish for the first time in 1994. Initial measures limited countries to catch levels consistent with certain reference years. [Rec.17-03](#) slightly reduced the annual TAC for 2018-21, in line with scientific advice. A stock assessment is planned for 2021.

Mediterranean Swordfish: [Rec. 03-04](#) required CPCs to reduce the mortality of juvenile swordfish and prohibited the use of driftnets in fisheries for large pelagics in the Mediterranean. In 2007, a time/area closure was established. A stock assessment in 2016 found that the stock was overfished and subject to overfishing. [Rec. 16-05](#) established a new suite of measures, including catch limits, extension of the time/area closure, increasing the minimum size, limiting the use of hooks at a certain depth, designating a port log scheme, requiring observers, and monitoring recreational fisheries; allocations were agreed intersessionally. A stock assessment is planned for 2020.

Billfishes:

Blue Marlin and White Marlin: In 2000, ICCAT adopted a two-phase plan to rebuild Atlantic blue and white marlin stocks, but for many years was unable to move beyond Phase 1. The measure was revised several times, and in 2012, ICCAT established an Atlantic-wide landings limit for each stock with country-specific quotas, recreational minimum sizes, and a ban on the sale of recreationally caught marlin. The SCRS was also directed to review existing data and information collection programs for artisanal billfish fisheries, including those of other regional and sub-regional fisheries management organizations, and to develop a plan to improve data collection with particular emphasis in the Caribbean and West Africa. A 2018 stock assessment found that blue marlin remained overfished and subject to overfishing, while a 2019 assessment found that white marlin was no longer subject to overfishing but was still overfished.

In 2019, ICCAT adopted the first-ever rebuilding programs for blue marlin and white marlin stocks ([Rec. 19-05](#)). Roundscale spearfish are included as part of the white marlin species complex per SCRS advice. The measure, a compromise text co-sponsored by Brazil, EU, Panama, and the United States, reduced the annual limit for blue marlin from 2,000 t to 1,670 t, a level that will stop overfishing immediately, and has a greater than 50% probability of rebuilding the stock by 2028. The annual limit for white marlin/roundscale spearfish is set at 355 t, consistent with scientific advice. These limits take into account the mortality associated with reported dead discards. The annual U.S. landings limit of 250 individual blue and white marlin (combined) was maintained. The measure maintains a live release provision for purse seine and longline vessels as well as a minimum size and other measures for recreational fisheries. The SCRS is directed to study the effect of hook type and hook size, as well as fishing practices, that could help to reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality for marlins.

Sailfish: A stock assessment in 2016 found that the eastern stock of sailfish is overfished with overfishing possibly occurring, while the western stock is likely not overfished or subject to overfishing. In light of the scientific advice, [Rec. 16-11](#) requires CPCs to take or maintain appropriate measures to limit sailfish mortality; such measures could

include releasing live sailfish, encouraging or requiring the use of circle hooks or other effective gear modifications, implementing a minimum size, and/or limiting days at sea. If in any year the total catch of either stock of Atlantic sailfish exceeds the level corresponding to 67% of the average estimate of maximum sustainable yield (i.e. 1,271 t for the eastern stock and 1,030mt for the western stock), the Commission will review the measure.

Sharks:

Shark Finning: In 2004, ICCAT adopted a binding measure for sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT (Rec. 04-10). The decision was taken by consensus and was the first time ICCAT ever asserted management authority over sharks. To address the issue of shark finning, the measure requires full utilization of shark catches. Fishermen must retain all parts of the shark except the head, guts, and skins to the point of first landing. Countries are required to ensure that their vessels retain on board fins that total no more than 5% by weight of sharks onboard up to the first point of landing. [Rec. 04-10](#) also (1) established requirements for data collection on catches of sharks, (2) called for research on shark nursery areas, and (3) encouraged the release of live sharks, especially juveniles. Since 2009, a proposal has been introduced annually to 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. This proposal is designed to increase the enforceability of ICCAT's shark finning ban and strengthen data collection efforts by improving species identification. In 2019, the U.S. proposal had 32 co-sponsors, but consensus could not be reached.

Retention Prohibitions: ICCAT has adopted prohibitions for several shark species that are caught in association with ICCAT fisheries, including bigeye thresher ([Rec. 09-07](#)), oceanic whitetip ([Rec. 10-07](#)), hammerheads ([Rec. 10-08](#)), and silky shark ([Rec. 11-08](#)).

Blue Shark: A 2015 assessment for blue shark found that the stocks are not subject to overfishing and not overfished although there is substantial uncertainty surrounding the results. In 2019, ICCAT established a TAC of 39,100 t for North Atlantic blue shark with specific allocations for EU, Japan, and Morocco, and 870 t set aside for "other" CPCs, including the United States ([Rec. 19-07](#)). A TAC has also been established for South Atlantic blue sharks ([Rec. 19-08](#)).

Porbeagle Shark: [Rec. 15-06](#) requires CPCs to release any incidental catches of porbeagle sharks that are alive when brought alongside the vessel. Additional conservation measures will be considered if catches of porbeagle sharks increase beyond 2014 levels. A stock assessment is planned for 2020.

Shortfin Mako Shark: In 2017, a stock assessment indicated that North Atlantic shortfin mako shark was overfished and subject to overfishing. The SCRS advised that catches should be reduced to 500 t or less. With several competing proposals, ICCAT adopted a compromise measure ([Rec. 17-08](#)) that (1) prohibited retention of live North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks and requires vessels to release them in a manner that causes the least harm; (2) allowed retention of dead sharks if there is an observer or electronic monitoring system on board, if the shark is over a certain size, or in some other limited cases; and (3) created reporting and biological sampling requirements to improve the availability of scientific information.

In 2019, the SCRS carried out new projections for the North Atlantic shortfin mako stock through 2070 (two generation times) at the Commission's request. These showed, among other things, that a TAC of 700 t would end overfishing immediately with a 57% probability, a TAC of 500 t, including dead discards, has a 52% probability of rebuilding the stock by 2070; and to have at least a 60% probability of rebuilding the stock by 2070, the realized TAC has to be 300 t or less. Further, SCRS advised that to accelerate the rate of recovery and increase the probability of success, the Commission should prohibit retention of North Atlantic shortfin mako as it has done for other shark species. The United States presented a proposal at the 2019 ICCAT meeting designed to end overfishing immediately and rebuild the stock by 2070 with a greater than 50% probability by establishing a TAC, including dead discards, of 700 t in 2020 with a step-down to 500 t by 2022. It also proposed the use of circle hooks and nylon monofilament leaders be required to assist in reducing at-vessel and post-release mortality. Individual CPCs would be accountable for reducing their catches; retention would be prohibited until a CPC achieves its required reductions. In a separate proposal, Senegal along with nine co-sponsors sought to prohibit the retention and sale of North Atlantic shortfin mako. The EU presented a proposal to require release of all North Atlantic shortfin mako alive at haulback, with a TAC of 500 t, allocation table, and requirements for in-season monitoring. CPCs were unable to reach consensus, and ICCAT adopted a Chair's proposal to roll over Rec. 17-08 for one year ([Rec. 19-06](#)),

while discussions on a longer term approach continued. The planned intersessional meeting to continue these negotiations in July 2020, however, was cancelled due to COVID-19. Formal negotiations will restart on this issue at the 2020 annual meeting.

Bycatch and Discards

Sea Turtles: In [Rec. 10-09](#), ICCAT required the following: (1) purse seine vessels avoid encircling sea turtles to the extent practicable and release turtles that are encircled or entangled, including on FADs; (2) that pelagic longline vessels carry on board safe handling, disentangling and release equipment capable of releasing sea turtles in a manner that maximizes the probability of survival; and (3) that fishermen on pelagic longline vessels use the equipment and be trained in its proper use. [Rec. 13-11](#) provides additional specificity in safe handling practices required for incidentally caught sea turtles (e.g., concerning best practices for the use of line cutters and de-hooking devices). In 2017, SCRS advised that pelagic longline fisheries in the ICCAT Convention area interact with substantial numbers of sea turtles. The United States presented a proposal reflecting SCRS advice to strengthen bycatch mitigation, but it was not adopted. In 2019 the United States again presented a proposal on the bycatch of sea turtles, this time with co-sponsors Brazil, Curaçao, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Senegal, Belize, Mexico, Canada, Gabon and El Salvador. It was designed to streamline existing ICCAT sea turtle bycatch requirements in [Rec. 10-09](#) and [13-11](#). Consistent with SCRS advice and recent measures adopted by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), this proposal included a menu of options to further reduce bycatch and increase post-release survival of turtles, namely: (1) use of large circle hooks; (2) use of finfish bait; or (3) other measures considered effective by the SCRS. However, consensus could not be reached.

Seabirds: In 2007, ICCAT adopted a recommendation requiring line weighting or use of tori lines on vessels fishing south of 20°S, for purposes of seabird bycatch mitigation. [Rec. 11-09](#), applicable in waters south of 25°S, requires use of at least two mitigation measures (night setting, bird scaring lines, or line weighting). The SCRS has been tasked with evaluating the effectiveness of current mitigation measures although this effort has been slowed by a lack of data from CPCs. The Commission is expected to consider the harmonization of these two measures, taking into account any new SCRS advice in 2020.

Permanent Working Group (PWG)

The PWG focuses on reviewing the implementation of technical measures, particularly monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) measures, with a view to improving their effectiveness through revision or other means and, where needed, developing new recommendations. Together these measures provide a suite of tools to help deter illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Many of ICCAT's MCS measures are developed through its Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM), including flag state duties ([Rec. 03-12](#)) and data recording systems for fishing vessels authorized to fish for species managed by ICCAT ([Rec. 03-13](#)). Other MCS measures include:

Bluefin Tuna Trade/Catch Tracking: In 1992, ICCAT adopted the Bluefin Tuna Statistical Document program to monitor trade in fresh and frozen bluefin tuna. ICCAT moved to a catch documentation scheme for bluefin tuna in 2007, which allows tracking of bluefin tuna product from the point of capture through to its final market. This was a major change designed in large measure to improve the monitoring of harvests and data reporting for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery, especially to assist in identifying the source and destination of live-traded bluefin tuna destined for farms. After many years of development, all CPCs catching and/or trading Atlantic bluefin tuna began using an electronic Bluefin Catch Document System (e-BCD) in 2016, with e-BCD provisions updated most recently by [Rec. 18-12](#) and [Rec. 18-13](#). ICCAT's e-BCD Technical Working Group meets on a periodic basis to consider further improvements to the system.

Swordfish and Bigeye Tuna Trade Tracking. ICCAT adopted statistical document programs for swordfish (fresh and frozen) and bigeye tuna (frozen only) in 2001. Several CPCs have suggested the need for refinements to the statistical document programs to improve reporting, address duplication with other requirements, modernize paper-based systems and potentially to expand their scope--in particular, to convert them to catch documentation programs. IMM and PWG discussions on the potential expansion of catch documentation programs in ICCAT are expected to consider in more detail which stocks might benefit from the development and application of such a tool,

the structure and design of any new program, associated costs including training needs, how to avoid dual systems, how to accommodate the varied capacity of developing CPCs, and lessons learned from development of the eBCD.

Vessel Lists, Vessel Sighting and Transshipment Controls: ICCAT first adopted a recommendation to establish a record of authorized vessels in 2002 and it has been amended a number of times since then. [Rec. 13-13](#) requires that vessels 20 meters and above LOA be included on the authorized list and require eligible vessels to obtain an International Maritime Organization-Lloyd's Register (IMO/LR) number as a condition of listing and a prerequisite for fishing for ICCAT species. [Rec. 14-10](#) harmonized certain vessel list reporting deadlines in ICCAT's authorized vessel lists.

Like other RFMOs, ICCAT has had an IUU vessel listing measure for some time, most recently revised in [Rec. 18-08](#). The measure requires ICCAT members and cooperating non-members to take all necessary measures to not support fishing activities by vessels on the list, including prohibiting imports, landings or transshipments of ICCAT species. Rec. 18-08 includes streamlined listing procedures, additional relevant information on vessels included in the list, and cross-listing procedures for the IUU vessel lists of an expanded list of other RFMOs. ICCAT has adopted measures over the years to encourage or require the submission of information on member, non-member, and/or stateless vessels that were sighted on the fishing grounds operating in a manner contrary to ICCAT's conservation and management measures, most recently updated in [Rec 19-09](#).

[Rec. 12-06](#) prohibits at-sea transshipment except for large-scale pelagic longline vessels (24 meters or greater LOA) and only to carrier vessels on ICCAT's authorized list of carrier vessels, on which an observer has been deployed per ICCAT's transshipment regional observer program (ROP). [Rec. 16-15](#), extended the vessel listing requirement to carrier vessels receiving product in port as well as at sea and also required carrier vessels receiving transshipments in port to install and operate VMS. In 2019, the United States tabled a proposal to strengthen Rec. 16-15 on transshipment, but it was not discussed; it may be reintroduced in 2020.

Port Inspection and Control: [Rec. 98-11](#) requires ICCAT members to inspect non-member vessels sighted at sea fishing in a manner that may be contrary to ICCAT measures pursuant to [Rec. 97-11](#) (replaced by [Rec. 19-09](#)) if the non-member vessel voluntarily enters a Contracting Party port. Landings and transshipments by such vessels must be prohibited if such vessels have onboard species subject to ICCAT conservation measures unless the vessel establishes during the port inspection that the fish were harvested either in accordance with ICCAT rules or from outside of the Convention area. Minimum standards for inspection in port were first adopted in 1997. In 2012, ICCAT rules on port inspection were significantly expanded. In 2018, [Rec 18-09](#) was adopted to bring the 2012 recommendation fully in line with the FAO's Port State Measures Agreement. [Rec. 14-08](#) set up a Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Fund to support capacity building needs, and [Rec. 16-18](#) established an Expert Group for Capacity Building and Assistance, which is conducting on-site country assessments, developing an ICCAT-specific port inspection training program, and coordinating training.

Chartering Arrangements: A recommendation setting out rules and requirements pertaining to vessel chartering arrangements was first adopted in 2002. It aimed to ensure transparency in chartering arrangements and consistency with applicable ICCAT measures. In 2013, ICCAT revised its rules governing chartering arrangements by strengthening observer requirements ([Rec. 13-14](#)).

Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS): ICCAT has had minimum standards in place for VMS for many years. [Rec. 18-10](#) continues to require all commercial vessels greater than 24 m LOA that are operating in ICCAT fisheries to have VMS, and it extends the VMS requirement to any vessels above 15 m LOA authorized to fish in waters beyond the jurisdiction of its flag State. In addition, the measure increased the minimum polling rate to one hour for purse seine vessels (except those fishing for small tunas in the Mediterranean who have a two hour rate) and two hours for all other vessels.

High Seas Boarding and Inspection: In 2014 and 2015, the United States and the EU introduced a proposal to establish a comprehensive, modern high seas boarding and inspection scheme, to replace ICCAT Scheme of Joint International Inspection adopted in 1975. The 1975 scheme has only been operationalized in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery (starting in 2007) and, despite some updates, it is not fully consistent with the HSBI principles found in the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. Consensus on a new, binding HSBI measure has not yet

been possible. In 2018, ICCAT adopted a Pilot Programme for the Voluntary Exchange of Inspectors ([Res. 18-11](#)); the scope of the program was expanded in 2019 to include bluefin tuna farms and traps ([Res. 19-17](#)).

Access Agreements: In order to increase the transparency of access agreements, ICCAT requires the reporting of these arrangements (most recently updated through [Rec. 14-07](#)).

Lost and Abandoned Fishing Gear: In 2019, Norway introduced a proposal on lost and abandoned fishing gear, which includes new reporting requirements. It was adopted as [Rec. 19-11](#).

Observer Programs:

Scientific: In 2010, ICCAT adopted a U.S. proposal establishing minimum standards for national observer programs. These minimum standards were revised with the adoption of [Rec. 16-14](#). It maintained the minimum level of observer coverage of 5% using an effort measurement and expanded the fleets covered to include traps, gillnets, and trawls, in addition to longline, purse seine and bait boats. It continues to require reporting on the structure and design of scientific observer programs as well as the number of vessels monitored and coverage levels achieved. It also requires data collected through such programs to be reported to SCRS. For vessels less than 15m, where an extraordinary safety concern precludes deployment of observers, CPCs can employ an alternative scientific monitoring approach. Rec. 16-14 also incorporated text on the use of electronic monitoring; SCRS advice and Commission agreement are required before electronic monitoring systems could be used to replace human observers. The issue of electronic monitoring is expected to be discussed in 2020 with a view to developing standards and requirements by 2021.

Compliance: ICCAT has adopted regional observer programs (ROPs) for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery ([Rec. 19-04](#)) and for carrier vessels to monitor at-sea transshipments of ICCAT stocks and other species taken in association with fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species ([Rec. 16-15](#)). The primary purpose of these programs is to monitor implementation of applicable rules although they have scientific aspects as well. In the tropical tunas fishery, ICCAT has a hybrid scheme that provides for mutual recognition of observers on vessels fishing for tropical tunas in certain areas of the eastern Atlantic Ocean ([Rec. 19-02](#)). In 2019, ICCAT agreed to consider the possible development of a regional observer program for tropical tuna fisheries.

Observer Health and Safety: In 2019, ICCAT adopted [Rec. 19-10](#) on protecting the health and safety of observers in ICCAT's regional observer programs (initially a U.S. proposal), and a complementary resolution introduced by Norway on harmonization with global initiatives to address observer safety and stakeholder engagement ([Res. 19-16](#)).

Compliance Committee

The Compliance Committee (COC) evaluates compliance and cooperation with ICCAT measures by members and non-members through an annual review of compliance with ICCAT statistical data requirements and management measures. This process includes a review of any alleged infractions submitted by third party sources. There is an opportunity for each Contracting Party to ask questions, provide information and clarify the record, and submit missing information or reports. The Secretariat compiles a compliance summary table to facilitate a substantive discussion of compliance failures and corrective actions. The Compliance Committee implements a number of ICCAT recommendations, including requirements for quota overharvests to be repaid in full within a specified timeframe and for additional quota or other penalties to be assessed for repeated quota overharvests. Since 2011, an *ad hoc* review group has assisted the Compliance Committee Chair in assessing relevant information and recommending actions to address implementation and compliance concerns related to both members and non-members. Several proposals have been adopted to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of COC operations and help ensure recommended decisions are more transparent, fair, and consistent (see [Res. 16-22](#) and [Res. 16-17](#)).

Trade Measures Instrument: Under [Rec. 06-13](#), if an ICCAT member or non-member is found to be diminishing the effectiveness of ICCAT, that party is "identified" and ICCAT sends a letter notifying them of the identification, explaining the reasons behind the decision, and asking them to rectify the situation. An identified party has the opportunity to respond to ICCAT at least 30 days prior the next annual meeting to explain its non-compliance and any actions taken in response. Failure to rectify the identified activity may result in penalties including, for example, quota reduction or, as a last resort, non-discriminatory trade restrictive measures. To date, ICCAT has recommended

trade action for several non-members and one ICCAT member. Based on the 2019 review, ICCAT maintained the identification of Dominica and identified seven CPCs: El Salvador, Grenada, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Republic, Namibia, Costa Rica, and Guyana. Letters describing other, less serious compliance issues that still need to be rectified will be sent to 37 CPCs in 2020.

No data-no fish: [Rec. 11-15](#) requires parties to submit information on how they are meeting data reporting obligations and states that in cases where Task I (catch and effort) data are not reported or are not reported completely, members and cooperating non-members will be prohibited from retaining the species in question until the data are sent to ICCAT. [Res. 15-09](#) established guidelines for the application of [Rec. 11-15](#), including how CPCs will report zero catches.

Cooperating Parties: ICCAT continues to encourage non-members interested in harvesting ICCAT species to become Cooperating Parties, Entities, or Fishing Entities ([Rec. 03-20](#)). Currently, ICCAT has six cooperating non-members: Bolivia, Chinese Taipei, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guyana, and Suriname.

Check Sheets: [Rec. 18-06](#) outlines a process and requirement for CPCs to report on their implementation of all shark measures through the submission of a check sheet. [Rec. 18-05](#) established a similar requirement for billfish.

Online Reporting Technology Working Group: Many CPCs have highlighted difficulties in complying with reporting requirements and requested mechanisms to streamline the reporting process. [Rec. 16-19](#) established the Online Reporting Technology Working Group to coordinate development of an online reporting system. This system will facilitate the timely and accurate submission of required information as well as simplify the process of compiling, reviewing, and assessing that information for the purpose of evaluating compliance with ICCAT obligations. ICCAT adopted [Rec. 19-12](#) to continue the development of the system in collaboration with the SCRS.

Special COC Sessions: In 2019, the COC adopted a Strategic Plan for Review of Compliance Priorities, which outlines suggestions to streamline the issues the COC addresses at each annual meeting. The COC Chair will work with CPCs and the Secretariat intersessionally to identify priority areas for review in 2020. A special two-day session is planned just prior to the annual meeting in November 2020 to conduct a CPC-by-CPC review.

Enhancing Support for Scientific Work and Processes

Several measures are designed to strengthen ICCAT's scientific work and processes, including the link between scientific advice and management. These include:

- *Decision Making Principles:* This recommendation provides guidance on conservation and management actions to be taken based on the status of the stock as reflected in the Kobe plot [[Rec. 11-13](#)].
- *Best Available Science:* ICCAT adopted a resolution aimed at enhancing ICCAT's scientific process, including greater incorporation of peer review [[Rec. 11-17](#)].
- *Standing Working Group of Fisheries Scientists and Managers (SWGSM):* This Working Group was established to enhance communication and foster mutual understanding between fisheries managers and scientists in particular on management strategies, including data collection, research needs and priorities, and establishment of limit and target reference points, as well as to promote the efficient use of scientific resources and information [[Rec. 14-13](#)].

In addition, a [Science Strategic Plan for 2015-2020](#) was adopted in 2014; an updated plan is under development.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:
Kimberly Blankenkemper
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8357
Fax: (301) 713-1081
Email: Kimberly.Blankenbeker@noaa.gov

Department of State:
Deirdre Warner-Kramer
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2883
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: Warner-KramerDM@State.gov

Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean (Basic Instrument for the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization – NASCO)

Basic Instrument

[Convention](#) for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean (TIAS 10789), 1982

Implementing Legislation

Atlantic Salmon Convention [Act](#) of 1982 (16 U.S.C. 3601)

Members

Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union (EU), Norway, the United States, and the Russian Federation

Commission Headquarters

North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
11 Rutland Square
Edinburgh, EH1 2AS Scotland
United Kingdom

Secretary: Dr. Emma Hatfield
Tel: 44 131 228 2551
Fax: 44 131 228 4384
Email: hq@nasco.int
Web address: <http://www.nasco.int/>

Budget

The Convention provides that 30 percent of the Organization's budget will be borne equally by the Parties; 70 percent will be based on their recent nominal catches of Atlantic salmon. NASCO's 2021 budget totals 665,730--of which the U.S. contribution is £30,637. The 2021 budget is an increase over the 2020 budget of £29,100 (approximately 1.046%, which is almost no change in real terms) primarily due to the establishment of a new special fund (the Periodic Projects Special Fund) intended to reduce large fluctuations in the annual operating budget due to occasional costly activities, such as performance reviews, updates to the State of Salmon report produced as part of the Year of the Salmon (IYS) activities, and follow up symposia related to the IYS, higher staff-related costs, and higher meeting costs. The 2020 NASCO annual meeting was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, the new Special Fund will be seeded with £15,000 from the 2021 budget, any budget surplus remaining at the end of 2020, and surplus funds in the amount of £60,800 from the IYS Fund. Overall, the budget keeps the organization in strong financial position.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

The Atlantic Salmon Convention Act of 1982 provides that the United States shall be represented on the Council and Commissions by three U.S. Commissioners, appointed by and to serve at the pleasure of the President. Of the Commissioners, one must be an official of the U.S. Government and two must be individuals (not officials of the U.S. Government) who are knowledgeable or experienced in the conservation and management of salmon of U.S. origin. Under certain circumstances, the Department of State is authorized to designate alternate Commissioners pending appointment of a regular Commissioner by the President.

U.S. Commissioners:

Federal Government Commissioner:

Kimberly Damon-Randall
Acting Deputy Regional Administrator
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
Gloucester, MA 01930

Non-Federal Commissioners:

Patrick Keliher
Commissioner
Department of Marine Resources
Maine

Stephen Gephard
Department of Environmental Protection
Inland Fisheries Division
Connecticut

A. Advisory Structure:

The U.S. Section to NASCO was formally constituted to provide the U.S. Commissioners with advice on the international conservation and management of Atlantic salmon, with particular reference to development of U.S. policies, positions, and negotiating tactics. Membership of the U.S. Section includes public and *ex officio* members. Public members are appointed by the Commissioners and serve for a term of 2 years with eligibility for an additional 2-year term. Public members are limited to 15 in number and must be persons knowledgeable or experienced in the conservation and management of salmon of U.S. origin.

Ex officio members include:

- (1) the Chair (or designee) of the New England Fishery Management Council;
- (2) a representative of the fishery agency of each of the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut;
- (3) the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and Space or her representative;
- (4) a representative of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce; and
- (5) a representative of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

In addition, the U.S. Commissioners established the U.S. Atlantic Salmon Assessment Committee, which is composed of staff from State and Federal fisheries agencies. The work of this body focuses on assessing New England stocks of Atlantic salmon, proposing and evaluating research needs, and serving the U.S. Section to NASCO. This body meets each year to produce an assessment document for the use of the U.S. Commissioners.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The Convention applies to the salmon stocks that migrate beyond areas of fisheries jurisdiction of coastal States of the Atlantic Ocean north of 36 degrees N latitude throughout their migratory range. The purpose of NASCO is to promote (1) the acquisition, analysis, and dissemination of scientific information pertaining to salmon stocks in the

North Atlantic Ocean and (2) the conservation, restoration, enhancement, and rational management of salmon stocks in the North Atlantic Ocean through international cooperation.

B. Organizational Structure:

NASCO consists of: (1) the Council; (2) three regional Commissions (North American Commission or NAC, West Greenland Commission or WGC, and North-East Atlantic Commission or NEAC); and (3) the Secretariat. The Council, which consists of representatives of all Contracting Parties: (1) provides a forum for the study, analysis, and exchange of information on salmon stocks subject to the Convention; (2) provides for consultation and cooperation concerning salmon stocks beyond Commission areas; (3) coordinates the activities of the Commissions; (4) establishes working arrangements with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and other fisheries and scientific organizations; (5) makes recommendations concerning scientific research; (6) supervises and coordinates the administrative, financial, and other internal affairs of the Organization; and (7) coordinates the Organization's external relations.

The three Commissions each have the following functions: (1) to provide for consultation and cooperation among their members; (2) to propose regulatory measures for intercepting salmon fisheries; and (3) to make recommendations to the Council concerning scientific research.

Canada and the United States are members of the NAC. Canada, the EU, the United States, and Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), are members of the WGC. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the EU, Norway, and the Russian Federation are members of the NEAC. In the case of the NAC, the EU may submit and vote on proposals for regulatory measures concerning salmon stocks originating in the territories of its Member States. Canada and the United States each have similar rights in the case of the NEAC. In 2020, the UK contacted NASCO to express interest in acceding to the Convention as soon as possible in light of Brexit. As a prerequisite, the EU Council must provide its agreement that the UK can join NASCO before the end of the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement (which ends 31 December 2020) and the Council must provide its approval. This is expected to happen without difficulty so that the UK will be able to deposit its instrument of accession and become a member of NASCO before the end of 2020.

C. Programs:

Scientific Advice: ICES provides scientific advice to NASCO. To facilitate the process of requesting scientific information, the NASCO Council established a Standing Scientific Committee (SSC) in 1992, composed of a scientist and a management representative from each of NASCO's three geographic commissions, to formulate requests for future scientific advice from ICES. The SSC is designed to ensure that questions to the scientific working groups are formed to reflect accurately the information desired by managers. Initial consideration of NASCO scientific questions and compilation of catch statistics and other information are undertaken by the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon. The results of this work are reviewed and considered by the ICES Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon (ACOM) and formal scientific advice is issued in the ACOM report to NASCO in advance of each annual meeting.

Non-Contracting Party Fishing: At the 1992 meeting held in Washington, D.C., the Council approved a protocol to the NASCO Convention for signature by non-Contracting Parties (NCP) to NASCO due to concerns about fishing for Atlantic salmon by certain NCPs. The protocol was designed to provide NCPs with a legal instrument for the creation and enforcement of domestic legislation and regulations. It calls upon non-members to prohibit the fishing of Atlantic salmon stocks beyond the areas of fishing jurisdiction of coastal States and to take appropriate actions to enforce the provisions of the protocol. The NASCO Council also approved a resolution calling upon NASCO Parties to encourage NCPs fishing for salmon on the high seas to comply with the protocol and to obtain and compile information on such fishing. The NASCO Secretariat was given the task of devising a mechanism by which Parties to the NASCO Convention may approach any State whose flag vessels have been observed fishing on the high seas for Atlantic salmon contrary to the protocol.

To date, no NCPs have become bound by the protocol although certain NCPs (i.e., Panama and Poland) took action to address the problem of their flag vessels that were harvesting Atlantic salmon. There have been no sightings of NCPs fishing for salmon since February 1994; however, there have been few surveillance flights conducted over the

winter and spring periods preceding NASCO annual meetings. Past estimates of catch taken by NCP vessels fishing in international waters has been 25-100 metric tons (mt).

Unreported Catch: The Council has expressed continuing concern over the years about the level of unreported catch and has taken steps to try to reduce it. In 2007, NASCO convened a Special Session at its Annual Meeting to provide an opportunity for exchange by the Parties on: methods used to estimate unreported catches; trends in estimates of unreported catches; the source of unreported catches; and the measures being taken to minimize them. In general, sources of unreported catch include illegal target fishing; bycatch in directed fisheries for other species in riverine, estuarine, and marine environments where it is illegal to retain salmon; and under-reporting in legal recreational and aboriginal fisheries. All parties agreed that it is difficult to quantify unreported catches given that they result primarily from illegal fishing, and many Parties indicated that where legal salmon fisheries are allowed, surveys by, and local knowledge of, enforcement authorities have been used to quantify unreported catches. Also, local management groups and associations have often been approached to gather information. Additional methods for estimating unreported catch include analyses and comparison of catch statistics over multiple years and analyses of catch per unit of effort from different netting sites or stations. In some cases, catch statistics from local anglers have been compared to catch statistics from foreign anglers which appear to be more accurate.

While it is agreed that the precise size of unreported catch in the jurisdictions of respective Parties is difficult to ascertain, as of the review in 2007, trends in the level of unreported catch and related violations across jurisdictions suggest a decline in the amount of unreported catch. In some jurisdictions declines appeared to correspond to increases in successful prosecutions and the severity of penalties imposed. Also, there are instances where sources of unreported catch in some aboriginal fisheries are now included in reported catch due to negotiated agreements. In some jurisdictions, regulatory measures such as area closures, onboard or at site observers, tagging and documentation of catch, sale, transfer or disposal by fishery proprietors or operators, and logbooks for recreational angling have been implemented. Public outreach, education, and notices have also appeared to help reduce unreported catch.

The Council agreed to revisit the matter of unreported catch in the future, has encouraged the Parties to maintain and continue efforts to reduce and eliminate unreported catch, and has recommended that Parties include actions related to unreported catch in their Implementation Plans and Annual Progress Reports (APRs) as part of the “Next Steps” process. In that regard, the Council has requested that statistics on reported and unreported catch estimates be provided at the lowest possible level (in river, estuarine, coastal habitats) to assist in assessing progress in fisheries management. In addition, the SSC has included a question to ICES seeking clarification of the levels of unreported catch in the West Greenland fishery since 2002.

Research Fishing: At its 1995 Annual Meeting, NASCO first considered conditions under which research fishing by Contracting Parties might be undertaken. While all agreed that harvesting salmon for scientific research purposes could provide valuable management information, some were concerned that such research fishing could be contrary to Article 2 of the NASCO Convention. At the 1996 Annual Meeting, the Parties adopted a resolution setting forth a procedure to allow research fishing. The measure does not distinguish where such fishing occurs (i.e., within areas of national jurisdiction or on the high seas) and allows research fishing provided certain safeguards are observed. Since the adoption of the resolution, NASCO has approved research-fishing proposals from several of its members.

International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (IASRB): Due to concerns about marine survival of Atlantic salmon, the Council agreed at its 2000 meeting to set up a working group to develop ideas for an international cooperative research program to identify and explain the causes of increased marine mortality of Atlantic salmon and to consider ways to counteract this problem. The resultant IASRB was established in 2001 and has been meeting regularly to identify and coordinate needed research and consider funding sources. The IASRB receives advice from its Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) and maintains an inventory of research relating to salmon at sea. The inventory has been made available to ICES and others to assist in the identification of data deficiencies, monitoring needs and research requirements.

In 2005, the IASRB adopted the SALSEA (Salmon at Sea) Program to advance the coordination of needed Atlantic salmon research. It comprised three main areas of work: developing technologies, early migration and distribution, and migration at sea (the marine survey component). The 2008 IASRB research inventory included three significant new projects: SALSEA-Merge, SALSEA-North America, and SALSEA-West Greenland. SALSEA-Merge was

launched in April 2008. This three-year public-private partnership included multi-year marine surveys conducted by Irish, Faroese, and Norwegian vessels. Under SALSEA-North America, a Canadian research vessel conducted sampling in the Labrador Sea. U.S. scientists participated in the Canadian survey and facilitated processing of samples obtained during the cruise. Related to SALSEA-West Greenland, enhanced sampling programs in the West Greenland fishery from 2009 through 2011 were undertaken. Additional information on SALSEA, including findings from the research, can be found at www.nasco.int/sas/.

The IASRB continues to meet annually. In 2015, the Board recognized the valuable data that the SALSEA Program has generated over the years and encouraged all Parties to continue to contribute to the metadatabase, which is available on the IASRB website. In addition, the Board adopted a resolution on research at sea and terms of reference for a telemetry workshop—resulting in development of a large-scale international collaborative project called SALSEA-Track. This project has the ultimate objective of providing information on migration paths and quantitative estimates of mortality during phases of the marine life cycle of salmon. SALSEA-Track is a novel, exciting and high profile project dependent upon extensive international collaboration and partnerships -- with collaborators focused on a variety of other marine species that utilize the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. Additional information on SALSEA and the IASRB more generally can be found at www.nasco.int/sas/.

Precautionary Approach: In 1997, the Council agreed to establish a working group to consider how the precautionary approach might be applied to NASCO's work. Its first meeting was held in January 1998 and representatives of ICES and FAO were invited to attend. At its 1998 annual meeting, NASCO adopted an agreement on adoption of the precautionary approach, which was largely developed at the 1998 intersessional. The key provisions of the agreement were: (a) NASCO and its Contracting Parties agree to adopt and apply a precautionary approach; (b) NASCO and its Contracting Parties should apply the precautionary approach to the entire range of NASCO salmon conservation and management activities; and (c) the application of the precautionary approach should focus on (1) management of North Atlantic salmon fisheries, (2) the formulation of management advice and associated scientific research, and (3) introductions and transfers including aquaculture impacts and possible use of transgenic salmon. To further this work, NASCO adopted the Action Plan for the Application of the Precautionary Approach to Salmon Management at its 1999 meeting. The action plan provides a framework to further implement the precautionary approach in NASCO and established a standing committee to oversee this work. The action plan addresses such issues as: management of fisheries; socioeconomic issues; unreported catches; scientific advice and research requirements; stock rebuilding programs; introductions, transfers, aquaculture and transgenics; habitat issues; and bycatch. The agreement by NASCO to apply the precautionary approach to its work represents a significant milestone in cooperation by the Parties. The NASCO Parties recognized that ultimate development of the precautionary approach will take many years and will seriously challenge the resources of the organization and its members. Progress has been made on a number of fronts, however, including the development of a decision structure for use by the Council and Commissions as well as by relevant authorities of NASCO members in the management of single and mixed stock salmon fisheries; a plan of action for the application of the precautionary approach to the protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon habitat; revision and broadening of the Oslo Resolution, including incorporating into it all other NASCO measures addressing introductions, transfers, aquaculture and transgenics (i.e., the guidelines on transgenic salmon, the NAC protocols, and the NEAC resolution, and the guidelines on containment). In addition, guidelines on stocking were developed and appended. The new and improved resolution was dubbed the Williamsburg Resolution. In addition, progress has been made in the area of socio-economics through the adoption of guidelines for incorporating social and economic factors in decisions under the precautionary approach.

Liaison Group and Aquaculture issues: NASCO has recognized the need to involve the salmon farming industry in efforts to protect the wild stocks through improved salmon farming management. Toward that end, NASCO established a Wild and Farmed Salmon Liaison Group with the International Salmon Farmer's Association (ISFA) to effect closer cooperation with the salmon farming industry. The group met several times over the years, sharing information on a variety of topics, including area management initiatives, escape issues, controlling disease, etc. Until its 2007 meeting, NGOs were not invited to participate. In considering the results of the 2007 Liaison group meeting and a discussion document presented by industry, the Council decided that a Joint Technical Task Force should be established to consider matters further. Membership would be from the Secretariat and two or three nominated expert participants from NASCO and ISFA. The Terms of Reference for this Group were as follows: taking account of the findings in the 2005 ICES/NASCO Bergen Symposium, the Joint ISFA/NASCO Trondheim Workshop and any other relevant scientific information regarding impacts from aquaculture on wild stocks; and

identify and agree on a series of best practice recommendations to address the continuing impacts of salmon farming on wild stocks (e.g. escapes, interbreeding, sea lice infestations, disease transfers to and from the wild). The Task Force was intended to at least temporarily replace the NASCO/ISFA Liaison Group. In communicating this decision to ISFA, that organization responded that it was eager to continue the relationship with NASCO and preferred to maintain the Liaison Group. The Council determined that it was not ready to reconvene the Liaison Group and proposed proceeding with the Task Force.

The Task Force met in Boston in March 2009 and reviewed national and international initiatives on best practice guidance and measures. It was the view of the Task Force that the Williamsburg Resolution remains valid, but it needs to be strengthened in its interpretation and application, particularly in terms of defined goals and assessment of outcomes. The Task Force developed 'Guidance on Best Management Practices to address impacts of sea lice and escaped farmed salmon on wild salmon stocks.' The Guidance includes an international goal for both sea lice and escaped salmon, best management practices to help achieve those goals, reporting to track progress towards that goal, and identification of factors facilitating implementation. The Task Force recommended that NASCO include reference to the Best Management Practice matrix in the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the upcoming review group and ask that Parties report on progress toward achievement of the international goal. The Liaison Group met immediately after the Task Force meeting and ISFA accepted the interim report of the Task Force. At its 2009 annual meeting, the Council supported the continued work of the Task Force and also its recommendation that the TORs for the upcoming FAR incorporate the Guidelines on Best Management Practice developed by the Task Force.

There has been an ongoing discussion within NASCO concerning the appropriate extent of NASCO's role with respect to aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics issues. During the intersessional meeting of the Parties, held in London in February 2013, the role of NASCO with regard to aquaculture and the future of the Liaison Group were discussed. The Parties concluded that aquaculture would remain a focus area for NASCO in terms of concerns over impacts on wild Atlantic salmon and progress toward the containment and sea lice goals would be tracked as implementation plans and annual reports are submitted. The Parties recognized that, in general, NASCO has established international goals and some guidance on measures that may reduce or avoid adverse impacts to wild stocks from aquaculture activities, but it is the responsibility of the Parties to identify and implement appropriate measures to meet the performance standards. This determination was not inconsistent with the recommendations of the external performance review panel although it did not go as far as that recommendation (i.e., the Parties did not agree to seek revision of its Convention to allow binding decisions to be taken in the area of aquaculture and related activities). With regard to the Liaison Group, the Parties concluded that, while there was not a need for a permanent body, there remained the option to convene a joint *Ad Hoc* group if the need arose. The Parties also agreed that an item should be retained on the Council agenda to allow for an exchange of information between ISFA and NASCO on issues concerning impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon.

Next Steps for NASCO: On the occasion of its 20th anniversary, NASCO decided to undertake a review of the Organization (in essence, a performance review) in order to ensure that it was properly positioned to be able to address the current and future issues facing Atlantic salmon in the North Atlantic. Through an intensive working group process that included public scoping meetings, NASCO comprehensively reviewed its Convention, rules of procedure, decision making, structure, and operations. The Working Group developed a Strategic Approach that articulated the vision for NASCO, framed future activities of NASCO, and laid out a clear approach for moving forward in addressing challenges and implementing the recommendations. The Council endorsed the work of the Working Group, calling for speedy implementation of some recommendations and setting up processes to consider implementation aspects for the more complicated issues, including those surrounding improving implementation of and reporting on Contracting Party commitments. A Public Relations Working Group was created to develop a strategy to raise the profile of the Organization and generally to improve public relations and outreach. A Task Force met intersessionally to develop improved reporting procedures to enhance compliance and accountability with NASCO agreements. Developing improvements to the transparency and inclusiveness of the organization, including by considering modification of the rules governing observers at NASCO meetings, was also a key recommendation. Advancements in all the areas identified for improvement have been made. Relevant information on the task force recommendations follows:

Transparency: Regarding transparency, revisions to NASCO's rules of procedures concerning NGOs were developed which increased their level of involvement, including allowing them to take the floor more frequently

during NASCO meetings and participate in working groups. This move helped resolve a longstanding difference between NASCO and at least two North American NGOs whose observer status in the organization had been suspended. In addition, more debate on issues occurs in plenary rather than in Heads of Delegation meetings so that the rationale for decisions is more clearly understood.

Accountability/Implementation Plans: During its 2005 annual meeting, NASCO agreed that one way to improve implementation, commitment, and accountability was to have each Party produce an Implementation Plan (IP) and report annually on progress in achieving the objectives contained therein. The Next Steps Task Force met intersessionally before the 2006 Annual meeting and developed guidelines to assist the Parties in preparing the IPs and to provide a proposed process and schedule for review and finalization of IPs, as well as for annual progress reports under the IPs. The Council refined this work at the 2006 annual meeting. At the 2007 NASCO meeting, the Council held an open “Special Session” on the Report of the *Ad Hoc* Review Group appointed in 2006 to evaluate the IPs. At this stage, the review focused on the structure of the plans and how well they conformed with the guidelines for development of the plans not the adequacy of their substantive content. The plans were resubmitted for final review on November 1, 2007.

The second phase of review of the Next Steps Process was to develop reports for review and assessment in key Atlantic salmon management areas. The first focus area report was on the fisheries management aspect of the IP. After a formal review process, the final report of the Fisheries Management Focus Area Review Group was presented at NASCO during the special session. The Group recommended that the Council formally adopt the draft guidance on best practice as a way of providing clarification for the guidelines, agreements and definitions relating to fishery management or revisit these agreements and guidelines. There was significant discussion during the special session in terms of characterization of the best practice document and the document was revised and characterized as guidelines (NASCO Guidelines for the management of salmon fisheries).

The second focus area report on habitat protection and restoration was presented in 2009 by The Habitat Focus Area Review Group. Similar to the previous review of implementation plans, Parties did not necessarily score high marks if they had pristine salmon habitat, but rather on the extent to which their Habitat reports were consistent with the NASCO Habitat Plan of Action. The final work of the review group was presented at the 2010 NASCO meeting. Guidelines for the Protection, Restoration, and Enhancement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat were adopted and are intended to assist Parties in the effective implementation of NASCO agreements and to aid future reviews of reports on this topic.

The third focus area report was on aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics. During the period between the 2009 and 2010 NASCO meeting, completed aquaculture FARs were evaluated by a review group and that report was considered by the Liaison Group. It was then presented and discussed at a special session held during the 2010 annual meeting. During the 2010-11 intersessional period, the review group report was finalized and its findings were reported to NASCO at its 2011 meeting, having been previously considered by the Task Force and the Liaison Group. Although significant information was provided, no jurisdiction had meet the goals of the BMP guidance of: (1) 100% of farms having effective sea lice management such that there is no increase in sea lice loads or lice-induced mortality for wild salmonids attributable to the farms; and (2) 100% of farmed fish are retained in all production facilities.

After the first full cycle of Implementation Plan and Focus Area reporting was completed, the Council agreed to take a comprehensive look at the processes in place to improve implementation and accountability. The results of this review, including a discussion of NASCO’s external performance review and adjustments to reporting on implementation of NASCO agreements, is discussed later in this document.

Public Relations Group: As part of the Next Steps process, the Council agreed in 2006 to establish a Public Relations Group to advise on implementation of public relations/outreach issues. Terms of reference were adopted. The Public Relations Group met in London in December 2006. The Group developed recommendations for a strategy to enhance NASCO’s profile and increase publicity for its work, including development of an annual ‘State of the Salmon’ report, undertake a major enhancement of the Organization’s website, and potentially employ an Information Officer with good public relation skills. In order to carry out some of the tasks identified by the PR group, the Council decided to allocate 25,000 Pounds Sterling (approximately USD\$50,000) to upgrade and improve the website of NASCO and the IASRB, and produce possible formats for a “State of the Salmon” report. The State

of the Salmon report was identified as an aspect of the communications strategy that is a critical element of enhancing public understanding. Such a report would be posted on the website and updated as necessary to provide accessible information to the public on the current health of salmon stocks in the North Atlantic. The Group recommended that in addition to the State of the Salmon report, other fact sheets should be accessible via the website to encourage greater transparency and information accessibility.

Moreover, there was general agreement that the organization should be developing a communications rather than a public relations strategy. In 2009, the Council received a report from a Public Relations Group, which met during the Annual Meeting. The Public Relations Group stressed the importance that Parties consider their commitment to improving public relations and communication given the significant effort that would be required to truly invest in the process. Related to this point, the Public Relations Group requested that if the Parties were committed to this process, a communications representative from each of the Parties would be necessary and the use of new communications media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr were suggested.

During the 2009 Council meeting, most of the recommendations of the Public Relations Work Group were agreed upon although no final decision was taken concerning the use of new communications media and an information officer has not been hired. To date, NASCO's website has been revamped and information from NASCO's rivers database has been reflected, including maps. In addition, NASCO has updated and developed new pages containing relevant socio-economic information associated with wild Atlantic salmon.

Socio-Economic Working Group: For a number of years, NASCO has been considering the issue of how to effectively incorporate social and economic factors into salmon management—including what role NASCO should play in this regard—most recently as part of the Next Steps process. Part of the difficulty in advancing the issue has been in developing a shared understanding of the concept. Early efforts included the potential development of a bio-economic model, which has since been put on hold, and also to gather basic types of socio-economic data and information from NASCO Parties, such as the number of salmon fishing licenses issued by jurisdiction, for inclusion on the NASCO website. A sub-group on socio-economics was formed to help progress the issue, including continuing development of the “State of the Salmon” report. In addition, NASCO adopted guidelines a few years ago to assist Parties in incorporating social and economic factors into salmon management. Implementation of these guidelines and reporting on how Parties consider and include social and economic factors into salmon management has been limited—no doubt in part because of a lack of a common understanding of the issue.

To facilitate greater understanding, the Sub-Group on socio-economics proposed that a Special Session be held to provide for a more detailed exchange of information on how jurisdictions are incorporating socio-economic factors into decisions relating to fisheries management, habitat protection, aquaculture, and related activities. The idea was to have a limited number of case studies presented that illustrate different concepts of how socio-economics are used in salmon management with a view to facilitate discussion. A valuable outcome would be a more common understanding of how socio-economics should be used in salmon management, including a better understanding of the purpose of the NASCO guidelines and a discussion of their usefulness. Initially, NASCO agreed to convene a Special Session on the topic in 2014 but it had to be deferred. In the end, NASCO determined that a more efficient and effective way to get at the issue would be for all Parties to include information on how they take account of social and economic factors when presenting information on key topics, including fisheries management, habitat, and aquaculture and related activities, during Special Sessions.

Review of the “Next Steps” process: NASCO reviewed the status of implementation of the “Next Steps” process in 2011. While recognizing that progress had been made in advancing some challenge areas, in particular relative to process matters, more work was needed. NASCO agreed to update the Strategic Plan and streamline the next Implementation Plans so that details on activities and actions to be taken by each jurisdiction over a five-year period can be included. NASCO also stressed that plans should emphasize monitoring and evaluation of activities and clearly describe identifiable, measureable outcomes, and timescales. NASCO further agreed that future reporting be structured around specific themes and that progress on Implementation Plans be addressed through the Annual Reports. In 2012, NASCO agreed an improved reporting process that focused on outcomes. At the February 2013 intersessional meeting of the Parties, the Next Steps process was further considered and its original goals and objectives continued to be endorsed. The recommendations from the review of the Next Steps process were further discussed in the context of the results of the external performance review (see below) and included as part of an overall action plan for strengthening the organization.

Performance Review of the Work of NASCO: The EU made a proposal to the Council a few years ago that NASCO conduct an independent performance review similar to those being conducted by other Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). Given that the proposal was made before the Next Steps process had completed a full implementation cycle, the Council agreed that the external performance review would be initiated in 2011 as that year would mark the end of the first full Next Steps cycle. It was also acknowledged that the internal process to critically review the Next Steps process would be underway and the results of that work should inform the expert panel. As agreed, three independent experts were empaneled in 2011. In addition to considering the results of the Next Steps process, the Panel took into account the provisions of the Convention, and advancements in international fisheries management, including recent international instruments, in conducting its review of the organization. The performance review report was completed in the spring 2012. At its June 2012 annual meeting, NASCO agreed to convene an intersessional meeting of the Parties to consider the panel's recommendations in detail. The meeting also considered the results of the Next Steps review discussed above and any additional input from members and stakeholders. The overall purpose of the meeting was to discuss a future vision for the organization and consider ways to strengthen it.

At the intersessional meeting, the Parties reaffirmed that priority areas of focus to support the recovery of wild Atlantic salmon continue to be fisheries management, habitat, and aquaculture and related activities. Recommendations by the external performance review panel and some NGOs that NASCO consider amending its Convention, in particular to expand and enhance the organization's ability to take binding decisions, were discussed. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) expressed support for broadening the scope of NASCO's binding authority with its primary interest relating to the management of home water fisheries. The majority of parties, however, felt that there were more effective ways to address these matters. Concern was also expressed about the difficult and time-consuming nature of amending the Convention. As a result, a draft action plan was developed for consideration at the 2013 NASCO annual meeting that (1) identified progress made to date in priority and other areas of NASCO's work that need to be monitored and evaluated, (2) recommended new actions to be undertaken to improve the ability of the organization to meet its objectives, and (3) highlighted that fisheries management was a particular priority that required additional commitment by the parties, including exploring new ways to ensure fairness and balance between conservation actions taken by distant water fisheries and those taken in home water fisheries. At its 2013 meeting, NASCO adopted the Action Plan for Taking Forward the Recommendations of the External Performance Review and the Review of the 'Next Steps' for NASCO. The document represents NASCO's response to the recommendations of the External Performance Review and the Next Steps review process and, as its elements are implemented, will further strengthen the work of the organization. In relation to habitat, aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics, the Council agreed that the ongoing actions in the Implementation Plans and the Annual Progress Reports were the appropriate path forward. In contrast, the Council agreed that further action was needed to strengthen actions on fisheries management. NASCO reviews progress on implementation of the various recommendations in the action plan at each annual meeting.

In 2017, NASCO again reviewed how well parties are meeting their NASCO commitments. Parties submitted their annual progress reports against their previously provided Implementation Plans. These reports were reviewed intersessionally to highlight areas needing further elaboration, and the plans, questions, and responses were then considered during a special public session that allowed parties and NGOs alike to raise additional questions or concerns. There was considerable engagement by all Parties and NGOs in the special session, but there remained considerable variation in the level of detail provided by each jurisdiction in their APRs.

The next cycle of Implementation Plans covers the 2019-2024 period. At the 2017 NASCO annual meeting, the Council established a working group on Future Reporting to (a) review the Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress and advise on any changes required to streamline and further improve reporting in the next Implementation Plan cycle in order to ensure that reports are meaningful and that unnecessary burden is avoided; (b) review the templates for preparation of Implementation Plans and Annual Progress Reports and advise on any changes to streamline and further improve reporting in the next Implementation Plan cycle, including options for including reporting under the Six Tenets for Effective Management of an Atlantic Salmon Fishery; (c) propose a schedule for the development and review of Implementation Plans and submission and review of Annual Progress Reports. Based on the input of this working group, the Council adopted guidelines and terms of reference setting forth a process for submission and review of IPs and APRs during the next 5 year reporting cycle. Work was undertaken in accordance with agreed procedures

but difficulties have been encountered by Parties in meeting some of the new reporting requirements and delays have been experienced in approving new IPs. This has, in turn, complicated the submission and review of APRs against the new IPs. The Council held an intersessional meeting in September 2020 to try to resolve identified issues and developed new guidance for the review of IPs and for the submission of APRs. In particular, the Review Group was given additional flexibility to critique IPs, to do so by section, and to provide specific input where areas are unsatisfactory (even if they technically meet the required format for reporting). In addition, to enhance implementation and improve accountability, the Council agreed that the President should right to high level officials within the parties in cases where IPs continue to have sections that are unsatisfactory. Further, IPs and APRs will continue to be considered at special sessions and the Council may consider appropriate actions in cases where a Parties is not meeting its NASCO responsibilities. Special sessions served as an important way to continue to improve the openness and transparency of NASCO and accountability of its Parties as NGOs and Parties alike are allowed to raise questions directly on relevant issues.

At its 2019 annual meeting, the Council agreed to hold a second external performance review. The Council met virtually in September 2020 to begin to develop proposed terms of reference for the review. It is expected that these will be finalized via correspondence and adopted by the Council at a second intersessional meeting in December 2020.

International Year of the Salmon (IYS): In 2015, NASCO agreed to engage with the North Pacific Anadromous Fisheries Commission (NPAFC) on the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) initiative, an ambitious research and outreach program that has been under development. NASCO has been liaising with NPAFC on development of the initiative. At the 2016 meeting, NASCO expressed broad acceptance for an outline proposal, previously endorsed by NPAFC, for IYS that establishes a general vision for the initiative, including its governance structure. In 2017, NASCO held a special session to further advance the IYS initiative and in 2019, the Council held a regional IYS symposium in conjunction with the 2019 annual meeting of NASCO in Norway. This was in addition to NPAFC's 2018 symposium to launch the IYS initiative. Now that the focal year has passed, NASCO is winding down its IYS work but has retained funds to hold additional symposia in the future as well as update is State of the Salmon report, a prime deliverable during IYS. A concluding symposium will be held in 2022.

Actions Taken by NASCO's Three Regional Commissions:

West Greenland Commission (WGC) Discussions/Actions:

Scientific information and advice: NASCO has adopted management objectives to guide the provision of management advice for the West Greenland fishery. If these objectives are not met, no fishery should be allowed. The advice from ICES for many years has been that West Greenland stock complex is below conservation limits and that there are no mixed-stock fisheries catch options at West Greenland. Some of the stocks contributing the fishery at West Greenland, including salmon of U.S. origin, are critically endangered.

ICES developed a Framework of Indicators (FWI) for the West Greenland fishery in 2007, which was accepted by NASCO that same year. The FWI includes 32 indicator variables that can be used to determine if there has been a significant change in the previously provided multi-annual catch advice. The FWI would be used in January of a given year. ICES would only conduct a full assessment of the mixed stock off West Greenland if the FWI indicated that a significant change had occurred. In the absence of a significant change in the intervening years, a full assessment would be conducted every three years. The FWI was first developed to support multi-year regulatory measures adopted for the period 2006-2008. The FWI and associated process have been working well within the WGC. The application in 2020 of the FWI for the West Greenland fishery did not indicate the need for a revised analysis of catch options.

Management: A three-year regulatory measure was adopted in 2018 that set an annual 30 t TAC, inclusive of all harvests (professional and private fishers), required quota payback in case of overharvest, maintained a prohibition on exports, established a maximum fishing season of three months (August – October), prohibited landings to factories, and required stronger monitoring and control measures and timely reporting. The latter included licensing all fishers and requiring catch reports even in the case of nil harvests. Reporting was linked to license renewal. Greenland overharvested its quota in both 2018 and 2019 and implemented the quota payback provision in the following season. Greenland committed to improving monitoring, control, and reporting so that overharvest would

not recur in 2020. As 2020 is the last year of the current regulatory measure, the WGC has agreed to meet intersessionally in early 2021 to begin discussions on a replacement measure to be adopted at the 2021 annual meeting.

Sampling: A collaborative “sampling agreement” has been in place for many years to collect genetic and other materials from the West Greenland salmon fishery. The program is essential for monitoring the stocks, including the percentage of U.S., Canadian, and EU stocks contributing to the fishery at West Greenland.

NAC Discussions/Actions: Management advice on catch options from the ICES is only provided for the non-maturing 1SW and maturing 2SW components, as the maturing 1SW component is not fished outside of home waters. Scientific advice indicated that there is a very low probability that the numbers of 2SW salmon returning to the six North American regions will be above the management objectives simultaneously. ICES has advised, therefore, that there were no mixed-stock fishery catch options on 1SW non-maturing and 2SW salmon in North America. A review of the NASCO FWI did not indicate a potential change in the status of the resource which would result in a need to conduct a revised analysis of catch options.

For many years, ICES has noted that wild salmon populations are now critically low in extensive portions of North America and that these populations require alternative conservation actions, such as habitat restoration, in addition to very restrictive fisheries regulation to maintain their genetic integrity and persistence. Given that many stocks in the NAC area, particularly those originating in U.S. rivers, are in a critical state, fishing is not undertaken. The United States has not had a commercial fishery since 1948 and in more recent years, recreational fisheries have been eliminated. Canada has reduced its fisheries substantially over the years, including eliminating its commercial fisheries several years ago. Currently, three groups in Canada exploited salmon: aboriginal peoples; residents fishing for food in the Labrador Sea, and recreational fishers.

Labrador Sampling: Canada has been conducting genetic sampling of its Labrador fishery for several years and has indicated plans to continue this work at similar levels in the future. Small number of U.S. origin fish have been taken in this fishery in the past. ICES has called for improvements in the spatial and temporal sampling of the Labrador fishery. Canada will continue monitoring this fishery but has not committed to expanding its sampling program. Canada has committed to doing a power analysis to evaluate the likelihood that U.S. origin salmon are taken in its Labrador fishery and to provide additional information on the location of its Labrador fisheries help ascertain the vulnerability of U.S. origin salmon to those fisheries.

Salmonid Introductions and Transfers: The United States and Canada have been working bilaterally over the past few years to improve cooperation on the management of aquaculture operations—in particular with respect to containment of farmed fish and notification when escapes occur. In light of the significant domestic changes to the management of introductions and transfers in both countries, in 2008 the status of the NAC protocols, the SWG, and the inventory databases were reviewed. Ultimately, the NAC agreed sharing information is important, however, changes were made in the level of detail to be reported. Both parties retained the obligation to notify the other if any introduction or transfer is inconsistent with the NAC Protocols. While recognizing that there is no longer a need to populate and maintain an international database on introductions and transfers, the need to exchange information annually and more immediately on fish health and breaches of containment was identified. Regarding introductions and transfers, it was determined that information should be provided on any transfers made into the Commission area (including from the west to the east coast and from Europe to North America) on an annual basis. These needs are in addition to the commitment already contained in the MOU between the United States and Canada. These changes to reporting were reflected in the Williamsburg Resolution, and the U.S. and Canada agreed to liaise as needed to address any remaining issues. Each year, both countries are to present relevant information in writing to the NAC, in particular on disease incidences, breaches of containment, and introductions of salmonids from outside the Commission area. Recently, Canada has reported that it is considering a proposal to allow the farming of non-North American triploid stock in Newfoundland.

The St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery: In recent years, the North American Commission and the Council have been concerned about catches of salmon at St. Pierre and Miquelon (SPM) in light of the low abundance of many North American stocks and given strict harvest restrictions have been introduced throughout the North Atlantic. Reported harvests in recent years have been generally between 3 and 4 t with 2016 being the second highest on record at about 4.7 t. The cooperation shown by France (in respect of SPM) to NASCO over the years has been

inconsistent, and the organization has tried a wide variety of means to enhance this cooperation. Efforts since 2007 to encourage France (SPM) to join NASCO have been unsuccessful although France (SPM) has been attending NASCO meetings as an observer regularly for a number of years and reports on the outcome of its fishery and sampling activities. Similarly, NASCO has made serious efforts and achieved some success in encouraging France (SPM) to improve the sampling of its catch, including instituting more robust genetics research. Genetics work is essential to understanding the origin of fish taken in the SPM fishery and to quantify the potential effect of the fishery on endangered populations in particular. Such efforts are continuing. NASCO has previously asked France (SPM) to consider strengthening its management of the fishery, including taking effective action to limit catches such as by eliminating its commercial fishery, and to join the organization. France (SPM) continues to prefer to engage with NASCO in an observer capacity. While not agreeing to eliminate portions of its fishery, France (SPM) has also taken some actions to manage it; catches over the last two years have been the lowest on record although this is not necessarily due to the management actions taken. In 2020, France (SPM) committed to improving data submissions and to ensure its sampling was representative of the fishery.

NEAC Discussions/Actions:

Scientific Information and Advice: ICES has provides catch options for the fishing season in the Faroe Islands (October to May). There have been no catch options that would allow all stock complexes to achieve their conservation limits with a greater than 95% probability for many years. Further, ICES stated that while stocks remain in a depleted state and in the absence of a fishery at Faroe Islands, particular care should be taken to ensure fisheries in home waters are managed to protect stocks that are below their CLs. In the NEAC, as well as the other Commission areas, ICES observed that, despite management measures aimed at reducing exploitation in recent years, there has been little improvement in the status of stocks, and this was attributed to pressures in freshwater and low marine survival.

ICES also delivered an updated FWI in 2020 to be used to support potential multi-annual regulatory measures for this fishery. The FWI identifies if any significant change may have occurred in the status of the stocks which would call into question the previously provided multi-annual management advice. The FWI is similar to the framework used for the West Greenland fishery and did not indicate that a significant change in the status of the stocks had occurred.

Management of Faroese fishery: There has been no commercial fishery at the Faroe Islands since 2000. In 2012, the Commission adopted, for the first time, a multi-year decision for the Faroe Islands fishery that did not set a quota but indicated that the Faroe Islands would manage any fishery on the basis of ICES advice. The multi-year nature of the agreement was made possible by the acceptance of the FWI provided by ICES. In 2015, the NEAC adopted another multi-annual regulatory measure for the Faroes fishery for the 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 fishing seasons. Similar to the 2012 decision, the 2015 regulatory measure did not set a quota but states that the Faroe Islands will manage any fishery on the basis of ICES advice. NEAC extended the measure in 2018, which was applicable to the 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 fisheries. The regulatory measure will apply in all years depending on the outcome of the FWI.

Genetics and research fishing: In 2015, ICES commented on the results of genetic analyses of historical samples from salmon taken in the Faroese fishery. These results indicated that the contribution to the Faroe Islands fishery of North American origin salmon was much higher than previously assumed (5.7% for 1SW fish and 20.5% for MSW). The analysis was based on scale samples collected during the 1993/94 and 1994/95 research fisheries. It should be noted that these results are based on a relatively low number of samples (~650), from only two fishing seasons, and from samples that are 20 years old that may not necessarily reflect the current day composition of the stock complex. In addition, there have been major changes in the continental composition of the catch at West Greenland over this time period, and there may have been similar changes in the eastern North Atlantic. In response to this information, ICES was asked to advise on sources of uncertainties and possible biases in the assessment of catch options for the Faroes fishery resulting from using these historical samples. ICES provided a full assessment of this request which showed the biases to be minimal.

As no fishery has been prosecuted by the Faroe Islands since 2000 and the current composition of the stock complexes that would contribute to that fishery is unclear, Denmark (in respect to the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated at the 2015 NASCO meeting that it was considering initiating a scientific research fishery to collect

samples to provide more up-to-date information on the composition of stocks in the areas under its fisheries jurisdiction. It was noted that there could be value in a properly designed research program, but specifics on the objectives and structure of any such program would need to be provided to assess its utility. To date, Denmark (in respect to the Faroe Islands and Greenland) has not submitted a research program for consideration by NASCO. Given the terms of the NASCO Convention and rules of procedure, the United States and Canada only have observer status at the NEAC at this time. A review of this matter may be needed if it is confirmed that that salmon of North American origin were vulnerable to the Faroese fishery.

Other Matters:

Additional information on the work of NASCO can be found on its website (<http://www.nasco.int>).

NASCO held its 37th Annual Meeting on June 1-5, 2020, via WebEx and it was preceded by a month-long correspondence process. NASCO is planning to hold its 38th Annual Meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, June 1-4, 2021.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Kim Blankenbeker
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8350
Fax: (301) 713-1081
Email: Kimberly.Blankenbeker@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Rebecca Wintering
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: Dorseyrj@state.gov

Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (Basic Instrument for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization – NAFO)

Basic Instrument

Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (entered into force January 1, 1979)

Implementing Legislation

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Convention Act of 1995 (Title II of P.L.104-43)

Member Nations

Current members of NAFO include: Canada, Cuba, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union (EU), France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), Iceland, Japan, Republic of Korea, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the United States. The United States acceded to the Convention on November 29, 1995, and participated for the first time as a Contracting Party at the 1996 Annual Meeting (the United States attended earlier annual meetings as an observer).

Commission Headquarters

Executive Secretary:
Mr. Fred Kingston
Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
Summit Place
1601 Lower Water Street, Suite 401
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, B3J 3P6
Telephone: (902) 468-5590
Fax: (902) 468-5538
Web address: <http://www.nafo.int>

Budget

NAFO adopted a 2020 annual budget of \$2,369,000 CDN (approximately U.S. \$ 1,753,892). Following a subtraction from NAFO's accumulated surplus, the preliminary US assessment for 2020 will be 316,457CND (approximately U.S. \$ 234,289).

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Convention Act of 1995 provides that not more than three U.S. Commissioners and not more than three U.S. Representatives to the NAFO Scientific Council (see below) shall represent the United States in NAFO. Commissioners and Representatives are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and serve at his pleasure. Each Commissioner and Representative is appointed for a term not to exceed 4 years, but is eligible for reappointment.

Of the three Commissioners, one (but no more than one) must be an official of the U.S. Government, at least one a representative of the commercial fishing industry, and one a voting (non-government employee) member of the New England Fishery Management Council. Commissioners must be knowledgeable and experienced concerning the fishery resources to which the NAFO Convention applies. Of the three U.S. Representatives to the NAFO Scientific Council, at least one must be an official of the U.S. Government. All Representatives must be knowledgeable and experienced concerning the scientific issues dealt with by the Scientific Council.

B. U.S. Representatives:

U.S. Commissioners:

Michael Pentony (U.S. Federal Commissioner)
Regional Administrator
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
National Marine Fisheries Service
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

Dr. Michael Sissenwine (representing the New England Fishery Management Council)
39 Mill Pond Way
East Falmouth, MA 02536

Eric Reid (representing the US fishing industry)
General Manager, Seafreeze Shoreside, Inc.
75 State St., Narragansett, (Pt. Judith) Rhode Island 02882 USA

Representative to the Scientific Council:

Ms. Katherine Sosebee
Resource Evaluation and Assessment Division
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543

C. Advisory Structure:

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Convention Act of 1995 further requires that the Secretaries of Commerce and State establish jointly a Consultative Committee of not more than 15 members to advise the Secretaries on issues related to the Convention. Each member of the Consultative Committee shall serve for a term of 2 years and shall be eligible for reappointment. The membership of the Committee shall consist of representatives from the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, the States represented on those Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the fishing industry, the seafood processing industry, and others knowledgeable and experienced in the conservation and management of fisheries in the Northwest Atlantic. For information regarding the U.S. Consultative Committee to NAFO, please contact Patrick Moran (see Staff Contacts, below).

Organizational Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

NAFO is the successor organization to the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF). Its mission is: (1) to provide for continued multilateral consultation and cooperation with respect to the study, appraisal, and exchange of scientific information and views relating to fisheries of the Convention Area and (2) to conserve and manage fishery resources of the NAFO Regulatory Area (NRA), i.e., that part of the Convention Area that lies beyond the areas in which coastal states exercise fisheries jurisdiction. The Convention Area is located within the waters of the Northwest Atlantic Ocean roughly north of 35° N latitude and west of 42° W latitude.

(Note: The Convention applies to all fishery resources of the Convention Area with the exception of: salmon, tunas, swordfish, and marlins; cetacean stocks managed by the International Whaling Commission or any successor organization; and sedentary species of the Continental Shelf.)

B. Structure:

On 28 September 2007, after a two-year process, NAFO adopted a number of significant amendments to the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries. This amended Convention was entered into force (became legally binding) in 2017, following ratification by the required three-fourths of NAFO Contracting Parties.

Among other things, these amendments included significant changes to the structure of the Organization. Under the amended Convention, the functions of the General Council and Fisheries Commission are combined. Thus, the Organization now consists of: a) the Commission; b) the Scientific Council; and c) the Secretariat. The previous functions of NAFO standing committees are also re-organized to reflect this new structure, and new rules of procedure have been developed to ensure its effective implementation. More information on these activities can be found on the NAFO website (<http://www.nafo.int>).

Other noteworthy changes associated with the entry into force of the amended Convention include amendments to the NAFO provisions relative to both the objection and dispute settlement procedures, as well as changes addressing key U.S. concerns relating to the dues assessment procedure (as noted above). The United States also obtained improved wording for authorizing trade measures in the case of IUU fishing and for entry into force of amendments to Convention annexes. Although U.S. efforts to broaden considerations relevant to allocations beyond fishing history were not successful, recent reopening of species previously under moratoria will likely keep the allocation issue in the spotlight.

C. General Programs:

Species managed: The principal species managed by NAFO are cod, flounders, redfish, American plaice, Greenland halibut (turbot), capelin, hake, skates and shrimp. Occasionally, a significant squid fishery occurs in the Regulatory Area as well. Following decades of unregulated fishing by non-members—over-harvesting, under-reporting and fishing under formal objection by members—NAFO-imposed moratoria continue for 9 of the 20 NAFO-managed stocks in 2018. Details on current U.S. allocations from NAFO as well as fishing opportunities for other species (including yellowtail flounder resulting from a harvesting arrangement with Canada) are provided in the allocation section below.

Conservation and Management Measures: NAFO has established and maintained conservation and management measures in the NRA since 1979. In addition to adoption of annual total allowable catches (TACs) and member nation quotas by species, NAFO also maintains and establishes: 1) general and fishery-specific conservation and management measures (e.g., bycatch, minimum size and gear requirements); 2) measures to prevent significant adverse impacts of bottom fishing activities on vulnerable marine ecosystems; 3) control measures (e.g., fishing authorizations, vessel registry, and chartering requirements); 4) monitoring requirements (data recording and reporting, vessel monitoring system (VMS) and observer requirements). In addition, NAFO maintains a scheme of joint international inspection and surveillance in the NRA, Port State measures, and a scheme to promote compliance by non-Contracting Parties (including a listing mechanism for tracking and sharing information on IUU fishing vessels). The full text of the current NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures (NAFO/COM Doc. 20/1) can be found on the NAFO website at: <http://www.nafo.int>.

D. Current Issues of Interest:

2020 NAFO Annual Meeting: The 41st Annual Meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) took place from 23-27 September in Bordeaux, France. The United States continued to advocate for strong science-based and transparent decision making processes and was pleased with the commitment NAFO demonstrated to those principles by adopting quotas for most stocks within scientific advice. NAFO re-opened the Division 3M shrimp fishery, which had been under moratorium for many years, and will work during the 2020 intersessional period to develop a new management regime for this fishery. Additionally, the United States continued to advance opportunities for US industry in NAFO fisheries, working bilaterally with key international partners and in the NAFO meeting itself. Finally, the United States put forward a series of proposals aimed at improving how NAFO manages bycatch, as well as enhancing transparency in NAFO processes. While none of these measures passed at the Annual Meeting, there was a commitment to make progress on them during the intersessional process.

U.S. Allocations for 2020: At the 2019 NAFO Annual Meeting, the United States received fish quota allocations for two NAFO stocks to be fished during 2020. These stocks were: Division 3M redbfish (69mt) and Subareas 3 & 4 *Illex* squid (453mt). The United States also received an effort allocation allowing for 25 fishing days of Div. 3M shrimp. This effort allocation may change based on the outcome of a scheduled intersessional discussion on new 3M shrimp management regime. U.S. fishermen are also entitled to harvest, on a first-come-first-served basis, any allocation for which an “Others” category has been designated, provided there is not a country-specific allocation to the United States for that fishery. For 2020, “Others” category allocations available to U.S. fishermen include: Div. 3M cod (34mt); Div. 3LN redbfish (109mt); Div. 3O redbfish (100mt); Div. 3NO witch flounder (12mt); Div. 3NO white hake (59mt); and Div. 3LNO skates (258mt). Fishing is halted by NAFO when the “Others” allocation for a particular stock has been fully harvested.

Yellowtail Flounder: From 2008-2018, the United States and Canada maintained a 10-year arrangement through which Canada will transfer (upon request) 1000mt of NAFO Div. 3LNO yellowtail flounder for use by U.S. vessels. At the request of both countries, this transfer is memorialized annually through a footnote in the NAFO Quota Table. Following the 2008 negotiations of the agreement, an exchange of letters took place to record the intent of the two parties to work cooperatively to obtain a permanent U.S. allocation of NAFO Div. 3LNO yellowtail flounder. During 2019, following the expiration of the 2018 arrangement, the United States solicited and received an *ad hoc* transfer of yellowtail flounder in order to maintain its fishing operations. The United States is currently engaged in discussions with Canada regarding next steps.

U.S. Fishing Activities: Since 2009, the United States has annually solicited expressions of interest from U.S. vessels to fish Div. 3LNO yellowtail flounder under the arrangement with Canada. Between 2009 and 2011, the United States received a number of expressions of interest in this fishing opportunity, but changes in the yellowtail flounder market, fuel prices, and other economic considerations made fishing operations on the Grand Banks impossible for U.S. vessels. However, a U.S. vessel has successfully harvested yellowtail flounder under the arrangement since 2012. Additionally, a second U.S. vessel harvested Atlantic halibut beginning in 2014. These operations represent the first U.S. fishing activity for NAFO species in the NAFO Regulatory Area since the United States joined the Organization in 1995. They also represent a positive step toward establishing the case for a permanent U.S. allocation for yellowtail flounder from NAFO. In 2020, the United States once again received expressions of interest relative to yellowtail flounder, Atlantic halibut and other NAFO species. Thus, it is likely that U.S. fishing activity in NAFO will continue.

Future Meetings

The 42nd NAFO Annual Meeting took place virtually from 21-25 September 2020.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick E. Moran
Office of International Affairs (F/IA)
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10645
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Email: Pat.Moran@noaa.gov

Moira Kelly
NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
55 Great Republic Drive Gloucester, MA 01930
Telephone: (978) 281-9218
Email: Moira.Kelly@noaa.gov

U.S. Department of State:

Deirdre Warner-Kramer
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2883
Email: Warner-KramerDM@state.gov

Convention on the Conservation and Management of Fishery Resources in the Southeast Atlantic Ocean (SEAFO)

The [Southeast Atlantic Fisheries Organization \(SEAFO\)](http://www.seafo.org/) manages fishery resources on the high seas of the Southeast Atlantic Ocean, but not those under national jurisdiction or highly migratory species. The objective of the [Convention](#) on the Conservation and Management of Fisheries Resources in the South East Atlantic Ocean is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources in the Convention Area through the effective implementation of the Convention.

The initiative to establish a regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) in the region came from Namibia in 1995 and was shared with and gained support from coastal states of Angola, South Africa and United Kingdom (on behalf of St. Helena and its dependencies of Tristan da Cunha and Ascension Islands). Various meetings of coastal states took place between 1995-1997 where the initial ideas to form a basis for negotiations were discussed and eventually presented to the first meeting that included other participants with real interests in the fishery resources of the South East Atlantic Ocean. The negotiations for the Convention took place between 1997-2001 with several meetings held within the region and beyond.

The Convention was signed in April 2001 in Windhoek by Angola, the European Community, Iceland, Namibia, Norway, Republic of Korea, South Africa, United Kingdom (on behalf of St. Helena and its dependencies of Tristan da Cunha and Ascension Islands) and the United States of America. It entered into force in April 2003 after the deposit of instruments of ratification by Namibia and Norway and approval by the European Community as required under Article 27 of the Convention. States that have participated in the negotiations but have not signed the Convention are Japan, Russian Federation and Ukraine. The United States has not ratified the Convention because there is no U.S. fishing activity in the Convention Area at present.

From the date of signatures in 2001, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources in Namibia acted as an Interim Secretariat. In March 2005 and with the appointment of the staff, the permanent secretariat was opened in Walvis Bay, Namibia.

SEAFO is comprised of the Commission, the Scientific Committee and the Compliance Committee as subsidiary bodies, and the Secretariat. The Compliance Committee was established in 2007. The Commission may establish other subsidiary bodies from time to time to assist in meeting the objective of the Convention. The Commission has an oversight responsibility of the Organization. The Scientific Committee provides scientific advice on the status of fishery resources and on setting harvesting levels taking into consideration, among other things, ecosystem and precautionary approaches. The institutions are designed to function according to the principles of cost-effectiveness and to expand only at the same pace as its workload.

The Convention Area covers a sizeable part of the high seas of the South East Atlantic Ocean. It covers all waters beyond areas of national jurisdiction in the region bounded by a line joining the following points along parallel of latitude and meridians of longitude: beginning at the outer limit of waters under national jurisdiction at a point 6° South, thence due west along the 6° South parallel to the meridian 10° West, thence due north along the 10° West meridian to the equator, thence due west along the equator to the meridian 20° West, thence due south along the 20° West meridian to a parallel 50° South, thence due east along the 50° South parallel to the meridian 30° East, thence due north along the 30° East meridian to the coast of the African continent.

Economically important fish species under the purview of the Convention include sedentary, discrete, and straddling stocks such as alfonso, orange roughy, oreo, dorries, armorhead, sharks, deepwater hake, and red crab.

Web address: <http://www.seafo.org/> or <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/seafo/en>

The 16th Annual Commission Meeting was convened at the Strand Hotel, Swakopmund, Namibia, from 25th to 27th November 2019. The meeting report can be found at: <http://www.seafo.org/media/61205a0e-bc37-41a7-a001-0438af54ea91/SEAFOweb/pdf/CC/Annual%20Compliance%20Report%202019.pdf>

Staff Contacts*SEAFO Secretariat Contact:*

South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization
(SEAFO)
NatMirc Bldg, Strand Street No. 1,
Swakopmund, Namibia,
P.O. Box 4296
Tel: +264-64-406885
Fax: +264-64-406884
Email: info@seafo.org
Website: <http://www.seafo.org/>

NOAA Fisheries Contact:

Christopher Rogers
Office of International Affairs and
Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: 301-427-8350
christopher.rogers@noaa.gov

Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC)

Basic Instrument

Article VI-1 of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Constitution. Resolution 4/61 of the FAO Council at its Sixty-first Session in November 1973. Statutes amended by FAO Council in December 1978 and revised statutes in 2006 with Resolution 1/131.

Implementing Legislation

None.

Member Nations

Membership is open to coastal States whose territories are situated wholly or partly within the area of the Commission or States whose vessels engage in fishing in the area of competence of the Commission that notify the Director-General of the Organization in writing of their desire to be considered as members of the Commission.

Member nations include: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, European Union, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Japan, Korea (Rep. of), Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States, and Venezuela.

Commission Headquarters

FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean
6th Floor, Tom Adams Financial Centre
P.O. Box 631C
Bridgetown, Barbados

Secretary: Yvette DieiOuadi
Telephone: 246 426 7110
Fax: 246 426 7111

Web address: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/wecafc/en>

U.S. Representation

The U.S. delegation usually consists of representatives from NOAA Fisheries Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region, NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center, the Caribbean Fishery Management Council and the Department of State.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The general objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources of the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission. The Commission has an advisory management function but no regulatory powers.

The work of the Commission is guided by the following three principles:

- Promote the application of the provisions of the FAO Code of Conduct on Responsible Fisheries and its related instruments, including the precautionary approach and the ecosystem approach to fisheries management;
- Ensure adequate attention to small-scale, artisanal and subsistence fisheries; and
- Coordinate and cooperate closely with other relevant international organizations on matters of common interest.

B. Organizational Structure:

The Commission, composed of all Members, is the central policy forum. The Commission has four Subsidiary Committees: (1) Working Party on Assessment of Marine Fishery Resources; (2) Working Party on Fishery Economics and Planning; (3) Committee for the Development and Management of Fisheries in the Lesser Antilles; and (4) the Ad hoc working groups.

Working Groups, as of the 17th session of the Commission in 2019 include the following:

1. Working Group on Spiny Lobster
2. Working Group on Recreational Fisheries
3. Working Group on Queen Conch
4. Working Group on Development of Sustainable Moored Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) Fishing in the Lesser Antilles
5. Working Group on Flyingfish, Dolphinfish and other Pelagics
6. Working Group on the management of deep-sea fisheries
7. Working Group on Spawning Aggregations
8. Working Group for the Conservation And Management of Sharks in the Wider Caribbean Region
9. Regional Working Group on IUU Fishing
10. Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish in the Northern Brazil-Guianas Shelf
11. Regional Fisheries Data and Statistics Working Group

Most working groups are joint working groups with other regional partner institutions. Fishery scientists, experts, managers and decision-makers of member countries, regional partner organizations and NGOs participate in the working groups, which have specific terms of reference.

WECAFC currently operates as a regional fisheries body under Article VI of the FAO Constitution. WECAFC is considering alternatives for a possible strategic reorientation from an advisory body to a regional fisheries management entity or arrangement with the following main objectives: to ensure the sustainability of the resources in the area of competence, increase regional cooperation, strengthen management of shared/transboundary stocks and improve data collection.

Recent Developments*WECAFC 17*

The United States hosted the most recent biennial meeting of Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC 17) on July 15-18, 2019, in Miami, FL, with 25 Members attending along with numerous observer organizations and individuals. At this meeting, the Commission adopted 13 recommendations, 4 resolutions as well as other work products described below.

A Regional Plan of Action for the Wider Caribbean to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing, as prepared by the Regional Working Group on IUU Fishing, was endorsed with minor changes. Several recommendations developed by the joint working group were also adopted, related to the application of technical guidelines on methodologies and indicators for the estimation of the magnitude and impact of IUU fishing, the marking of fishing gear, and the monitoring and control of transshipment at sea.

An interim Data Collection Reference Framework was adopted, and work will continue to finalize this framework. The Commission adopted a recommendation on regional data access and sharing policies, approved a list of the main species for data collection in the WECAFC area and urged that members provide national data and statistics to the regional database. WECAFC members also adopted a resolution that expressed support for the WECAFC-FIRMS partnership as a collaborative platform for collating and sharing scientific information throughout the region.

The Commission endorsed the Caribbean Spiny Lobster Fishery Regional Management Plan (MARPLESCA Plan), based upon the subregional plan created by La Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano (OSPESCA), to help promote sustainable management and harvest. There was support for improved information sharing, coherent data collection, and an examination of the working conditions, safety and insurance needs of those participating in the dive fishery for Caribbean spiny lobster. While some U.S. domestic measures differ from the MARPLESCA Plan, the United States expressed support and interest in close cooperation with WECAFC member countries on spiny lobster science, data collection, and management.

The Commission reviewed information on the latest developments in the conservation, management and trade of queen conch under the auspices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Outcomes of a meeting of the Scientific, Statistical and Technical Subgroup of the Queen Conch Working Group, recent research findings on microplastics in queen conch, and progress towards the development of a Caribbean Education Program focused on queen conch were also considered by the Commission. Recommendations to improve the monitoring of queen conch fisheries, compliance with trade measures and information sharing relative to queen conch fisheries were adopted.

A recommendation aimed at promoting the conservation and management of sharks and rays in the area of competence of WECAFC was adopted. Among its elements, the Commission recommended that WECAFC members develop National Plans of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (consistent with the International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks); prohibit retention, transshipment, landing and trading of sharks and rays consistent with measures adopted by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and other relevant international instruments, as appropriate; and require sharks to be landed with their fins naturally attached. WECAFC members are also strongly encouraged to provide their estimates of landings and discards of sharks and other data to WECAFC and ICCAT to support future stock assessments. A Regional Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks is still under development by WECAFC's Shark Working Group.

A recommendation on billfish prepared by the Recreational Fisheries Working Group was not adopted, due to some technical inconsistencies with recent measures adopted by ICCAT. Numerous delegations noted the economic importance of their billfish fisheries and the need to share information and statistics within the region. The draft Caribbean Billfish Plan was not formally considered, but further work in this area is contemplated in WECAFC's Program of Work for 2019-2020. The Executive Secretaries of ICCAT and WECAFC have expressed support for the development of a memorandum of understanding between WECAFC and ICCAT that could define relevant areas of collaboration, and this approach has been endorsed by ICCAT's membership.

The Commission also adopted a recommendation to promote the sustainable use of moored fish aggregating devices (MFADs) in the WECAFC region. This measure encourages WECAFC members to prepare national fisheries development and management plans for MFADs, adopt legislation in support of sustainable MFAD fisheries, and standardize statistics collected on MFADs. The scope of the mandate of the Working Group on Flyingfish was expanded to include dolphinfish and other pelagics that are not managed by ICCAT.

The Commission adopted a recommendation on the sustainable management of spawning aggregations and aggregating species. Subsequently, at a meeting of the WECAFC Working Group on Spawning Aggregations in December 2019, a draft Regional Fish Spawning Aggregation Draft Fishery Management Plan focused on Nassau grouper and mutton snapper was endorsed to further improve the management and conservation of fish spawning aggregations in the wider Caribbean Region. The management plan will be finalized in the coming months for consideration by the Working Group at their next meeting in November 2020. The WECAFC Working Group also expressed support for a communications strategy aimed at educating and spreading awareness among the public and stakeholders of the importance of fish spawning aggregations in the WECAFC region.

The Commission considered informative presentations related to the state of fisheries and aquaculture in the wider Caribbean region, the impacts of climate change, and activities of the CLME+ Project. The Commission approved several related resolutions on the interim coordination mechanism for the sustainable management, use and protection of shared living marine resources in the CLME+ region and the proposed Permanent Coordination Mechanism and associated sustainable financing plan for integrated ocean governance in the wider Caribbean.

The Commission recalled outcomes of the first preparatory meeting on the transition of WECAFC from a regional fishery advisory body to a new regional fisheries management entity or arrangement, which took place in March 2019. The Commission endorsed the suggestion of holding a second preparatory meeting as a forum to further consider all the options, the advantages and disadvantages of these options, and make recommendations to the Commission on a way forward. The United States led an effort at WECAFC 17 to develop a roadmap for a member-driven and inclusive process to advance the development of a model for a regional fisheries management entity or arrangement in the WECAFC area. This road map for 2019-2020 was adopted by the Commission to guide future progress.

Following these deliberations, the Commission approved a comprehensive Program of Work for WECAFC (2019-2020), which is subject to the availability of funding. It was announced that the Government of Nicaragua is considering the possibility of hosting the 18th session of WECAFC in 2021.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Laura Cimo
National Marine Fisheries Service
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8359
Fax: (301) 713-2313

Rachel O'Malley
National Marine Fisheries Service
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8363
Fax: (301) 713-2313

WECAFC Contact:

Yvette DieiOuadi
FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean
P.O. Box 631C
Barbados
Telephone: +246 426 7110
Fax: +246 426 7111

PACIFIC OCEAN

Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP)

Basic Instruments

The Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program is a legally binding multilateral agreement that entered into force in February 1999 ([link to AIDCP text](#)). The AIDCP strengthened and replaced the 1992 Agreement on the Conservation of Dolphins (also known as the "[La Jolla Agreement](#)").

Implementing Legislation

International Dolphin Conservation Program Act ([IDCPA](#)) of 1997 (11 Stat. 1122; 16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.; 16 U.S.C. 1411)

Parties

Belize, Bolivia¹, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, European Union, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, the United States, Vanuatu¹ and Venezuela.

Secretariat Headquarters

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
8901 La Jolla Shores Drive
La Jolla, California 92037-1509

Secretariat: Dr. Guillermo Compeán
Telephone: (858) 546-7100
Fax: (858) 546-7133
Web Address: <http://www.iattc.org/IDCPENG.htm>

Budget

Article XV of the AIDCP provides that the Parties “shall contribute to the expenses necessary to achieve the objectives of this Agreement through the establishment and collection of vessel fees, the level of which shall be determined by the Parties, without prejudice to other voluntary financial contributions.” A significant feature of the fishery is that since 1995 one hundred percent of trips by large purse seine vessels (i.e., vessels in excess of 400 short tons, 363 metric tons, carrying capacity) are covered by observers. However, 100% observer coverage comes at a substantial expense. In order to cover the cost of the AIDCP’s On-Board Observer Program, all large purse seine vessels, authorized to fish for tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO), pay assessment fees at a rate of US\$14.95 per cubic meter of well volume. In 2019, the United States had 29 purse seine vessels (both large and small) listed on the Active Purse Seine Vessel Capacity Register and 1 vessel listed on the Inactive Purse Seine Vessel Register. The total U.S. vessel assessments paid for 2019 was \$431,411. The AIDCP Parties approved the 2019 budget in the amount of \$3,433,897.

While vessel assessments from all Parties cover the majority of AIDCP costs, approximately 30% of the observer program costs are derived from the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). The expenses of the IATTC are also shared by the IATTC Members, according to the proportion of the total catch by each Member from the fisheries covered by the IATTC Convention and the portion of the catch utilized by each Member, among other factors. The Member proportions are calculated from statistics compiled by IATTC staff for calendar years previous (approximately 3 years) to the Fiscal Year (FY) budget in question. Historically, the United States paid 80-90 percent of the IATTC’s budget, but currently around 20 percent. The approved IATTC budget for FY 2020 is \$8,133,836, of which the United States assessed contribution is \$1,746,553.

¹ Applies the Agreement provisionally.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The goals of the AIDCP are:

“(1) to progressively reduce incidental dolphin mortalities in the tuna purse-seine fishery in the Agreement Area to levels approaching zero, through the setting of annual limits; (2) with the goal of eliminating dolphin mortality in this fishery, to seek ecologically sound means of capturing large yellowfin tunas not in association with dolphins; and (3) to ensure the long-term sustainability of the tuna stocks in the Agreement Area, as well as that of the marine resources related to this fishery, taking into consideration the interrelationship among species in the ecosystem, with special emphasis on, *inter alia*, avoiding, reducing and minimizing bycatch and discards of juvenile tunas and non-target species.”

B. Organizational Structure:

The AIDCP consists of Parties (i.e., nations and a regional economic integration organization), and a Secretariat who also serves as the Director of the IATTC. Approval of decisions, resolutions, recommendations and publications is achieved by consensus of all Parties to the AIDCP. The Secretariat is responsible for drafting programs of investigations, budget formulation, accounting and administrative support, directing technical staff, coordinating the AIDCP with other organizations and preparing administrative, scientific, and other reports of the AIDCP.

The International Review Panel (IRP) follows a general procedure for monitoring compliance by vessels with measures established by the AIDCP, including minimizing the mortalities of dolphins during fishing operations and reporting on compliance to appropriate Parties. The IRP reviews data collected by observers of the On-Board Observer Program related to compliance with the AIDCP, and identifies possible infractions of that Agreement. Lists of these possible infractions are submitted by the Secretariat to the Parties in which the vessels are registered for investigation and possible action. The Parties report back to the Secretariat on actions taken to address these possible infractions. The IRP publishes an annual report that summarizes the activities, actions, and decisions of the IRP, and lists the possible infractions identified for the various national fleets.

The Permanent Working Group on Tuna Tracking (PWGTT) was established by the Parties to the AIDCP in 1999 as a component of the IRP. The AIDCP requires that all Parties have an approved tuna tracking and verification system. The purpose of the system is to ensure the dolphin-safe status of tuna harvested in the EPO. The first task undertaken by the Working Group was to develop an international tuna tracking and verification system template that each Party could use to prepare a national tuna tracking system consistent with AIDCP requirements. In addition, the PWGTT has encouraged and assisted in the development of national plans as requested by AIDCP Parties. The PWGTT provides a forum for discussing and solving problems encountered in operating the national tuna tracking systems, and recommends improvements to the system, as necessary. In 2001, the PWGTT developed an international dolphin-safe Certification Program to provide a method of documenting the dolphin-safe status of EPO tuna in the world market. The international certification program and system for tracking and verifying tuna are reviewed and amended as necessary.

The Working Group to promote and publicize the *AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System* was established in 2002. This working group seeks to identify means of effectively promoting the scientific and technical aspects of the AIDCP, as well as its conservation successes. Additionally, those Parties that utilize the *AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System* also look for means of promoting and increasing consumer understanding of the *AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Label* so that commercial benefits can be realized from the program. The United States participates in the work that seeks to raise awareness of the AIDCP and its successes, but does not implement the *AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System*.

C. Programs:

To fulfill its mission, the Parties carry out an extensive data collection program. This program is conducted by a permanent, internationally recruited staff selected and directed by the Secretariat, who is responsible to the Parties.

In addition, the Parties to the AIDCP have established work groups to address specific management and organizational issues.

Dolphin Conservation

In the 1950s, fishermen discovered that yellowfin tuna in the EPO aggregated beneath schools of dolphin stocks. Soon after that discovery, the predominant tuna fishing method in the EPO was to intentionally encircle a school of dolphins with a purse seine net (also known as “setting on dolphins”) to capture the tuna concentrated below. Hundreds of thousands of dolphins died each year in the early years of this fishery. In 1972, the United States passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) that, among other things, began conservation efforts to reduce dolphin mortality in the EPO. However, foreign participation in setting on dolphins in the EPO increased during the 1980s, such that the total EPO dolphin mortality of all fleets rose from about 21,000 in 1979 to approximately 132,000 in 1986. A program developed by the IATTC to monitor and reduce dolphin mortality began to take effect soon after 1986 and the annual mortality began to decline again, to approximately 15,500 in 1992². After the signing of the La Jolla Agreement in 1992 and the AIDCP later on in the same decade (described below), the number of observed mortalities has declined significantly to just 778 in 2019. This represents a total reduction in observed dolphin mortality of approximately 99% compared to 1986 levels. While today the majority of the U.S. purse seine fleet in the EPO make sets on floating objects and sets on un-associated schools of tuna, one U.S. large purse seine vessel was authorized to set on dolphins in 2019 as per the protocols set forth by the AIDCP.

In the fall of 1992, the nations participating in the EPO tuna fishery signed the La Jolla Agreement, which placed voluntary limits on the maximum number of dolphins that could be incidentally killed annually in the fishery, decreasing the maximum each year over seven years, with a goal of eliminating dolphin mortality in the fishery. In 1995, the United States and nine other nations fishing in the EPO negotiated the Panama Declaration. The Panama Declaration established conservative species/stock-specific annual dolphin mortality limits and represented an important step toward reducing bycatch in commercial fisheries with sound ecosystem management. It contained provisions for additional protection for individual stocks of dolphins and for other living marine resources to achieve an ecosystem approach to management of the fishery. Due to the efforts of the nations that negotiated the Panama Declaration and the IATTC, the yellowfin tuna fishery in the EPO has had 100% observer coverage since 1995. The signatory nations envisioned that, as a result of their actions in reducing dolphin mortality, the United States would amend its laws so their participation in the AIDCP would satisfy compatibility requirements of the MMPA and result in the lifting of embargoes on yellowfin tuna and yellowfin tuna products.

In response to the Panama Declaration, in 1997, Congress amended the MMPA with the IDCPA to authorize the AIDCP and to: (1) allow for lifting the embargoes for countries fishing in compliance with the AIDCP and (2) lift the ban on the sale of tuna that is not dolphin-safe. In February 1998, the nations participating in the tuna purse seine fishery in the EPO negotiated the AIDCP, a legally-binding instrument for dolphin conservation and ecosystem management in the EPO. The IDCPA is intended to give force domestically to the AIDCP, which was designed to strengthen dolphin protection measures already in place and afford nations harvesting tuna in the EPO in compliance with those measures access to the lucrative U.S. market for their tuna.

Despite successes in reducing observed dolphin mortality in the EPO purse seine fishery, the three stocks of dolphin that interact to the greatest degree with the fishery, the eastern spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris orientalis*), northeastern offshore spotted dolphin (*Stenella attenuata*) and coastal spotted dolphin (*Stenella attenuata graffmani*), are currently categorized as depleted under the MMPA. As of the most recent fisheries-independent survey, conducted in 2006, none of these stocks of dolphin were recovering at a rate of population increase that is consistent with the drastic reduction in observed dolphin mortality in the ETP purse seine fishery. The Parties at AIDCP meetings in 2018 and 2019 have discussed initiating new population research on EPO dolphin stocks. While the Parties have not yet reached consensus on final AIDCP funding approval for new population research, Mexico initiated a trial survey in the EPO in fall 2019 and the results are expected to be presented at a future meeting.

² Dolphin mortality figures up to 1992 were obtained from the following sources: <https://swfsc.noaa.gov/textblock.aspx?Division=PRD&ParentMenuId=228&id=1408> and <https://www.iattc.org/AnnualReportsENG.htm>

It is important to note that the dolphin-safe standard established by the AIDCP differs from that currently implemented in the United States. Under the AIDCP, dolphin-safe means “tuna captured in sets in which there is no mortality or serious injury of dolphins.” The current dolphin-safe standard in the United States includes the provision that “no purse seine net or other fishing gear was intentionally deployed on or used to encircle dolphins during the fishing trip and that no dolphins were killed or seriously injured in the sets or other gear deployments in which the tuna were caught.”

Other Conservation and Administration Issues: The Parties have taken a proactive position in fishery management and dolphin conservation in recent years. There are or have been two working groups dealing with specific management issues: (1) fishing by non-parties to the AIDCP and (2) vessel assessments and financing the AIDCP. The AIDCP currently does not require small purse seine vessels (i.e., of 400 short tons, 363 metric tons, carrying capacity or less) to carry observers. However, in light of the concern that some small purse seine vessels have set on dolphins, in contravention of the AIDCP, the Parties adopted measures to require small purse seine vessels, identified by the IRP that have intentionally set on dolphins, to carry observers on subsequent trips.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Ryan Wulff
Assistant Regional Administrator
Sustainable Fisheries Division, West Coast Region
650 Capital Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone: (916) 930-3733

Justin Greenman
Protected Resources Division, West Coast Regional Office
– Long Beach Office
National Marine Fisheries Service NOAA
501 W. Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, CA 90802-4213
Telephone: (562) 980-3264
Fax: (562) 980-4027

Madison Harris
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East West Highway, SSMC3
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (202) 480-4592

Department of State:

David Hogan
Deputy Director
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350

Convention for the Establishment of an Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and Convention for the Strengthening of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Established by the 1949 Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica

Basic Instrument and the Transition to the Antigua Convention

The Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica for the establishment of an Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, 1949 ([“1949 Convention” Text](#)); and Convention for the Strengthening of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Established by the 1949 Convention between the United States of America and Costa Rica ([“Antigua Convention” Text](#)).

The Antigua Convention entered into force on August 27, 2010, and was drafted to update, and eventually replace, the original 1949 Convention. The Antigua Convention contains modern principles and reflects the duties and responsibilities of nations to cooperate to ensure the sustainable management of shared fisheries resources, to minimize impacts to bycatch species, and to conserve the marine ecosystems on which sustainable fisheries depend. The Antigua Convention also provides updates to monitoring, control, and surveillance provisions, which, *inter alia*, help to strengthen IATTC’s mandate to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and illegal imports of tuna product.

The United States signed the Antigua Convention on November 14, 2003, and the Senate subsequently provided advice and consent for the United States to ratify the Convention. On February 24, 2016, the United States deposited its instrument of ratification of the Antigua Convention. Several Parties to the 1949 Convention have signed the Antigua Convention, but have not yet ratified. As such, the IATTC will continue to function under a dual-convention scenario until the Antigua Convention for all Parties to the 1949 Convention enters into force, at which time the 1949 Convention will be terminated.

Implementing Legislation

Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica for the establishment of an Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, 1949.

[Tuna Conventions Act](#) (16 U.S.C. 951 *et seq.*), as amended on November 5, 2015, by Title II of Public Law 114-81.

Member Nations

The sixteen members that have ratified/acceded to the Antigua Convention include Belize, Canada, China, Costa Rica, El Salvador, the European Union, France (on behalf of its overseas territories), Guatemala, Japan, Kiribati, Korea, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, and the United States. Additionally, Chinese Taipei is a Member of the IATTC pursuant to Article XXVIII of the Antigua Convention, which allows fishing entities to agree to be bound by the terms of the Convention and the measures adopted by the Commission.

Colombia, Ecuador, Vanuatu, and Venezuela are Members of the IATTC under the 1949 Convention, but have not yet ratified the Antigua Convention.

Cooperating Non-Members

Cooperating Non-Member status was renewed for 2020 for Bolivia, Chile, Honduras, Indonesia, and Liberia.

Commission Headquarters

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
8901 La Jolla Shores Drive

La Jolla, California 92037-1509

Acting Executive Director: Jean-Francois Pulvenis

Telephone: (858) 546-7100

Fax: (858) 546-7133

Web Address: <http://www.iattc.org>

Budget

As with most other decisions under the Antigua Convention, the budget of the Commission is adopted by a consensus decision of the Members of the Commission present at a given meeting. In formulating and approving a budget, the Antigua Convention directs the Commission to give due consideration to the principle of cost effectiveness. The Commission maintains separate accounts for the activities carried out by IATTC and the AIDCP. The Antigua Convention provides that the amount of the contribution of each Member of the Commission to the budget shall be determined in accordance with a scheme that the Commission shall adopt, and amend, as required. The scheme must be transparent and equitable for all Members and must be set out in the financial regulations of the Commission.

At the first meetings of the IATTC following the entry into force of the Antigua Convention in 2010, the IATTC Working Group on Finance began discussions on the development of a contribution formula for use under the new Convention. In 2012, the Working Group was again unable to reach agreement on a long-term or permanent contribution formula, but did recommend an interim formula that will continue to be used until 2017 and beyond, until such time as a Member indicates that they can no longer accept its use for the basis of calculating contributions to the IATTC budget.

The provisionally approved IATTC budget for FY2020 is \$8,133,836. The United States assessed contribution is \$1,746,553 for FY2020.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

The Tuna Conventions Act of 1950, as amended, provides that the United States shall be represented by a total of not more than four Commissioners, of which, one must be an officer or employee of the Department of Commerce and not more than two may be appointed who reside in a State other than a State whose vessels maintain a substantial fishery in the Convention Area. The Commissioners are appointed by the President and shall be subject to supervision and removal by the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce. In the absence of any U.S. Commissioner, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary, may designate from time to time and for periods of time deemed appropriate Alternate U.S. Commissioners to the Commission. These Commissioners, along with the U.S. Department of State representative, comprise the U.S. Section to the IATTC.

B. U.S. Commissioners:

Andrew Lawler
NOAA Deputy Assistant Secretary -
International Fisheries
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room
5128
Washington, DC 20230
(301) 427-8061

William (Bill) W. Fox, Jr., Ph.D.
Retired Vice President and Managing
Director for Fisheries
World Wildlife Fund
San Diego, CA 92166
(571) 205-8845

Vacant

Vacant

C. Alternate to U.S. Commissioners

Vacant	John Zuanich Owner and Operator of JZ Trading San Pedro, CA (310) 710-4552
Mike Thompson Owner and Operator of Newport Landing Sportfishing and Davey's Locker Sportfishing San Juan Capistrano, CA (949) 500-5901	Dorothy Lowman 6507 SW Barnes Road Portland, OR 97225 (503) 804-4234

D. Advisory Structure:

The Tuna Conventions Act, as amended, provides that the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall appoint a General Advisory Committee (Committee) and a Scientific Advisory Subcommittee (Subcommittee) to advise the U.S. Section regarding policy and science issues, respectively, as well as U.S. positions associated with IATTC conservation and management measures. The Committee first met in September 2003 and all interested sectors - commercial and recreational fishing and environmental organizations - are represented on the Committee. The Subcommittee convened for the first time in 2010, as this was the first time that applications from the required minimum of five eligible persons were received. Under the recent amendments to the Tuna Convention Act, the terms of the Committee are fixed at three years. Each member of the advisory committees may reapply and there are no term limits. The Committee members are invited to attend all non-executive meetings of the U.S. Section and are given the opportunity to examine and be heard on all proposed programs, reports, recommendations, and regulations of the Commission.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

Under the 1949 Convention, the IATTC was established to "(1) study the biology of the tunas and related species of the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) to determine the effects that fishing and natural factors have on their abundance, and (2) to recommend appropriate conservation measures so that the stocks of fish can be maintained at levels which will afford maximum sustainable catches." The objective of the IATTC under the Antigua Convention is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of tuna and other fish stocks covered by the Convention, in accordance with the relevant rules of international law.

B. Organizational Structure:

The IATTC consists of States and regional economic integration organizations that are Parties to the 1949 Convention and/or the Antigua Convention, and any fishing entity that has expressed its formal commitment to abide by the terms of the Antigua Convention, and a Secretariat headed by a Director of Investigations. The principal duties and functions of the Commission, as reflected in the 1949 Convention and Antigua Convention include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) To promote, carry out and coordinate scientific research concerning the abundance, biology and biometry in the Convention Area of covered fish stocks and, as necessary, of associated or dependent species, and the effects of natural factors and human activities on the populations of these stocks and species;
- 2) To adopt measures that are based on the best scientific evidence available to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of covered fish stocks and to maintain or restore the populations of harvested species at levels of abundance which can produce the maximum sustainable yield;

- 3) To adopt, as necessary, conservation and management measures and recommendations for species belonging to the same ecosystem and that are affected by fishing for, or dependent on or associated with covered fish stocks to maintain or restore populations of such species above levels at which their reproduction may become seriously threatened; and
- 4) To apply the precautionary approach for covered fish stocks.

Approval of decisions, resolutions, recommendations, and publications is only by consensus of all Members. National sections may consist of one to four members appointed by the governments or the respective Contracting Members. Each national section may establish an advisory committee which is invited to attend non-executive sessions of the Commission meetings. The Director of Investigations is appointed by the Commission and is responsible for drafting programs of investigations, budget formulation, accounting and administrative support, directing technical staff, coordinating Commission work with other organizations and preparing administrative, scientific, and other reports of the Commission.

C. Programs:

To fulfill its mission, the Commission carries out an extensive research and data collection program. This program is conducted by a permanent, internationally recruited staff selected and directed by the Director of Investigations, who is responsible to the Commission. In addition, the IATTC has established a number of working groups to address specific management and organizational issues and has expanded the scope and nature of its management recommendations in recent years.

Fisheries Conservation and IATTC Management

The IATTC uses a combination of effort-based and catch-based measures to manage tuna stocks in the Convention Area. To address growing fishing capacity in the purse seine fleet, the IATTC has adopted measures intended to control fishing effort in the eastern Pacific Ocean. The IATTC adopted a measure in 2002 that limited the purse seine vessel well volume capacity available to Members at levels at the time of adoption ([C-02-03](#)). The IATTC is the first, and currently the only, tuna regional fishery management organization to establish a fleet capacity limit. The measure required purse seine vessels to be included on an IATTC Regional Vessel Register before being authorized to fish in the Convention Area. Additionally, the measure established a target purse seine well volume total capacity of 158,000 m³ based on recommendations of the IATTC scientific staff.

The Commission typically adopts tuna conservation and management measures on an annual or multi-annual basis. Since 2004, the Commission has adopted three-year measures for tropical tuna conservation in the eastern Pacific Ocean. In 2017, the Commission adopted a three-year measure on tropical tuna conservation ([C-17-02](#)). The IATTC measure on tropical tuna includes a variety of conservation measures: (1) time-area closures for the purse seine fishery; (2) a requirement to retain all bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin tuna caught, except fish considered unfit for human consumption for reasons other than size; and (3) longline catch limits for bigeye tuna. This measure is to be re-evaluated in 2020. Since 2012, the Commission has adopted measures to establish catch limits for Pacific bluefin tuna in the EPO. In 2018, the Commission adopted a short term two-year measure ([C-18-01](#)), and a long term measure ([C-18-02](#)) aiming to conserve and establish rebuilding targets for Pacific bluefin stocks.

The IATTC has also adopted conservation and management measures to address the bycatch and incidental capture of other living marine resources, such as seabirds ([C-11-02](#)), sea turtles ([C-19-04](#)), sharks ([C-05-03](#); [C-11-10](#); [C-16-05](#); [C-16-06](#); [C-19-05](#); and [C-19-06](#)), mobulid rays ([C-15-04](#)), as well as a measure on fish aggregating devices (FADs) ([C-19-01](#)).

Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

The IATTC has adopted measures to establish a vessel monitoring system ([C-14-02](#)), regulate transshipments ([C-12-07](#)), require International Maritime Organization (IMO) numbers ([C-18-06](#)), and list and sanction vessels engaged in IUU fishing ([C-19-02](#)). In 2011, the IATTC adopted a measure to implement a compliance and monitoring scheme ([C-11-07](#)), and results are reviewed annually at the meetings of the IATTC.

Additional Resources

A list of active IATTC resolutions and recommendations can be found on the Commission's website:

<http://www.iattc.org/ResolutionsActiveENG.htm>

A list of vessels authorized to fish for tuna and tuna-like species in the IATTC Convention Area can be found on the Commission's website: <https://www.iattc.org/VesselRegister/VesselList.aspx?List=RegVessels&Lang=ENG>

Minutes from the meetings of the Commission, as well as minutes from the various working groups, can also be found on the Commission's website: <http://www.iattc.org/Minutes/IATTC-AIDCP-Minutes-ReportsENG.htm>

Staff Contacts*NOAA Fisheries:*

Lyle Enriquez
HMS Branch Chief
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
501 W. Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, CA 90802-4213
Telephone: (562) 980-4025
Fax: (562) 980-4047

Rachel O'Malley
Office of International Affairs and Seafood
Inspection
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8373
Email: Rachel.O'Malley@noaa.gov

Department of State:

David Hogan
Acting Director, Office of Marine Conservation
(OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350

Convention for the Preservation of the Halibut Fishery of the Northern Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea: Basic Instrument for the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC)

Basic Instrument

Convention for the Preservation of the Halibut Fishery of the Northern Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea, 1953 (TIAS 2900)

Implementing Legislation

Northern Pacific Halibut Act of 1982 (as amended: 50 Stat. 325; 67 Stat. 494; 79 Stat. 902; 97 Stat. 78)

Member Nations

The United States and Canada

Commission Headquarters

International Pacific Halibut Commission
2320 W. Commodore Way Suite 300
Seattle, WA 98199-1287

Director: Dr. David T. Wilson
Telephone: (206) 634-1838
Web address: <http://www.iphc.int>

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

The United States is represented on the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) by three Commissioners who are appointed by the President for a period of 2 years (with eligibility for reappointment). Of these Commissioners, one must be a NOAA official, one must be a resident of Alaska, and one must be a nonresident of Alaska. In addition, one of these three Commissioners must be a voting member of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, may designate from time to time Alternate U.S. Commissioners to the IPHC.

B. U.S. Commissioners:

Christopher Oliver (Federal Commissioner)
Assistant Administrator
NOAA Fisheries
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Richard Yamada
President, Alaska Charter Association

Robert Alverson

C. Advisory Structure:

There are no formal provisions for a U.S. Advisory Committee to IPHC, although informal groups made up of U.S. and Canadian industry representatives, known as the IPHC Conference Board and the Processor Advisory Group, do attend and provide recommendations to annual Commission meetings.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The IPHC was created to conserve, manage, and rebuild the halibut stocks in the Convention Area to those levels that would achieve and maintain the maximum sustainable yield from the fishery. The yield definition was changed to optimum sustainable yield by amending the 1979 Protocol.

The halibut resource and fishery have been managed by the IPHC since 1923. The IPHC was established by a Convention between the United States and Canada, which has been revised several times to extend the Commission's authority and meet new conditions in the fishery. The most recent change, a protocol, was concluded in 1979 and involved an amendment to the 1953 Halibut Convention.

"Convention waters" are defined as the waters off the west coasts of Canada and the United States, including the southern as well as the western coasts of Alaska, within the respective maritime areas in which either Party exercises exclusive fisheries jurisdiction. For purposes of the Convention, the "maritime area" in which a Party exercises exclusive fisheries jurisdiction includes without distinction areas within and seaward of the territorial sea or internal waters of that Party.

B. Organizational Structure:

The IPHC consists of a Commission and staff. The Commission consists of six members; three representatives appointed by each Contracting Party. All decisions of the Commission are made by a concurring vote of at least two of the Commissioners of each Contracting Party. The research programs and regulatory actions of the Commission are coordinated by the IPHC staff, in consultation with the Commissioners. The IPHC staff currently consists of 27 permanent employees, including fishery biologists, administrative personnel and support staff.

In addition, the Commission is advised by a Conference Board, a Processor Advisory Group (PAG), and a Research Advisory Board. The Conference Board is a panel representing U.S. and Canadian commercial, native and sport halibut fishers. Created in 1931 by the Commission, the Board provides the industry/sport/native harvesters' perspectives on Commission proposals presented at Annual Meetings. Members of the Board are designated by union, vessel owner, recreational harvester, Native American, and Canadian First Nations organizations from both nations. Created in 1996, the Processor Advisory Group (PAG) represents halibut processors. Like the Conference Board, the PAG lends its opinion regarding Commission proposals and offers recommendations at IPHC Annual Meeting. The Research Advisory Board (RAB) was created in 1999 with representation from harvesters and processors to advise the Director and staff on Commission research programs.

C. Programs:

Under the Protocol to the Convention, the Commission retains a research staff and recommends, for the approval of the Parties, regulations designed to achieve the purpose of the Convention. The Protocol provides for: (1) the setting of quotas in the Convention Area, and (2) joint regulation of the halibut fishery in the entire Convention Area under Commission regulations. Neither U.S. nor Canadian halibut fishing vessels are presently allowed to fish in the waters of the other country. In 1991, Canada implemented an individual vessel quota (IVQ) system; a similar, individual fishing quota (IFQ) system for Alaska was implemented by the United States in 1995.

D. Conservation and Management Measures:

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) held its 96th Annual Meeting (AM096) in Anchorage, Alaska, U.S.A. on 3-7 January 2020. More than 200 Pacific halibut stakeholders attended the meeting, with approximately 100 more participating in web broadcasts of the meeting. The full Report of the AM096, associated

meeting documents (including allocation decisions), and presentations are available at the IPHC website (<https://iphc.int>).

E. Upcoming Meetings:

The IPHC 2020 Interim Meeting will be held virtually on 18-19 November. The next Annual Meeting (AM097) will take place virtually on 25-29 January 2021.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick E. Moran
Office of International Affairs (F/IA)
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10645
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Email: Pat.Moran@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Staci K. MacCorkle, PMP
International Relations Officer
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520-7878
Telephone: 202-647-3010
Email: MacCorkleSK@state.gov

Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean Basic Instrument for the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC)

Basic Instrument

[Convention](#) for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean, 1992 (hereafter referred to as the "Convention," Senate Treaty Document 102-30, 102d Congress, 2d Session).

Implementing Legislation

The North Pacific Anadromous Stocks [Act](#) of 1992 (Title VIII of Public Law 102-567).

Member Nations

Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States

Commission Headquarters

North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission
Suite 502, 889 West Pender Street
Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6C 3B2

Executive Director: Mr. Vladimir L. Radchenko
Telephone: (604) 775-5550
Fax: (604) 775-5577
Email: vrad@npafc.org
Web address: <http://www.npafc.org/>

Budget

The approved budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020/2021 is CAD\$933,950 with each Party contributing CAD\$180,000. The budget estimate for FY2021/2022 is CAD \$940,800 with each Party contributing CAD\$183,600. The NPAFC agreed to increase annual contribution by each Party by 2% annually starting from the 2021/22 FY. At the 2020 Annual Meeting, the Commission approved the rate of inflation be fixed at 2.0% per annum and that the duration of this measure will be five years. The budget estimate for FY 2022/2023 is CAD\$941,160 with each Party contributing CAD\$187,272

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

The United States is represented on the Commission by not more than three U.S. Commissioners who are appointed by the President and serve at his pleasure. Each U.S. Commissioner is appointed for a term not to exceed 4 years, but is eligible for reappointment. Of the three Commissioners, one must be an official of the U.S. Government, one a resident of the State of Alaska, and the third a resident of the State of Washington. Candidates for the non-Federal Commissioner positions must be knowledgeable or experienced concerning anadromous stocks and ecologically-related species of the North Pacific Ocean.

In addition, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, may designate from time to time alternate U.S. Commissioners to the NPAFC. The number of Alternate Commissioners that may be designated to a Commission meeting is limited to the number of authorized U.S. Commissioners that will not be present.

B. U.S. Commissioners

Doug Mecum (Alternate)
Deputy Regional Administrator
Alaska Regional Office
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
709 W 9th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Joe Mentor (Alternate)
Mentor Law Group, PLLC
411 First Avenue South, Suite 450
Seattle, WA 98104

Tommy Sheridan
Alaska Commissioner
P.O. Box 375
Cordova, Alaska 99574

C. Advisory Structure:

The North Pacific Anadromous Stocks Act of 1992 established an Advisory Panel to the United States Section of the NPAFC. The Advisory Panel shall be composed of: (1) the Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game; (2) the Director of the Washington Department of Fisheries and Wildlife; (3) one representative of the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission; and (4) 11 members (6 residents of the State of Alaska and 5 residents of the State of Washington) appointed by the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, from among a slate of 12 persons nominated by the Governor of Alaska and a slate of 10 persons nominated by the Governor of Washington. There must be at least one representative of commercial salmon fishing interests and one representative of environmental interests on each of the Governors' slates. As is the case with NPAFC Commissioners, Advisors must be knowledgeable of North Pacific anadromous stocks and ecologically related species. Advisors serve for a term not to exceed 4 years, and may not serve more than two consecutive terms. The terms of the most recent Washington Advisory Panel members will expire in April 2022 and the Alaska Advisory Panel members' terms will expire in November 2022.

Description**A. Mission/Purpose:**

The NPAFC serves as a forum for promoting the conservation of anadromous stocks and ecologically-related species, including marine mammals, sea birds, and non-anadromous fish, in the high seas area of the North Pacific Ocean. This area, as defined in the Convention, is "the waters of the North Pacific Ocean and its adjacent seas, north of 33E North Latitude beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured." In addition, the NPAFC serves as the venue for coordinating the collection, exchange, and analysis of scientific data regarding the above species within Convention waters. It also coordinates high seas fishery enforcement activities by member countries (the Convention prohibits directed fishing for salmonids and includes provisions to minimize the incidental take of salmonids in other fisheries in the Convention area).

B. Organizational Structure:

The NPAFC has three standing committees: the Committee on Enforcement (ENFO), the Committee on Finance and Administration (F&A), and the Committee on Scientific Research and Statistics (CSRS). The committees are responsible for providing accurate and timely advice to the Commission in the areas relating to the finances of the Secretariat and the scope of the enforcement activities and scientific research conducted under the auspices of the Commission.

C. Programs:

The NPAFC is an international organization that promotes the conservation of Pacific salmon and steelhead in the North Pacific and its adjacent seas. It serves as a venue for cooperation in and coordination of enforcement activities and scientific research. The vast majority of salmon catches in the North Pacific originate from NPAFC member countries, which are Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States.

The NPAFC and its counterpart in the Atlantic, the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) have partnered on the International Year of the Salmon (IYS), an international framework for collaborative outreach and research. Through outreach efforts the IYS will raise awareness of what humans can do to better ensure salmon and their varied habitats are conserved and restored against the backdrop of increasing environmental variability, and thus the overall theme is ‘salmon and people in a changing world’. The IYS is intended to stimulate an investment in research and leave a legacy of knowledge, data/information systems, tools, and a new generation of scientists better equipped to provide timely advice to inform rational management of salmon.

The IYS organization includes independent Pacific and Atlantic IYS steering committees that oversee outreach activities, identify research priorities, support fund raising and establish reporting procedures. Outreach and research will be planned at three spatial scales—the hemispheric or "salmosphere" scale, the basin scale (Pacific, Atlantic, Arctic or Baltic), or at the local coastal level.

The following broad scientific themes have been identified for the IYS:

- Status of Salmon: to understand the present status of salmon and their environment
- Salmon in a changing salmosphere: to understand and quantify the effects of natural environmental variability and anthropogenic factors affecting salmon distribution and abundance and to make projections of their future changes
- New Frontiers: to develop new technologies and analytical methods to advance salmon science and to explore the uncharted regions of the salmosphere
- Human Dimension: to investigate the cultural, social, and economic elements that depend upon sustainable salmon populations
- Information Systems: to develop an integrated archive of accessible electronic data collected during the IYS and tools to support future research

In 2019, the Commission presented Captain John Vince O’Shea, retired USCG, with the prestigious NPAFC Award for his sustained contributions in the areas of compliance and enforcement to the Commission’s mission to conserve and manage anadromous salmon and steelhead stocks in the North Pacific Ocean and its adjacent seas.

Outcomes of the 28th Annual Meeting: The 28th Annual Meeting of the NPAFC took place May 19 - June 11, 2020, virtually, by e-mail. At the meeting, Plenary Sessions and the Commission’s three standing committees convened to discuss issues related to salmon and steelhead in the NPAFC Convention Area.

NPAFC member countries discussed coordinated enforcement efforts at the 2020 enforcement meetings. These efforts covered significant portions of the NPAFC Convention Area with over 430 hours of aircraft patrols and more than 260 ship-days, to deter and interrupt illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity. These combined multilateral efforts identified multiple violations of Conservation and Management Measures established by regional fisheries management organizations in the North Pacific Ocean; however, none involved high-seas driftnet activity or illegal retention of salmon. Member countries also discussed the status of acceptance of the Food and Agriculture Organization Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate IUU Fishing (PSMA). The one-day ENFO/CSRS workshop on “Threats and Knowledge Gaps Related to Pacific Salmon Conservation on the High Seas” was postponed until May 2021.

At the Commission’s scientific meetings, leading salmon researchers from member countries reviewed commercial catch statistics compiled from information provided by each of the member countries. The total preliminary salmon catch in 2019 was 968.7 thousand metric tonnes (~563.3 million fish). Pink salmon constituted the majority of the total commercial catch (54% by weight) followed by chum (24%) and sockeye salmon (19%). Coho comprised 2%

of the catch, while Chinook salmon, cherry salmon, and steelhead trout were each less than 1% of the catch by weight.

In 2020, salmon research surveys were planned to take place in the Bering Sea, southern Chukchi Sea, the northwestern North Pacific, and the southern Sea of Okhotsk. Researchers will examine conditions such as migration timing, abundance, distribution, survival, marine ecology, run size forecasting, stock identification, and salmon growth and body condition at sea. On April 7, 2020, the International Gulf of Alaska Expedition 2020—with contributions from the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF), the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BC SRIF) and donors from the fishing industry, foundations, and private individuals—was successfully completed with 12 scientists from Canada, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America aboard the chartered Canadian Fishing Vessel Pacific Legacy. This expedition is a continuation of the international scientific effort to identify mechanisms and environmental factors that could determine the annual abundance and condition of Pacific salmonids in the Gulf of Alaska.

The Commission discussed activities and plans for the IYS which had a focal year in 2019 with research and outreach projects and events continuing through 2022. Thus far, the IYS has been successful in achieving its overarching goal to build resilience of salmon and people in a changing world. The High Seas Expeditions have been especially rewarding in strengthening international collaboration and increasing outreach and communications capacity. Moving forward from the focal year (2019), it will be essential that the IYS strengthens and maintains these partnerships for years to come, and continues to increase its scope for raising awareness about the state of Pacific salmon, the work that is being done to protect them, and to promote sustainable populations.

The 2020 NPAFC Annual Meeting closed with an invitation from Japan to the Parties to attend the 2021 Annual Meeting in Hakodate, Japan. According to the normal rotation, Korea would host the next meeting, but since the 2020 meeting took place via email due to COVID-19, Japan will host the Annual Meeting in 2021 and Korea invited the Commission to host the 2022 Annual Meeting in Korea.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Kent Laborde
Foreign Affairs Specialist
Office of International Affairs and Seafood
Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10738
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8364
Email: kent.laborde@noaa.gov

Doug Mecum
Deputy Regional Administrator
Alaska Regional Office
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
709 W 9th Street
Juneau, AK 99801
Telephone: (907) 586-7221
Fax: (907) 586-7249
Email: doug.mecum@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Elana Mendelson
Office of Marine Conservation
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520
Telephone: 202-647-1073
Fax: 1-202-736-7350
Email: MendelsonEK@state.gov

Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada Concerning Pacific Salmon Basic Instrument for the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC)

Basic Instrument

Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada Concerning Pacific Salmon, 1985.

Implementing Legislation

Pacific Salmon Treaty [Act](#) of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3631).

Member States

The United States and Canada.

Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) Headquarters

Pacific Salmon Commission
1155 Robson Street, Suite 600
Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada V6E 1B5

Executive Secretary: Mr. John Field
Telephone: (604) 684-8081
Fax: (604) 666-8707
Web address: <http://www.psc.org>
General email requests: info@psc.org

Budget

Each Party to the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) contributes equal amounts to a bilaterally approved annual budget for joint expenses of the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC), with supplementary payments made to mitigate the PSC's unfunded pension liability. The Parties have identified the need for increased annual contributions over the next ten years to respond to annual salary increases, inflationary increases of meeting and operational costs, and to supplement the unprecedented drop in income from fish sold to recover the costs of test fishing.

Additionally, each Party pays its own incurred expenses. An Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA) between the Department of State and the National Marine Fisheries Services is used to transfer funds to pay for the U.S. Section staff, U.S. Section members' travel, and the costs associated with meeting rooms, supplies, and overhead. Non-federal and non-state Commissioner and Panel members receive a stipend for their PSC work, also funded through the Department of State. PST implementation funds, which are separate from the IAA monies, pay for state and tribal costs and grants to fulfill the fisheries conservation, enhancement, research, and management responsibilities described in the PST, as well as Endangered Species Act requirements for implementing each fishery.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

The appointment process for U.S. members of the PSC includes several unique features. The legislation implementing the treaty specifies: "The United States shall be represented on the Commission by four Commissioners who are knowledgeable or experienced concerning Pacific salmon, to be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the President. Of these, one shall be an official of the U.S. Government who shall be a non-voting member of the U.S. Section; one shall be a resident of the State of Alaska and shall be appointed from a list of at least six qualified individuals nominated by the Governor of that State; one shall be a resident of the States of Oregon or Washington and shall be appointed from a list of at least six qualified individuals nominated by the Governors of those States; and one shall be appointed from a list of at least six qualified individuals nominated by the treaty Indian Tribes of the States of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Two of the initial appointments shall be for 2-year terms; all other appointments shall be for 4-year terms." Legislation also provides for the designation of an

Alternate Commissioner for each Commissioner. In the absence of a Commissioner, the Alternate Commissioner may exercise all functions of the Commissioner.

B. Commissioners:

Mr. Phil Anderson (Washington Commissioner)
P.O. Box 696
Westport, WA 98595

Mr. Douglas Vincent-Lang (Alaska Commissioner)
Deputy Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish and Wildlife
1255 W 8th St
Juneau, AK 99801

Mr. W. Ron Allen (Tribal Commissioner)
Tribal Chairman
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
1033 Old Blyn Highway
Sequim, WA 98382

Dr. Scott Rumsey (Federal Commissioner)
Deputy Regional Administrator, West Coast Region
National Marine Fisheries Service
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd #1100, Portland, OR 97232

C. Alternate Commissioners:

Mr. William F. Auger (Alaska Alt. Com.)
PO Box 9335
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Mr. McCoy Oatman (Tribal Alt. Com.)
PO Box 305
Lapwai, ID 83540

Mrs. Staci MacCorkle (Federal Alt. Com.)
Office of Marine Conservation
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW, Suite 2758
Washington, D.C. 20520

Mr. Rick Klumph (Oregon Alt. Com.)
920 Azalea Lane
Tillamook, OR 97141

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The PSC's mission is to serve as a forum for cooperation between the United States and Canada in the establishment and implementation of salmon fishery management regimes for the international conservation and harvest sharing of intermingling North Pacific salmon stocks. Implementation of the principles of the Pacific Salmon Treaty enables the two countries, through better conservation and enhancement, to "prevent overfishing and provide for optimum production; and provide for each Party to receive benefits equivalent to the production of salmon originating in its waters." The Commission also serves as a forum for consultation between the Parties on their salmonid enhancement operations and research programs.

B. Organizational Structure:

The Commission has a complex organizational structure which includes four regional Panels (Northern, Transboundary, Fraser River, and Southern) consisting of 23 U.S. Panel Members, 15 of whom are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. Each Panel member on the Northern, Fraser River, and Southern Panels has an Alternate Member (16 total), 8 of whom are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. The Northern Panel's stocks of concern are those originating in rivers between Cape Suckling in Alaska and Cape Caution in British Columbia. The Transboundary Panel's stocks of concern are from rivers that originate in British Columbia and flow to the sea through Southeast Alaska. The Fraser River Panel is the only panel with regulatory responsibility. It is responsible for stocks of sockeye and pink salmon originating in the Fraser River. The Southern Panel is concerned with stocks originating in rivers of Canada south of Cape Caution (not including Fraser River pink and sockeye salmon) and the rivers of Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

The Panels are responsible for providing advice to the Commission on the fishing regimes for the intercepting salmon fisheries in their respective regions, i.e., those in which one or both countries intercept salmon spawned in the other country. The fishing regimes in the Treaty are contained in Annex IV and must be renegotiated from time to time. This is done by reviewing technical data on annual fishing plans, regulations, and the salmon enhancement programs of each country. Based in part on the advice provided by the Panels, the PSC develops catch limits and related provisions to present to the two governments. These recommendations, which become effective upon approval by both governments, are then implemented by each country's domestic management authorities.

C. Programs:

Signed by Canada and the United States in 1985, the Pacific Salmon Treaty (Treaty) provides a framework for the two countries to cooperate on the management, research, and enhancement of Pacific salmon stocks of mutual concern. The Treaty establishes a process for developing, implementing, and monitoring science-based fishery management regimes to provide for shared salmon conservation and harvest objectives, working to meet the needs of the parties while eliminating overfishing.

The arrangements and institutions established in 1985 proved effective in the early years of the Treaty, with subsequent amendments negotiated in 1999, 2009, and 2019. After two years of negotiations, the Parties implemented a new 10-year agreement for these fisheries that is now in force 2019 through 2028.

The 2019 agreement maintains abundance based fishing regimes, based on run strength, for the major salmon intercepting fisheries in the United States and Canada. The 2019 agreement reduced pressure on stocks of concern, including harvest reductions of up to 15% in Oregon and Washington, 12.5% in British Columbia, and 7.5% in Alaska applied on a sliding scale depending on Chinook salmon abundance. The 2019 agreement also provides additional conservation objectives for several salmon populations, including unfunded measures to increase fish hatchery production to mitigate impacts to endangered or threatened Chinook salmon, and enhance prey availability for Southern Resident Killer Whales. In support of science-based decision-making, the 2019 agreement supports an unfunded program to identify hatchery salmon in real time, as well as new methods to determine annual Chinook salmon abundance and catch limits. These regimes are designed to implement the conservation and harvest sharing principles of the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

Remaining in place are two bilaterally-managed regional funds that were established in 1999: the Northern Boundary and Transboundary Rivers Restoration and Enhancement Fund (northern fund) and the Southern Boundary Restoration and Enhancement Fund (southern fund). The Pacific Salmon Commission oversees these two funds to support projects in Canada and the United States that develop improved information for resource management, rehabilitate and restore marine and freshwater salmon habitats, and enhance wild stock production through low technology techniques. The United States contributed US\$75 million and US\$65 million to the northern and southern funds, respectively, over a 4-year period after the 1999 Agreement.

Overview of the Agreement's Current Fishing Regimes in Annex IV of the Treaty

Transboundary Rivers (Chapter 1): Chapter 1 addresses the cooperative management of Chinook, sockeye, and coho salmon originating in the Canadian portion of rivers that flow from Canada through the Alaskan panhandle to the Pacific Ocean, including the Stikine, Taku and Alsek Rivers. Appendix to Annex IV, Chapter 1 describes Canada's and the United States sockeye salmon enhancement commitments and programs for the Transboundary Rivers, specifically in the Taku and Stikine Rivers.

Northern British Columbia and Southeast Alaska (Chapter 2): Chapter 2 primarily addresses the management of sockeye and pink salmon fisheries in southern Southeast Alaska and northern British Columbia. It specifies how the fisheries will be managed to achieve conservation and fair sharing of salmon stocks that intermingle in the border area. The fixed catch ceilings contained in the expired agreements were replaced with abundance-based fishing regimes in 1999. These regimes allow harvests to vary from year to year depending on the abundance of salmon. Of particular note, because they resolve long-contentious issues, are agreements governing the harvest of Nass and Skeena river sockeye in Alaska's purse seine fisheries near Noyes Island (District 104) and the harvest of Nass River sockeye in the gillnet fishery at Tree Point (District 101), and Canada's various marine net fisheries for Alaska pink salmon and its troll fishery for Alaska pink salmon in specific Canadian fishing areas. Additional

support for the conservation of Nass and Skeena River sockeye salmon, including additional management actions, a comprehensive escapement goal analysis, review of sockeye run reconstruction model, and sockeye genetic samples, as well as a harvest pattern analysis of the Alaska pink salmon fishery were included in the 2019 amendments. Appendix to Annex IV, Chapter 2 includes the methodology for the Annual Allowable Harvest.

Chinook Salmon (Chapter 3): Chapter 3 addresses the management of Chinook stocks, including marine and certain freshwater fisheries in Alaska, Canada, Washington, and Oregon. Chinook stocks vary in status from healthy stocks that meet long-term production goals to stocks with conservation concerns, including some in the U.S. Pacific Northwest that are listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and some in Canada that are assessed to be at increasing risk of extinction and under consideration for listing under Canada's Species at Risk Act. Successful Chinook conservation, restoration, and harvest management depends on bilaterally coordinated programs including: the restoration and rebuilding of depressed natural stocks while providing opportunities for harvest, scientifically sound enhancement activities, maintaining or increasing the overall harvest rates exerted on hatchery-origin Chinook, a 10-year Chinook salmon Coded Wire Tag and Recovery program that begins in 2019, a Mark Selective Fisheries Fund subject to the availability of funds, and a work group to explore issues related to Okanagan Chinook. An abundance-based framework is used to manage all Chinook fisheries. Fishing regimes are managed using either the aggregate abundance of Chinook salmon present in the fishery or on the status of individual stocks or stock groups in the fishery. The 2019 agreement reduces pressure on stocks of concern, including harvest reductions of up to 15% in Oregon and Washington, 12.5% in British Columbia, and 7.5% in Alaska applied on a sliding scale depending on Chinook salmon abundance, as compared to the 2009 agreement that it replaced. Appendix A to Annex IV, Chapter 3 includes understandings and obligations of the Chinook Technical Committee. Appendix B to Annex IV, Chapter 3 includes calculations and base period data related to estimating the Catch Per Unit Effort from the southeast Alaska winter troll fishery in district 113 during statistical weeks 41 – 48. Appendix C to Annex IV, Chapter 3 includes a table showing the relationship between AIs, catches and HRIs. Attachment I includes a list of indicator stocks and the fishery limits and management objectives associated with each stock.

Fraser River Sockeye and Pink Salmon (Chapter 4): Chapter 4 applies to Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon harvested in marine waters of the Straits' of Juan de Fuca and Georgia, the San Juan Islands, the Fraser River and its tributaries; specific waters defining the Fraser Panel Area are identified in Annex II of the Treaty. The most recent negotiations for Chapter 4 amendments concluded in February 2019. The parties agreed to provisionally apply this chapter as of January 1, 2020 until it formally enters into force. Same as the other Chapters, Chapter 4 shall apply through 2028.

Coho Salmon (Chapter 5): Chapter 5 covers coho management, recognizing that some coho stocks are below levels necessary to sustain maximum harvest. The chapter provides an outline of conservation, research, and management regimes for border area fisheries in southern British Columbia and Washington State. The fishing regime includes rules that establish harvest limits in specified border area fisheries. The rules are designed to limit exploitation rates on natural coho stocks to sustainable levels, taking into account all fisheries affecting the stocks, thereby improving the long-term prospects of sustainable, healthy fisheries in both countries.

Southern British Columbia and Washington State Chum Salmon (Chapter 6): Chapter 6 covers chum conservation, research, and fisheries management in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Puget Sound, Johnstone Strait, Strait of Georgia, and Fraser River. Management incorporates certain refinements to the provisions that trigger fisheries directed at chum salmon in the Strait of Georgia and Puget Sound. The 2019 refinements further restrict fisheries in years of low Fraser chum abundance and expand fishing opportunities in years of high abundance. These refinements will have only a minor impact on the allocations of catches, but will improve the effectiveness of the regime.

General Obligations (Chapter 7): Chapter 7 notes that “with respect to intercepting fisheries not dealt with elsewhere in the PST, unless otherwise agreed, neither Party shall initiate new intercepting fisheries, nor conduct or redirect fisheries in a manner that intentionally increases interceptions”.

Yukon River (Chapter 8): Chapter 8 covers Yukon River fisheries management regimes, including rebuilding and conserving stocks, while providing benefits to the fisheries of both counties on this river system.

The 2019 agreement can be found at the PSC website at <http://www.psc.org>.

2020 Update: The PSC held its 35th Annual Meeting on February 18-21, 2020, in Vancouver, B.C. At this meeting the PSC focused on issues relating to the implementation of the 2019 agreement.

Future Meetings: The next Commission Session of the PSC will be held October 19-23, 2020, in Vancouver, B.C. The PSC Post Season Meeting will be held January 11-15, 2021, in Vancouver, B.C. and the 36th Annual Meeting will be held February 8-12, 2021, in Portland, OR.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Courtney Hann, U.S. Program Manager, Pacific Salmon
Commission
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
7600 Sand Point Way
Seattle, WA 98115-0070
Telephone: (206) 526-4338
Email: Courtney.Hann@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Staci MacCorkle, International Affairs Officer
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Suite 2758
Washington, D.C. 20520-7878
Telephone: (202) 647-3010
E-mail: MacCorkleSK@state.gov

Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea

Implementing Legislation

There is no implementing legislation for the [Convention](#).

Parties

Japan, People's Republic of China (China), Republic of Korea (Korea), Republic of Poland (Poland), Russian Federation, and the United States.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The objectives of the Convention are:

- "1. To establish an international regime for conservation, management, and optimum utilization of pollock resources in the Convention Area [the high seas area of the Bering Sea beyond the U.S. and Russian 200-mile jurisdictions];
2. To restore and maintain pollock resources in the Bering Sea at levels which will permit their maximum sustainable yield;
3. To cooperate in the gathering and examining of factual information concerning pollock and other living marine resources in the Bering Sea; and
4. To provide, if the Parties agree, a forum in which to consider the establishment of necessary conservation and management measures for other living marine resources in the Convention Area as may be required in the future."

B. Organizational Structure:

The Convention does not provide for a commission. It does, however, specify that Parties will convene an Annual Conference and establish a Scientific and Technical (S&T) Committee. The functions of the Annual Conference are, among other things, to establish an annual allowable harvest level (AHL) for pollock in the Convention Area, establish an annual individual national pollock quota (INQ) for each Party, adopt appropriate pollock conservation and management measures, establish a Plan of Work for the S&T Committee, and discuss cooperative enforcement measures and receive enforcement reports from each Party. Parties may also use the Annual Conference to determine the scope of any cooperative scientific research on, and conservation and management measures for, living marine resources other than pollock covered by the Convention.

The S&T Committee has the charge to "compile, exchange, and analyze information on fisheries harvests, fish stocks, and other living marine resources covered by this Convention in accordance with the Plan of Work established by the Annual Conference, and shall investigate other scientific matters as may be referred to it by the Annual Conference." The S&T Committee also makes recommendations to the Annual Conference regarding the conservation and management of pollock, including the AHL.

C. Advisory Body:

No formal U.S. advisory body has been legislated for the Convention. However, the U.S. Department of State has invited the 12-member "North Pacific and Bering Sea Fisheries Advisory Body," appointed to advise the U.S.

Representative to the U.S.-Russia Intergovernmental Consultative Committee (ICC), to serve informally as the advisory body. This group consists of the following individuals:

- The Director of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife of the State of Washington;
- The Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game of the State of Alaska;
- Five members appointed by the Secretary of State from a list of 10 nominees provided by the Governor of Alaska; and,
- Five members appointed by the Secretary of State from a list of 10 nominees provided by the Governor of Washington.

D. Background:

The development in the mid-to-late 1980s of an extensive pollock fishery in the central Bering Sea area of the Aleutian Basin, beyond the U.S. and Russian 200-mile zones, was of great concern to U.S. and Russian fishing interests. The United States closed a domestic fishery as a result of the adverse impact this unregulated fishery was having on U.S. pollock stocks. Concern also extended to bycatch problems associated with the fishery.

The central Bering Sea pollock fishery was conducted by trawl vessels from China, Japan, Korea, Poland, and the former Soviet Union. Catch data submitted by these countries indicated that annual harvests in the area rose to approximately 1.5 million metric tons (t) in the years leading up to 1989, largely due to drastic declines in catch and catch-per-unit-effort, leading to a total catch of less than 300,000 t in 1991 and only 10,000 t in 1992. As a result, the governments involved agreed to a voluntary suspension of fishing in the area for 1993-94. During the 2-year suspension of fishing, an agreed scientific monitoring program was carried out that showed no evidence of the recovery of the resource.

On February 11, 1994, after 3 years of negotiations, the Parties initialed the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the central Bering Sea. Its major principles include: no fishing permitted in the Convention area unless the biomass of the Aleutian Basin stock exceeds a threshold of 1.67 million t (if the parties cannot agree on an estimate of the biomass, the estimate of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center and its Russian counterpart will be used); allocation procedures; 100 percent observer and satellite transmitter coverage; and prior notification of entry into the Convention area and of transshipment activities.

On June 16, 1994, the Convention was signed by China, Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States. Japan and Poland signed it on August 4, 1994, and August 25, 1994, respectively. The Convention entered into force on December 8, 1995, for Russia, Poland, China, and the United States, on December 21, 1995, for Japan, and on January 4, 1996, for Korea.

At the 14th Annual Conference of the Parties held on August 31-September 1, 2009, in Stevenson, Washington, the Parties adopted revised Rules of Procedure (Annex III of the Report of the First Annual Conference) for holding "virtual meetings" via teleconferences or other electronic forms of communication. To test the effectiveness of such meetings, the United States agreed to host the 15th Annual Conference and the S&T Committee Meeting virtually, with the understanding that the S&T Committee Meeting would be held well in advance of the Annual Conference. The Parties recommended that the Party hosting the Annual Conference distribute available scientific information at least 45 days in advance of the Annual Conference, if possible. Pending the success of the trial virtual meeting, the Parties would resume the normal rotation for hosting future virtual meetings beginning in 2011. The description of the "virtual" Annual Conference process can be found at:

http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM/CBS/15th_annual_conference.htm

The United States conducted the S&T Committee Meeting from 1-25 August 2010, and the 15th Annual Conference from 22 September-6 October 2010. It was the first Annual Conference to be conducted via electronic mail.

Current Status

The 24th Annual Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea was hosted by the Russian Federation, 25 October to 15 November, 2019 via Virtual Process Conference.

The Allowable Harvest Level (AHL) was again set at zero for 2020 because the minimum biomass level needed to trigger a non-zero AHL has not been reached in accordance with the Convention Annex. The process described in Article VII Part 1 of the Annex to the Convention was followed and the AHL for 2020 was set at zero. Since the AHL for 2020 was set at zero, no individual national quotas could be established.

Based on the report of the Scientific and Technical Committee, there was no new advice and consequently, no new conservation and management measures were adopted. The Parties agreed to adopt the same terms and conditions for trial fishing in 2020 as agreed to at the 2010 Annual Meeting. As in past Annual Conferences, the Parties recommended that countries planning to conduct trial fishing give at least one month lead time prior to fishing in order to facilitate enforcement efforts.

The Parties agreed to continue the virtual meeting process for 2020.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Kent Laborde
Foreign Affairs Specialist
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10738
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8364
Email: kent.laborde@noaa.gov

Region:

Glenn Merrill
Assistant Regional Administrator
Alaska Region (F/AK)
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
709 W 9th Street
Juneau, AK 99802-1668
Telephone: (907) 586-7775
Email: Glenn.Merrill@noaa.gov

Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada on Pacific Coast Albacore Tuna Vessels and Port Privileges

Implementing Legislation

Implementing legislation was signed on April 13, 2004, as Public Law 108-219, 118 Stat. 615.

Parties

The United States and Canada

Description/history

The Treaty entered into force in 1982. In 2001, at the request of the U.S. albacore fishing industry, the United States requested consultations with Canada for the purpose of discussing limitations on the catch or effort by fishing vessels of one Party operating in the jurisdiction of the other Party. Following initial consultations, three subsequent negotiating sessions culminated in agreement in April 2002 to [amend](#) the Treaty. The U.S. Senate gave its advice and consent to the Treaty amendments, and Congress enacted H.R. 2584 (Public Law 108-219) on March 29, 2004, to authorize the Secretary of Commerce to issue regulations to implement the amended Treaty. The President signed H.R. 2584 into law on April 13, 2004. Proposed regulations to allow the United States to implement the amendments to the Treaty were published in April 2004 and final regulations followed in June 2004.

The United States and Canada agreed to allow fishing vessels of the other Party to fish for albacore tuna in waters under its fisheries jurisdiction beyond 12 nautical miles during a fishing season that occurs from June through October. The Treaty requires that the United States and Canada annually exchange lists of fishing vessels which may fish for albacore tuna in each other's waters. The vessels agree to abide by the provisions of the Treaty, which include: vessel marking; recordkeeping; and reporting. The Treaty also allows the fishing vessels of each Party to enter designated fishing ports of the other Party to:

1. Land their catches of albacore without payment of duties, and
2. Transship catches in bond under the supervision of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to any port of the flag state, or
3. Sell them for export in bond, or
4. Sell them locally on payment of the applicable customs duty and
5. Obtain fuel, supplies, repairs, and equipment on the same basis as albacore tuna vessels of the other Party.

When the Treaty was amended in 2002, it had a default provision that if no agreement was reached to extend the arrangement or negotiate a new limit regime after three years, specific fishing limits would be triggered (i.e., 94 Canadian vessels allowed in U.S. waters for four months or 376 vessel months). The provision was first used for the 2007 fishing season and repeated again in 2008. The Parties renegotiated the reciprocal fishing regime in 2008 and agreed on a three-year regime for 2009-2011, which subsequently expired at the end of the 2011 fish season. When established, this regime left in place previous provisions regarding the exchange of scientific data and fishery information as well as the practice of annual Treaty consultations. However, the regime agreed to in 2008 did contain a number of significant changes, which included:

1. The Parties were to exchange a list of vessels for the upcoming fishing season; Canada submits a fixed list of vessels to the United States by June 1 and the United States provided their provisional list to Canada by July 1. Information on vessel lengths was also required.
2. The fishing season extended from June 15 through October 31.
3. The number of Canadian vessels fishing in U.S. waters was limited to 110 and the number of U.S. vessels fishing in Canada was to be reflective of "historical levels." The use of vessel months to limit access was no longer in use.

4. Canadian vessels fishing in U.S. waters could only use troll gear while U.S. vessels were allowed to use both troll and pole-and-bait methods.
5. The implementation of management resolutions at the international level or management requirements at the domestic level were to be considered as sufficient triggers for terminating the Treaty.
6. If national allocations by the appropriate regional fishery management organization had been established during the tenure of the regime, allocations received by Canada and the United States attributable to catch taken in the waters of the host country will be reassigned to the host country.

Upon the expiration of the 2009-2011 fishing regime, the United States and Canada entered into discussion for renewing a reciprocal fishing access regime but could not come to agreement in advance of the 2012 season. As a result, there was no reciprocal fishing in 2012. Subsequently, the Parties restarted negotiations and reached agreement on a renewed reciprocal fishing access agreement for 2013 (one year) with the United States noting that any future fishing regime for 2014 and beyond may include a complete phase-out of reciprocal fishing. The 2013 regime agreement contained changes from the 2009-2011 regime, including extending the fishing season from June 15 through October 31 for U.S. vessels fishing in Canada and June 15 through September 15 for Canadian vessels fishing in the United State and limiting the number of Canadian vessels fishing in U.S. waters to 45 and the number of U.S. vessels fishing in Canada continued to be reflective of “historical levels.”

In 2014, the Parties negotiated and reached agreement on a three-year fishing regime under the Treaty for the years 2014-2016 that mirrored the regime adopted for 2013. In 2016, an agreement was reached to extend the existing regime, with no substantive changes, for 2017-2019. Negotiations for another 3-year (2020-2022) renewal of reciprocal fishing are currently underway. Terms and conditions governing reciprocal fishing and port access activities are set forth in Annexes to the Treaty

For further information regarding the current stock status of the north Pacific Albacore tuna stock and domestic/international management efforts relative to the U.S./Canada Pacific Albacore Agreement, please see the contacts below.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick Moran
Office of International Affairs and Seafood
Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: pat.moran@noaa.gov

Department of State:

David Hogan
Deputy Director, Office of Marine Conservation
(OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C. Street, NW, Rm. 2758
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350

Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada on Pacific Hake/Whiting

Basic Instrument

Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada on Pacific Hake/Whiting (TIAS 08-635)

Implementing Legislation

Implementing legislation was signed on January 12, 2007, as Title VI of Public Law 109-479, and was amended in 2011 in Title III, Section 302 of Pub. L. 111-348.

Parties

The United States and Canada

Description

The Agreement was signed on November 21, 2003. The U.S. Senate gave its advice and consent to the Agreement, and Congress approved H.R. 5946 on December 7, 2006. The President signed H.R. 5946 into law (Public Law 109-479) on January 12, 2007, and signed the instrument of ratification for the Agreement on May 3, 2007. The Agreement entered into force on June 25, 2008, with the exchange of diplomatic notes with Canada. However, implementation of the agreement was delayed because there were errors in the implementing legislation concerning conflict of interest provisions for panel members and the correct number of members on the Joint Technical committee. These errors were corrected with approval of Public Law 111-348, which was signed into law on January 4, 2011. The 2012 whiting season was the first year that the whiting/hake harvest levels were established via the Agreement.

The Agreement implementing legislation tasks the Secretary of Commerce with carrying out the agreement and authorizes him to issue regulations to implement the Treaty. The Agreement established, for the first time, agreed percentage shares of the transboundary stock of Pacific hake, also known as Pacific whiting. It also created a process through which U.S. and Canadian scientists and fisheries managers recommend the total catch of Pacific hake each year, to be divided between the countries by a set percentage formula. Stakeholders from both countries have significant input into this process. The Agreement not only allows the Parties to prevent overfishing, but also provides long-term stability for U.S. fishers and processors and a structure for future scientific collaboration.

Current Issues

For the first time since implementation of the Agreement, the parties did not come to agreement in 2020 on a final coastwide Total Allowable Catch (TAC). The 2019 TAC was 597,500 mt.

Although there was not a disagreement on the supporting science or stock assessment, the parties disagreed on how to interpret and act on that science. The United States published a rule on June 18, 2020 (85 FR 36803) that implemented a final coastwide TAC of 575,000 mt. Canada has completed their regulatory process and decided on a final coastwide TAC of 400,000 mt.

More information on the Pacific Hake/Whiting Agreement can be found at:

http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/management/whiting/pacific_whiting_treaty.html.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Northwest Region:

Frank D. Lockhart
Senior Policy Advisor, Groundfish and
Coastal Pelagic Species
Sustainable Fisheries Division
National Marine Fisheries Service – West Coast Region
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115
Telephone: (206) 526-6142
Email: frank.lockhart@noaa.gov

Headquarters:

Patrick E. Moran
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Email: pat.moran@noaa.gov

Treaty on Fisheries between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America South Pacific Tuna Treaty (SPTT)

Implementing Legislation

South Pacific Tuna [Act](#) of 1988 as amended (U.S.C. 973 et seq.)

Parties

The United States and Pacific Island Parties (Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu)

Description

The SPTT entered into force in 1988. After an initial 5-year agreement, the SPTT was extended in 1993 and again in March 2003. In 2016, the United States and the Pacific Island Parties (PIPs) agreed to revise and extend the South Pacific Tuna Treaty for a period of 6 years. A related Economic Assistance Agreement between the United States and the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) was also renewed. The Treaty provides access for U.S. purse seine fishing vessels to fish in the EEZ's of the Pacific Island Parties. The Treaty includes a number of terms and conditions including mandatory observers and vessel monitoring system (VMS). The Treaty has linkages to the requirements of Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention (WCPFC), and the Nauru Agreement.

Budget

Under the multilateral treaty, the terms for the level of access (vessel days) to be afforded U.S. vessels and the associated level of fees to be paid by U.S. vessel owners are included in an annexed Access and Fee Agreement which covers six Licensing Periods, beginning on 1 January 2017.

Also associated with the SPTT is an Economic Assistance Agreement between the U.S. Government (U.S. Agency for International Development) and the FFA. The U.S. Government will pay \$23 million annually, subject to the availability of appropriated funds for this purpose, into an economic development fund administered by the FFA. The FFA ensures that the fund is used to support economic development programs in the region.

In addition to paying access (vessel days) fees, the U.S. tuna industry also pays the costs associated with observer coverage (including training), vessel monitoring system deployment and associated recurring costs, and a regional registration fee.

U.S. Administration

U.S. operational, administrative, and enforcement commitments under the SPTT are carried out by the NOAA Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Regional Office located in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Regulatory Actions

An Administration draft bill, the "South Pacific Tuna Act of 2017" (SPTA), is being developed to update the existing South Pacific Tuna Act of 1988 with conforming edits to reflect the recent amendments to the Treaty. Once legislation is signed, corresponding regulations will be developed to implement appropriate measures.

Future Meetings

The Pacific Island Parties and the U.S. Government and industry will meet regularly to promote broader cooperation under the treaty and when necessary, to modify and extend the economic assistance agreement and Treaty, as needed.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Michael Tosatto, Regional Administrator
Pacific Islands Regional Office
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg. 176
Honolulu, HI 96818
Telephone: (808) 725-5001
Email: Michael.Tosatto@noaa.

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention (WCPFC)

Basic Instrument

[Convention](#) on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

Implementing Legislation

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation [Act](#), 2007. Pub. L. 109-479, 120 Stat.3575

Membership

Australia, Canada, China, Cook Islands, European Union, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France (extends to French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna), Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand (extends to Tokelau), Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), Tonga, Tuvalu, United States (extends to American Samoa, Guam and Northern Mariana Islands), and Vanuatu.

Participating Territories

American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, New Caledonia, Tokelau, Wallis and Futuna.

Cooperating Non-members

Curacao, Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Liberia, Thailand, and Vietnam have been granted Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) status for 2020.

Commission Headquarters

WCPFC Secretariat
Kaselehlie Street
PO Box 2356
Kolonja, Pohnpei State 96941
Federated States of Micronesia

Executive Director: Feleti P. Teo
Telephone: +691 320-1992
Fax: +691 320-1108
Email: wcpfc@mail.int
Web address: <http://www.wcpfc.int>

Budget

Each member of the Commission shall contribute to the budget in accordance with the following formula determined according to article 18, paragraph 2, of the Convention:

- a) a 10 per cent base fee divided in equal shares between all members of the Commission;
- b) a 20 per cent national wealth component based upon an equal weighting of proportional gross national income (calculated on a three-year average) per capita and proportional gross national income (calculated on a three-year average); and
- c) a 70 per cent fish production component based upon a three-year average of the total catches taken within exclusive economic zones and in areas beyond national jurisdiction in the Convention Area of all the stocks covered by the Convention for which data are available (including the main target tuna species, as well as the four main billfish species (black marlin, blue marlin, striped marlin and swordfish)), subject to a discount factor of 0.4 being applied to the catches taken within the EEZ of a member of the Commission which is a developing State or territory by vessels flying the flag of that member.

The 13th Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) met during the Sixteenth Annual Commission meeting in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, from December 5-11 2019 under the chairmanship of a

delegate the Federated States of Micronesia. The total budget approved by the Commission for 2020 was \$8,118,261, with the United States paying \$987,161, or approximately 13% of the total budget.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act, 2007, provides that the United States shall be represented in the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPFC) by five Commissioners. Individuals shall be appointed to serve on the Commission at the pleasure of the President. In making the appointments, the President shall select Commissioners from among individuals who are knowledgeable or experienced concerning highly migratory fish stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, one of whom shall be an officer or employee of the Department of Commerce, one of whom shall be a member of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council and one of whom shall be a member of the Pacific Fishery Management Council. The Commissioners shall be entitled to adopt such rules of procedures as they find necessary and to select a chairman from among members who are officers or employees of the United States Government. Alternate Commissioners may be designated by the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce.

B. U.S. Commissioners:

The following five individuals currently serve as U.S. Commissioners to the WCPFC. Presidentially appointed WCPFC Commissioners serve at the pleasure of the President.

Alternate U.S. Commissioners:

Drew Lawler
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for International Fisheries
National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
Washington, DC 20230
Tel: (301) 427-8000

Stuart Chikami
4395 S. Cameron Street, Unit C
Las Vegas, Nevada 89103
Tel: (702) 588-4573

U.S. Commissioners:

Michael K. Goto
1133 N. Nimitz Hwy
Honolulu, HI 96817
Tel: (808) 536-2148

Dorothy M. Lowman
6507 SW Barnes Road
Portland, OR 97225
Tel: (503) 804-4234

Timothy E. Johns
Bishop Museum
1525 Bernice Street
Honolulu, HI 96817
Tel: (808) 848-4142

C. Advisory Body:

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act, 2007, provides that there is to be established an advisory committee which shall be composed of:

- (i) not less than 15 nor more than 20 individuals appointed by the Secretary of Commerce in consultation with the United States Commissioners, who shall select such individuals from various groups concerned with the fisheries covered by the WCPFC Convention, providing, to the maximum extent practicable, an equitable balance among such groups;
- (ii) the chair of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council's Advisory Committee or the chair's designee; and
- (iii) officials of the fisheries management authorities of American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands (or their designees).

The Permanent Advisory Committee was initially established in 2008, with 20 members appointed by the Secretary of Commerce, in accordance with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act of 2007. The two-year terms of the 19 individuals appointed in 2019 will expire on August 3, 2021. Members will serve alongside representatives from the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, the Pacific Fishery Management Council and the three territories.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The objective of the Convention is to ensure, through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the western and central Pacific Ocean in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement. For this purpose, the Convention establishes a Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPFC).

The Convention applies to all species of highly migratory fish stocks (defined as all fish stocks of the species listed in Annex I of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea occurring in the Convention Area and such other species of fish as the Commission may determine) within the Convention Area, except sauries. Conservation and management measures under the Convention are to be applied throughout the range of the stocks, or to specific areas within the Convention Area, as determined by the Commission.

B. Organizational Structure:

The WCPFC is composed of member nations, participating territories and the fishing entity Chinese Taipei, and a Secretariat headed by an Executive Director. The Commission's primary subsidiary bodies are the Scientific Committee, Technical and Compliance Committee, and Northern Committee. In addition to these three bodies specified in the Convention, the Commission may establish other subsidiary bodies (e.g., the Finance and Administration Committee) and also employs *ad hoc* working groups as required. *Ad hoc* working groups have been established for data-related issues, the Commission's vessel monitoring system, the regional observer program, and other issues.

Fisheries Conservation and Management

Developing a conservation and management measure (CMM) for yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna was one of the Commission's primary objectives when the Commission was established in 2004. Following a recommendation by the Scientific Committee (SC) that a 30% reduction in the fishing mortality rate of bigeye tuna in the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) was necessary to address overfishing, the Commission adopted a conservation and management measure for WCPO bigeye tuna and WCPO yellowfin tuna in 2005 (CMM 2005-01). That measure was first replaced in 2008 (CMM 2008-01), and has been updated and replaced throughout the years (CMM 2012-01, CMM 2013-01, CMM 2014-01, CMM 2015-01, CMM 2016-01, and CMM 2017-01). The most recent version of the measure, CMM 2018-01, was adopted in 2018.

CMMs for bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack tuna have included measures aimed at reducing the fishing mortality rate of WCPO bigeye tuna and controlling the fishing mortality rate of WCPO yellowfin tuna and WCPO skipjack tuna. Measures have included fishing effort limits in purse seine fisheries, seasonal prohibitions on the use of fish

aggregating devices, high seas area closures, tuna retention requirements, 100% observer coverage in purse seine fisheries, bigeye tuna catch limits in longline fisheries, and limits on fishing capacity in other commercial tuna fisheries. At the 15th Regular Session of the Commission (WCPFC15) in 2018, Commission members adopted CMM 2018-01, which replaced and built on previous versions of the measure. CMM 2018-01 is generally applicable for the period 2019-2021, and is intended to be a bridging measure while the Commission works towards the adoption of a harvest strategy (including development of management objectives and target reference points) for bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin tuna stocks. The current measure is set to expire in February of 2021, so negotiations towards a new measure will begin in 2020. Negotiations will focus primarily on revised catch and effort limits.

The WCPFC also has CMMs in place addressing other living marine resources, including Pacific Bluefin tuna, North and South Pacific albacore, North and South Pacific striped marlin, Southwest Pacific swordfish, sharks, mobulid rays, sea turtles and seabirds. A list of adopted CMMs can be found on the WCPFC's website (<http://www.wcpfc.int/conservation-and-management-measures>).

Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

The WCPFC has implemented a number of measures and programs to address monitoring, control and surveillance in the western and central Pacific Ocean. Article 28(1) of the WCPFC Convention requires the WCPFC to develop a Regional Observer Programme (ROP) to, among other things, collect verified catch data, and monitor the implementation of the conservation and management measures adopted by the WCPFC. Accordingly, the WCPFC established the ROP in 2007, setting forth a number of guiding principles, objectives, rights and responsibilities. Subsequently, progress has been made on issues such as minimum standards, data to be collected by observers, observer placement costs, and the authorization of national and sub-regional observer programs (which collectively comprise the ROP). However, the development of some standards, definition and procedures is expected to continue to evolve over time.

The WCPFC has also adopted CMMs to establish a vessel monitoring system, regulate transshipment, list and sanction IUU fishing vessels, establish high-seas boarding and inspection procedures, establish port state minimum standards and implement a compliance and monitoring scheme. Work has also begun on the development of electronic reporting and electronic monitoring. More information on the relevant MCS measures can be found on the WCPFC website (<https://www.wcpfc.int/wcpfc-monitoring-control-and-surveillance-mcs-scheme>).

Additional Resources

A summary report of the Sixteenth Regular Session of the WCPFC is available at: <https://www.wcpfc.int/meetings/wcpfc16>.

2020 meetings

The WCPFC will hold its Seventeenth Regular Session in December 2020. The Scientific Committee is scheduled to meet August 11-20, 2020. The Northern Committee is tentatively scheduled to meet in September 2020. The Technical and Compliance Committee is scheduled to meet September 23-29, 2020.

Staff Contacts

*NOAA Fisheries,
Pacific Islands Region:*

Tom Graham
National Marine Fisheries Service,
NOAA IRC
1845 Wasp Blvd., Building 176
Honolulu, HI 96818
Telephone: (808) 725-5032
Fax: (808) 725-5215
Email: tom.graham@noaa.gov

NOAA Fisheries Headquarters:

Michael Abbey
Office of International Affairs and
Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8355
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: michael.abbey@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Michael T. Brakke
Bureau of Oceans and International
and Scientific Affairs
Office of Marine Conservation
(OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-3941
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: brakkeMT@state.gov

Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean (SPRFMO)

Basic Instrument

[Convention](#) on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean

Implementing Legislation

The United States signed the SPRFMO Convention on 31 January 2011. The Convention entered into force 24 August 2012. The U.S. Senate provided its advice and consent to ratification of the Convention in April 2014. Implementing legislation was enacted on 16 December 2016 (Public Law 114-327), and the United States ratified the Convention on 19 January 2017. The United States of America became a full member of the SPRFMO on 18 February 2017.

Member Nations/Entities

Australia, Chile, China, Cook Islands, Cuba, Ecuador, the European Union, Denmark in respect of the Faroe Islands, South Korea, New Zealand, Peru, Russia, Chinese Taipei (as a fishing entity), Vanuatu and the United States of America

Cooperating Non-Contracting Non Parties

Curacao, Liberia, and Panama

Secretariat Headquarters

SPRFMO Secretariat
PO Box 3797
Wellington 6140
NEW ZEALAND
Tel: +64- 4- 499 9889

Web Address: <http://www.sprfmo.int>

Budget

Financial regulations (including a formula for contributions), were adopted at the first Commission Meeting. The contributions formula consists of a base fee and components for national wealth and catch of pelagic and demersal fisheries resources, which was modified at the Commission's 2018 meeting.

U.S. Representation

Appointment Process:

The Ensuring Access to Pacific Fisheries Act, enacted in 2016, provides that the United States shall be represented on the Commission by no more than three Commissioners. In making each appointment, the President shall select a Commissioner from among individuals who are knowledgeable or experienced concerning fishery resources in the South Pacific Ocean. At least one of the Commissioners serving at the pleasure of the President shall be an officer or employee of the Department of Commerce, the Department of State, or the Coast Guard, and at least one of the Commissioners shall be the chairperson or designee of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, may designate for periods of time

considered appropriate an alternate Commissioner to the Commission. An alternate Commissioner may exercise all powers and duties of a Commissioner in the absence of a Commissioner.

U.S. Commissioners:

On 2 October 2017, Michael Tosatto was designated as an Alternate United States Commissioner to SPRFMO. This appointment was renewed on 3 February 2020.

Description

Beginning in 2006, a series of International Consultations were held with the objective of establishing a regime for conservation and management of non-highly migratory fish stocks and protection of biodiversity in the marine environment in high seas areas in the South Pacific. Following the successful conclusion of the International Consultations, the participants conducted a series of meetings of a [Preparatory Conference](#) to prepare for the first meeting of the [Commission](#) of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization, which took place from 28 January to 1 February 2013. The most recent annual meeting of the Commission took place from 14 February to 18 February 2020 and was preceded by the seventh meeting of the Compliance and Technical Committee from 10-12 February 2020.

A. Mission/Purpose

The objective of the Convention is, through the application of the precautionary approach and an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources and, in so doing, to safeguard the marine ecosystems in which these resources occur.

B. Organizational Structure:

The Organization structure includes the following:

- Commission;
- Scientific Committee;
- Compliance and Technical Committee;
- Eastern Sub-regional Management Committee;
- Western Sub-regional Management Committee;
- Finance and Administration Committee;
- Secretariat.

As a general rule, decisions by the Commission will be adopted by consensus, however there are provisions for voting, if that is determined to be necessary. There is also an objection procedure.

The SPRFMO Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) define the regulatory framework for the SPRFMO fisheries in the high seas areas of the South Pacific Ocean. Each year, the Commission may revise existing, or adopt new, CMMs. Existing CMMs can be found at <http://www.sprfmo.int/measures/> and include management measures for jack mackerel and bottom fishing, monitoring, control and surveillance measures, and several other measures.

C. Programs

The eighth Commission meeting was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu from 14 February to 10 February 2020 and was preceded by the seventh meeting of the Compliance and Technical Committee on 10-12 February 2020. The meeting documents can be found at <https://www.sprfmo.int/meetings/comm/8th-commission-2020/>.

Several conservation and management measures of interest to the United States were adopted at the 2020 SPRFMO annual meeting, including strengthened measures related to the allocation and management of jack mackerel, bottom fishing, deep sea fisheries, and data collection, as well as SPRFMO's first measure for squid. Significant progress was also made in advancing support for the U.S. proposal for high seas boarding and inspection.

Staff Contacts*NOAA Fisheries:*

Michael Tosatto
Regional Administrator
Pacific Islands Regional Office
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
Telephone: (808) 725-5001
Email: Michael.tosatto@noaa.gov

Rini Ghosh
Natural Resource Specialist
Pacific Islands Regional Office
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
Telephone: (808) 725-5033
Email: rini.ghosh@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Michael Brakke
Bureau of Oceans and International and Scientific
Affairs
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-3941
Email: BrakkeMT@state.gov

Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean (NPFC)

Basic Instrument

The [Convention](#) on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean. The Convention text was agreed to by the negotiating Participants on February 24, 2012. The Convention received its fourth instrument of ratification on January 21, 2015. The Convention entered into force July 19, 2015, 180 days after the 4th ratification.

Implementing Legislation

H.R. 4576, “Ensuring Access to Pacific Fisheries Act,” signed December 16, 2016.

Member Nations

The Members include Canada, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei, the United States of America, and Vanuatu.

Fisheries

Fisheries resources covered by the Convention are all fish, mollusks, crustaceans and other marine species caught by fishing vessels within the Convention Area, excluding: (i) sedentary species insofar as they are subject to the sovereign rights of coastal States; and indicator species of vulnerable marine ecosystems as listed in, or adopted pursuant to the NPFC Convention; (ii) catadromous species; (iii) marine mammals, marine reptiles and seabirds; and (iv) other marine species already covered by pre-existing international fisheries management instruments within the area of competence of such instruments.

Secretariat Headquarters

North Pacific Fisheries Commission
2F Hakuyo-Hall
Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology
4-5-7 Konan, Minato-ku, Tokyo 108-8477 JAPAN
Web Address: <https://www.npfc.int/>

Budget

The budget for 2019/2020 is \$1,479,609.

U.S. Representation

The United States shall be represented on the Commission by five United States Commissioners. The Commissioners shall be as follows:

1. Two of the Commissioners shall be appointed by the President and shall be an officer or employee of the Department of Commerce, the Department of State or the Coast Guard. In making each appointment under clause (i), the President shall select a Commissioner from among individuals who are knowledgeable or experienced concerning fisheries resources in the North Pacific Ocean.
2. One Commissioner shall be the chairman of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council or a designee of such chairman.
3. One Commissioner shall be the chairman of the Pacific Fishery Management Council or a designee of such chairperson.

4. One Commissioner shall be the chairman of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council or a designee of such chairperson.

In the event of a vacancy in a position as a Commissioner appointed under subsection (a), the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary, may designate from time to time and for periods of time considered appropriate an alternate Commissioner to the Commission. An alternate Commissioner may exercise all powers and duties of a Commissioner in the absence of a Commissioner appointed under subsection (a), and shall serve the remainder of the term of the absent Commissioner for which designated.

Description

The Convention was formed in response to calls from the international community (e.g., United States General Assembly Resolutions 59/25, 61/105 and 64/72) for States to take measures to address the impacts of fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) on the high seas, including through the establishment of new regional fisheries management organizations with the competence to regulate bottom fisheries and the impacts of fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems in areas where no such organization exists. The Convention also responds to calls from the international community to close international jurisdictional gaps for high seas fisheries.

The Convention establishes a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) through which Parties will cooperate to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources in the Convention Area of the North Pacific Ocean, while protecting the marine ecosystems in which these resources occur. Cooperation under NPFC addresses fisheries resources not covered under pre-existing international fisheries management instruments and helps to prevent impacts on fisheries resources in areas subject to U.S. jurisdiction.

The Convention Area is the high seas area (i.e. outside of 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones) roughly north of 20-degrees N latitude and south of the Aleutians. Of particular concern to the NPFC are bottom fisheries over seamounts that would have significant adverse impacts on VMEs. The participants to the negotiations of NPFC agreed to interim measures aimed at protecting VMEs and the sustainable management of high seas bottom fisheries in the Convention Area and these interim measures will remain in place until the Commission adopts permanent measures. The interim measures contain measures for any fishing entity to abide by including conducting assessments to prove that contemplated fishing activities would not have significant adverse impacts on VMEs and sustainability of the fishery resources.

The Convention also establishes two committees, a Scientific Committee and a Technical and Compliance Committee, to carry out its functions. The Members are working on developing: (a) A 5-year science research plan, (b) standards, rules and procedures for the compilation and management of data for effective stock assessments, (c) standards, rules, and procedures for vessel monitoring, transshipment, and observer coverage, and (d) an encounter protocol for bottom fishing.

As a general rule, decisions by the Commission will be adopted by consensus, however there are provisions for voting, if that is determined to be necessary. There is also an objection procedure.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Kent Laborde
Foreign Affairs Specialist
Office of International Affairs and Seafood
Inspection
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10738
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8364
Email: kent.laborde@noaa.gov

Glenn Merrill
Assistant Regional Administrator
Alaska Region (F/AK)
709 W 9th Street
Juneau, AK 99802-1668
Telephone: (907) 586-7775
Email: Glenn.Merrill@noaa.gov

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources: Basic Instrument for the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

Basic Instrument

[Convention](#) on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, 1982

Implementing Legislation

Antarctic Marine Living Resources Convention Act of 1984 (16 U.S.C. 2431 *et seq.*)

Members/Acceding States

Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, People's Republic of China, European Union, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

Bulgaria, Canada, Cook Islands, Finland, Greece, Mauritius, Pakistan, Panama, Peru and Vanuatu have acceded to the Convention, but are not Members of the Commission.

Commission Headquarters

Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
PO Box 213
North Hobart 7002
Tasmania, Australia

Executive Secretary: David Agnew (as of April 2018)

Telephone: 61 3 6210 1111

Email: ccamlr@ccamlr.org

Web address: www.ccamlr.org

Budget

The Commission approved a budget for 2020 of A\$5,541,578 (approximately US\$3,905,400). The U.S. contribution for its dues in 2020 is A\$125,326 (approximately US\$100,170).

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

The Secretary of State, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the National Science Foundation, appoints an officer or employee of the United States as the U.S. representative to the Commission. The Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the National Science Foundation, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, designates the U.S. representative to the Scientific Committee.

B. U.S. Representative to the Commission:

Evan Bloom
Director, Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs
OES/OPA, DOS - Room 5801
Washington, D.C. 20520

Telephone: (202) 647-3925
U.S. Representative to the Scientific Committee:

Dr. George Watters
Director, Antarctic Ecosystem Research Division
NOAA/NMFS/SWFSC
8901 La Jolla Shores Drive
La Jolla, CA 92037
Telephone: (858) 546-5600

C. Advisory Structure:

The U.S. Commissioner receives advice from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Science Foundation, Marine Mammal Commission, and the NGO community.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The objective of the Convention is the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources. The Convention is based upon an ecosystem approach to the conservation of marine living resources and incorporates principles designed to ensure the conservation of populations and the Antarctic marine ecosystem as a whole.

The Convention applies to the Antarctic marine living resources of the area south of 60° South latitude and to the Antarctic marine living resources of the area between that latitude and the Antarctic Convergence that form part of the Antarctic marine ecosystem.

B. Organizational Structure:

The Convention establishes the Commission, Scientific Committee, and the Secretariat. The Commission consists of one representative from each member. It is responsible for facilitating research and compiling data on the populations of Antarctic marine living resources, ensuring the acquisition of catch and effort data, publishing information, identifying conservation needs, adopting and revising conservation measures, and implementing a system of observation and inspection. The Secretariat, headed by an Executive Secretary, handles the administrative matters for the Commission.

The Commission has two standing committees, the Standing Committee on Implementation and Compliance (SCIC) and the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance (SCAF). SCIC, among other activities, provides technical advice and recommendations related to CCAMLR's conservation measures; reviews and assesses the implementation of, and compliance with, the conservation measures; reviews information on IUU fishing; and reviews and recommends improvements to the System of Inspection and with the Scientific Committee, to the Scheme of International Scientific Observation. SCAF examines and provides advice related to the budget and advises on other administrative and financial matters.

The Scientific Committee is composed of scientific advisors from the members. It provides the best available scientific information on harvesting levels and other management issues to the Commission. The work of the Scientific Committee is carried out with the assistance of the Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment (WG-FSA); the Working Group on Ecosystem Monitoring and Management (WG-EMM); the Subgroup on Acoustics, Survey and Analysis Methods (SG-ASAM); and the Working Group on Statistics, Assessments and Modeling (WG-SAM). The Working Group on Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing (WG-IMAF), which met to address seabird mortality incidental to fishing, last met in 2011 as seabird mortality had been significantly reduced.

C. Conservation Measures:

Paragraph 2 of Article IX of the CAMLR Convention provides a non-exhaustive list of conservation measures the Commission may adopt, including those related to quantity and characteristics of harvested species, protection of

species, open and closed seasons, open and closed geographic regions, regulation of fishing effort employed and methods of harvesting.

The Commission adopted its first conservation measures during its 1984 session (CCAMLR-III). Each year, CCAMLR updates some of the conservation measures or adopts new measures. The conservation measures are organized by general categories, including compliance, general fishery matters, data reporting, fishery regulations, research, minimization of incidental mortality, environmental protection, and protected areas. CCAMLR has also adopted non-binding resolutions that Members are encouraged to implement.

Protected areas

In 2009, CCAMLR established its first marine protected area (MPA) in the South Orkney Island southern shelf. In 2011, it adopted a general framework for establishment of CCAMLR MPAs. Proposals for establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) has since remained a high priority.

At its 2016 meeting, CCAMLR adopted the Ross Sea region MPA. The MPA entered into force on December 1, 2017. With a 35-year period of designation, it is set to expire in year 2052. The MPA protects a rich and productive ecosystem and is designed to be a natural laboratory and reference area for scientific study of the impacts of climate change and fishing. The MPA consists of three zones: the General Protection Zone (GPZ) where no commercial fishing is allowed (about 72 percent of the MPA), the Krill Research Zone (KRZ) designed to allow regulated fishing for krill only (about 21 percent of the MPA), and the Special Research Zone (SRZ), in which limited fishing is allowed (about 7 percent of the MPA)

CCAMLR has ongoing efforts to adopt MPAs in other parts of the Convention Area. Australia and the EU have proposed since 2012, a representative system of MPAs in East Antarctica. The EU has proposed since 2016 the Weddell Sea MPA and Argentina and Chile have proposed since 2017 an MPA in the Antarctic Peninsula. Discussions on all new MPA proposals have continued during the recent Commission meetings.

The 10-year review of the South Orkney Islands Southern Shelf MPA was conducted in 2019. Most Members agreed that the scientific basis for protection remained as described in the Conservation Measure establishing the MPA and, thus, did not revise the measure.

Compliance

CCAMLR conservation measures require marking of fishing vessels and gear, licensing and inspections, port inspections of fishing vessels carrying Antarctic marine living resources, vessel monitoring system operation, the toothfish catch documentation scheme, procedures for listing IUU vessels, a scheme to promote compliance by Contracting Party nationals, advance notifications of transshipments, and a compliance evaluation procedure.

CCAMLR has been applying its Compliance Evaluation Procedure (CEP) since 2012. The CEP initially included review of compliance with a small number of the conservation measures in force. 2017 was the first year that the procedure was applied to all conservation measures in force. During the annual meeting, the Standing Committee on Implementation and Compliance (SCIC) discusses information provided in a Summary CCAMLR Compliance Report compiled by the Secretariat, containing incidences of non-compliance and the responses of the Contracting Party for each identified incidence. In general, SCIC recommends compliance status categories for each incident in a Provisional Compliance Report to the Commission, which then provides its responses to the recommendations.

The conservation measure for advance notifications of at-sea transshipments was revised in 2019, based on a proposal from New Zealand, to require additional information be submitted in the advance notifications and to require Contracting Parties to confirm or amend the notified information after transshipments take place. The revision facilitates port and at-sea inspections and the additional information on transshipments will be made available to inspectors upon request.

In 2018, CCAMLR reviewed and approved Ecuador's request to be a non-Contracting Party (NCP) cooperating with CCAMLR by participating in the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) for toothfish (*Dissostichus* spp.). Ecuador has a *Dissostichus* fishery in its EEZ and has since been able to export toothfish to CCAMLR Member countries

where such imports must be accompanied by *Dissostichus* Catch, Export and/or Re-Export documents issued through the CDS.

General fishery matters

CCAMLR maintains conservation measures related to notification requirements, gear restrictions, data reporting, research and experiments, minimization of incidental mortality, and environmental protection.

Bottom trawling in the high seas areas of the Convention Area has been restricted since 2006. The use of gillnets is also currently prohibited in the Convention Area except for scientific research purposes. CCAMLR has measures for avoiding significant adverse impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems. Seabird conservation measures for longline and trawl gear have significantly reduced the number of incidental seabird mortality, from thousands of birds in the late 1990s to an estimated 116 birds in the longline fishery in the 2016/17 fishing season.

CCAMLR has a conservation measure prohibiting directed fishing for sharks in the Convention Area, but allows for retention of incidentally-caught sharks that cannot be released alive. The measure is silent on the practice of finning (i.e., removal of the fins and discard of the carcass at sea), which is widely prohibited in international fora and in U.S. domestic law. In 2011 and from 2013 to 2017, and again in 2019 the United States and European Union, joined by several other members, led proposals requiring that any sharks incidentally caught in the Convention Area be kept with all fins naturally attached to the point of first landing.

Fishery regulations

CCAMLR maintains conservation measures for regulating the fisheries, identifying fishing seasons, catch limits by area and species, bycatch limits, and closed areas, as well as other requirements. Members currently target toothfish, icefish, and krill. Fisheries for toothfish and icefish require 100% observer coverage on fishing vessels. All krill fishing vessels are required to have 75% observer coverage in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 fishing seasons, increasing to 100% observer coverage in the 2020/21 season and all subsequent fishing seasons.

For the krill fishery in Statistical Area 48, the spatial distribution of the interim trigger level (620,000 metric ton catch limit) among four Subareas has been in place since 2009. This spatial distribution of krill fishing in this area was set to lapse in 2016, which could have led to concentrated fishing anywhere. However, in 2016, the Commission agreed to reauthorize the spatial allocation of krill under the existing conservation measure for five years, now set to lapse in 2021.

The Commission considered notifications for exploratory longline fishing for toothfish in all three sectors of the Southern Ocean. In the Pacific Sector, the total catch limit for the exploratory fishery for toothfish in the Ross Sea Region (Statistical Subareas 88.1 and 88.2A and 88.2B) was updated for the 2019/20 season, based on a new biennial stock assessment. The Commission further agreed on catch limits for a Ross Sea shelf survey. The Commission agreed on updated catch limits for exploratory fisheries in Subareas 48.6 (Atlantic sector), 88.2 (Amundsen Sea), and Division 58.4.2 (east Antarctic Indian Ocean).

In 2017, in an effort to track the full scope of fishing for research purposes, the Commission adopted a new conservation measure that lists details of approved research fishing occurring in areas otherwise closed to fishing in the Convention Area. Documenting the research plans promotes transparency of the research fishing that takes place in areas closed to fishing. This new conservation measure went into effect for the 2018/19 season and was updated for the 2019/20 season, reflecting research fishing endorsed by the Commission in Subareas 48.1 and 88.3 (toothfish).

Research and experiments

In 2016, CCAMLR adopted a conservation measure to establish Special Areas for Scientific Study in newly exposed marine areas following ice shelf retreat or collapse in the Antarctic Peninsula area. Such habitats offer unique opportunities for research to understand how ecological states change due to climate change (e.g., colonization of new benthic areas after ice sheet collapse). In 2017, under this new conservation measure the Commission

designated the area of the Larsen C Ice Shelf break a Special Area for Scientific Study. This area is set to expire on October 27, 2028.

The Pine Island Glacier has decreased in size by 465 square kilometers (over 2½ times the area of Washington, DC). In July 2019, the sea area exposed by the lost ice was designated as a Stage 1 Special Area for Scientific Study, which is a designation that establishes a temporary (up to 2 years) moratorium on fishing in the newly exposed area while Members review information on the area's characteristics. The area exposed by the loss of ice from the Pine Island Glacier can be designated as a Stage 2 Special Area for Scientific Study if the Members agree on such designation, which would extend the moratorium on fishing for 10 years so that research may be undertaken in the area to observe how the characteristics of the area change.

D. Scheme of International Scientific Observation:

In line with domestic priorities, the United States had actively advanced the issue of observer safety in international fisheries. In 2017, the Commission adopted an Emergency Action Plan, to be implemented in the event an observer: dies, is missing or presumed fallen overboard; suffers from a potentially serious illness or serious injury that may threaten his/her life or safety, and; has been assaulted, intimidated, threatened, or harassed such that their health or safety is endangered. In the following year, CCAMLR reached agreement on amendments to the text of the System of International Scientific Observation (SISO) proposed by the United States. These changes ensure that scientific observers are provided independent two-way communication devices and waterproof personal lifesaving beacons, so that observers are not reliant on vessel-based communication equipment, which is usually under the sole control of the vessel operator.

E. Activities and Meetings:

The 2020 annual meeting of CCAMLR, CCAMLR-39, was scheduled for October 26 to November 6, 2020 at CCAMLR headquarters in Hobart, Tasmania. However, due to travel restrictions and other measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission is discussing the potential and logistics of virtual meetings with a streamlined agenda. Working Group meetings have been canceled but options for continuing their work are under consideration.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Mi Ae Kim
Office of International Affairs and Seafood
Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8365

Department of State:

Evan Bloom
Director, Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs (OES)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520
Telephone: (202) 647-3925

Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals (CCAS)

Basic Instrument

[Convention](#) for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals (29 UST 441, TIAS 8826)

Implementing Legislation

None

Member Nations

Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, South Africa, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

Commission Headquarters

The Convention did not establish a Commission. The United Kingdom serves as the Depository Government.

Budget

None

U.S. Representation

The United States is represented at Meetings of Contracting Parties to the Convention by a delegation, headed by the Department of State and including representatives of the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Marine Mammal Commission, and the environmental community.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose

The Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals was signed in London on February 11, 1972. It entered into force on March 11, 1978, and calls for Contracting Parties to meet within 5 years of entry into force, and at least every 5 years thereafter, to review the operation of the Convention. The purpose of the Convention is to promote and achieve the objectives of protection, scientific study and rational use of Antarctic seals, and to maintain a satisfactory balance within the ecological system.

The Convention applies to the seas south of 60° South Latitude, in respect of which the Contracting Parties affirm the provisions of Article IV of the Antarctic Treaty.

B. Organizational Structure

There is no Commission. The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) of the International Council of Scientific Unions, through its Group of Specialists on Seals, receives reports from and advises the Contracting Parties on the number of seals killed or captured, the status of stocks, and the need, if any, for conservation and management measures.

C. Programs

Because there had been no commercial sealing in the Antarctic after the Convention entered into force in 1978, an offer by the United Kingdom, as Depository Government, to host a 1983 meeting of Parties, was declined. The first

and, to date, only meeting of Parties, held in 1988, was occasioned by a 1986/87 Soviet commercial sealing expedition and research cruise.

The 1988 meeting limited its recommendations to amendments to the Annex to the Convention or to Contracting Parties and other institutional action independent of the terms of the Convention. The Meeting agreed that Contracting Parties should restrict the number of seals killed or captured by special permit. It also agreed to encourage cooperative planning among holders of special permits for scientific research and detailed the scientific information which should be reported. The meeting recommended that the Annex be amended to increase the period of notification by a Contracting Party to other Contracting Parties prior to leaving home port for a commercial sealing expedition from 30 to 60 days. The final report of the meeting noted, however, that Contracting Party countries are unlikely to engage in commercial sealing in the foreseeable future.

In 1992, the United Kingdom proposed, but the Parties did not feel it necessary, to hold a further meeting. In October 1993, the United Kingdom hosted an informal meeting of the Parties to review the operation of the Convention. The meeting was held in the margins of the twelfth meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. As a result, the Parties noted the need to: improve the submission and exchange of data; endorse scientific programs on seal research; provide SCAR with contact points of CCAS parties; and circulate copies of reports from the SCAR Group of Specialists to CCAS Parties. In response to an inquiry, the United Kingdom confirmed that the recommendations adopted by the 1988 Meeting of Parties entered into force on March 27, 1990.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Nina Young
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East- West Highway, Room 10632
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: 301-427-8383

Department of State:

Evan Bloom
Deputy Director, Office of Ocean Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520
Telephone: (202) 647-3262

Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)

Basic Instrument

[Convention](#) for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, 1994

Implementing Legislation

N/A, the United States is not a party.

Member Nations/Entities of the Extended Commission

Australia, European Union, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, South Africa, and Chinese Taipei

Cooperating Non Parties

Philippines

Commission Headquarters

CCSBT Secretariat
Unit 1, JAA House
19 Napier Close
Deakin, ACT, Australia
Telephone: (61 2) 6282 8396
Fax: (61 2) 6282 8407
Web Address: <http://www.ccsbt.org>

Budget

The contributions to the annual budget from each Party are calculated on the following basis:

- (a) 30% of the budget shall be divided equally among all the Parties; and
- (b) 70% of the budget shall be divided in proportion to the nominal catches of southern bluefin tuna among all the Parties.

Description

Mission/Purpose: The Commission's objective is to ensure, through appropriate management, the conservation and optimum utilization of the global southern bluefin tuna (SBT) fishery. The Commission provides an internationally recognized forum for other countries/entities to participate actively in SBT issues.

In pursuit of this objective the CCSBT performs a number of functions. It:

- Is responsible for setting a total allowable catch and its allocation among the members;
- Considers and administers regulatory measures to meet Convention objectives;
- Conducts and coordinates a scientific research program aimed at providing information to support the Commission's management objectives (the program is a mixture of member managed activities and activities managed directly by the CCSBT Secretariat);
- Takes decisions to support and implement fishery management;
- Provides a forum for the discussion of issues relevant to the conservation objectives of the Convention;
- Acts as a coordination mechanism for member's activities in relation to the SBT fishery;
- Fosters activities directed towards the conservation of ecologically related species (living marine species which are associated with the SBT fishery) and bycatch species;

- Encourages nonmembers engaged in the fishery, to accede, apply for cooperating non-membership, or participate as observers in Commission activities;
- Cooperates and liaises with other regional tuna fishery management organizations in areas of mutual interest.

Organizational Structure: The CCSBT consists of a Commission composed of national sections of member nations and an Extended Commission consisting of representatives from all member nations and entities. The Secretariat is headed by an Executive Director.

Decisions of the Commission are taken by a unanimous vote of the Parties present at the Commission meeting. The Extended Commission makes consensus recommendations to the Commission for consideration and adoption. There are currently three subsidiary bodies of the Extended Commission: a scientific committee, a compliance committee, and a finance and administration committee.

Fisheries Conservation and CCSBT Management

Status of the Stock. The current spawning stock biomass (SSB) of southern bluefin tuna (SBT) remains very low, with the 2017 assessment suggesting that the stock is estimated to be 13% of the initial spawning stock biomass, and below the level to produce maximum sustainable yield. There has been improvement since previous stock assessments, which indicated the stock was at 5.5% of original biomass in 2011 and 9% in 2014. The total biomass of SBT aged 10 and over relative to initial is estimated to be 11%, which is an increase from the estimate of 5% in 2011 and 7% in 2014. The current fishing mortality rate is below the level associated with maximum sustainable yield.

Overall performance indicators show signs of higher recruitment in recent years and there are some consistent positive trends in the age-based longline catch per unit effort estimates. This suggests that there may be some relatively strong cohorts moving through the fishery, though they have yet to contribute to the spawning stock. It will likely take a few more years before there is sufficient data to confirm the recent apparent strong recruitments evident in the aerial survey. A stock assessment will be completed again in 2020.

TAC and Management Procedure. At its eighteenth annual meeting in October 2011, the CCSBT agreed that a Management Procedure (MP) would be used to guide the setting of the southern bluefin tuna global total allowable catch (TAC) to ensure that the spawning stock biomass achieves the interim rebuilding target of 20% of the original spawning stock biomass. The Management Procedure set the TAC in three year periods starting in 2012, with a one year lag between TAC calculation and implementation of that TAC for each three-year TAC setting periods. The TAC for 2014 was 12,449 tons, the TAC for 2015 to 2017 was 14,647 tons and the TAC for 2018 to 2020 is 17,647 tons. Procedure includes the following associated management parameters unless otherwise decided based on information that is not incorporated into the MP:

- The MP is tuned to a 70% probability of rebuilding the stock to the interim rebuilding target reference point of 20% of the original spawning stock biomass by 2035;
- The minimum TAC change (increase or decrease) is 100 tons;
- The maximum TAC change (increase or decrease) is 3,000 tons;
- The TAC will be set for three-year periods; and
- The national allocation of the TAC within each three-year period will be apportioned according to the CCSBT Resolution on the Allocation of the Global Total Allowable Catch.

The CCSBT also adopted the meta-rule process as the method for dealing with exceptional circumstances in the southern bluefin tuna fishery. The meta-rule process describes: (1) the process to determine whether exceptional circumstances exist; (2) the process for action; and (3) the principles for action.

The CCSBT has developed a new MP to guide the setting of TACs for 2021 and onwards, which incorporates new data series. The Cape Town Procedure has a 50% probability of achieving a biomass level of 30% of the original spawning stock biomass by 2035.

Compliance. The Compliance Plan provides a framework for the CCSBT, Members and Cooperating Non-Members to achieve full compliance with CCSBT's conservation and management measures. It includes a three-year action plan to address priority compliance risks and will be reviewed, and confirmed or updated every year. The CCSBT has also adopted three Compliance Policy Guidelines, including minimum performance requirements to meet CCSBT Obligations, corrective actions policy; and MCS information collection and sharing. The CCSBT adopted an updated Compliance Action Plan for 2018 – 2021 in October 2017.

Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS). In 2005 the CCSBT established a list of all fishing vessels approved to fish for SBT, which is available on the CCSBT website. In 2008 the CCSBT established a list of authorized farms that are approved to operate for farming SBT. The CCSBT established a list of carrier vessels that are authorized to receive SBT at sea from large scale fishing vessels in 2009. In an effort to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, Members and Cooperating Non-Members will not allow the trade of SBT caught by fishing vessels and farms, or transshipped to carrier vessels that are not on these lists.

The CCSBT's Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) measure came into effect in 2008 and was updated in 2017. It requires CCSBT Members and Cooperating Non-Members to adopt and implement satellite-linked VMS for vessels fishing for SBT that complies with the IOTC, WCPFC, CCAMLR, or ICCAT VMS requirements according to the respective convention area in which the SBT fishing is being conducted. For fishing outside of these areas, the IOTC VMS requirements must be followed, with a minimum polling rate of 4 hours for all authorized vessels. The CCSBT will review the VMS measure in 2018 and consider additional improvements.

The CCSBT Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) came into effect on 1 January 2010 and replaced the Statistical Document Program. The CDS provides for tracking and validation of legitimate SBT product flow from catch to the point of first sale on domestic or export markets. The CCSBT is undertaking efforts to develop an electronic CDS.

The CCSBT Transshipment monitoring program came into effect on 1 April 2009. The program applies to transshipments at sea from tuna longline fishing vessels with freezing capacity (referred to as "LSTLVs"). It requires, amongst other things, for carrier vessels that receive SBT transshipments at sea from LSTLVs to be authorized to receive such transshipments and for a CCSBT observer to be on board the carrier vessel during the transshipment. The CCSBT transshipment program is harmonized and operated in conjunction with those of ICCAT and IOTC to avoid duplication of the same measures. ICCAT or IOTC observers on a transshipment vessel that is authorized to receive SBT are deemed to be CCSBT observers provided that the CCSBT standards are met.

U.S. Participation

As a non-cooperating, non-member of CCSBT that does not catch SBT, the United States must be invited to meetings in order to participate as an observer. The CCSBT has issued annual invitations since 2012, and the United States attended Compliance Committee and Annual meetings from 2014 to 2018 as an invited observer. A U.S. representative was not able to attend in 2019.

U.S. dealers are required to ensure that imports and re-exports of SBT are accompanied by the appropriate CCSBT documentation. As one of the largest non-cooperating, non-member importers of SBT, the United States has provided import data from CDS forms to the Commission since 2016.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Melanie King

Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection

National Marine Fisheries Service

1315 East-West Highway

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Telephone: (301) 427-8366

melanie.king@noaa.gov

INDIAN OCEAN

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

Basic Instrument

The [Agreement](#) for the Establishment of the IOTC, 1996

Implementing Legislation

N/A, the United States is not a party.

Contracting Parties (Members)

Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, Eritrea, European Union, France, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Sultanate of Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, and Yemen.

Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties

Liberia and Senegal

Commission Headquarters

IOTC Secretariat
Le Chantier Mall (2nd floor)
PO Box 1011
Victoria Mahé – SEYCHELLES
Executive Secretary: Dr. Chris O'Brien

Tel: +248 4225494
Fax: +248 4224364
E-mail: secretariat@iotc.org
Website: <http://www.iotc.org/>

Description

The IOTC seeks to promote cooperation among its members with a view to ensuring, through appropriate management, the conservation and optimum utilization of fish stocks covered by the Agreement and to encourage sustainable development of fisheries based on such stocks. The IOTC has authority over tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean and its adjacent seas, with a focus on the key commercial species of albacore tuna, bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, swordfish, and yellowfin tuna.

Unlike the other tuna RFMOs, the IOTC is an intergovernmental organization established under the FAO Constitution and is placed under the FAO framework. In practical terms, IOTC is meant to operate largely independently from FAO save from its financial controls and is meant to be guided by, and respond to, its Members alone. The issue of whether to preserve this institutional link with FAO remains under consideration.

The Commission is the main decision-making body and is composed of all Members. Other important subsidiary bodies include the Compliance Committee, the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance, and the Scientific Committee. The Scientific Committee advises the Commission (and any sub-commissions which may be established) on research and data collection, status of stocks, and management issues. Seven Working Parties – Tropical Tunas, Neritic Tunas, Billfish, Temperate Tunas, Tagging, Ecosystems and Bycatch – report to the Scientific Committee. An electronic Working Party on the development of a high seas boarding and inspection proposal also exists. In 2016, the Commission established an additional Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (to take place back to back with Compliance meetings) and a Technical Committee on Management Procedures (to function alongside an existing Dialogue on Management Procedures).

The main functions of the IOTC are, among other things: (a) to review the conditions and trends of the stocks and to gather, analyze, and disseminate scientific information, catch and effort statistics, and other relevant data; (b) to

encourage, recommend, and coordinate research and development activities in respect of the stocks and fisheries covered by the Agreement; and (c) to keep under review the economic and social aspects of the fisheries based on the stocks covered by the Agreement. In order to achieve these ends, the Commission may, by a two-thirds majority, adopt, on the basis of scientific evidence, conservation and management measures to ensure the conservation and optimum utilization of the stocks covered by the Agreement. IOTC has passed measures that are comparable to the other tuna RFMOs including: positive and negative vessel lists, VMS, rules on transshipment, reporting requirements for chartering arrangements, trade restrictive measures, statistical document requirements for bigeye tuna, a shark finning ban and a requirement to land sharks with fins naturally attached (exempting frozen product), port state measures, a ban on discards of tropical tunas in the purse-seine fishery, a prohibition on vessels intentionally fishing on data buoys, management of fish aggregating devices (FADs), and bycatch mitigation measures for sea turtles, sea birds and mobulid rays.

Reported catches by gear are attributed to gillnets (33%), purse seine (26%), pole and line (18%), longline (12%), baitboat (6%) and other (5%). Overall, 67% of reported catches are considered artisanal. Although coastal fisheries represented the majority of catches within the IOTC area over the last decade, these fisheries report a small fraction of catch-effort and length-frequency data; there has been minimal progress in improving this data-poor situation in recent years. The Scientific Committee has developed a Strategic Science Plan for 2020–2024 with an emphasis on improving data reporting. Current composition of reported catch in the IOTC area is 52% tropical tunas; 34% neritic tunas; 6% sharks; 5% billfish and 3% temperate tunas.

The status of stocks in the IOTC area is mixed: skipjack, bigeye, albacore, and blue shark are considered to be not overfished, with no overfishing occurring. There is concern about the status of some stocks of billfish and neritic tunas. Yellowfin tuna is overfished and subject to overfishing. There has been mixed success in reducing catches under a yellowfin tuna rebuilding plan; an interim measure adopted in 2019 is subject to review in 2020. The Technical Committee on Management Procedures conducts intersessional work on harvest control rules and management strategy evaluation for key stocks, with regular sessions to support capacity building.

IOTC has been engaged in a multi-year process to work on development of allocation criteria, an issue that has been contentious due to differing perspectives among distant water fishing nations, developed and developing coastal states. A Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria has met five times; its most recent meeting in March 2020 was postponed due to COVID-19. In 2019, South Africa, on behalf of a coalition of developing coastal states, offered a proposal that would deemphasize historical catches by flag states (and attribute historical catches to the coastal state with the EEZ in which they occurred); it also contains a complex weighting scheme for applying criteria. A less-formulaic alternative approach was tabled by the EU as an information paper.

U.S. Participation

The United States has attended the annual meetings of the IOTC Commission, as well as some of its subsidiary bodies, as an observer since 2007. The most recent annual meeting of the IOTC took place June 17-21, 2019, in Hyderabad, India.

The next IOTC annual meeting has been postponed due to COVID-19, and will be held electronically on November 2-6, 2020.

Staff Contact*NOAA Fisheries:*

Rachel O'Malley
Office of International Affairs and
Seafood Inspection
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8373
Email: Rachel.O'Malley@noaa.gov

Melanie King
Office of International Affairs and
Seafood Inspection
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8366
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: Melanie.King@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Michael T. Brakke
Bureau of Oceans and International
and Scientific Affairs
Office of Marine Conservation
(OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-3941
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: brakkeMT@state.gov

Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)

Basic Instrument

The [Agreement](#) for the Establishment of the SIOFA, 2006

Implementing Legislation

N/A, the United States is not a party.

Contracting Parties (Members)

Australia, China, the Cook Islands, the European Union, France on behalf of its Indian Ocean Territories, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mauritius, the Seychelles, Thailand

Non-Contracting Parties

Comoros

Others

Chinese Taipei participates as a fishing entity. Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique and New Zealand are signatories to the Agreement but have not ratified it.

Commission Headquarters

Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA/APSOI)
c/o DAAF
Bâtiment B
Parc de la Providence
97489 Saint-Denis Cedex
La Réunion

Mr. Thierry Clot
Executive Secretary
Email: Thierry@siofa.org
Tel: +262 9 7631 8970
Mobile: +262 6 9344 4495
Web address: <https://www.apsoi.org/>

Description

The objectives of SIOFA are to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources in the southern Indian Ocean through cooperation among members, and to promote the sustainable development of fisheries in the SIOFA area, taking into account the needs of developing States bordering the SIOFA area that are members of the Agreement, and in particular the least developed among them and small-island developing States.

The Agreement covers fishery resources including fish, molluscs, crustaceans and other sedentary species within the area, but excludes highly migratory species and sedentary species subject to the fishery jurisdiction of coastal states. Major fish species include Pelagic armourhead (*Pseudopentaceros richardsoni*), Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*), Oreos (*Neocyttus rhomboidalis*, *Pseudocyttus maculatus*), Orange roughy (*Hoplostethus atlanticus*), Dogfish (*Centroscymnus coelolepis*), Bluenose Warehou (*Hyperoglyphe antarctica*), and Alfonsino (*Beryx splendens*).

SIOFA maintains cooperative agreements with the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and the Agreement on Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP).

U.S. Participation

The United States has an interest in SIOFA fisheries in consideration of intersections with species also managed by CCAMLR, to which the United States is a party. The U.S. is considering the potential benefits of attending SIOFA annual meetings as an observer.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Lauren Fields
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8379

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Inter-American Convention (IAC) for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles

Basic Instrument

Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles

Member Nations

Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panamá, México, Netherlands Antilles, Peru, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The [Convention](#) entered into force on May 2, 2001, with nine signatory nations ratifying—Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, the Netherlands on behalf of the Netherlands Antilles, Peru, the United States, and Venezuela. Nicaragua has signed, but has not yet completed their internal ratification processes and/or deposited instruments of ratification. The Dominican Republic is the most recent Party to join. The Convention is open for accession to all countries of the Inter-American region.

The IAC is the first binding regional agreement for protecting sea turtles and their habitats in the Western Hemisphere. The stated purpose of the Convention is "to promote the protection, conservation and recovery of sea turtle populations and of the habitats on which they depend, based on the best available scientific evidence, taking into account the environmental, socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of the Parties." The Convention's efforts to date have included calling attention to the most endangered sea turtle species, such as leatherbacks and hawksbills, as well as calling on countries to address sea turtle bycatch in fisheries and climate change. The Convention has also recently adopted measures to improve loggerhead sea turtle conservation.

B. Organizational Structure:

The Convention provides for the creation of an Executive Secretary, a Consultative Committee of Experts, and a Scientific Committee. The Consultative Committee, among other things, reviews and analyzes information relating to the protection and conservation of populations of sea turtles and their habitats; examines reports concerning the environmental, socio-economic and cultural impact on affected communities resulting from the measures set forth or adopted pursuant to the Convention; and evaluates the efficiency of the different measures proposed to reduce the capture and incidental mortality of sea turtles, as well as the efficiency of different kinds of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs). The Scientific Committee examines and, as appropriate, may conduct research on sea turtles covered by the Convention, including research on their biology and population dynamics. It may also evaluate the environmental impact on sea turtles and their habitats of activities such as fishing operations and the exploitation of marine resources, coastal development, dredging, pollution, degradation of estuaries and reef deterioration, among other things.

At the fourth Conference of Parties in April 2009, the Parties agreed to move the Secretariat Pro Tempore to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Arlington, VA and to authorize the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation as the manager of the IAC Special Fund. This arrangement has been renewed several times since 2009. At the Eighth Conference of Parties, this arrangement was renewed again until 2021. The official website for the organization is <http://www.iacseaturtle.org/defaulteng.htm>.

Status

The IAC's initial meeting of member countries--the First Conference of the Parties (IAC COP1)--took place in San José, Costa Rica on August 6–8, 2002. Delegates from all 11 signatory countries were present, along with 27 observers from 10 countries. The goal of COP1 was primarily to create procedural rules and bylaws. Because there

was not enough time to address all of the specific items set out in the Convention to be accomplished at the first COP, the Parties decided to suspend COP1 and resume it in August 2003 in San Jose. At this session, the Parties were able to come to agreement on the outstanding substantive items on the agenda—the rules of procedure and the terms of reference for the Consultative Committee of Experts and the Scientific Committee. Agreement was also reached with regard to guidelines for international cooperation and the 2004 work program for the Secretariat Pro Tempore.

Several delegations raised the issue of funding for the IAC. It was stressed that adequate and reliable sources of funding must be secured in order to ensure the continued operation of the Pro Tempore Secretariat and to assist Parties in implementing the provisions of the IAC. While it was recognized that most Parties contribute to the implementation of the IAC through their national efforts to protect and conserve sea turtles, financial contributions are necessary to support the work of the Secretariat Pro Tempore and the meetings of the Parties. To address this situation, Peru proposed that a minimum voluntary contribution from each Party in the amount of US\$2,000 be established. The Parties agreed, but several delegations noted that financial contributions to the IAC are voluntary and so Parties may not all be able to meet the minimum level each year.

The Second Conference of the Parties took place in Isla de Margarita, Venezuela, 16-18 November 2004. Delegates from 10 of the 11 signatory countries were present (Ecuador did not attend), along with observer states Nicaragua and Panama, and observers representing the United Nations Environment Program, OLDEPESCA, and 11 non-governmental organizations. At COP2 the Parties constituted the Consultative Committee, finalized the format for the annual report form, extended the Secretariat Pro Tempore, continued discussions on the agreement of the structure of the Scientific Committee (SC), passed the IAC's first resolution (a largely advisory resolution on conservation of the leatherback sea turtle) and concluded its first Memorandum of Understanding between the IAC and the regional South American fisheries development organization OLDEPESCA.

The Third Conference of the Parties took place in September 2006 in Mazatlán, Mexico. Delegates from all signatory nations attended and, for the first time, Canada (non-signatory) sent an official observer. The primary issues discussed and decisions made included: rules of procedure for the Scientific Committee, establishment and funding of a permanent Secretariat, and revisions to the annual national report format. The Parties adopted two resolutions; (1) convening a meeting to discuss the status of the hawksbill in the wider Caribbean, and (2) promotion of sea turtle bycatch avoidance and mitigation techniques adopted by FAO.

In October of 2007, the IAC held its first Extraordinary meeting to discuss the establishment of a Permanent Secretariat and to negotiate a voluntary contribution scheme. The first two days of the meeting were restricted to the heads of the delegation and the afternoon of the third day was open to observers. The Parties agreed to a procedure for selecting the Permanent Secretary and a process for selecting the location of Permanent Secretariat. The Parties also agreed to a voluntary contribution scheme for 2008.

The fourth Conference of Parties was moved from the fall of 2008 to the spring of 2009. At the fourth Conference of Parties in April of 2009, the Parties agreed to host the Secretariat Pro Tempore in Arlington, VA at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as selecting a new Secretary Pro Tempore, agreeing to the 2009-2011 contribution scheme, a resolution on Climate Change and choosing the United States to be Chair of the Conference of Parties.

The 5th Conference of Parties met in Bonaire in June 2011. The major agenda items included renewing the Secretary Pro Tempore's contract, establishing a process to identify a permanent location for the Secretariat, adopting the procedures for establishing exceptions to the prohibitions outlined in the Convention, adopting a new annual report form, adopting a delegate travel support fund, updating the Terms of Reference for the Consultative and Scientific Committees, adopting an MOU between IAC and IATTC, and adopting the 2011-2012 work plan and budget.

In June 2013, the government of Ecuador hosted the 6th Conference of Parties at the Galapagos National Park. The COP addressed several administrative issues related to eventually transitioning the Secretary Pro Tempore to a Permanent Secretariat. In addition, the COP adopted several conservation measures including adopting the first requests from exceptions to the Conventions prohibition on the collection of sea turtles eggs. These exceptions are granted only for subsistence, traditional communities if there is a management plan in place with regular review. The Consultative Committee and the Secretariat Pro Tempore are working closely with Guatemala and Panama on the implementation of these exceptions. Further, the COP agreed that Parties will only use index nesting beach

information from now on in their annual reports. This allows the Scientific Committee to analyze the data for trends. This is a significant step as several countries in the region do not currently have index nesting beaches identified. And finally, the COP outlined a plan for addressing the critical status of endangered Pacific Leatherbacks and are implementing this plan intersessionally.

The 7th Conference of Parties was held in Mexico City, Mexico in June 2015. At the meeting resolutions were adopted to strengthen conservation efforts for Pacific leatherbacks as well as loggerheads in the Atlantic and the Pacific. Costa Rica's request for exception for their harvest of Olive Ridley eggs was also approved provided certain improvements were made to their monitoring program. Finally, Parties approved the 2015-2017 budget.

The 8th Conference of Parties was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in June 2017. The Parties worked to strengthen the existing hawksbill resolution, renew the Secretariat Pro Tempore and agree to financing resolution. The Parties also discussed supporting the on-going United Nation negotiations on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction. However, they were not able to agree to the text during the COP. Several delegations supported the spirit of this proposal but given the sensitivities of this issue could not agree to text.

The 9th Conference of Parties was held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in June 2019. The Parties passed a resolution to protect and conserve the Northwest Atlantic leatherback turtle population. The Parties committed to protecting key nesting beaches, reducing fishery bycatch, and improving in-water and nesting beach monitoring programs. The Parties also agreed on a procedure to facilitate sea turtle information requested from the IAC Secretariat Pro Tempore. Finally, the Parties approved the 2019 - 2021 budget.

The 10th Conference of the Parties will be held in Panama in 2021.

Future Meetings

The next Conference of Parties will be held in 2019 in Guatemala. The major agenda topics will likely include additional work on Pacific leatherback conservation and addressing sea turtle bycatch in fisheries.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Barbara Schroeder/AnnMarie Lauritsen
Office of Protected Resources, F/PR2
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8450
Fax: (301) 713-4060

Department of State:

Joseph Fette
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350

GLOBAL

Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)

Basic Instrument

[Agreement](#) on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Members

Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, France, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay

Secretariat Headquarters

Dr. Christine Bogle
Executive Secretary, ACAP
Level 2, 119 Macquarie St
Hobart 7000, Tasmania, Australia
Phone: +61-03 6165-6674
Email: christine.bogle@acap.aq
Website: www.acap.aq

Description

ACAP entered into force in 2004 and currently has 13 Parties. ACAP is one of several treaties under the Convention on Migratory Species, also known as the Bonn Convention. ACAP's objective is to achieve and maintain a favorable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels through improved conservation measures, research and information exchange, and increased public awareness of the threats facing these seabirds.

Annex 1 of the Agreement contains a list of species identified by ACAP Parties as in need of conservation action. This list is composed of: 22 albatrosses and 9 petrel species with known fisheries interactions. Four of these species are of particular interest to the United States, the 3 North Pacific albatrosses (added in 2009 during the 3rd Meeting of the Parties) and the pink-footed shearwater (a species that breeds in Chile but migrates to U.S. waters, added in 2015 during the 5th Meeting of the Parties). Annex 2 of ACAP contains an "Action Plan" which outlines the major conservation elements of the Agreement. The Action Plan emphasizes several major conservation strategies that Parties must undertake to conserve seabirds.

Budget

ACAP's annual budget for 2021 is AU \$840,610 based upon ACAP's membership fee schedule, which assigns dues (up to a maximum of 20%) proportionally based upon countries GDPs, and other income sources. As the United States is currently not a member, it does not pay dues.

Organizational Structure

ACAP has an Advisory Committee which holds meetings and oversees the activities of three working groups (1) Population and Conservation Status Working Group (which was formed in August 2011 when the Advisory Committee merged the Breeding Sites Working Group and the Status and Trends Working Group), (2) the Seabird Bycatch Working Group, and (3) the Taxonomy Working Group. ACAP Parties meet every 3 years, with the Advisory Committee and its working groups meeting in the 2 intervening years.

U.S. Representation

Countries and Regional Economic Integration Organizations may participate in ACAP as either Parties or Observers. The United States, via NOAA Fisheries, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service, has participated in ACAP meetings as an Observer due to its interest in seabird conservation and its status as a Range State under ACAP. This participation has granted the United States influence over some ACAP proceedings, although only full Parties have voting rights, the ability to Chair any of ACAP's working groups, and propose amendments to the Agreement. The United States has been pursuing accession to the Agreement.

Programs

ACAP's working groups have made significant progress in reviewing the population status and trends of threatened seabird species, addressing taxonomic issues, compiling information on breeding sites and assessing threats to species from factors associated with these sites, development of best practice advice on bycatch mitigation measures, and engaging Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) to address seabird bycatch. In particular, the ACAP Secretariat, on behalf of its Parties, has participated as an observer at key RFMO meetings to offer expertise and assistance to help RFMOs address seabird bycatch. The Secretariat also works with non-governmental organizations, such as BirdLife International, to develop informational materials detailing seabird distribution and its overlap with specific fisheries for discussion at RFMO and other relevant meetings, seabird bycatch identification guide, bycatch mitigation measure fact sheets, and guidelines related to breeding birds and habitats.

Recent Activities

ACAP entered into force in 2004, and is the only multilateral agreement that coordinates on a global scale activity to mitigate known threats to albatross and petrel populations. ACAP held its first Meeting of the Parties in 2005. A major outcome of that meeting was the establishment of an Advisory Committee to guide the implementation of the Agreement. As the last Party to join was in 2008, ACAP is implementing a strategy for engagement with non-Party Range States, including countries with breeding habitats for Annex I species and/or distant water fishing fleets. ACAP is also active within RFMOs, providing technical assistance and expert advice regarding minimization of bycatch of albatrosses and petrels in high seas longline and trawl fisheries.

At its 6th Meeting of the Parties (MoP6; held in 2018 in South Africa), ACAP Parties resolved the issue of participation of the member economies of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum (APEC). Since 2012, ACAP Parties had been seeking a way forward on whether or how APEC member economies could participate in their meetings. At MoP6, a resolution under Article VIII(15) of the Agreement proposed by Australia was adopted. This Resolution allows for representatives of APEC member economies that have vessels fishing within the range of albatrosses and petrels to participate as observers in ACAP meetings.

ACAP develops and updates advice for reducing the impact of fishing on seabirds, including technical specifications for certain bycatch mitigation measures specific to gear types, such as pelagic longline, demersal longline, and trawl gear. SBWG continues to adjust specifications for various mitigation measures based on research and experimental trials. It also notes research priorities for the development of mitigation measures for longline, trawl, and gillnet fishing gear. During the 2017 SBWG meeting, a toolbox format was developed for mitigation measures that have been tested for effectiveness for possible use in artisanal and small-scale fisheries. In 2019, SBWG focused on drivers and barriers against the uptake of seabird bycatch mitigation measures. One of the main outcomes was to pursue engagement with fisheries certification schemes, with priority toward influencing evaluation criteria for threatened and endangered species, to increase the reach of ACAP in more fisheries.

The Advisory Committee adopted in 2019, an updated strategy for engagement with RFMOs and CCAMLR, but the main elements continue to be: (1) engage in RFMO reviews of seabird measures; (2) strengthen RFMO measures; and (3) strengthen RFMO bycatch data collection and reporting requirements and inclusion of bycatch mitigation measures in the RFMO compliance monitoring procedures. An RFMO engagement strategy workshop was held in 2019 in part to address data presented to tuna RFMOs indicating that bycatch rates of ACAP species remain high, while bycatch data collection and reporting in tuna RFMOs remains inadequate for monitoring bycatch levels. The objective of the workshop was to identify the most effective and efficient ways to engage with the tuna RFMOs to deliver on the ACAP seabird conservation objectives. Workshop participants agreed that new messaging was needed to reinstate information on the current crisis in albatross conservation, and why and how it should be solved. In

addition, compliance with required seabird bycatch mitigation measures was an area that the workshop participants considered needed greater attention.

The Population and Conservation Status Working Group collates and maintains information on population size, trends, demography, at-sea distribution, threats and management of albatrosses, petrels, and shearwaters listed on Annex I of the Agreement. In 2019, this working group pursued the development of an action plan for the waved albatross on Espanola Island, guidelines on mitigation of bird strikes on land, particularly for the nocturnally-active petrel species, and guidelines on sampling albatrosses and petrels to assess macroplastic (> 5mm) and microplastic (< 5mm) ingestion. Guidelines on removing entangled seabirds from nets were also endorsed.

In late 2018, Marco Favero was succeeded by Christine Bogle as the Executive Secretary.

Ecuador offered to host the 12th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2020. However, due to travel restrictions and other measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting is postponed to 2021.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Mi Ae Kim
Office of International Affairs and Seafood
Inspection
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (202) 482-8365

Department of State:

David Hogan
Acting Director
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350

Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas

The problem of fishing vessels reflagging, sometimes repeatedly and rapidly, to avoid compliance with national or international fisheries conservation and management measures was first raised for urgent action at the International Conference on Responsible Fishing held in Cancun, Mexico, in May 1992. The Declaration of Cancun adopted by that Conference called upon States “to take effective action, consistent with international law, to deter reflagging of fishing vessels as a means of avoiding compliance with applicable conservation and management rules for fishing activities on the high seas.” Other injunctions for the eventual agreement came from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the FAO Technical Consultation on High Seas Fishing in September 1992.

The Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (<http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/MEETING/003/X3130m/X3130E00.HTM>) was approved by the FAO Conference on 24 November 1993. In April 2003, upon the date of deposit of the 25th instrument of acceptance, the Agreement entered into force. As of October 2014, 40 instruments of acceptance have been deposited. The Agreement is an integral part of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

At the heart of the Agreement are the requirements that Parties:

- permit only their flag vessels that they have authorized to fish on the high seas to do so and prohibit all others from fishing on the high seas;
- control their vessels authorized to fish on the high seas so that all applicable rules governing such fishing are observed;
- collect data on their vessels authorized to fish on the high seas and their catches;
- submit to the FAO a list of vessels authorized to fish on the high seas;
- maintain such list as vessels are added or deleted. If an authorization to fish is withdrawn for misconduct, report the specifics of the misconduct and any punitive measures to the FAO.

The Agreement is implemented within the United States through the High Seas Fishing Compliance Act (16 U.S.C. 5501 *et seq.*) and regulations promulgated by NOAA Fisheries. NOAA Fisheries issues the authorizations for U.S.-flagged vessels to fish on the high seas, collects data on such vessels, and submits the list of vessels to the FAO.

An updated rule, effective January 14, 2016, sets forth regulatory changes to improve the administration of the High Seas Fishing Compliance Act program and the monitoring of U.S. fishing vessels operating on the high seas. This final rule includes, for all U.S. fishing vessels operating on the high seas, adjustments to permitting and reporting procedures. It also includes requirements for the installation and operation of enhanced mobile transceiver units (EMTUs) for vessel monitoring, carrying observers on vessels, reporting of transshipments taking place on the high seas, and protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems. The rule brings the High Seas Fishing Compliance Act to be consistent with other established requirements.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Kent Laborde
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8364
Email: Kent.laborde@noaa.gov

Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA)

UNFSA was adopted in 1995 and sets out principles for the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. It, *inter alia*, prescribes that a precautionary approach and the best available scientific information be used in fishery management, that the impacts of fishing on associated and dependent species be managed, that pollution be minimized, and that overfishing and excess fishing capacity be prevented or eliminated. The UNFSA has provisions that help to ensure that key fishery resources that occur both within a State's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and on the high seas are conserved and managed on a sustainable basis. The UNFSA balances the sovereign rights of coastal States with respect to resources in their EEZs with the rights of all States to authorize their vessels to fish on the high seas. UNFSA also reinforces the conservation and management capacities of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) so that non-member fishing does not undermine them, specifies means for cooperation between coastal States and distant water fishing States, articulates the duties of States with respect to vessels flying their flags, requires parties to settle disputes using procedures in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and reaffirms the sovereign rights of coastal States with respect to their EEZs.

UNFSA also elaborates on the fundamental principle, established in the Convention, which dictates that States should cooperate to ensure conservation and to promote the objective of optimum utilization of fisheries resources both within and beyond the EEZ by providing as the framework regional and sub-regional fisheries management organizations. It promotes effective management and conservation of high seas resources by, among other things:

- Prescribing specific roles and functions for RFMOs, and standards of operation;
- Establishing principles and minimum international standards for the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, such as data collection and the application of the precautionary approach;
- Establishing that measures taken for the conservation and management of those stocks in areas under national jurisdiction and in the adjacent high seas be compatible;
- Establishing standards for flag State control and effective mechanisms for compliance and enforcement on high seas
- Recognizing the special requirements of developing States.

Article 36 of UNFSA required the Secretary-General of the UN to convene a conference to assess the effectiveness of the Agreement in securing the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. The Review Conference was held in May 2006. The Review Conference was suspended, following agreement on the resumption of the Conference at a date no later than 2011. The Review Conference resumed in May 2010 to review and assess the adequacy of the provisions of UNFSA and, if necessary, to propose ways to strengthen the substance and methods of implementation of those provisions in order to better address any continuing problems in the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. Detailed information can be found at http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/review_conf_fish_stocks.htm.

The Resumed Review Conference recommended specific actions and approaches that States and RFMOs could undertake to strengthen the implementation of UNFSA's provisions. These recommendations are centered around 4 core themes: (1) Conservation and Management of Stocks; (2) Mechanisms for international cooperation and non-members; (3) Monitoring, control and surveillance and compliance and enforcement; and (4) Developing States and non-parties. The Participants also agreed that further review is necessary and, to that end, suspended the Review Conference again and agreed to continue the informal consultations of States parties and resume the review of the Agreement again not earlier than 2015. The final report of the Resumed Review Conference can be found at: http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/review_conf_fish_stocks.htm

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/75, the Review Conference was resumed May 23-27, 2016. The meeting Report can be found at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/244/06/PDF/N1624406.pdf?OpenElement>

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Cheri McCarty
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8369
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: Cheri.McCarty@noaa.gov

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Basic Instrument

The [Convention](#) was opened for signature at the United Nations Convention on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, June 1992; signed by President Clinton on June 4, 1993, and transmitted to the Senate for advice and consent, along with an interpretive statement to clarify how the United States understands certain provisions that have caused concern. The treaty entered into force on December 29, 1993.

Implementing Legislation

The CBD is awaiting Senate ratification. No implementing legislation to carry out the terms of the treaty was sent to the Congress because current law was considered sufficient to meet the U.S. obligations.

Member Nations

196 nations have ratified or acceded to the CBD. The United States has signed but not yet ratified the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety has been ratified or acceded to by 172 nations. The Cartagena Protocol entered into force on September 11, 2003. The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing has been ratified or acceded to by 124 nations. The Nagoya Protocol entered into force on October 12, 2014. As a non-Party to the Convention, the United States cannot become Party to the Protocols.

Secretariat Headquarters

413, Saint Jacques Street, suite 800
Montreal Quebec, Canada H2Y 1N9
Tel: +1-514-288-2220
Fax: +1-514-288-6588
Email: secretariat@cbd.int
Web address: <https://www.cbd.int/>

Executive Secretary: Elizabeth Maruma Mrema

U.S. Representation

The Department of State is the lead U.S. agency to the CBD negotiations. The Department of Commerce (including NOAA), Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Agency for International Development, and a number of other Agencies participate actively in the interagency process and on delegations to CBD negotiations.

NOAA Office of International Affairs is the lead for NOAA. NOAA Fisheries Service works in close consultation with NOAA International in the development of position papers and the review of information documents.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are:

- (1) the conservation of biological diversity,
- (2) the sustainable use of its components, and
- (3) the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

B. Organizational Structure:

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is governed by a Conference of the Parties (COP) made up of all the Parties to the Convention. At the COP, countries report on steps taken, and consider further measures for implementing the provisions of the Convention. In addition to the COP, a Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) has been established to provide advice to the COP. The SBSTTA is also composed of representatives of governments that are Parties and has its own Bureau. SBSTTA generally meets annually, and can request assistance for its work intersessionally of *ad hoc* technical expert groups or liaison groups on specific issues. A Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) has also been created. The SBI's main purposes is to review progress in implementation, identify strategic actions to enhance implementation, strengthen means of implementation, and oversee operations of the convention and the protocols. The COP Bureau serves as the SBI's Bureau. A Secretariat, located in Montreal, Canada, provides administrative support to the Convention under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program. The Secretariat also manages an electronic clearing-house mechanism to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation (<https://www.cbd.int/>).

The Conference of the Parties to the CBD adopted a supplementary agreement to the Convention known as the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety on January 29, 2000, which later came into force on September 11, 2003. The Cartagena Protocol seeks to contribute to the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) - such as genetically engineered plants, animals, and microbes - that cross international borders. Although the United States is not a Party to the CBD and therefore, cannot become a Party to the Biosafety Protocol, the U.S. participated in the negotiation of the text and the subsequent preparations for entry into force under the Intergovernmental Committee on the Cartagena Protocol. The Cartagena Protocol provides countries the opportunity to obtain information before new biotech organisms are imported. It acknowledges each country's right to regulate bio-engineered organisms, subject to existing international obligations. It also creates a framework to help improve capacity of developing countries to protect biodiversity.

The Cartagena Protocol establishes an Internet-based "Biosafety Clearing-House" to help countries exchange scientific, technical, environmental and legal information about living modified organisms. It creates an advance informed agreement (AIA) procedure that in effect requires exporters to seek consent from importers before the first shipment of LMOs meant to be introduced into the environment (such as fish for release). It requires bulk shipments of LMO commodities intended for direct use as food, feed or for processing, to be accompanied by documentation stating that such shipments "may contain" living modified organisms and are "not intended for intentional introduction into the environment." The Cartagena Protocol establishes a process for considering more detailed identification of LMO commodities in international trade.

The Conference of the Parties also adopted a supplementary agreement to the Convention known as the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity on October 29, 2010, which later came into force on October 12, 2014. The Nagoya Protocol seeks to maintain fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The Nagoya Protocol creates legal transparency for providers and users of genetic resources by establishing more predictable conditions for access to genetic resources, and helping to ensure benefit-sharing when genetic resources leave the country providing the genetic resources. The benefit-sharing of the Nagoya Protocol creates incentives to conserve and sustainably use genetic resources, and therefore enhances the contribution of biodiversity to development and human well-being.

General Provisions of the Treaty: The Convention on Biological Diversity affirms that conservation of biodiversity is a common concern of humankind and reaffirms that nations have sovereign rights over their own biological resources. Implementation depends principally on action by Parties at the national level. In this respect, the Convention provides general guidance on best practices, but does not currently include any sanctions for countries that do not adhere to these practices. The Convention covers both terrestrial and marine biota, and Parties are explicitly required to implement the CBD consistent with the rights and obligations of States under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The major commitments made by Parties to the Convention encompass nearly all aspects of NOAA Fisheries work and responsibilities. These commitments include:

- To develop national strategies, plans, etc., for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; and to integrate, as far as possible and appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans (Art. 6);
- To identify and monitor the components of biodiversity and activities which have or might have significant adverse impacts (Art. 7);
- To establish protected areas or areas where special measures are needed and to regulate or manage biological resources important to biodiversity; to promote protection of ecosystems and natural habitats; and to promote environmentally sound and sustainable development in areas adjacent to protected areas; to prevent introduction of species from outside a country that could threaten native ecosystems or species; to develop or maintain necessary legislation and other regulatory provisions for protection of threatened species and populations; and to establish means to regulate, manage or control risks associated with use and release of living modified organisms from biotechnology with likely adverse environmental affects (Art. 8);
- To adopt measures for the *ex-situ* conservation of components of biological diversity (Art. 9);
- To integrate consideration of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources into national decision-making; adopt measures relating to the use of biological resources to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on biological diversity; to preserve and maintain knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements; support remedial action in degraded areas; and encourage cooperation between the government and private sector to develop methods for sustainable use (Art. 10);
- To adopt economically and socially sound measures that act as incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of components of biological diversity (Art. 11);
- To establish programs for scientific and technical education and training in identification, conservation, sustainable use of biodiversity and promote research that contributes to biodiversity (Art. 12);
- To promote programs for public education and awareness (Art. 13);
- To require environmental impact assessments that address impacts on biodiversity and to minimize such impacts; (Art. 14);
- To create conditions to facilitate access to genetic resources on mutually agreed terms, recognizing sovereign rights of States over their natural resources; and to share in a fair and equitable way the results of research, development, and the commercial utilization of genetic resources with contracting Parties providing such resources (Art. 15);
- To encourage access to, and transfer of, technology relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or that makes use of genetic resources and does not cause significant damage to the environment (Art. 16);
- To facilitate the exchange of information and scientific and technical cooperation in the field of the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity (Art. 17&18);
- To encourage biotechnology research, especially in developing countries; ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from biotechnology; and address safety concerns related to the transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (Art. 19).

In addition to these general provisions, developed country Parties are required to provide “new and additional financial resources” to assist developing country parties meet the incremental costs of implementing measures that fulfill the obligations of the CBD. These resources are provided through the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) (Art. 20 & 21).

Marine and Coastal Biodiversity: The Second Conference of the Parties (COP) in November 1995 adopted the Ministerial Statement on the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which referred to the new global consensus on the importance of marine and coastal biological diversity as the “*Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity*.” The Ministerial Statement (re)affirmed the critical need for the Parties to address the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biological diversity and urged Parties to initiate immediate action to implement COP decisions on the issue.

The program of work on marine and coastal biological diversity was approved by the COP in a decision in 1998, and further elaborated in decisions in subsequent COPs. The work program identifies important operation objectives and priority activities within the framework of five key program elements reflecting global priorities:

1. Promoting integrated marine and coastal area management as the framework for addressing human impacts on biological diversity;
2. Establishing and maintaining marine and coastal protected areas;
3. Using fisheries and other marine and coastal living resources sustainably (this was the most controversial recommendation, including issues of overcapacity, subsidies and bycatch);
4. Ensuring that mariculture practices are environmentally sustainable;
5. Preventing the introduction of, and controlling or eradicating, alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species.

The CBD program of work on Marine and Coastal biodiversity aims to assist the implementation of the Jakarta Mandate at the national, regional and global level. It identifies key operational objectives and priority activities within the five key program elements, namely: (1) implementation of integrated marine and coastal area management, (2) marine and coastal living resources, (3) marine and coastal protected areas, (4) mariculture and alien species and (5) genotypes. It also provides a general element to encompass the coordination role of the Secretariat, the collaborative linkages required and the effective use of experts, as well as enabling activities to assist Parties in overcoming obstacles to implementation.

The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will tentatively be held in Kunming, China, dates to be determined.

Staff Contacts*NOAA Fisheries:*

Lauren Fields
Office of International Affairs
Foreign Affairs Specialist
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10640
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8379
Fax: (301) 713-1081
Web address:
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/international-affairs>

NOAA Headquarters:

Elizabeth McLanahan
Office of International Affairs
Director
Herbert C. Hoover Building, AA302
14th and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20235
Phone: (202) 482-6196
Fax: (202) 482-6000; 482-4307
Email: Elizabeth.McLanahan@noaa.gov
Web address:
<http://www.international.noaa.gov/index.htm>

Department of State:

Ms. Barbara M. De Rosa-Joynt
Division Chief of Biodiversity
Office of Conservation and Water, OES/ECW
HST Room 2658
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520
Telephone: (202) 647-4511
FAX (202) 736-7351
Email: derosabm@state.gov
Web address: <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-economic-growth-energy-and-the-environment/bureau-of-oceans-and-international-environmental-and-scientific-affairs/>

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

Basic Instrument

The [Convention](#) on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as CMS or the Bonn Convention)

Member Nations

As of November 2019, 130 nations are party to the CMS. The United States is not a party.

Commission Headquarters

Bonn, Germany

Budget

The approved budget for 2021-2023 is €2,748,048; €2,803,009; and €3,200,691, respectively.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as CMS or the Bonn Convention) aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is an intergovernmental treaty, concluded under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme, concerned with the conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale. Since the Convention's entry into force, its membership has grown steadily to include 120 Parties (as of November 2014) from Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Europe and Oceania.

Migratory species threatened with extinction are listed on Appendix I of the Convention. CMS Parties strive towards strictly protecting these animals, conserving or restoring the places where they live, mitigating obstacles to migration and controlling other factors that might endanger them. Besides establishing obligations for each State joining the Convention, CMS promotes concerted action among the Range States of many of these species.

Migratory species that need or would significantly benefit from international co-operation are listed in Appendix II of the Convention. For this reason, the Convention encourages the Range States to conclude global or regional Agreements for those species.

In this respect, CMS acts as a framework Convention. The Agreements may range from legally binding treaties (called Agreements) to less formal instruments, such as Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), and can be adapted to the requirements of particular species or region. The development of models tailored according to the conservation needs throughout the migratory range is a unique capacity to CMS.

Species specific Agreements and MOUs, concluded under CMS, are open to all range States of a species, regardless of whether they are Party to the Convention. The United States is not a Party to CMS, however, it is currently signatory to three CMS MOUs: the MOU on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA); the MOU on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks; and the MOU for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region. Further, the United States is considering ratifying the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and actively participates as an observer in ACAP meetings.

B. Organizational Structure:

The Convention has established several bodies to support its implementation.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the CMS decision-making body. It meets every three years. Its functions are described in Article VII of the Convention. For example, it reviews the Convention's implementation, adopts

budgets, resolutions and recommendations, amends Appendix I and II, and decides on priorities for future CMS activities.

The Standing Committee (StC) provides policy and administrative guidance between regular meetings of the COP, particularly on general policy as well as on operational and financial issues. The StC consists of representatives of the Parties, in particular from each CMS region, the Depositary and a delegate representing the country that plans to host the next meeting of the COP. The StC meets at least annually.

The Scientific Council (ScC) advises the COP and the Secretariat on scientific matters and priorities for research and conservation. Its functions are described in Article VIII of the Convention. The ScC consists of experts appointed by CMS Parties. In addition, the Convention provides for the appointment of a limited number of qualified individuals - appointed councillors- who are recognized experts in their field or region. The ScC currently has 8 appointed councillors whose expertise covers aquatic mammals, African fauna, Asian fauna, birds, bycatch, fish, marine turtles and neotropical fauna. Scientific Councillors participate in ScC meetings in their capacity as experts, not as governmental representatives. The ScC meets once immediately before the COP and once intersessionally.

All three bodies have the ability to establish working groups on particular species or other topics.

Recent Activities

The thirteenth Meeting of the COP was held October 15-22, 2020, in Gandhinagar, India. The documents from the meeting can be found at: <https://www.cms.int/en/meeting/thirteenth-meeting-conference-parties-cms>.

Future Meetings

The fourteenth Meeting of the COP will take place in 2023.

Web address:

<http://www.cms.int/>

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Cheri McCarty
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8369
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: Cheri.McCarty@noaa.gov

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Basis Instrument

[Convention](#) on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (27 UST 1087, TIAS 8249)

Implementing Legislation

[Endangered Species Act](#) (16 USC 1531-43)

Member Nations

There are 183 Parties: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, People's Republic of China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, European Union, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Republic of Kuwait, Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Secretariat Headquarters

CITES Secretariat
International Environment House
Chemin des Anémones
CH-1219 Châtelaine, Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: (+4122) 917-8139/40
Fax: (+4122) 797-3417
Email: info@cites.org
Web address: <http://www.cites.org/>

Budget

The budget for the triennium 2020-2022 approved by the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties shall be covered by the Trust Fund budget in the amount of USD 5,907,043 for 2020, USD 6,080,945 for 2021 and USD 6,697,571 for 2022. According to United Nations scale, the U.S. contribution is 22%.

U.S. Representation

The Endangered Species Act provides authority to the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of Interior (FWS) to implement the Convention. FWS is also responsible for inspections of shipments of wildlife through designated ports of entry. Many CITES-listed marine species are managed by NMFS, including all the great whales, all the dolphins, all the marine turtles, all hard coral species, seahorses, queen conch, six seal species, coelacanths, some sturgeon species, basking sharks, great white sharks, hammerhead sharks (great, scalloped, and smooth), shortfin and longfin mako sharks, porbeagle sharks, oceanic whitetip sharks, silky sharks, all thresher sharks, whale sharks, devil rays, manta rays, giant guitarfishes, wedgefishes, and three species of teatfish.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is a multinational agreement that entered into force in 1975 to prevent species from becoming over-exploited through international trade. Under this treaty, countries work together to regulate international trade of certain animal and plant species to ensure that the trade is legal and not detrimental to the survival of wild populations.

B. Organizational Structure:

The CITES framework includes a Standing Committee, which meets annually to conduct the administrative matters of the Convention and to recommend policy actions to the Parties. In addition, there are separate committees on Animals and Plants, which meet annually to review technical matters and make recommendations to the Standing Committee.

All the committees meet approximately once a year on their own schedules. Meetings of the Conference of the Parties (CoPs) are convened approximately every three years.

C. Programs:

Species for which trade is regulated are listed in one of three Appendices to CITES. Species listed in Appendix I are threatened with extinction and trade is allowed only in exceptional circumstances; commercial trade is not allowed. Species listed in Appendix II are not necessarily now threatened with extinction but they may become so if international trade is not regulated. Commercial and non-commercial international trade is permitted for Appendix-II species if the exporting country is able to make certain determinations, including that the specimen was acquired in accordance with its domestic conservation laws and that the export will not be detrimental to the survival of the species. Species are listed in Appendix I or II based on a two-thirds majority vote of the Parties. Appendix III is a list of wildlife and plant species identified by any particular CITES Party as being in need of international trade controls and that is subject to domestic regulation to prevent or restrict its exploitation. A species is unilaterally listed in Appendix III by a country in the native range of the species, at the request of that country, and specimens in international trade must be accompanied by appropriate CITES documentation.

The Animals and Plants Committees of CITES may undertake reviews of Appendix II-listed species for which there are significant amounts of international trade. Based on these reviews, recommendations for conservation of the species are made to help ensure that international trade is sustainable.

Of special interest to NMFS in the past have been proposals to list commercially exploited aquatic species in CITES, significant trade studies for queen conch and hard corals, discussion of the implementation of CITES Appendix II for commercially exploited aquatic species, cooperative efforts with the International Whaling Commission to control illegal trade in whales, the listing criteria for commercially exploited aquatic species, and resolution of the CITES provisions for regulation of trade in species taken on the high seas, referred to under the treaty as “introduction from the sea.”

Eighteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

The Eighteenth Meeting of the CoP (CoP18), originally proposed to take place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 23 May – 3 June 2019, took place in Geneva, Switzerland, 17-28 August 2019. Delegations deliberated actions to address the international trade of species that are included or proposed for inclusion in the CITES Appendices.

Four proposals to include marine species in Appendix II of CITES were adopted at CoP18 by secret ballot. These species include shortfin and longfin mako shark, giant guitarfish, wedgefishes, and teatfish (three species of sea cucumbers found in the Indo-Pacific region). With the exception of the teatfish proposal, all proposals became effective 90 days after the meeting on 26 November 2019. The teatfish proposal became effective 12 months after the meeting on 28 August 2020.

Other marine species topics and decisions adopted at CoP18 are discussed below.

Totoaba

The United States led efforts at CoP18 to strengthen several draft decisions considered during CoP18 to combat the illegal harvest and trade of totoaba, which are putting the critically endangered vaquita at risk of extinction since vaquita are caught and drown in illegal gill nets set for totoaba. Both species are listed in Appendix I of CITES and are classified as endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Among the decisions that were adopted by the CoP, Mexico is called to take urgent actions to address the threats to these species. These actions include the deployment of enforcement personnel to effectively prevent fishers and vessels from entering the Vaquita Refuge area and re-establishment of a trilateral enforcement task force (comprised of enforcement personnel from Mexico, the United States, and China) aimed at enhancing collaboration to tackle the illegal trade in totoaba. The decisions also urge Mexico to expand its current efforts to confiscate and destroy the deadly gillnets fishermen use to illegally catch totoaba that entangle and kill vaquita. The CITES Standing Committee will review and assess the progress made by Mexico in fulfilling these decisions at its next full meeting and make any appropriate recommendations, including potential compliance measures.

Seahorses

CoP18 adopted several decisions offered by Monaco, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and the United States that will provide valuable information and assistance to support CITES Parties in combating the illegal international trade in seahorses. Although the inclusion of seahorses in CITES Appendix II has provided conservation benefits to these species, the United States is concerned about the ongoing illegal and unreported export of dried seahorses. The decisions adopted by CoP18 call on the CITES Secretariat to share available materials on the CITES website that support CITES implementation for seahorses, seek and disseminate information on national trade quotas and suspensions, and facilitate the organization of an expert workshop to identify practical steps for implementation and enforcement of the CITES Appendix II listing of seahorses. The findings of the workshop will be considered by the Animals and Standing Committees for the development of recommendations as appropriate to ensure sustainable harvest and legal trade in seahorses, address the illegal trade of seahorses, and strengthen CITES implementation and enforcement.

Marine Ornamental Fish Trade

Several decisions put forward by Switzerland with support from the United States and the European Union were adopted at CoP18 that will help CITES Parties examine the conservation implications of the marine ornamental fish trade. As one of the primary importers of marine ornamental fish, the United States believes there is a need to help ensure that international trade in these species is done sustainably. The decisions require, subject to the availability of external funding, the CITES Secretariat to convene a technical workshop to consider the conservation priorities and management needs related to the trade in non-CITES listed marine ornamental fishes worldwide with a focus on data from importing and exporting countries. The workshop is expected to result in a report that will inform recommendations of the Animals and Standing Committees to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Sharks and Rays

CoP18 adopted several decisions related to the conservation and management of sharks and rays based on recommendations from the CITES Animals and Plants Committee to address challenges with CITES implementation and knowledge gaps. To help fill some of these gaps, the Secretariat is requested to collaborate with FAO on an analysis of the trade in non-fin shark products of CITES-listed species, and conduct a study in collaboration with relevant experts to investigate the lower than expected levels of trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays in the CITES Trade Database since 2000. The CITES resolution on sharks and rays was also updated.

Queen Conch

The United States worked with Belize, Jamaica, and the Bahamas to update several decisions aimed at ensuring sustainable harvest and legal trade in queen conch that were adopted at CoP18. These decisions encourage range States to collaborate in priority activities, such as implementation of the Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan (endorsed by the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission), data collection to improve regional conversion factors or develop national conversion factors, joint research programs to support the making of non-detriment findings (NDFs), and development of public education and awareness programs regarding the conservation and sustainable use of queen conch. Decisions were also adopted directing the Animals Committee to provide advice on NDFs; the Standing Committee to review traceability and enforcement issues and make recommendations; and the Secretariat to provide assistance to range States, report developments in traceability systems, and make recommendations as appropriate.

Marine Turtles

The United States led efforts at CoP18 to strengthen draft decisions on marine turtles based on the recommendations of a study on the legal and illegal international trade in these species, which was co-funded by NMFS (CoP18 Inf. 18). CoP18 adopted the amended decisions, which urge Parties to, among other activities, develop and/or update management and action plans for the conservation of marine turtles; improve monitoring, detection and law enforcement activities related to marine turtles; collect DNA samples of marine turtle specimens, including from seized specimens, to determine species involved and populations of origin in support of research, investigations and prosecutions; improve cooperation, collaboration and exchange of actionable intelligence regarding illegal take of and trade in marine turtles; and ascertain key trade routes, methods, volumes, and trade “hot spots.” The Animals Committee is directed to review this study and other additional information and submit recommendations as appropriate to the Standing Committee. Upon review, the Standing Committee is directed to develop recommendations for consideration at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Precious Corals

CoP18 supported a renewal of decisions requesting that the Animals Committee analyze the outcomes of a study prepared by FAO on the biology, population status, use, trade, and comparison of management schemes for precious corals (black, red and pink corals). The Animals Committee is also requested to prepare recommendations as appropriate on actions needed to enhance the conservation, sustainable harvest and use of all precious corals in international trade for submission to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee is requested to consider these recommendations and formulate its own recommendations as appropriate for consideration at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The United States has long advocated for the sustainable harvest and legal trade in precious corals, which includes black corals (currently listed in CITES Appendix II) and pink and red corals (which are not currently listed in the CITES Appendices). Although a U.S. proposal to include pink and red corals in CITES Appendix II was defeated twice (CoP14 and CoP15), we continue to seek ways to ensure that international trade does not threaten the survival of these species in the wild.

Banggai Cardinalfish

Decisions were adopted at CoP18 that encourage Indonesia to continue conservation and management measures to ensure the sustainability of international trade in Banggai cardinalfish, a small tropical fish that is popular in the aquarium trade and only found in Indonesia. Indonesia is further encouraged to report its progress on these measures and implementation of recommendations made by the Animals Committee. The Committee is directed to

review Indonesia's progress report upon submission and make recommendations as appropriate to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The United States is concerned about the impacts of international trade on the Banggai cardinalfish and would like to ensure international trade in this species is done in a legal and sustainable manner. In 2016, NMFS listed the Banggai cardinalfish as threatened under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Subsequently, NMFS co-financed a study to assess the impact of international trade on the conservation status of this species and advise on suitable conservation and management measures. This study formed the basis of the Animals Committee's recommendations.

Black Sea Bottlenose Dolphin

CoP18 adopted a decision directing the CITES Secretariat to continue its collaboration with the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS) and in accordance with a resolution calling for cooperation with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) for effective conservation of CITES-listed species of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea. The United States supports the continued cooperation and contribution of CITES to the conservation efforts for Black Sea Bottlenose dolphin, including by cooperating with biodiversity-related Conventions such as CMS and the ACCOBAMS Agreement established under its auspices.

Sturgeon

Two sets of decisions related to sturgeon were adopted at CoP18. The first set of decisions seek to improve the identification of sturgeons and paddlefish specimens in trade. The second set of decisions strive to address the practical challenges with CITES implementation as increased trade in caviar from aquaculture facilities has led to shifts in trade.

Eels

CoP18 adopted several decisions proposed by the Animals and Standing Committees that will help ensure sustainable international trade in eel species, help address illegal trade, and aid with current enforcement challenges.

Marine Fish Species Listings in CITES

The CoP rejected a draft resolution that called for a halt to the adoption of new listings of marine species in the CITES Appendices until a review of the "efficiency" from a conservation and management perspective of all marine fish species listed since CoP12 (2002) was conducted. The United States strongly opposed the draft resolution because it is contrary to the nature of the Convention, and because there are already existing CITES mechanisms for evaluating species listings and the effectiveness of Party implementation.

Upcoming Activities

The 2020 meetings of the Animals Committee and Standing Committee of CITES were postponed due to COVID-19.

Staff Contacts*NOAA Fisheries:*

Laura Cimo
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8359
Fax: (301) 713-2313

Angela Somma
Chief, Endangered Species Division
Office of Protected Resources (F/PR)
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8474
Fax: (301) 713-0376

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Pam Scruggs
Division of Management Authority
Office of the Chief
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041
Telephone: (703) 358-2093
Fax: (703) 358-2280

Dr. Rosemarie Gnam
Division of Scientific Authority
Office of the Chief
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041
Telephone: (703) 358-1708
Fax: (703) 358-2276

International Whaling Commission (IWC)

Basic Instrument

International [Convention](#) for the Regulation of Whaling, 1946, (TIAS 1849); Protocol amending 1956 (TIAS 4228).

Implementing Legislation

Whaling Convention [Act](#) of 1949 (64 Stat. 421, 16 U.S.C. 916-9161).

Member Nations

There are currently 88 member nations: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, People's Republic of China, Colombia, Republic of the Congo, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, The Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Republic of Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Laos, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Republic of Palau, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Togo, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States, and Uruguay.

Commission Headquarters

International Whaling Commission
The Red House
135 Station Road, Impington
Cambridge, CB4 9NP, United Kingdom
Web address: <http://www.iwc.int>

Executive Secretary: Dr. Rebecca Lent
Telephone: +44-1223-233-971
Fax: +44-1223 232-876
Email: secretariat@iwc.int

Budget

The IWC Financial Year runs from 1 January to 31 December. The Commission passes a two-year budget at its biennial meetings. In 2018, the Commission approved a deficit budget of GBP 33 572 for 2019 and GBP 67 372 for 2020. Overall Member Contributions were kept the same at GBP1,656,663 for 2019 and 2020. The United States' dues in 2019 were GBP 84,354 and in 2020 were GBP 94,686. This increase is due to the withdrawal of Japan from the Commission, and the subsequent re-allocation of the Members' dues in accordance with the agreed contributions formula. The United States' voluntary contributions in 2019 were USD 105,000.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

The Commissioner is appointed by the President, on the concurrent recommendations of the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Commerce, and serves at his pleasure. The President may also appoint a Deputy U.S. Commissioner.

B. U.S. Commissioners:

U.S. Commissioner:
 Mr. Ryan Wulff (Acting)
 Assistant Regional Administrator
 West Coast Regional Office
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 National Marine Fisheries Service
 650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Deputy U.S. Commissioner:
 Mr. Ryan Wulff
 Assistant Regional Administrator
 West Coast Regional Office
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 National Marine Fisheries Service
 650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100
 Sacramento, CA 95814

C. Advisory Structure:

U.S. representation in the IWC has no formal (legislated) advisory structure. The IWC Commissioner does consult, however, with the "IWC Interagency Committee," which includes representatives of the Department of State, the Marine Mammal Commission, Department of the Interior, other Federal agencies, conservation organizations, Native organizations, and other interested parties.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The 1946 Convention has as its objective the proper conservation of world whale stocks, thus making possible the orderly development of the whaling industry. The Convention established the IWC to provide for a continuing review of the condition of whale stocks and for such additions to or modifications of the agreed conservation measures as might appear desirable.

B. Organizational Structure:

The IWC consists of the Commission, Bureau, Secretariat, and subject area committees, including a Scientific Committee. The Commission, currently chaired by Mr. Andrej Bibic (Slovenia) and vice-chaired by Mr. Amadou Téliel Diallo (Republic of Guinea), is composed of one member from each Contracting Government, may be accompanied by one or more experts and advisors. The Bureau is a group of seven IWC Commissioners elected to oversee the work of the IWC during the intersessional period. The Bureau members for 2018-20 are Slovenia (Chair), Republic of Guinea (Vice-chair), USA (Chair of F&A), and Argentina, Ghana, St Lucia and the UK.

At the Commission, each member government has one vote, including the members of the European Union, which vote along a common position, but cast individual votes. Decisions of the Commission are by simple majority of those members voting, except that a three-fourths majority of those members is required for actions to amend the provisions of the Schedule (which contains the binding decisions of the Commission). The Commission can determine its own rules of procedure and may appoint its own Secretary and staff. The Committees may be set up by the Commission from its own members and experts or advisors to perform such functions as it may authorize.

The IWC is comprised of the following subsidiary bodies:

- IWC Commission
 - Standing Working Group to support the review process for whaling under special permit
- Bureau
- Finance and Administration Committee
 - Budgetary Sub-committee
 - Working Group on operational effectiveness and cost savings measures
 - Intersessional Correspondence Group on Strengthening IWC Financing
- Conservation Committee
 - Ship Strikes Working Group
 - Standing Working Group on whale watching
 - Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans

- Standing Working Group on Bycatch
- Conservation Committee Planning Group
- Scientific Committee
 - Sub-committee on Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Sub-committee on Northern Hemisphere Whale Stocks (NH)
 - Sub-committee on In-Depth Assessments (IA)
 - Sub-committee on other Southern Hemisphere Whale Stocks (SH)
 - Standing Working Group on Abundance Estimates, Stock Status and International Cruises (ASI)
 - Working Group on Stock Definition and DNA techniques (SD&DNA)
 - Working Group on Non-Deliberate Human Induced Mortality of Cetaceans (HIM)
 - Standing Working Group on Environmental Concerns (E)
 - Working Group on Ecosystem Modelling Approaches (EM)
 - Sub-committee on Small Cetaceans (SM)
 - Sub-committee on Whale Watching (WW)
 - Sub-committee on Implementation Reviews and Simulation Trials
 - Sub-committee on Conservation Management Plans
 - Ad hoc Working Group on Sanctuaries
- Joint Working Group between the Scientific and Conservation Committees
- Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Sub-committee
- Infractions Sub-committee
- Working Group on Whale Killing Methods and Welfare Issues
 - Intersessional Working Group on Welfare
 - IWC Global Whale Entanglement Response Network

C. Programs:

The IWC meets biennially to review the condition of whale stocks and to modify conservation measures, as appropriate. The Commission has used various means of regulating commercial whaling including the fixing of open and closed seasons, open and closed areas, protected species, size limits for each species, and limits on the catch of whales in any one season. The IWC recognizes three types of whaling: commercial whaling, special permit (scientific research) whaling, and aboriginal subsistence whaling.

Past actions by the IWC include establishment of a whale sanctuary in the Indian Ocean area and in the Southern Ocean (in most of the waters south of 40° S. latitude), prohibition on the use of cold grenade (non-exploding) harpoons to kill whales for commercial purposes, a moratorium on all commercial whaling from the beginning of the 1985-86 pelagic and 1986 coastal seasons, and separate and distinct management for aboriginal subsistence whaling. Criteria for evaluating research involving the killing of whales under special permits were established because of concerns that some countries would use special permits for scientific research as a means of circumventing the zero catch limits for commercial whaling. The 1946 Convention allows countries to issue special permits authorizing the taking of whales for scientific research.

The Chair's summary of each Commission meeting can be found on the IWC Secretariat's website (www.iwc.int).

The 68th meeting of the IWC has been postponed to 2021.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Mi Ae Kim
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8365
Mi Ae Kim

Department of State:

Elizabeth Phelps
Foreign Affairs Officer
Office of Ocean Affairs (OES/OA)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520-7818
Telephone: 202-647-4935

PART II: BILATERAL CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

NORTH AMERICA

Informal Fisheries Consultations between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada

Basic Instrument

None

Authorities

Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1822(a), which authorizes the Secretary of State to negotiate international fisheries agreements, and 16 U.S.C. 1855(d), which authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to promulgate regulations necessary to carry out the Magnuson Act.

Member Nations

United States and Canada

Meetings

Parties meet annually, alternating meetings between the United States and Canada. This meeting generally takes place during the summer.

Description

The United States and Canada have agreed that annual informal consultations on bilateral, multilateral and global fisheries conservation and management issues are of benefit to both Parties. These consultations generally take two days to complete and are designed to provide an informal platform for broad coordination/communication as opposed to negotiation of final agreements or specific technical measures.

The meeting agenda generally first focuses on bilateral and multilateral fisheries management issues of mutual interest. Discussions on bilateral fisheries issues tend to focus on conservation and management of shared stocks (such as Pacific albacore, Pacific hake, Pacific salmon and species of mutual concern in the Gulf of Maine). In many cases, separate negotiations are underway on these species, and this meeting allows officials on both sides to discuss avenues for future progress. In addition, these discussions often touch on protected species, such as whales, sea turtles, sea birds and sharks. Discussions on multilateral issues typically focus on issues of mutual interest in regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), such as the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), and sometimes broader issues associated with tuna RFMOs.

Agenda items relating to global fisheries conservation and management tend to focus on international fisheries agreements and initiatives (such as on-going FAO work, implementation of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and development of the annual UN General Assembly Fisheries Resolution). The consultations are used to trade information on the status of implementation of these instruments and initiatives, as well as to discuss ways to encourage their implementation by other countries. In addition, Parties discuss fisheries- and oceans-related developments in economic organizations such as APEC, the OECD Committee on Fisheries and the FAO Subcommittee on Fish trade.

Recent Activities

Representatives of the United States and Canada met virtually (due to extenuating circumstances) on April 8, 2020, to discuss a range of fisheries and oceans issues of mutual interest. The U.S. Delegation included representatives of the Department of State, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Marine Fisheries

Service and the U.S. Coast Guard. The Canadian delegation included representatives from the Departments of Fisheries and Oceans and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The meeting agenda was adjusted to be consistent the shortened time-frame, but included specific high-priority topics within the following categories: national and international developments and priorities; bilateral fisheries issues; regional issues and RFMOs; Arctic cooperation; United Nations issues and fora; and FAO/COFI.

Upcoming Meeting:

The next informal consultation will take place in 2020 (venue and timing TBD).

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick E. Moran
Office of International Affairs
And Seafood Inspection (IASI)
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: Pat.Moran@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Deirdre Warner-Kramer
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 5806
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2883
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: Warner-KramerDM@state.gov

Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada on Fisheries Enforcement

Basic Instrument

[Agreement](#) between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada on Fisheries Enforcement of September 26, 1990 (House Document 102-22, 102d Congress, 1st Session)

Authorities

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management [Act](#), 16 U.S.C. 1822(a), which authorizes the Secretary of State to negotiate international fisheries agreements, and 16 U.S.C. 1855(d), which authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to promulgate regulations necessary to carry out the Magnuson Act.

Member Nations

United States and Canada

Meetings

Bilateral meetings are held, often on the margins of multilateral events, to review past practices and discuss new standards, policies, and strategies for cooperation. Representatives of the Conservation and Protection (C&P) Directorate of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) met with members of the NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) and NOAA Office of General Counsel in June 2019 in St. Andrews, New Brunswick to continue the annual meeting that DFO and OLE established in 2018. This is the second operational fisheries law enforcement meeting between Canadian and U.S. counterparts, and it is hoped that these routine, national level discussions between our fisheries enforcement organizations will continue into the future. The meeting provides an important forum to hold open law enforcement discussions related to the planning of joint fisheries enforcement operations, opportunities for bilateral cooperation to combat IUU fishing and trade in illegal products, fisheries intelligence development and sharing, Port State Measures implementation, aboriginal initiatives and issues, and capacity building cooperation. Periodic meetings between fisheries enforcement officials in each country are also held regionally to discuss cooperation on law enforcement matters on a more local level.

Description

The United States enjoys a strong working relationship at both the national and regional levels with Canadian fisheries enforcement officials. In cases involving boundary disputes and treaties governing fishery access, the United States Coast Guard (USCG), NOAA and Canadian DFO along with Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) counterparts have effectively coordinated living marine resource enforcement efforts despite occasional related political and economic tensions. The USCG and NOAA value the positive relationship with DFO and the CCG and consider this relationship exemplary of bilateral cooperation.

The United States desires to continue to develop increased opportunities for fisheries enforcement cooperation with our Canadian counterparts. Specifically, the USCG and NOAA are maintain continued collaboration on regionally specific enforcement issues, particularly along international boundaries, as well as increasing cooperation on combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The USCG and NOAA also collaborate on global high seas issues like development and implementation of boarding, inspection, and enforcement procedures within regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs). For example, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), and the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) are frequent partners in our joint collaborative efforts.

The United States and Canada are members of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and work cooperatively on operational issues with INTERPOL's other 194 members. Both countries participate in INTERPOL's Fisheries Crime Working Group (FCWG) whose main mission is to combat IUU fishing.

Recent Activities

New England

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) are the RFMOs responsible for managing most of the fishery resources in the high seas area of the Northwest Atlantic bordering the EEZs of the United States and Canada. OLE's Northeast Division (NED) has renewed its active participation in the US delegation to NAFO sending personnel to the 2019 STACTIC Intersessional Meeting and the 2019 Annual Meeting. In 2019, NED OLE participated with DFO in two joint-NAFO at-sea patrols as NAFO Inspectors onboard a Canadian Coast Guard Cutter. The two-week patrols provided an excellent platform for U.S. and DFO NAFO Inspectors to collaborate and train in the NAFO Regulated Area. OLE and the USCG also participated in a NAFO Inspector Workshop hosted by DFO, to promote collaboration regarding NAFO enforcement operations. In addition, OLE, US Coast Guard and DFO NAFO Inspectors attended a global inspector workshop hosted by the European Union in Horta, Azores, with several NAFO contracting parties in attendance.

OLE NED continues to enjoy an excellent working relationship with DFO Conservation and Protection in the Atlantic Maritimes region of Canada and the coastal area of Maine. OLE's NED has a strong relationship with Canada's National Fisheries Intelligence Service and their representatives at the Marine Security Operations Centre (MSOC), which is comprised of federal government departments and agencies responsible for marine security, asset support or maritime expertise, including the Department of National Defense, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada Border Services Agency, Transport Canada, DFO and CCG. Engagement is also strong between OLE NED and DFO detachments around New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

As a result of these strong relationships, OLE NED hosted an inaugural US/Canada Northeast Regional Enforcement Working Group meeting in Portsmouth, NH in December 2019. Representatives from DFO, Maine Marine Patrol, US Coast Guard and OLE attended the meeting. Outcomes from this meeting include joint patrols (NAFO/Hague Line), updated communication protocols, intelligence sharing, joint training and joint operations.

The Northeast Investigative Support Team, within OLE, monitored the activities and maintained communications with the one U.S.-registered vessel actively participating in the NAFO fishery during 2019. The vessel submitted required daily catch reports, including catch on-entry and catch on-exit reports, to the VMS Team who in turn reviewed and entered the catch data into OLE's monitoring application for direct access by the NAFO Secretariat. The catch data was also made available to NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region in order to track landings and discards.

The NED enjoys continued field level collaboration with DFO regarding NAFO/HMS intel sharing, Right Whale protection and Atlantic Maritimes US/CA boundary enforcement initiatives. As a result, OLE acting on information provided by DFO conducted (4) investigations involving US Fishermen fishing in Canadian Waters. All (4) cases were submitted for GCEL prosecution. In 2019, NOAA's General Counsel Enforcement Section issued one Notice of Violation Assessment (NOVA) for \$2,500, (2) Written Warnings and (1) case declination for the investigations.

DFO and OLE agents and officers continue to collaborate on permitting and import/export compliance along their shared border, including inspections for proper documentation and labeling of seafood imports/exports. This relationship has resulted in the effective collection and dissemination of operational intelligence involving cross border seafood commerce to include collaboration with additional law enforcement partners to include USFWS, US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

Oregon/Washington

The majority of US/CA coordination in this region occurs at the border and/or through bilateral treaties. In addition to coordination of border enforcement operations to inspect seafood products crossing the international border, there is significant coordination between USCG, NOAA, and DFO as part of the US/CA Albacore Treaty. This enforcement cooperation is vital to maintaining the treaty and will be a key part for subsequent agreements. In a first of its kind joint operation, Canada deployed a DFO Enforcement Officer as an observer, working alongside Coast Guard boarding officers off Coast Guard Cutter ACTIVE, where they participated in boardings of several U.S. and Canadian trollers within the US EEZ. Law Enforcement collaborators work towards ensuring that seafood is labelled at the Port of Entry (POE). OLE and DFO have been working collaboratively to promote compliance with the 2018 Canadian license requirements, as part of the Fishery Management Council Process, US-CA Albacore Treaty discussions and outreach to industry groups

The primary threat for illegal incursions in the Pacific Northwest occurs in the vicinity of the San Juan Islands during crab season and outside the approach to the Strait of Juan de Fuca during sablefish season. Through successful collaboration between DFO and NOAA state partner agencies, numerous illegal crabbing operations have been discovered and managed.

Moving beyond fisheries, the USCG, NOAA, and DFO have also partnered to develop complimentary cross-border regulations to support the recovery of the endangered population of Southern Resident killer whales.

North Pacific Ocean (high seas)

OLE meets annually with DFO representatives at the Dixon Entrance meeting (CANUSDIX) to share information and discuss cooperative efforts along the maritime border between Alaska and Canada. NOAA continues to coordinate with DFO and Canadian Customs on enforcement of laws and regulations related to the movement of fish and fish product across the US/Canada border. Also, USCG District 17 and the DFO continue to work collaboratively on enforcing the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary Line. This collaboration is necessary to ensure amicable and equitable enforcement of sovereignty and fisheries regulations.

As in past years, DFO coordinates with the USCG to provide maritime patrol aircraft in support of multilateral efforts to deter large-scale high seas driftnet (HSDN) fishing operations in the North Pacific Ocean. DFO deploys a liaison officer to Commander, Coast Guard District 17 in Alaska during Canadian deployments of maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) to coordinate at-sea surveillance and intelligence sharing. The DFO contracts with the Canadian Navy for limited surveillance of the North Pacific Ocean in support of broader multilateral IUU fishing enforcement efforts targeting HSDN fishing and to meet obligations under the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC). These flights are closely coordinated with the high seas enforcement operations of NPAFC Contracting Parties and People's Republic of China. Like U.S. DOD and USCG resources, the Canadian Navy must allocate limited resources across a global threat environment. Despite these pressures, DFO has been successful in recent years to maintain a base level of MPA coverage in the North Pacific targeting HSDN enforcement. The continued participation of Canada's MPA coverage is vital to supporting USCG surface efforts and overall multilateral efforts on the high seas in the deterrence of IUU/HSDN activity.

Canada also performs occasional satellite monitoring of the NPAFC convention area with its "RadarSat 2" synthetic aperture radar under the Department of National Defense (DND) unclassified maritime domain awareness program. When allocated for use by DFO, this surveillance satellite is capable of producing daily ship detection reports, which are then distributed to NPAFC member countries and China for use by patrolling vessels and aircraft.

Canada and the U.S. participate in the North of 60 Conference, an annual meeting consisting of field level officers from each countries natural resource enforcement agencies to exchange intelligence information related to violations of wildlife, fisheries and other natural resources, particularly those with a transboundary nexus, and coordinate enforcement activities and collaborative investigative efforts on subjects of joint interest.

The USCG typically conducts one patrol under the North Pacific Coast Guard forum that provides a surface patrol resource for purposes of conducting high seas boarding and inspection (HSBI) for enforcement of the High Seas

Driftnet ban, North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC).

Other Issues:

U.S. / Canada Maritime Border Dispute

The U.S. and Canadian maritime border is disputed in three areas of concern to living marine resources: Machias Seal Island and North Rock off the coast of Maine, Straits of Juan de Fuca in Washington State, and Dixon entrance in southeast Alaska. Within the disputed maritime zones associated with each of these locations, enforcement officials on each side exercise flag State authority for controlling the activity of and taking appropriate law enforcement actions upon their vessels. OLE completed a two-day joint operation with DFO and the Canadian Royal Mounted Police in July 2019 along the eastern side of the Dixon entrance US/CAN maritime A-B boundary line, involving both Canadian and OLE patrol vessels in Natoma Bay. The goal of the operation was to improve maritime domain awareness and exercise flag State authority for controlling the activity of and taking appropriate law enforcement actions upon their vessels.

Fisheries Intelligence

The OLE Investigative Analyst Team and the Canada's National Fisheries Intelligence Service (NFIS) continue to strengthen partnerships within the intelligence community and explore opportunities for each country's intelligence teams to work together, and share information as appropriate and where feasible, so that the United States and Canada will be leaders on counter IUU fishing initiatives. For example, OLE, with encouragement from DFO, continues to increase its engagement with the North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group (NA-FIG) and provided multiple presentations at the 2019 NA-FIG Conference in Montreal, Canada. Canada DFO is in the planning process to replicate NA-FIG through sponsorship of a similar organization on the Canadian West Coast, and OLE is supportive of the proposed Pacific Fisheries Intelligence Group (Pacific-FIG).

Technical Assistance to Developing States

OLE and DFO have identified several potential areas of mutual interest and have been coordinating outreach efforts and capacity building activities to combat IUU fishing in these areas. The OLE and DFO also hope to increase collaboration by inviting a representative(s) from each Party to join capacity-building efforts in areas where there is common interest.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Everett Baxter, Assistant Director (A)
Office of Law Enforcement (F/EN)
NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway SSMC3
Silver Spring, MD 20910-5612
Telephone: (301) 427-8272
Fax: (301) 427-2055
Everett.Baxter@noaa.gov

US Coast Guard:

CDR James Binniker,
Chief, Fisheries Enforcement Divisions (CG-MLE-4)
U.S. Coast Guard Office of Law Enforcement
Telephone: (202) 372-2187
Email: james.a.binniker@uscg.mil

United States-Mexico Fisheries Cooperation Program

Basic Instrument

The U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) and the predecessor agency to the Mexican Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación (SAGARPA) informally agreed in 1983 to meet annually to review the broad range of issues involved in the United States-Mexico Fisheries Cooperation Program (FCP) and the bilateral fisheries relationship. There are three memoranda of understanding (MOU) since agreed to by NOAA Fisheries Service and SAGARPA to formalize different aspects of the fisheries relationship: (1) MEXUS-Golfo research program, (2) MEXUS-Pacífico research program, and (3) information exchange.

Implementing Legislation

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act ([Act](#)), particularly 16 U.S.C. 1822(a), authorizes the negotiation of international fishery agreements to further the purposes, policy, and provisions of the Act.

Member Nations

United States and Mexico

Budget

There are no funds specifically budgeted for the program; costs are assumed in the operating budgets of the participating NOAA Fisheries offices. Annual costs of the program including staff time, travel, translation services, and miscellaneous expenses, which total about \$60,000 annually, during years when Fishery Cooperation Talks (FCTs) occur.

Representation

The annual FCT meetings are coordinated by NOAA Fisheries and Mexico's National Commission of Aquaculture and Fishing (CONAPESCA). Both agencies often invite other agencies to participate in the meetings. NOAA Fisheries has invited representatives from other NOAA line offices, the Food and Drug Administration, Department of Interior (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), U.S. Coast Guard, and the Department of State, as well as state government officials. CONAPESCA has invited other government units such as the Instituto Nacional de Pesca y Acuicultura, and the Procurator General para el Ambiente (PROFEPA), the Secretaría de Comercio, the Secretaría de Salud, and the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The participants have agreed to periodically review the United States-Mexican fisheries relationship. The FCT discussions serve to reinforce the longstanding cooperative relationship between the United States and Mexico on fishery issues. Formal and informal sessions provide opportunities to exchange information and discuss major issues.

B. Programs:

Ideally, NOAA Fisheries and CONAPESCA meet annually; alternating meetings between the United States and Mexico, and additional working group meetings are held as needed. The two science working groups, MEXUS-Golfo and MEXUS-Pacífico, also strive to meet annually. Other working group meetings are held as required on such matters as enforcement, management, aquaculture, protected species, and other issues.

Initially, the participants decided to omit the most contentious issues and focus on those issues where it was possible to reach some agreement on mutually beneficial projects. As a result, considerable progress was made during the 1980s in expanding cooperative research programs and better understanding each country's fishery laws and policies. The relationship matured during the 1990s; recent meetings have included discussions on management, enforcement, recreational fisheries, marine mammals and endangered species. The meetings help to inform participants of national programs affecting the other country. The participants in recent years have widened the scope of some research projects to include coordinated management and other issues.

C. Conservation and Management Measures:

Conservation and management issues are generally the major topics discussed at the meetings. The protection of marine mammals and endangered species (especially sea turtles and marine mammals) were for several years the focus of discussions. More recently, there have been information exchanges and a sharing of management experiences on various fishery resources. Shared interests and goals regarding participation in the various tuna RFMOs and other international bodies such as FAO COFI and the UNGA are also discussed.

D. Meetings

The most recent FCP meetings were held September 12-13, 2019, in Mexico City, Mexico along a Law Enforcement Cooperation Meeting. Prior to this, the last FCT meetings were held in February 2018 in Silver Spring. The delegations to the 2019 FCT meeting focused on protection of totoaba, and vaquita, as well as prevention of illegal incursions of Mexican fishing vessels into U.S. waters, as well as sustainable fisheries management, bilateral agreements, and the participation of the two countries in fisheries related international organizations. The parties agreed to exchange information and to work together in these areas. Both sides have agreed to continue regular bilateral exchanges and plan to hold a meeting in 2020.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Kent Laborde
International Fisheries Division
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Hwy
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8364
Fax: (301) 713-2313

SOUTH AMERICA

United States-Chile Fisheries Cooperation Program

Basic Instrument

The basic instrument establishing the United States-Chile Cooperation Program is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) and the Chilean Servicio Nacional de Pesca (SERNAPESCA) signed in 1995 and extended in 2004.

Implementing Legislation

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act ([Act](#)), particularly 16 U.S.C. 1822(a), authorizes the negotiation of international fishery agreements to further the purposes, policy, and provisions of the Act.

Member Nations

The United States and Chile

Budget

There are no funds specifically budgeted for the program; costs are assumed in the operating budgets of the participating NOAA Fisheries Service offices. Annual expenditures for the program including staff time, travel, translation services, and miscellaneous expenses total less than \$20,000 annually.

Representation

The meetings are coordinated by NOAA Fisheries Service and SERNAPESCA. Both agencies often invite other agencies to participate in the meetings. NOAA Fisheries Service has in the past invited representatives from other NOAA line offices, the Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Coast Guard, and the State Department. SERNAPESCA routinely invites other units of the Ministerio de Economía (the Subsecretaría de Pesca and the Instituto de Fomento Pesquero) as well as industry representatives. SERNAPESCA has also invited representatives of the Chilean Navy and Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (Foreign Ministry) to attend some sessions.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The participants have agreed to periodically review the United States-Chilean fisheries relationship. The resulting Fishery Cooperation Talks (FCT) provide a forum for U.S. and Chilean fishery officials to review fishery issues of mutual concern. Formal and informal sessions provide opportunities to exchange information and discuss major issues, resulting in a frank exchange of views and information.

B. Programs:

NOAA Fisheries and SERNAPESCA agreed to hold annual meetings approximately every 18-24 months (as possible) under the auspices of the MOU. Past meetings have included discussions on management, enforcement, recreational fisheries, marine mammals and endangered species, research, environment, aquaculture, and information exchange. The meetings help to inform participants of national programs affecting the other country.

C. Conservation and Management Measures:

Conservation and management issues are generally the major topics discussed at the meetings. The protection of marine mammals was initially the primary focus of the meetings and continues to be an important element. NOAA Fisheries Service has additionally raised some concerns about Pacific sea turtles, especially leatherbacks. Other important conservation and management issues discussed include enforcement, management strategies and systems,

and recreational fishing. Discussions on these issues as well as information exchanges and visits have enabled NOAA Fisheries and Chilean fishery agencies to exchange ideas and experiences in formulating domestic policies as well as to work further on species of mutual interest.

D. Most recent meeting:

The most recent FCT between fishery officials of the United States and Chile were convened in La Jolla, California, 16-17 June 2015. The Chilean delegation included representatives of the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Service (SERNAPESCA), National Fisheries Society, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The U.S. Delegation included participants from NOAA Fisheries Service and aquaculture experts from USDA-APHIS. The discussions explored cooperative efforts in five major issue areas: (1) research, (2) fisheries management, (3) enforcement, (4) aquaculture, and (5) international initiatives. The two Parties also signed an updated MOU at the meeting that provides a work plan for cooperation. Following the 2015 renewal of the MOU, a number of attempts to schedule Fishery Cooperation Talks with Chile have been unsuccessful -- for a variety of reasons. However, in April 2018, a small SERNAPESCA delegation met with NOAA Fisheries and NOAA National Ocean Service representatives in Silver Spring, Maryland, to discuss issues associated with: domestic fisheries management; fisheries enforcement training; illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and marine protected areas. It was agreed that informal communications would continue on these issues, and also that both sides would begin to talk about convening the FCT again in the near future. Although informal bilateral consultations with Chile continue in the context of a number of RFMOs and other fora, the FTC has not met and no future meetings are currently scheduled.

Future Meetings

No FCT meetings are currently scheduled, but informal consultations continue on a range of topics.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick E. Moran
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Hwy
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370

SERNAPESCA:

Alejandro Covarrubias Pérez
Head of International Affairs Unit
National Fisheries and Aquaculture Service
National Subdirection
Av. Victoria 2832, Valparaíso.
Telephone: (56-32) 28 19 445

ASIA

Fisheries Bilateral between the United States & China

Basic Instrument

This meeting was the outcome of an agreement in the 2014 and 2015 US-China Strategic & Economic Dialogue.

Members

The United States and China

Meetings

Parties will meet annually or as otherwise agreed, with the venue alternating between the United States and China.

U.S. Representation

The designated representatives are the National Marine Fisheries Service (U.S. Department of Commerce), the U.S. Coast Guard (Department of Homeland Security), and the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (U.S. Department of State).

Description

The United States and China meet to discuss bilateral, multilateral, and global fisheries conservation and management issues of interest to both countries.

Recent Activities

The United States and China established and held the first meeting of their Bilateral Fisheries Dialogue in April 2016 in Ningbo, China and have continued to meet annually since then. Through this fora, the United State and China have reaffirmed their commitment to jointly combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; strengthen cooperation under bilateral frameworks and in relevant international organizations; and promote the development of effective measures for combating IUU fishing by regional fisheries management organizations. Through this dialog the United States and China are working to enhance the exchange of management experience in marine fisheries resource conservation, marine fishing, aquaculture and recreational fisheries as well as share information related to fisheries law enforcement. The particular goal of these discussions is to facilitate a more fluid exchange between all interested Chinese and U.S. agencies on fisheries-related issues.

Future Meetings

The fifth meeting will be hosted by China at a date and location to be determined.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Melanie King
Office of International Affairs and Seafood
Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Suite 10657
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8366
Email : Melanie.King@noaa.gov

Department of State:

David Hogan
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 2758
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: HoganDF@state.gov

Memorandum of Understanding between the American Institute in Taiwan and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States Concerning Cooperation in Fisheries and Aquaculture

Basic Instrument

The basic instrument establishing U.S.-Taiwan cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in the United States Concerning Cooperation in Fisheries and Aquaculture. The MOU was originally signed by AIT and TECRO on July 30, 2002. Due to its five-year duration, it was renewed once again for the 2018-2023 in addition to its supporting documents.

Members

The United States and Taiwan

Meetings

The Parties (AIT and TECRO) agreed that their designated representatives will consult periodically, either in the United States or Taiwan.

U.S. Representation

The designated representatives for AIT are the National Marine Fisheries Service (U.S. Department of Commerce), the U.S. Coast Guard (Department of Homeland Security), and the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (U.S. Department of State).

Description

The United States began negotiating the MOU between AIT and TECRO in July 2000 to address problems associated with (1) Taiwan's inability, due to its political status as a non-state, to become party to a number of international fisheries treaties and regional organizations, and (2) Taiwanese fishermen's involvement in large-scale high seas driftnet fishing activities in the North Pacific Ocean.

Pursuant to the MOU, Taiwan committed to abide by the rules for sustainable fisheries set forth by the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks and the 1993 FAO Agreement on Promoting Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas. Taiwan also agreed to cooperate with the United States in the implementation of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; and the International Plans of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity, for the Conservation and Management of Sharks, for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries, and for Preventing, Deterring and Eliminating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing as adopted by the FAO. Finally, Taiwan committed to continue to cooperate with the United States in the implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/215, which calls for a global ban on the use of large-scale high seas driftnets. Taiwan will take action against individuals, corporations, and vessels that may engage in large-scale high seas driftnet fishing operations in the North Pacific Ocean. In exchange for the above commitments from Taiwan, the United States agreed to assist Taiwanese authorities to participate equitably in global, regional, and subregional fisheries organizations.

The two Parties, through their designated representatives, also agreed to (1) exchange information on fisheries and aquaculture research and relevant scientific reports and publications; (2) conduct joint studies and training programs on fisheries and aquaculture; (3) promote exchange visits of fisheries and aquaculture personnel; and (4) strengthen existing cooperation between fisheries enforcement representatives.

Recent Activities

On June 11, 2019, U.S. representatives held talks with a delegation from Taiwan for the annual bilateral fisheries meeting. The meeting took place at the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) in Gloucester, Massachusetts. The U.S. delegation was led by OES Acting DAS Bill Gibbons-Fly with the NOAA delegation led by the DAS for International Affairs Drew Lawler and the NMFS Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection Acting Director Alexa Cole. Representatives from State/OES, AIT, NMFS, and Coast Guard also participated. The Taiwan delegation consisted of Fisheries Agency Director General Hong-Yen Huang and representatives of the Fisheries Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Overseas Fisheries Development Council. The cross-cutting issues of combatting IUU fishing, high seas boarding inspection (HSBI) and limiting bycatch of non-target species were extensively discussed.

The MOU addresses issues relevant to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Fisheries Working Group. Other topics include FAO port state measures, data collection, vessel monitoring, fisheries enforcement coordination and cooperation, sharks, seabirds, derelict fishing gear, measures to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems on the high seas, the eastern Taiwan Strait humpback dolphins, and exchange of fisheries personnel. Taiwan's participation in the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO), the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the North Pacific Ocean regional fisheries management organization is also included.

Future Meetings: The next meeting for 2020 will be held in Taiwan. As of this writing, dates and location have yet to be finalized.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Michael Abbey
Office of International Affairs and Seafood
Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Cube 10633
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8355
Email: michael.abbey@noaa.gov

Department of State:

David Hogan
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 2758
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: HoganDF@state.gov

National Marine Fisheries Service/Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency, Scientific Cooperation

Basic Instrument

The basic instrument establishing scientific cooperation between the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency is the *Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] on Cooperation on Research Between the National Marine Fisheries Service of the United States of America and the Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency*. The MOU became effective on April 18, 2017.

Members

The United States and Japan

Meetings

The Parties agreed that their designated representatives will meet as needed.

U.S. Representation

United States

Dr. Cisco Werner
Director of Scientific Programs and
Chief Science Advisor
National Marine Fisheries Service

Japan

Mr. Masanori Miyahara
President, Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency

Pursuant to Article 5 of the Addendum, each Party agreed to appoint a coordinator for the joint program of cooperation. The coordinators will meet every two years to evaluate the joint program and to draft a cooperative work plan for the next two years. Following approval by the directors of the signatory institutions, the work plan will become the framework for cooperative activities for the next two years.

Description

The MOU serves to encourage and support cooperation on scientific matters related to fisheries, other living marine resources, their ecosystems, climate effects, aquaculture, and methods for communication of scientific information. The Appendix to the MOU describes five areas of support: (1) joint sponsorship of workshops or symposia on the assessment and management of living marine resources of the northern hemisphere and aquaculture; (2) exchange of scientific expertise and information; (3) extended visits of scientists; and (4) cooperative research on common scientific issues and methodological problems (5) coordination and planning.

Recent Activities

Representatives from NMFS, NOAA, and FRA met in Yokohama, Japan on September 26, 2019 to continue dialogue on collaborative research activities. The meeting offered the opportunity to have in-depth discussions on a range of issues of mutual interest. The following issues were discussed in detail:

- Utilization of eDNA for resource analysis
- Pacific Bluefin Tuna Management Strategy Evaluation process
- Utilization of new observation equipment such as ocean gliders

- Electronic reporting of fishing data
- Systematization and standardization of process from resource survey to Analysis
- AI technology

Next meeting

The next science meeting is was tentatively planned for May 2020 but has been re-scheduled due to delays related to the coronavirus.

Contacts

NMFS Headquarters

Dr. Cisco Werner
Director of Scientific Programs and Chief Scientist
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East West Hwy, Room 14659
Silver Spring, MD 20910
PH: (301) 427-8000
FAX: (301) 713-1940

Pacific Islands Region

Dr. Michael Seki, Director
Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1845 Wasp Blvd.
Honolulu, HI 96818

EUROPE

**Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Mutual Fisheries Relations
Basic Instrument for the U.S.-Russia Intergovernmental Consultative Committee (ICC)**

Basic Instrument

Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Mutual Fisheries Relations of May 31, 1988, as amended (TIAS 11442, the U.S.-Soviet Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement). Note: The obligations of the former Soviet Union under this agreement have devolved on the Russian Federation.

Implementing Legislation

Public Law 100-629 (An untitled Act that implemented the Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement. Enacted November 7, 1988).

Member Nations

The United States and the Russian Federation.

Meetings

The ICC meets alternately in the United States and Russia on an annual basis, at the discretion of the heads of delegation.

U.S. Representation

Under the Rules of Procedure established for the ICC, the United States and Russia designate a Representative and an Alternate Representative. The current U.S. Representative is Bill Gibbons-Fly, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries. The United States has not identified an Alternate Representative.

Pursuant to Section 5 of Public Law 100-629, a 12-member "North Pacific and Bering Sea Fisheries Advisory Body" was established to advise the U.S. Representative to the ICC. This body consists of the following individuals:

- (A) The Director of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife of the State of Washington;
- (B) The Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game of the State of Alaska;
- (C) Five members appointed by the Secretary of State from a list of ten nominees provided by the Governor of Alaska; and,
- (D) Five members appointed by the Secretary of State from a list of ten nominees provided by the Governor of Washington.

The current North Pacific and Bering Sea Advisory Body Representatives are:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Representative

Rachel Baker, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

State of Alaska

David Benton

Alvin Burch, Alaska Druggers Association

Howard "Dan" Hull, Hull Fisheries LLC

Mayor Frank Kelty, Unalaska, AK

Simon Kinneen, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Representative

William Tweit, Columbia River/Distant Waters Policy Lead, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
State of Washington

David W. Benson, Trident Seafoods Corporation

Mark Gleason, Gleason and Associates

Paul MacGregor, Law Firm of Mundt, MacGregor, Happel, Falconer, Zulauf, and Hall

Marlyn Twitchell, Consultant

Bradley Smith

Description

The United States and the Russian Federation maintain the bilateral ICC fisheries forum pursuant to the U.S.-Soviet Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement, signed on May 31, 1988. The ICC is responsible for furthering the objectives of the Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement. These objectives include maintaining a mutually beneficial and equitable fisheries relationship through (1) cooperative scientific research and exchanges; (2) reciprocal allocation of surplus fish resources in the respective national 200-mile zones, consistent with each nation's laws and regulations; (3) cooperation in the establishment of fishery joint ventures; (4) general consultations on fisheries matters of mutual concern; and, (5) cooperation to address illegal or unregulated fishing activities on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea.

In recent years, the ICC also has also served as the forum for discussing implementation of an agreement to prevent, deter, and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) harvesting of living marine resources.

Current Status:

Pursuant to Article XIV of the 1988 Agreement on Mutual Fisheries Relations, representatives of Russia and the United States conducted the 30th Session of the ICC on Fisheries in Seattle, Washington in June 2019. The Russian delegation was led by Dr. Vasily Sokolov, Deputy Head, Federal Fisheries Agency of the Russian Federation. The U.S. delegation, which consisted of representatives of the North Pacific and Bering Sea Fisheries Advisory Body, the U.S. State Department, NOAA, and the U.S. Coast Guard, was led by Bill Gibbons-Fly, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries.

Discussions during the ICC touch on a variety of issues and areas of mutual interest, including: the status of stocks and species of mutual concern (Bering Sea pollock, walrus, Steller Sea Lions and other marine mammals, and crabs); seabird bycatch; joint research planning, data exchanges, and surveys; exchange of information on fisheries enforcement cooperation; Bering Sea pollock management; Arctic and Antarctic fisheries; regional fisheries management bodies (such as NPFC); opportunities for cooperative research; and the cooperate to address IUU fishing and transshipment activity.

Due to COVID-19, the 31st Session of the ICC on Fisheries has been postponed.

Staff Contacts*NOAA Fisheries:*

Elizabethann Mencher
 Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
 1315 East-West Highway
 Silver Spring, MD 20910
 Telephone : (301) 427-8362
 Email: Elizabethann.Mencher@noaa.gov

Department of State:

C. Colin Brinkman
 Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
 2201 C Street, NW, Room 2758
 Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
 Telephone: (202) 647-1952
 Email: BrinkmanCC@state.gov

Informal Fisheries Consultations between the United States and Norway

Basic Instrument

None.

The U.S.-Norway cooperative relationship relative to fisheries and aquaculture was established in October 2008, with the signing of the *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation on Fisheries Issues Between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States of America and the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs of Norway*. An Addendum to this MOU was signed in September 2013, establishing a bilateral scientific relationship between NOAA Fisheries and the Institute of Marine Research, Norway. Initially, the scientific work focused on cooperation in marine ecosystems research and assessment. The original MOU expired on September 29, 2013, and a new MOU is currently under development. Full and cooperation via informal annual policy and scientific dialogues have continued in the interim.

Members

The United States and Norway

Meetings

Meetings are held annually, or as needed, alternating between the United States and Norway.

U.S. Representation

U.S. representation still follows the model found in Article 2 of the (now expired) MOU. The Parties established a Joint Committee, consisting of one Representative and advisors from each Party. The Representative for NOAA is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs or his designee, as appropriate. The Representative for the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs is the Secretary General, or his designee, as appropriate. This model will likely continue in any new MOU.

Description

The general purpose of the bilateral consultation is to strengthen and encourage cooperation between the United States and Norway on fisheries and other living marine resources, and ecosystem matters. Norway belongs to a number of international organizations to which the United States is also a member, including the International Whaling Commission, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization, and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. Thus, there are many areas of joint interest and concern regarding living marine resources.

Recent Activities

The 10th US-Norway Fisheries Consultations were held in Oslo, Norway during 4-5 September 2019. Ms. Alexa Cole (Director NOAA Fisheries Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection) led the U.S. delegation, consisted of representatives from NOAA Fisheries, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

The meeting covered issues of mutual interest within a range of topics, including: aquaculture; IUU fishing and fisheries-related crime; FAO and UN processes; regional fisheries management organizations; Arctic cooperation; and trade-related activities. The meeting also examined a number of strategic issues of mutual concern and areas of future cooperation/collaboration. A significant number of areas for follow-up were identified in the meeting and a negotiated report will be produced in the future. It was also agreed that a new MOU would be drafted at the staff level and distributed for comments before the 2020 consultations.

Future Meetings: The United States agreed to host the 11th Informal Fisheries Consultation in 2020--place and exact time to be determined.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick E. Moran
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
NOAA Fisheries
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10659
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Email: pat.moran@noaa.gov

United States-European Union High Level Fisheries Consultation

Basic Instrument

There is no formal instrument.

Implementing Legislation

None

Members

The United States and the European Union (EU)

Meetings

The United States and the EU normally meet on an annual basis, alternating venues between the United States and the EU.

U.S. Representation

The Consultation consists of one representative from each Government, as well as support staff and advisors. The current U.S. Representative is Ambassador David Balton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and Fisheries, Department of State.

Description

The United States and the EU first met in 1997 to promote cooperation in the field of fisheries and fisheries research. Since then, they have held annual consultations to review fishery issues of mutual concern, although no meetings were held 2008-2011.

Recent Activities

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and U.S. Department of State (DOS) representatives met with representatives of the European Commission's Directorate-General (D-G) for Fisheries and Marine Affairs on May 22-23, 2019, in Brussels, Belgium, for the 18th U.S.-EU High Level Fisheries Consultations. Mr. Stefaan Depypere, Director International Affairs and Markets, European Commission, Directorate-General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, led the EU side, and the U.S. delegation was co-lead by Ms. Deirdre Warner-Kramer, Acting Deputy Director of the Office of Marine Conservation, U.S. Department of State, and Mr. Andrew Lawler, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries, NOAA.

The agenda addressed various issues of common interest, including: IUU fishing, science, capacity management, bycatch, the UN General Assembly and Food and Agriculture Organization, and cooperative outreach to other States, as well as the large number of RFMOs in which the United States and the EU both participate.

Next Meeting

The date and venue of the next (19th) session of the U.S.-EU High Level Fisheries Consultations remains to be determined, but it is projected to be held in 2021 in Washington, D.C.

Staff Contacts*NOAA Fisheries:*

Melanie King
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8366
melanie.king@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Deirdre Warner-Kramer
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 2758
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: warner-kramerdm@state.gov

PART III: SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS AND COUNCILS

PACIFIC OCEAN

North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES)

Basic Instrument

Convention for a North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES)

Implementing Legislation

No implementing legislation: self-executing treaty; under the general authority of the Secretary of State.

Member Nations

Canada, Japan, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, and the United States of America.

Organization Headquarters

Executive Secretary
Dr. Sonia Batten
PICES Secretariat c/o Institute of Ocean Sciences
P.O. Box 6000
Sidney, B.C., Canada V8L 4B2
Telephone: (250) 363-6364
Fax: (250) 363-6827
Email: Sonia.Batten@pices.int
Email: Secretariat@pices.int
Web address: www.pices.int

Chair of Governing Council
Dr. Chul Park
Department Oceanography
Chungnam National University
79 Daehangro, Yuseong-gu
Daejeon
Korea, R 305-764

Vice Chair:
Prof. Enrique Curchister
Environmental Sci./Institute of Marine and Coastal Sci.
Rutgers University
14 College Farm Rd.
New Brunswick, NJ
USA 08901

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process

The United States is represented on the PICES Governing Council by two delegates appointed by the Secretary of State in consultation with interested agencies and institutions: one from a major Federal Government research agency and one from a research university or other academic institution. The United States is represented on the Scientific Committees and Working Groups created by the Governing Council by individuals appointed by the U.S. delegates with the authorization of the Secretary of State and in consultation with interested agencies and institutions.

B. U.S. Delegates:

Federal Government Representative:

Dr. Michael Seki
Director of the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
Daniel K. Inouye Regional Center
1845 Wasp Blvd.
Honolulu, HI 96818
Phone: (808) 725-5393
Email: Michael.Seki@noaa.gov

Academic Representative:

Dr. Enrique N. Curchitser
Environmental Sci./Institute of Marine and Coastal
Science
Rutgers University
14 College Farm Rd.
New Brunswick, NJ
U.S.A. 08901
Phone: (848) 932-7889
Email: Enrique@esm.rutgers.edu

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The PICES area is defined by the Convention as the temperate and sub-Arctic region of the North Pacific Ocean and its adjacent seas, especially northward from 30 North Latitude. Activities of the organization may, for scientific reasons, extend farther southward in the North Pacific Ocean.

The primary role of PICES is to promote and coordinate marine research undertaken by the Parties in the Convention Area; advance scientific knowledge about the ocean environment, global weather and climate change, living resources and their ecosystems, and the impacts of human activities; and promote the collection and rapid exchange of scientific information on these issues. PICES provides an international forum to promote greater understanding of the biological and oceanographic processes of the North Pacific Ocean and its role in the global environment.

B. Organizational Structure:

PICES is comprised of (1) a Governing Council, (2) a Science Board, (3) such permanent or *ad hoc* scientific groups and committees as the Governing Council may from time to time establish, and (4) a Secretariat.

Governing Council: The Governing Council oversees the administration and science activities of the organization, including the Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations; amendments to the Convention; adoption of the annual report of the organization; the annual budget and financial accounts of the organization; appointment of the Executive Secretary; contact with other international organizations; and management of the overall activities of the organization. The Finance and Administration Committee (F&A) reports directly to the Governing Council.

Science Board: The Science Board identifies research priorities and problems pertaining to the Convention Area and appropriate methods for their solution; recommends coordinated research programs and related activities pertaining to the Convention Area through the national efforts of the participating Contracting Parties; promotes and facilitates the exchange of scientific data, information and personnel; considers requests to develop scientific advice pertaining to the Convention Area; organizes scientific symposia and other scientific events; and fosters the discussion of problems of mutual scientific interest. The Science Board also oversees the activities of the four scientific committees, the technical committee, and the scientific program. Its membership includes an overall chairman, as well as the chairmen from each of the six scientific committees.

Committees:

- BIO - Biological Oceanography;
- FIS - Fisheries Science;
- HD- Human Dimensions
- MEQ - Marine Environmental Quality;
- POC - Physical Oceanography and Climate;
- MONITOR – Technical Committee on Monitoring.
- TCODE – Technical Committee on Data Exchange;

Working Groups: A Working Group is a group of experts that is established with specific terms of reference, by Council, based on the recommendation of Science Board. Most Working Groups report to parent Scientific Committees, others directly to Science Board. Most Working Groups meet annually to undertake specific tasks within their terms of reference. Science Board suggests the members of Working Groups in consultation with the PICES Chairman, and seeks Contracting Parties' approval and support.

Active PICES Working Groups are:

- WG 32: Working Group on *Biodiversity of Biogenic Habitats* (Jan. 2015 - PICES-2020)

- WG 34: Joint PICES/ISC Working Group on *Ocean Conditions and the Distribution and Productivity of Highly Migratory Fish* (Oct. 2015 - PICES-2020)
- WG 35: Working Group on *Third North Pacific Ecosystem Status Report (WG-NPESR3)* (May 2016 – PICES-2020)
- WG 36: Working Group on *Common Ecosystem Reference Points across PICES Member Countries* (Nov. 2016 – PICES-2020)
- WG 37: *Zooplankton Production Methodologies, Applications and Measurements in PICES Regions* (Nov. 2016 – Oct. 2020)
- WG 38: *Mesoscale and Submesoscale Processes* (Nov. 2016 – PICES-2020)
- WG 39: Joint PICES/ICES/PAME Working Group on *an Integrated Ecosystem Assessment for the Central Arctic Ocean* (Nov. 2016 – Oct. 2021)
- WG 40: Working Group on *Climate and Ecosystem Predictability* (Jul. 2017- Oct. 2020)
- WG41: Working Group on *Marine Ecosystem Services* (Sept. 2017 - Sept. 2020)
- WG 42: Working Group on *Indicators of Marine Plastic Pollution* (Nov. 2018 - Nov. 2021)
- WG43: Joint PICES/ICES Working Group on *Small Pelagic Fish* (Dec. 2019 - Nov. 2021)
- WG 44: Joint PICES/ICES Working Group on *Integrated Ecosystem Assessment for the Northern Bering Sea - Chukchi Sea* (Nov. 2019 - Nov. 2022)

Science Programs

Scientific Programs are established by PICES to address major scientific questions of general interest to the Organization. Typically, they will require significant resources and energy of the Organization for periods of up to a decade.

- FUTURE: Forecasting and Understanding Trends, Uncertainty and Responses of the North Pacific Ecosystem was established in October 2009.
- FUTURE-SSC: FUTURE Scientific Steering Committee was established in October 2014

Sections

A “Section” represents a sub-committee under a Scientific Committee that has a longer lifespan than a Working Group. Its purpose is to provide input to the parent Scientific Committee on specific issues for which expertise may be lacking on the parent committee. Sections should be reviewed periodically to ensure they continue to meet their objectives. Currently PICES has the following Sections:

- S-MBM: Section on Marine Birds and Mammals (PICES 2015 – PICES 2020)
- S-CCME: Section on Climate Change Effects on Marine Ecosystems (PICES 2011– PICES 2020)
- S-HAB: Section on Ecology of Harmful Algal Blooms in the North Pacific (PICES 2003–PICES 2021)
- S-CC: Section on Carbon and Climate (PICES 2005–PICES 2021)

Study Group

The purpose of a Study Group is to analyze the scientific, policy, and/or financial implications of a proposal made by Science Board or Governing Council, and provide recommendations for Science Board or Council on the proposal. This type of group would typically be formed for a period of one-year and would provide a report of their findings and recommendations to Science Board or Council prior to the Annual Meeting after it was formed.

Active Study Groups:

- SG-IMCE: Study Group on *Impacts of Mariculture on Coastal Ecosystems* (Nov. 2018 - Oct. 2019)

Advisory Panels

The purpose of an Advisory Panel is to provide scientific expertise to a Committee or Scientific Program to aid in accomplishment of a research issue or program of work that requires specific technical expertise, such as the design of an ocean experiment or sampling program, or the incorporation of certain scientific emphases (e.g. marine mammal and bird experts) into the PICES scientific scope. Most Advisory Panels report to parent Scientific Committees or Programs and meet annually to undertake specific tasks within their terms of reference.

Active Advisory Panels:

- AP-CREAMS: Advisory Panel for a CREAMS/PICES Program in East Asian Marginal Seas (Oct 2005–Dec 2019)
- AP-NPCOOS: Advisory Panel on North Pacific Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (Oct. 2015-).
- AP-NIS: Advisory Panel on Marine Non-indigenous Species (June 2016 -)

Task Teams

Currently, there are no active Task Teams.

Recent Activities

The 2019 PICES Annual Meeting was held October 16-27 in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, on the topic of “Connecting Science and Communities in a Changing North Pacific”. Information of other meetings, symposia and workshops held in 2019 can be found at the PICES website: <http://pices.int/meetings/>

Budgetary Matters

The contracting parties are assessed approximately \$133,900 annually as of 2019.

Appointments and Elections

Governing Council

Dr. Chul Park (Republic of Korea), Chair;
Prof. Enrique Curchitser, Vice-Chair;
Dr. Carmel Lowe (Canada);
Dr. Arran McPherson (Canada);
Dr. Tetsuo Fujii (Japan);
Mr. Hideki Uezono (Japan);
Mr. Antao Wang (PR China);
Dr. Fangli Qiao (PR China);
Dr. Se-Jong Ju (Republic of Korea);
Ms. Eun Won Yu (Republic of Korea);
Dr. Alexsei Baitaliuk (Russia);
Dr. Oleg Bulatov (Russia);
Dr. Michael Seki (USA).

F&A Committee

Dr. Carmel Lowe (Canada), Chair;
Ms. Lesley MacDougall (Canada);
Dr. Michael Seki (USA);
Dr. Nobuaki Suzuki (Japan);
Dr. Igor Shevchenko (Russia);
Mr. Antao Wang (PR China);
Mr. Yafeng Yang (PR China);
Mr. Heejin Kim (Republic of Korea);

Mr. Sun Ha Kim (Republic of Korea).

Science Board

Dr. Vera Trainer (USA), SB Chair;
Prof. Emanuele Di Lorenzo (USA), SB Vice-Chair, POC Chair
Prof. Mitsutaku Makino (Japan) HD-Chair;
Dr. Igor Shevchenko (Russia);
Dr. Guangshui Na (PR China), MEQ Chair;
Prof. Xianshi Jin (PR China), FIS Chair;
Dr. Akash Sastri, (Canada), BIO Chair;
Dr. Sukyung Kang (Republic of Korea), FUTURE-SSC Co-chair;
Ms. Jeanette Gann (USA), TCODE Chair;
Dr. Steven Bograd (USA), FUTURE-SSC Co-chair;
Prof. Sung Yong Kim (Republic of Korea), MONITOR Chair, AP-NPCOOS Co-Chair;

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries (U.S. government delegate):

Dr. Michael Seki
Director of the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
Daniel K. Inouye Regional Center
1845 Wasp Blvd.
Honolulu, HI 96818
Phone: (808) 725-5393
Email: Michael.Seki@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Adam Bloomquist
Office of Oceans and Polar Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
PH: (202)-647-0240
Email: BloomquistA@state.gov

ARCTIC OCEAN

Working Group for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)

Basic Instrument

The Arctic Council's Working Group for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) was established to address the special needs of Arctic species and their habitats in the rapidly changing Arctic region. It forms one of six working groups of the Arctic Council created by the Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council, signed September 19, 1996 in Ottawa, Canada. The Arctic Council succeeded the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), adopted through a Ministerial Declaration at Rovaniemi, Finland in 1991.

Implementing Legislation

None

Member Nations

Canada, Denmark/Greenland/Faroes, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States.

Permanent Participants

Each of the six Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples organizations assigns representatives to the CAFF management board. They are: Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous People of the North, and Saami Council.

Organization Headquarters

The CAFF International Secretariat is located at CAFF International Secretariat, Borgir Nordurslod, 600 Akureyri, Iceland. Email address: CAFF@caff.is; telephone: +354 462 3350.

Executive Secretary: Tom Barry
Telephone: +354 461 3352
Mobile: +354 861 9824
Fax: +354 462 3390
Email: tom@caff.is

Sweden is serving as the current chair of CAFF. The CAFF website is: <http://www.caff.is/>.

Budget

The cost of the Secretariat is borne largely by Iceland, supported by voluntary contributions from Member countries. The U.S. contribution is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Alaska Region. Other U.S. agencies contribute funds for U.S. expert participation on various Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) programs. NOAA is represented on the CBMP-Marine Steering Committee and provides some funding for participation of U.S. scientists in the CBMP-Marine Expert Networks.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process

The U.S. Department of State has designated the FWS as the lead Federal agency for CAFF. The FWS Alaska Region provides the U.S. National Representative to CAFF and leads the U.S. delegation to the biannual meetings of CAFF. Gilbert Castellanos is the present U.S. National Representative.

B. U.S. Delegates and Scientific Advisers

U.S. delegates and scientific advisors are provided to CAFF by the Department of State, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, academia, and non-governmental organizations.

C. Interagency Arctic Policy Group (APG)

U.S. participation in CAFF is also informed and advised by the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Group convened on a monthly basis by the Department of State.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose

CAFF's main goals are to:

(1) conserve Arctic flora and fauna, their diversity and their habitats; (2) protect Arctic ecosystems from threats; (3) improve conservation and management, laws, regulations and practices for the Arctic; and (4) integrate Arctic interests into global conservation.

Its guiding principles are:

(1) the involvement of indigenous and local people and the use of traditional ecological knowledge; (2) the use of a broad, ecosystem-based approach to conservation and management; (3) cooperation with other conservation initiatives and the other Arctic Council working groups, particularly the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) and the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) working group; and (4) effective communication with respect to CAFF programs.

B. Organizational Structure

CAFF operates through a system of Designated Agencies and National Representatives responsible to CAFF and their respective countries. The National Representatives and Permanent Participants meet several times a year to guide the administration of CAFF work and to prepare CAFF reports to meetings of Senior Arctic Affairs Officials (SAOs) and Arctic Ministers under the Arctic Council. CAFF meets biannually to assess programs and to develop CAFF Work Plans. It is directed by a chair and vice-chair, which rotate among the Arctic countries, and is supported by an International Secretariat.

Most of CAFF's work is carried out through a system of lead countries as a means of sharing the workload. Whenever possible, CAFF works in cooperation with other international organizations and associations to achieve common conservation goals in the Arctic.

As needed, CAFF also establishes Specialist and Expert Groups to address program areas.

C. Expert Groups

CAFF established three expert monitoring groups/programs to carry out its Strategic Plan. They are the: Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group (CBird); Flora Expert Group (CFG); and the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP). In addition, at the request of the Arctic Council, CAFF has undertaken an Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA).

Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group (CBird)

CBird facilitates seabird conservation, management and research activities between circumpolar countries, and works to improve communication between seabird scientists and managers. Conservation issues include exotic predators, habitat alteration, oil and contaminants pollution, seabird bycatch, subsistence harvesting, unregulated harvesting, and climate change. Further, CBird promotes conservation of seabirds outside the Arctic, coordinates research efforts with other seabird groups, and coordinates the circumpolar seabird monitoring network as part of CBMP, in addition to developing seabird initiatives for CAFF.

Recent CBird products include: (1) Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Framework, (2) Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan, and (3) International Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy and Action Plan. The CBird website has been updated and revised – and is available at: <http://www.caff.is/seabirds-cbird/cbird-members>.

CAFF Flora Expert Group (CFG)

With botanical expertise drawn from CAFF member countries, the CAFF Flora Expert Group promotes, encourages, and coordinates internationally the conservation of biodiversity of Arctic flora and vegetation, habitats, and research activities in these fields; and works to enhance the exchange of information relating to Arctic flora and vegetation and factors affecting them. CFG is designated as the Arctic Plant Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission.

Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP)

The Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) has evolved in response to the needs of CAFF and numerous international conventions and agreements which have stressed the link between conservation of biological diversity and sustainable development. A description of CBMP and its activities is available at: <https://www.caff.is/monitoring>; CBMP's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan is available at: <https://www.caff.is/administrative-series/455-circumpolar-biodiversity-monitoring-program-strategic-plan-2018-2021-arctic>.

The CBMP takes an ecosystem-based management approach, functioning as a coordinating entity for existing site-based monitoring networks for species and habitats. Many Arctic biodiversity monitoring networks are operating and linked to the CBMP. Several of these networks (e.g., CARMA, ITEX) have received substantial support from the International Polar Year (IPY).

Four Expert Monitoring Groups representing the major Arctic ecosystems – marine, coastal, freshwater, and terrestrial were created by the CBMP. The Marine Expert Monitoring Group was originally co-led by the United States and Norway. That group developed an Arctic Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Plan which was delivered to the CAFF Board in April 2011 (available at: <https://www.caff.is/monitoring-publications>). The CBMP-Marine Group produced and released its State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR) in 2018 (available at: <https://www.arcticbiodiversity.is/marine>). Monitoring plans for the terrestrial, freshwater, and coastal expert monitoring groups have also been developed.

Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA)

The ABA, led by Finland (Chair), Greenland/Denmark and the United States, synthesized and assessed the status and trends of biological diversity in the Arctic. It provided a description of the current state of the Arctic's ecosystems and created a baseline for use in global and regional assessments of Arctic biodiversity. It also served as a basis to inform and guide future biodiversity work. It provided up to date scientific and traditional ecological knowledge, identified gaps in the data record, identified key mechanisms driving change, and produced recommendations. The report was produced in two phases. Phase 1 was a short 2010 Arctic Highlights Report presenting twenty one indicators of trends and is based on the suite of indicators developed by the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program. This report was prepared as an Arctic Council contribution to the United Nations 2010 Biodiversity Target and the International Biodiversity Year in 2010. Phase 2 was a full scientific Arctic Biodiversity Assessment that was released in 2013. In 2015, CAFF released a report entitled, "Actions for Arctic Biodiversity, 2013-2021: Implementing the recommendations of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment."

D. CAFF's Work Plan

The CAFF program of work is guided by its "Strategic Plan for the Conservation of Arctic Biological Diversity" and undertakes priority tasks identified by the Arctic Council.

CAFF's work plans place a strong focus on climate change and building upon the recommendations contained in the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA). The CBMP and the ABA are two of the primary vehicles via which CAFF is responding to the recommendations in the ACIA. Further, the work plans emphasize cooperation and collaboration with other Arctic Council Working Groups, and organizations outside of the Arctic Council, and efforts to actively contribute to the global conservation agenda. The plans describe CAFF's main areas of emphasis in: (1) monitoring, (2) assessments, (3) strategies, (4) data management, (5) communications, and (6) cooperation.

E. Meetings

CAFF meets in plenary every two years. Sweden is presently serving as the CAFF Chair. The National Representatives to CAFF meet on an approximately every 6-month basis to address administrative and organizational matters. The meeting is referred to as a CAFF Management Board Meeting.

The Senior Arctic Officials meet approximately every six months. A calendar of CAFF meetings and listing of goals of the various projects is available at: <http://caff.arcticportal.org>.

Staff Contacts

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:

John L. Bengtson (CBMP-Marine Steering Committee)
Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NOAA Fisheries
7600 Sand Point Way N.E.
Seattle, WA 98115
Phone: (206) 526-4016
Fax: (206) 526-6615
Email: john.bengtson@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Julie Gourley
Office of Ocean Affairs (OES/OA)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 5801
Washington, D.C. 20520
Telephone: (202) 647-3262
Fax: (202) 647-9099

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management:

Catherine Coon (CBMP-Marine alternate)
Chief, Environmental Sciences Management
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 500
Anchorage, AK 99503-5823
Phone: (907) 334-5245
Email: catherine.coon@boem.gov

Fish and Wildlife Service:

Gilbert Castellanos (CAFF Management Board)
Fish and Wildlife Service
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99503
Telephone: (907) 786-3544
Fax: (907) 786-3640
Email: Gilbert_Castellanos@fws.gov

ATLANTIC OCEAN

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

Basic Instrument

The Council was established by an exchange of letters on July 22, 1902, in Copenhagen, Denmark, with eight countries' representatives in attendance (Denmark, Germany, Norway, Russia, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Ireland). The United States has been associated since 1912, and joined formally as a contracting party in 1972. From 1902 until 1964, the Council operated in a "gentlemen's agreement" fashion. On September 12, 1964, the Council membership concluded the Convention for the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, 1964 (TIAS 7628), giving it true and full international status. The Convention fixed the seat of the Council at Copenhagen and, by the end of 1967, all Contracting Parties had ratified the Convention, which came into force on July 22, 1968.

Member Nations

ICES coordinates and promotes marine research in the North Atlantic, working with an international community of over 1600 marine scientists from 20 member countries. Belgium, Canada, Denmark (including Greenland and Faroe Islands), Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. There are also a number of countries that have affiliate status with ICES. The Affiliate Countries are: Australia, Chile, Greece, New Zealand, Peru, and South Africa. Non-governmental organizations with formal observer status: Worldwide Fund for Nature and Birdlife International.

Council Headquarters

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
H. C. Andersens - Boulevard 44-46 DK-1553 Copenhagen V Denmark
Tel: +45 3338 6700
Fax: +45 3393 4215
Email: info@ices.dk

General Secretary: Dr. Anne Christine Brusendorff
Email: Anne.Christine@ices.dk
Web address: <http://www.ices.dk/>
US focused web address: <http://ices-usa.noaa.gov/>

Budget

The ICES annual budget is approximately \$5.5 million USD. The U.S. contribution, paid by the Department of State, is 1,182,000 DKK which is approximately USD \$247,000.

U.S. Representation

A. Process:

Each of the member countries elects two delegates who represent their country on the ICES Council. The ICES Council is the principal policy and decision-making body of ICES. NMFS, through NOAA and DOC, and the National Science Foundation provide the Department of State with recommendations for the U.S. representatives (delegates and advisors) to the annual meeting.

B. U.S. Representation (Delegates):

Dr. Jonathan Hare
NOAA Fisheries, Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543
Phone: 508-495-2233 Fax: 508-495-2232
Email: jon.hare@noaa.gov

Dr. William Karp, Affiliate Faculty
University of Washington
School of Aquatic & Fishery Sciences
Box 355020
Seattle, WA 98195-5020
Email: billkarp1950@gmail.com

C. Committees and Working Groups:

U.S. representation in ICES has no formal (legislated) advisory structure. During 2007-2008, United States scientists served as members on each of the eight scientific committees (Oceanography, Marine Habitat, Living Resources, Resource Management, Fisheries Technology, Mariculture, Baltic, Diadromous Fish), and on each of the three advisory committees (Fisheries Management, Marine Environment, Ecosystems) and the Consultative Committee with a number of members on more than 100 working/study/planning groups. In 2008, the three advisory committees were combined into one overarching Advisory Committee (ACom) which includes U.S. representation, and the eight scientific committees were combined and governed by one committee, the Scientific Committee (SciCom), which also includes U.S. representation. ICES has more than 100 Expert/Study Groups that cover most aspects of the marine ecosystem.

Description**A. Mission/Purpose:**

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), with 20 member nations, is the oldest intergovernmental organization in the world concerned with marine and fisheries sciences. (ICES was founded in 1902; the United States has been associated since 1912, and joined formally as a contracting party in 1972). ICES is a leading forum for the promotion, coordination, and dissemination of research on the physical, chemical, and biological systems in the North Atlantic and adjacent seas such as the Baltic Sea and North Sea, and advice on human impacts on its environment, in particular fisheries effects in the Northeast Atlantic. ICES has long recognized the mutual interdependence of the living marine resources and their physical and chemical environment. In support of these activities, ICES facilitates data and information exchange through publications and meetings, in addition to functioning as a marine data center for oceanographic, environmental, and fisheries data. ICES works with experts from its 20 member Countries and collaborates with more than 40 international organizations, some of which hold scientific Observer status.

Uniquely, ICES is also the provider of objective, independent and apolitical scientific advice on fisheries and environmental management, not only to the governments of its member countries but also to six intergovernmental regulatory commissions. The latter includes the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) of which the U.S. is a leading member, particularly through NASCO's North American Commission.

ICES is a complex organization involving about 1600 scientists. It fulfills functions through an Annual Science Conference, about a dozen committees, over 100 working and study groups, several symposia annually, and a wide range of quality science publications which are recognized as such by the world's scientific community. Two delegates represent each member country on the Council.

The fundamental purposes of ICES outlined in the ICES Convention are: to promote and encourage research and investigation for the study of the sea particularly related to the living resources thereof; to draw up programs required for this purpose and to organize, in agreement with the Contracting Parties, such research and investigations as may appear necessary; and to publish or otherwise disseminate the results of research and investigations carried out under its auspices or to encourage the publication thereof.

The ICES mission is to advance the scientific capacity to give advice on human activities affecting, and affected by, marine ecosystems. The mission calls for: effective arrangements to provide scientific advice; informing interested parties and the public objectively and effectively about marine ecosystem issues; coordinating and enhancing

physical, chemical, biological, and interdisciplinary research; partnerships with other organizations that share a common interest; developing and maintaining accessible marine databases.

Further information on ICES can be found on the Web at <http://www.ices.dk/>.

B. Organizational Structure:

The Council (the ultimate governing body) consists of the President who presides at all meetings of the Council and the Bureau, and two Delegates from each member country. The Bureau (the Executive Committee of the Council) meets intersessionally and consists of the President, a First Vice President, and five Vice Presidents elected from the delegates, each for a 3-year term. On completion of their terms of office, Bureau members are not eligible for re-election to the same office for the succeeding term. The Finance Committee meets annually to discuss financial issues, to review the audit report, and to prepare proposed and forecast budgets for Bureau approval and subsequent presentation to the Council for approval at the annual meeting of Delegates in October.

To organize its work, ICES has established a structure of committees supported by a **Secretariat**. This organizational structure ensures an efficient delivery of products and services, and facilitates the participation of experts across a wide range of disciplines. The **Secretariat** is responsible for fostering the science, advisory, and data and information services of ICES by providing strategic inputs, and offering technical and administrative expertise and assistance.

The **Science Committee (SCICOM)** and the **Advisory Committee (ACOM)** are delegated to advance the scientific and advisory work of ICES, respectively, including integration of joint activities where appropriate. Both committees have one member per country (and alternate members) nominated by member countries. Both committees manage supporting structures, which include expert groups. **Data and Information Services** delivers needed data, data services, and products that enable the science and advisory work to be successfully accomplished.

- The **Science Committee (SCICOM)** oversees all aspects of ICES scientific work. SCICOM activities are aimed at attaining two major goals: (1) Develop an integrated, interdisciplinary understanding of the structure, dynamics, and the resilience and response of marine ecosystems to change; and (2) Understand the relationship between human activities and marine ecosystem, estimate pressures and impacts, and develop science-based sustainable pathways.
- The **Advisory Committee (ACOM)** oversees all aspects of the producing and delivering of ICES scientific advice to address the needs of member countries and partner management and regulatory commissions and authorities. ACOM activities are aimed at attaining the following goal: Evaluate and advise on options for the sustainable use and protection of marine ecosystems.
- **Data and Information Services (DIS)**, comprising the Data Information Group (DIG) and the ICES Data Center, oversees ICES data stewardship and its data management and delivery. DIS activities are aimed at attaining two major goals: (1) Promote the advancement of data and information services for science and advice needs; and (2) Catalyze best practices in marine data management, and promote the ICES data nodes as a global resource.
- The bulk of the work in ICES is accomplished in Expert/Working/Study Groups and these constitute the foundation of ICES science and advisory programs. ICES Expert/Working/Study Groups cover all aspects of the marine ecosystem from oceanography to fish, seabirds, and marine mammals.

In October 2018, Dr. Fritz W. Köster (Denmark) was elected as ICES President for the next three years (November 2018 to October 2021). Dr. Köster is Head of Department, National Institute of Aquatic Resources Institute Management at the Technical University of Denmark. Dr. William Karp (USA) was elected as first vice-President. Dr. Karp worked at NOAA Fisheries for a number of years and is currently affiliated with University of Washington.

For information on recent activities, please consult <http://www.ices.dk/>.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Dr. Jonathan Hare
NOAA Fisheries, Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street Room
Woods Hole, MA 02543
Phone: 508-495-2233 Fax: 508-495-2232
Email: jon.hare@noaa.gov

GLOBAL

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Basic Instrument

Participating countries initially approved the [Instrument](#) for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility (GEF) in March 1994. The Instrument was formally adopted by the three Implementing Agencies of the GEF: the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank. The Instrument became effective on July 7, 1994 and was most recently amended it at the Fifth GEF Assembly in 2014.

Implementing Legislation

No new implementing legislation needed. U.S. participation in the GEF is dependent on contributions from the Department of the Treasury to the GEF Trust Fund based on annual appropriations by Congress.

Member Nations

Currently, 184 member governments, including both recipient governments and donor governments, participate in the GEF. See www.thegef.org/ for a complete list.

Secretariat Headquarters

The GEF Secretariat
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433
Telephone: (202) 473-0508
Fax: (202) 522-3240/3245
Email: secretariat@thegef.org
Website: <http://www.thegef.org>
GEF Chief Executive Officer and Chairman: Naoko Ishii

Budget

Today, the GEF is the largest multilateral fund for projects that improve the global environment, and the U.S. has historically been the largest contributing member government. Since its establishment in 1991, the GEF has provided funds for more than 4,800 projects in more than 170 developing countries and countries with economies in transition. These grants amount to almost \$20.5 billion from the GEF alongside an additional \$112 billion in co-financing from various multilateral, bilateral, governmental, and private sector sources. Through its Small Grants Programme (SGP), the GEF has also made more than 24,000 small grants directly to civil society and community initiatives in 133 countries. GEF budget replenishment cycles occur every four years. On April 25, 2018, close to 30 countries jointly pledged \$4.1 billion for the current cycle, known as GEF-7 (2018-2022).

U.S. Representation

The Department of the Treasury and the Department of State share the lead for the U.S. Government. The NOAA Office of International Affairs represents the agency on an interagency team that reviews and comments on GEF project proposals and provides feedback to the Department of Treasury and Department of State on funding directions and documents for GEF Council meetings and replenishment meetings. NOAA also often collaborates with implementing agencies to provide technical and capacity-building support to recipient countries on project activities.

Description

The GEF is a global partnership between 184 countries and international institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector to address global environmental issues through the support and expansion of pre-existing national sustainable development initiatives in recipient countries. It provides grants for projects related to six focal areas: biodiversity, chemicals and waste, climate change, forests, international waters, and land degradation.

The GEF was established in October 1991 as a \$1 billion pilot program in the World Bank to assist in the protection of the global environment and to promote environmentally sustainable development. The GEF set out to provide

new and additional grants and concessional funding to cover the "incremental" or additional costs associated with transforming a project with national sustainable development benefits into one with global environmental benefits. In 1994 at the Rio Earth Summit, the GEF was restructured and moved out of the World Bank system to become a permanent, independent institution.

As part of the restructuring, the GEF was entrusted to become the financial mechanism for both the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The GEF subsequently was also selected to serve as financial mechanism for three more international conventions: The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2003), and the Minamata Convention on Mercury (2013). The GEF also supports implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in countries with economies in transition.

The United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Environment Program, and the World Bank were the three initial partners implementing GEF projects. Fifteen more agencies joined the GEF family over the years: The Food and Agriculture Organization; the Inter-American Development Bank; the United Nations Industrial Development Organization; the Asian Development Bank; the African Development Bank; the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the International Fund for Agricultural Development; the West African Development Bank; the Development Bank of Latin America; Conservation International; the Development Bank of South Africa; the Foreign Economic Cooperation Office – Ministry of Environmental Protection of China; the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund; the International Union for the Conservation of Nature; and the World Wildlife Fund U.S.

Marine Issues

Marine projects of interest to NMFS may be funded under the Biodiversity focal area and/or the International Waters (IW) focal area. The Biodiversity focal area aims “to maintain globally significant biodiversity in landscapes and seascapes.” The three GEF-7 biodiversity objectives are to (1) mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes; (2) address direct drivers to protect habitats and species; and (3) further develop biodiversity policy and institutional frameworks. The IW focal area has the unique mandate to support transboundary cooperation in shared marine and freshwater ecosystems, which involves building trust between governments. GEF-7 investment in International Waters has three key objectives: (1) strengthening national blue economy opportunities; (2) improving management in the areas beyond national jurisdiction; and (3) enhancing water security in freshwater ecosystems. Through the IW focal area, the GEF has funded twenty-three large marine ecosystem (LME) projects to implement ecosystem-based management (EBM) of transboundary marine resources. NOAA often provides in-kind technical and capacity-building assistance, facilitated through the NMFS Office of Science and Technology, NOS Marine Protected Areas Center, and NOAA Office of International Affairs. For example, NOAA has partnered with the Humboldt Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project on a marine spatial planning (MSP) pilot project for the region of Ica, Peru, as well as provided capacity-building assistance with technical experts and trainers for MSP workshops. Additionally, through NOAA, the United States is a full country member of the Gulf of Mexico LME Project and the Caribbean Sea and North Brazil Shelf LMEs (CLME+) project. For more information on LMEs, please refer to the entry in this publication on Large Marine Ecosystems.

The GEF is showing increasing flexibility and breaking new ground both in types of projects and as a coordination mechanism between the UN, bilateral, and multilateral development bank assistance mechanisms. For example, the GEF is funding a Global Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) Program, commonly referred to as the Common Oceans ABNJ Program, part of the IW and Biodiversity focal areas that promotes efficient and sustainable management of fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ. Often considered the world’s last global commons, the complex ecosystems in the ABNJ include the water column and seabed of the high seas and are typically far from coasts, making the sustainable management of fisheries resources and the conservation of biodiversity in those areas extremely challenging. The Common Oceans ABNJ Program was approved by GEF Council in November 2011. Since then, the GEF has provided \$50 million of grants in the Biodiversity and IW focal areas for the Common Oceans ABNJ Program, leveraging over \$269.7 million in co-financing from public and private partners including: Food and Agriculture Organization; the World Bank; the United Nations Environment Programme; the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations; the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation; the South Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement; the International Union for Conservation of Nature; the World Wildlife Fund; and the Global Oceans Forum. NOAA serves on the project steering committees of two ABNJ programs focusing on tuna management and

deep-seas biodiversity. An additional \$27 million in financing for the new phase of the Common Oceans Program was endorsed by the GEF's governing body at the 58th Council meeting in June 2020. In this second phase,

NOAA is increasing engagement in relevant ABNJ Program Child Projects that deal with ocean governance, such as the newly funded *Strengthening the stewardship of an economically and biologically significant high seas area -the Sargasso Sea*. NOAA is the U.S. governmental focal point for the *Hamilton Declaration on Collaboration for the Conservation of the Sargasso Sea*, signed in 2014, and is working with the other Signatory States to help guide the project as it progresses.

Staff Contact

NOAA Office of International Affairs:

Elizabeth McLanahan, Director
1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230
Telephone: (202) 482-5140
Fax: (202) 482-4307
Email: elizabeth.mclanahan@noaa.gov

**PART IV: OTHER INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OF
INTEREST**

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Oceans and Fisheries Working Group

Description

[APEC](#) was established in 1989 to promote open trade and economic cooperation among economies around the Pacific Rim. APEC members account for over 90% of global aquaculture production, more than 75% of the world's capture fisheries, and approximately 70% of global consumption of fish products. Given that they represent nine of the top ten fish producers in the world, APEC economies are an important voice internationally on fishery-related issues and collectively have a significant impact on the global sustainability of fisheries and responsible practices in fish trade. Similarly, the APEC region encompasses large and varied marine and coastal environments that support marine biodiversity and contribute to marine-related industries, associated economic growth, and food security.

The APEC Marine Resource Conservation Working Group (MRCWG) was established in 1990 to promote initiatives to facilitate domestic and regional policies and programs leading to the sustainability of the marine and coastal environments in the APEC region. In 1991, the APEC Fisheries Working Group (FWG) was created to achieve well-managed fisheries and aquaculture to yield optimal economic value and support of local communities and livelihoods. For over twenty years, these groups actively pursued regional capacity building projects and other activities to address such issues as: impacts of marine pollution on coastal habitat; coral reef conservation; destructive fishing practices; export seafood safety; illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and sustainable development of aquaculture. All decisions are taken by consensus and project work is funded by the broader APEC organization, with individual members supplementing where possible/appropriate. In 2011, the MRCWG and the FWG jointly decided to merge and form the Ocean and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG). This effort was led by the United States with the goal of cultivating synergy and efficiency between two groups with overlapping/similar mandates. The first meeting of the new OFWG took place during 2012.

Oceans work in APEC is guided by APEC Senior Officials and advanced through periodic Oceans Ministerial Meetings. The first APEC Oceans-related Ministerial Meeting ([AOMM1](#)) was held in Seoul, Korea in 2002, and resulted in the Seoul Oceans Declaration. In 2005, APEC Ministers met again in Indonesia for the second APEC Oceans-related Ministerial Meeting ([AOMM2](#)) and endorsed the Bali Plan of Action, which implements the commitments Ministers agreed to in Seoul. The Bali Plan of Action provides a framework to ensure the sustainable development of APEC's marine environments and resources to achieve sustained economic benefits from ocean resources and resilient marine-resource dependent communities. The plan continues to serve as one of the primary guides for the work of the OFWG and is also a reference for other APEC working groups. The third APEC Ocean-Related Ministerial Meeting ([AOMM3](#)) was held in Paracas, Peru in October 2010. This meeting provided an opportunity for APEC Ministers to provide a more focused level of commitment to marine issues. The resulting Paracas Declaration and Action Agenda focus OFWG efforts on the following four sub-themes: 1) Sustainable Development and Protection of the Marine Environment; 2) Impacts of Climate Change on the Oceans; 3) Promotion of Free and Open Trade and Investment; and 4) the Role of Oceans in Food Security. [AOMM4](#), which took place in Xianmen, China in August 2014, built upon the foundation laid in Paracas by highlighting the need for future OFWG work to: 1) address coastal and marine ecosystem conservation and disaster resilience; 2) recognizing the role of the ocean in food security and food-related trade; 3) encourage development in marine science, technology and innovation; 4) explore and highlight the concept of Blue Economy; and 5) encourage cooperation among APEC economies in all of these areas.

Recent events

The 14th meeting of the APEC Ocean and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG) took place 7-8 February 2020, in Putrajaya, Malaysia, on the margins of the second APEC Senior Officials Meeting of the year. Sixteen APEC member economies attended the meeting: Australia, Canada, Chile, the People's Republic of China (virtually), Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States. A liaison from the APEC Virtual Marine Debris Working Group also participated in the meeting. External invited guests included representatives from the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, the Nature Conservancy the Ocean Conservancy, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, and

the SeaOwl Group. The meeting was chaired by the OFWG Lead Shepherd (LS) Patrick E. Moran of the United States. The U.S. delegation was led by the Department of State and consisted of members from State (OES/OPA, EAP/EP offices) and NOAA (Office of International Affairs and NOAA Fisheries).

The key output of the 14th APEC OFWG meeting was the development of initial drafts (and a strategy for adoption of) OFWG implementation plans for the APEC Marine Debris Roadmap and the APEC IUU Roadmap, adopted by senior APEC leadership during the 2019 APEC year. These documents will guide OFWG implementation of the two Roadmaps and will be integrated (or attached) to future OFWG Annual Work Plans and the Strategic Plan. The OFWG also reviewed the progress of existing project work relative to a range of topics and discussed future work relative to the mandate of the mandate of the group. Finally, the OFWG began the process of electing a new OFWG Lead Shepherd (Chair), as the current US Lead Shepherd has reached his 2-term limit.

Upcoming Meetings

Due to uncontrollable circumstances, the timing/venue/format of the August 2020 OFWG meeting and APEC Food Security Week have not yet been decided. It is likely that the OFWG will meet virtually (if at all) and normally-scheduled meetings with the APEC Policy Partnership on Food Security and interactions with a range of other APEC fora may be postponed.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick E. Moran (OFWG Chair)
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Email: pat.moran@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Nicholas Austin (Head of US Delegation)
Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, OES
Telephone: (202) 647-3073
Email: AustinND2@state.gov

Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC)

The Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) was established under the APFIC agreement as the Indo-Pacific Fisheries Council in 1948 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. APFIC is an Article XIV FAO Regional Fishery Body established by FAO at the request of its members. The Secretariat is provided and supported by FAO.

The subregions covered by APFIC broadly follow marine ecosystem boundaries e.g. South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand, Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea, and Sulu-Sulawesi and Timor-Arafura Seas. These subregional areas are part of the FAO major fishing areas (MFAs): Western/Eastern Indian Ocean Northwest, Western/Eastern Central and Southwest Pacific Ocean (MFA 04), (MFA 06), (MFA 51 and 57), and (MFA 61, 71, 77 and 81) (see Appendix IV Fig. 1 and 2).

APFIC's area of competence (i.e., the Asia-Pacific region) is the biggest producer of fisheries and aquaculture globally. The Governing Body of APFIC is the Commission, which is advised by its Executive Committee. The Commission may establish Committees and working parties to assist its work. The function of APFIC is described in the APFIC agreement, and more recent sessions have elaborated that APFIC will act as a Regional Consultative Forum that works in partnership with other regional organizations and arrangements and members. It provides advice, coordinates activities and acts as an information broker to increase knowledge of fisheries and aquaculture in the Asia Pacific region to underpin decision making.

Due to the COVID-19 and national responses, The Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) indefinitely delayed the 8th Regional Consultative Forum Meeting and the Thirty-sixth Session which was to take place in Krabi Province, Thailand. The following themes, already agreed to by the Executive Committee, bifurcate along capture/inland and aquaculture. IUU Fishing, Traceability, Seafood Fraud Theme; Small Scale Fisheries; Inland Fisheries and Marine Debris/Aquaculture governance: Innovation on aquaculture technology; Improve aquatic animal health management and biosecurity Theme and Strengthen aquaculture value chain.

The APFIC Members are Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, United Kingdom, the United States, and Viet Nam.

Secretariat:

FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
39 Phra Atit Road, Bangkok 10200, Thailand
Telephone: +66 2 281 7844
Fax: +66 2 280 0445
Web address: <http://www.apfic.org>

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Michael Abbey
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
Lead for Asia-Pacific Capacity Building
1315 East West Highway, Room 10633
Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8355
Cellphone: (301) 938-9544
Email: Michael.Abbey@noaa.gov

Canada/Mexico/US Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management

In 1996, the wildlife conservation agencies of the United States, Mexico, and Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing the Canada/Mexico/US Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management. This agreement formally brought together for the first time the three nations of North America, consolidating a continental effort for wildlife and ecosystem conservation and management. The Trilateral Committee facilitates and enhances cooperation and coordination among the wildlife agencies of the three nations in projects and programs for the conservation and management of wildlife, plants, biological diversity, and ecosystems of mutual interest.

The Trilateral also facilitates the development of partnerships with other associated and interested entities. Delegations from each country come together annually for discussions on a wide range of topics ranging from joint, on-the-ground projects to issues of law enforcement to the development of information databases. Discussions take place under the auspices of working tables that report to an executive body comprising the directors of the three wildlife agencies. Currently, there are six active working tables: Species of Common Concern, Law Enforcement, Ecosystem Conservation, Migratory Birds, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), and the Executive Committee.

Next Meeting:

The 2020 meeting of the Trilateral was postponed until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Web address: <http://www.trilat.org/>

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Liz English
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3281
Telephone: (301) 427-8362
Fax: (301) 713-3110
Email: liz.english@noaa.gov

Lauren Wenzel
National Marine Protected Areas Center
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3281
Telephone: (301) 713-7265
Fax: (301) 713-3110
Email: Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov

Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

The signing of the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) in 1993 created the world's largest trading bloc. At the same time, the NAFTA partners (Canada, Mexico, and the United States) sought to build environmental safeguards into the trade liberalization pact and signed the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC), creating the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC). In 2018, the three countries signed the successor to NAFTA, the United States-Canada-Mexico Agreement, which entered into force on July 1, 2020. Canada, Mexico, and the United States also signed the Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA), a new environmental side agreement and successor to the NAAEC, which continues collaboration through the CEC.

The CEC's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan structures the Commission's work around six main themes: (1) Clean Air, Land and Water; (2) Preventing and Reducing Pollution in the Marine Environment; (3) Circular Economy and Sustainable Materials Management; (4) Shared Ecosystems and Species; (5) Resilient Economies and Communities; and (6) Effective Enforcement of Environmental Laws. The Strategic Plan also identifies two crosscutting themes: (a) Innovative and Effective Solutions and (b) Diverse and Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation. Projects focus on the protection of the North American environment, and therefore trilateral environmental problems, issues, and cooperation are given priority in funding.

The 2019-2020 Operational Plan includes cooperative projects on trilateral priorities on environment, trade, and sustainability; strategic stakeholder and partner engagement; support for action at the community level, and continued development of innovative tools and information resources for which the CEC is known, and which equip citizens, communities, industry, and governments to take informed and effective action. Current cooperative projects with a marine focus include: 1) Strengthening Adaptive Capacity of Marine Protected Areas and 2) Finding Community Solutions to Marine Litter. A new Operational Plan will be developed for the 2021-2022 biennium.

Headquarters

Commission for Environmental Cooperation
700 de la Gauchetière St. West
Suite 1620
Montréal (Québec)
H3B 5M2 Canada
Telephone: (514) 350-4300
Fax: (514) 350-4314
Email: info@cec.org
Web address: <http://www.cec.org/>

Staff Contacts

NOAA, Office of International Affairs:

Sammi Dowdell
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230
Telephone: (202) 482-5144
Email: Samantha.Dowdell@noaa.gov

NOAA, MPA Project:

Lauren Wenzel
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3281
Telephone: (301) 713-3165
Fax: (301) 713-3110
Email: Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov

Coral Disease and Health Consortium (CDHC)

The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Department of Interior (DOI) developed the framework for the CDHC for the United States Coral Reef Task Force through an interagency effort in March 2000. The Coral Reef Task Force was established by Executive Order in June 1998 (Executive Order 13089 on the Protection of Coral Reefs) to help preserve and protect the biodiversity, health, heritage, and social and economic value of U.S. coral reef ecosystems. The purpose of the CDHC is to organize and coordinate the scientific resources of the United States and its territories to document the condition of coral reef ecosystems, determine causes of declines in coral reef health, and provide technical information and assistance to managers and scientists regarding coral reef health. The CDHC is a network of over 150 national and international partners, including U.S. federal (EPA, DOI, NOAA) and state agencies, academia, non-profit groups and industry representing field and laboratory scientists, health professionals, coral reef managers, and agency representatives devoted to understanding coral health and disease. It is extensive, highly collaborative, and completely voluntary. Members share information and ideas and contribute their time and expertise for a common set of goals *to understand and address the effects of natural and anthropogenic stressors on corals in order to contribute to the preservation and protection of coral reef ecosystems.*

The CDHC has been working closely with our partners to assist in addressing the key goals and objectives related to coral health and disease issues. Four thematic areas have been identified as key areas of focus:

- Establishing diagnostic criteria and diagnostic tool development
- Conducting mechanism-based research on coral health and disease
- Web-based communication and distance learning tool development
- Capacity building among the community through training and continuing education

Through these objectives, the CDHC aims to significantly enhance current assessments of coral health, reproduction and fitness; improve the effectiveness of management decisions by providing early warning of disease and disease outbreaks; identify putative causative factors and possible prevention and mitigation strategies; and offer managers viable risk management options.

For information: CDHC.Coral@noaa.gov

Website: www.cdhc.noaa.gov

Staff Contact

NOAA NCCOS:

Cheryl M. Woodley
Key Species and Bioinformatics Branch
National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Phone: 843-460-9805
Email: Cheryl.woodley@noaa.gov

Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF)

CECAF is the FAO regional fishery body for the Eastern Central Atlantic. The Committee promotes the sustainable utilization of the living marine resources within its area of competence through the proper management and development of the fisheries and monitoring of fishing operations.

To this end, the Committee has the following functions and responsibilities:

- to keep under review the state of the resources within its area of competence and of the industries based on them;
- to promote, encourage, and coordinate research in the area related to the living resources thereof and to draw up programs required for this purpose and to organize such research as may appear necessary;
- to promote the collection, interchange, dissemination and analysis or study of statistical, biological, environmental and socio-economic data and other marine fishery information;
- to establish the scientific basis for regulatory measures leading to the conservation and management of marine fishery resources, to formulate such measures through subsidiary bodies, as required, to make appropriate recommendations for the adoption and implementation of these measures and to provide advice for the adoption of regulatory measures by Member Governments, subregional, or regional organizations, as appropriate;
- to provide advice on monitoring control and surveillance, especially as regards issues of a subregional and regional nature;
- to encourage, recommend, and coordinate training in the priority areas of the Committee;
- to promote and encourage the utilization of the most appropriate fishing craft, gear, and techniques;
- to promote liaison among and with competent institutions within the sea area served by the Committee and to propose and keep under review working arrangements with other international organizations which have related objectives within that area.

The Committee has no regulatory powers, and recommendations are not binding on Committee members. It operates through a Main Committee and a Scientific Subcommittee, the latter of which provides scientific advice.

The CECAF Members are Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, European Union, France, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Togo, and the United States.

The Committee, which is composed of all CECAF member States, is the central body in CECAF. Sessions of the Committee are normally held every two years. Decisions of the Committee are taken by a majority of the votes cast, unless otherwise provided. Each member has one vote.

The Committee also established a Scientific Sub-Committee in 1998. The main function of the Scientific Sub-Committee is to provide appropriate advice to the Committee for fisheries management recommendations to members.

The 22nd session of CECAF was held in Libreville, Gabon from 17 to 19 September 2019. Major topics discussed were: (i) action on recommendations from the 21st session; (ii) main outcomes of the eighth session of the Scientific Sub-Committee (SSC); (iii) the independent cost-benefit assessment for improved directions of CECAF; (iv) improvement of data quality and assessment models; (v) CECAF rules and procedures (vi) the EU-funded PESCAO project Improved regional fisheries governance in West Africa; (vii) matters regarding the EAF-Nansen programme; (viii) and other matters including the CECAF Programme of Work for 2019-2020, and other ongoing activities.

CECAF Meeting Reports can be found here:

<http://www.fao.org/fi/website/MultiQueryAction.do?loadMenu=/fishery/rfb/search&xsl=webapps/figis/shared/xsl/m>

[ultiquery.xml&query=http://www.fao.org/fi/oldsite/eims_search/advanced_s_result.asp?xml=Y%26xml_no_subject=y%26SERIES=34.375%26statutory=7%26FORM_C=AND%26SortOrder=3%26language=EN](http://www.fao.org/fi/oldsite/eims_search/advanced_s_result.asp?xml=Y%26xml_no_subject=y%26SERIES=34.375%26statutory=7%26FORM_C=AND%26SortOrder=3%26language=EN)

CECAF Working Group Reports can be found here:

http://www.fao.org/fi/website/MultiQueryAction.do?loadMenu=/fishery/rfb/search&xsl=webapps/figis/shared/xsl/multiquery.xml&query=http://www.fao.org/fi/oldsite/eims_search/advanced_s_result.asp?xml=Y%26xml_no_subject=y%26SERIES=332%26FORM_C=AND%26SortOrder=3%26language=EN

Staff Contacts

FAO Contact:

Merete Tandstad
Fishery Resources Officer
Marine and Inland Fisheries Branch (FIRF)
Fisheries and Aquaculture Department
Telephone: +39 06 0657052019
Email: Merete.Tandstad@fao.org
<http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/cecaf/en>

NOAA Fisheries Contact:

Christopher Rogers
Office of International Affairs and Seafood
Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8350
Email: christopher.rogers@noaa.gov

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI)

FAO

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was founded in October 1945 with a mandate to raise levels of nutrition and standards of living, to improve agricultural productivity, and to better the condition of rural populations. It was the first specialized agency of the United Nations that was established.

Today, FAO is the largest autonomous agency within the United Nations system with 194 member countries plus the European Community (Member Organization) and two Associate Members (Faroe Islands and Tokelau

The Organization offers direct development assistance; collects, analyzes, and disseminates information; provides policy and planning advice to governments; and acts as an international forum for debate on food, agriculture, and forestry issues. FAO is active in land and water development, plant and animal production, forestry, fisheries, economic and social policy, investment, nutrition, food standards and commodities, and trade. It also plays a major role in dealing with food and agricultural emergencies. A specific priority of the Organization is encouraging sustainable agriculture and rural development, a long-term strategy for the conservation and management of natural resources. It aims to meet the needs of both present and future generations through programs that do not degrade the environment and are technically appropriate, economically viable, and socially acceptable.

FAO is governed by the Conference of Member Nations, which meets every two years to review the work carried out by the organization and approve a Program of Work and Budget for the next biennium. The Conference elects a Council of 49 Member Nations to act as an interim governing body. Members serve 3-year, rotating terms. The Conference also elects a Director-General to head the agency. The current Director-General, Mr. QU Dongyutook office on August 1, 2019.

The Organization's work falls into two categories. The Regular Program covers internal operations, including the maintenance of staff that provides support for field work, the provision of advice to governments on policy and planning, and support for a wide range of development needs. It is financed by Member Nations who contribute according to levels set by the Conference. The Field Program implements FAO's development strategies and provides assistance to governments and rural communities. Projects are usually undertaken in cooperation with national governments and other agencies.

FAO's overall program of work is funded by assessed and voluntary contributions. The assessed contributions are member countries' contributions, set at the biennial FAO Conference. The total FAO Budget planned for 2018-19 is USD 2.6 billion. Of this amount, 39 percent comes from assessed contributions paid by member countries, while 61 percent is mobilized through voluntary contributions from Members and other partners. The voluntary contributions provided by Members and other partners support technical and emergency (including rehabilitation) assistance to governments for clearly defined purposes linked to the results framework, as well as direct support to FAO's core work.

COFI

COFI, a subsidiary body of the FAO Council, was established by the FAO Conference at its Thirteenth Session in 1965. The Committee presently constitutes the only global inter-governmental forum other than the United Nations General Assembly, where major international fisheries and aquaculture problems and issues are examined and recommendations addressed to governments, regional fishery bodies, NGOs, fishworkers, and the international community on a world-wide basis. COFI has also been used as a forum in which global binding agreements as well as non-binding instruments were negotiated.

COFI membership is open to any FAO Member and non-Member eligible to be an observer of the Organization. Representatives of the UN, UN bodies and specialized agencies, regional fishery bodies, national and international non-governmental organizations participate in the debate, but without the right to vote.

The two main functions of COFI are to review the programs of work of FAO in the field of fisheries and aquaculture and their implementation and to conduct periodic general reviews of fishery and aquaculture problems of an international character and appraise such problems and their possible solutions with a view to concerted action by nations, by FAO, inter-governmental bodies and the civil society. The Committee also reviews specific matters relating to fisheries and aquaculture referred to it by the Council or the Director-General of FAO, or placed by the Committee on its agenda at the request of Members, or the United Nations General Assembly. In its work, the Committee supplements rather than supplants other organizations working in the field of fisheries and aquaculture.

COFI is empowered to establish subcommittees on specific issues and these subsidiary bodies meet in the intersessional period of the parent Committee. COFI has a Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (<http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/cofi-sub-committee-on-fish-trade/en/>) and a Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (<http://www.fao.org/cofi/aq/en/>) and is advised by the FAO Advisory Committee on Fishery Research.

The 32nd Session of COFI met in Rome on July 11-15, 2016. The meeting report can be found at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6882e.pdf>.

The 33rd Session of COFI is scheduled to meet in Rome February 1-5 2021.

Website: <http://www.fao.org>

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Cheri McCarty
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: 301-427-8369
Cheri.McCarty@noaa.gov

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)

The United States has negotiated multiple bilateral and regional Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). NOAA has the opportunity to participate in negotiation and implementation of these agreements as appropriate, including the environmental chapter, the environmental assessment, the environmental cooperation agreement and associated work plan.

- *Environment Chapters* of FTAs are negotiated by the United States Trade Representative (USTR), and formulated through an interagency process in the United States with public input. The text is generally similar across FTAs, with differences most apparent between developed and developing countries. Key provisions of these chapters include commitments to maintain high levels of environmental protection, to not waive or derogate from environmental laws to encourage trade or investment, and to not fail to effectively enforce one's environmental laws. Environment chapters also contain measures to enhance public participation and transparency in environmental and natural resource management. Future trade agreements may also contain provisions that more specifically address trade-related conservation issues of interest to NOAA, including ocean governance and marine fisheries issues.
- *Environmental Assessments* of FTAs are also prepared by USTR. These evaluate the anticipated impact of FTAs on the environment of all countries participating in the FTA.
- The State Department negotiates *Environmental Cooperation Agreements* and associated *Work Plans* for each FTA. These may be binding or non-binding documents that address cooperative and capacity building work related to trade and the environment, and require varying levels of commitment from the participating countries.
- The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was signed in February 2016, in New Zealand by 12 countries (United States, Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Vietnam, Chile, Brunei, Singapore, and New Zealand) concluding more than five years of negotiations. Upon taking office in 2017, the current Administration subsequently pulled the United States out of this Free Trade Agreement.
- At the beginning of 2018, the United States is in negotiation with its North American partners Mexico and Canada on an updated North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Greg Schneider
Office of International Affairs and Seafood
Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8378
Email: greg.schneider@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Robert Wing
Chief for Environment and Trade
Office of Environmental Quality and Transboundary
Issues
Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental
and Scientific Affairs
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520
Telephone: (202) 647-6780
Email: WingRD@state.gov

Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS)

GOOS is an internationally coordinated system for systematic operational data collection, data analysis, exchange of data and data products, and technology development and transfer. The objective of GOOS is to ensure the establishment of a permanent system of global and systematic observations adequate for forecasting climate variability and change; for assessing the health or the state of the marine environment and its resources, including the coastal zone; and for supporting an improved decision-making and management process, which takes into account potential natural and man-made changes in the environment and their effects on human health and marine resources. GOOS is coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) headquartered in Paris, France. GOOS planning and operations are guided by the Framework for Ocean Observing (<http://www.oceanobs09.net/foo/index.php>)

GOOS is a programme executed by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the UNESCO, but its success relies on the coordinated contributions of several people and organizations world, eg., the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), The World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and the International Council for Science (ICSU).

GOOS is implemented by member states via their government agencies, navies, and oceanographic research institutions working together in a wide range of thematic panels and regional alliances.

Today, GOOS has six key components:

- Governance through a **GOOS Steering Committee and sponsors** (the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, the World Meteorological Organization, United Nations Environment Programme, and the International Science Council);
- Core coordination through a central **GOOS Office** in Paris and distributed nodes supporting GOOS structures and engagement. A G7 GOOS Coordination Centre operates to complement this;
- **Expert panels** for physics and climate, biogeochemistry, and biology and ecosystems, that synthesize across requirements and provide guidance on observing system design and Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs);
- **The Observations Coordination Group, JCOMMOPS, the GOOS Regional Alliances, and the global observing networks** that implement observing systems and ensure the flow of observations across networks and regional observing structures;
- An **expert team on operational ocean forecast systems** creating guidance to improve capacity, quality and interoperability of ocean forecast products
- **GOOS Projects** that advance innovation and expand into new areas and capabilities for the observing system, service and product delivery through operational and other service providers; (eg. Deep Argo and Tropical Pacific Observing System)

GOOS is an ocean component of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS). Status of GCOS climate components are assessed regularly in the GCOS Implementation Plan and against WMO targets.

The United States contribution to GOOS is the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS®). Within NOAA, the Oceanic Atmosphere Research (OAR) Climate Program Office's Climate Observation Division is the Program Manager for many in situ components of global US IOOS. The United States contributes resources for ~50% of the global arrays in GOOS. The U.S. coastal component of US IOOS is comprised of, 11 Regional Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (RCCOOS), and a National consortium for sensor verification and validation – the Alliance for Coastal Technologies (ACT). Remote sensing under NASA is also a contribution to GOOS and part of U.S. IOOS. Web address: <http://www.ioos.noaa.gov>

GOOS comprises many observation platforms:

- Argo floats which collect high-quality temperature and salinity profiles from the upper 2000m of the ice-free global ocean and currents from intermediate depths
- Drifting buoys which record the currents of surface waters, the temperature and the atmospheric pressure

- Embarked systems on commercial or cruising yachts which collect temperature, salinity, the oxygen, and carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the ocean and the atmosphere, and atmospheric pressure
- Research vessels which measure all the physical, chemical, and biological parameters between the surface of the sea and the ocean floor every 30 nautical miles out of 25 transoceanic lines
- Marigraphs and holographs which transmit information in quasi real time, thus providing the possibility of detecting tsunamis
- Commercial ships which launch probes measuring the temperature and salinity between in the upper ocean on their transoceanic ways
- Moorings in open sea which are used as long-term observatories, recording weather, chemical and biological parameters on a fixed site between the surface and the bottom
- Satellite constellations which measure sea level, temperature, salinity, winds, and ocean color.

The Joint WMO - IOC Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM) office in Brest tracks deployments of the array of almost 4000 Argo floats throughout the ocean, with IOC/UNESCO's support. More than 1000 deployments per year are required to maintain the two global arrays. Argo sampling is global and year-round. Argo's 2 millionth profile was collected in the fall of 2018. The U.S. supports half of this array leveraging partnerships with 24 other countries for the comprehensive coverage. The Argo mission is expanding to be truly global, full depth, and multidisciplinary. The full depth mission goes down to 6000m to take temperature and salinity profiles and there are now 135 floats in several regional arrays around the world. The multidisciplinary mission has biogeochemical (BGC) sensors (pH, oxygen, nitrate, fluorescence, irradiance, backscatter) in addition to the core temperature and salinity ones. There are now 225 BGC floats with multiple sensors globally.

GOOS Recent Developments

- IOC-Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) is implementing its new ten-year strategic plan and preparing to implement the outcomes of the OceanObs 2019.
- The IOC approved a new governance framework for biogeochemical sensors for Argo floats at its July 2018 Executive Council meeting.
- As a result of G7 deliberations on ocean observations over the past 3 years, a new GOOS expert will be collocated in Paris at IOC to help advance GOOS implementation.
- The newly appointed members of the Expert Team on Operational Ocean Forecasting System (ETOOS) met for the first time from 3-4 February 2020, Paris, France at UNESCO Headquarters to discuss the way forward in the creation of a Guide on Operational Ocean Monitoring and Forecasting Systems.
- The GOOS Steering Committee helped organize the Ocean Obs'19 meeting, September 16-20, in Hawaii which builds on the decadal OceanObs series (www.oceanobs19.net). As part of the decadal conferences series, OceanObs will galvanize ocean observing communities to improve coordination of regional and national efforts to better observe the global ocean, to better respond to the joint scientific and societal needs of a fit-for-purpose ocean observing system, and maximize the overall benefit of more integrated observing. OceanObs'19 will seek to better connect observers with end user communities.

GOOS Steering Committee Co-Chairs

John Gunn
CEO, Australian Institute of Marine Science
Australian Institute of Marine Science, Townsville

Toste Tanhua
Senior scientist
GEOMAR | Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel

Staff Contact

NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research:

Arthur Paterson
Program Manager
International Affairs Office
1315 East-West Highway, Rm 11326
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 734-1291
Fax: (301) 713-1459
Email: Arthur.E.Paterson@noaa.gov

NASA Science Mission Directorate:

Eric Lindstrom
Physical Oceanography Program Scientist
Earth Science Division
Mail Suite 3B74
300 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20546
Telephone: (202) 358-4540
Fax: (202) 358-2770
Email: eric.j.lindstrom@nasa.gov

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) serves a unique role in the United Nations as the focal point for global ocean science. As the only UN body focused specifically on ocean science, the IOC coordinates efforts to understand the global ocean and applies this understanding to improving human welfare, saving lives, promoting sustainable development, and fostering human and environmental resilience and capacity.

The IOC's high level objectives in its current Medium Term Strategy are:

- Healthy ocean ecosystems and sustained ecosystem services
- Effective early warning systems and preparedness for tsunamis and other ocean related hazards
- Increased resilience to climate change and variability and enhanced safety, efficiency and effectiveness of all ocean-based activities through science-founded services, adaptation and mitigation strategies.
- Enhanced knowledge of emerging ocean science issues

IOC Develops a United Nations system wide Implementation Plan for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

- The UNGA proclaimed a UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development in December 2017. The UN General Assembly is anticipated to accept the Implementation Plan in December 2020 to launch the Decade on January 1, 2021.

The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to deliver scientific knowledge, foster technological innovation, and build capacity to achieve the 2030 Agenda and reverse the decline of ocean health. This will be a truly global effort based on inclusive partnerships flourishing in a global research and innovation ecosystem.

Following the First Global Planning Meeting held May 2019 in Denmark, a series of Regional Consultative Workshops were organized. The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030: Western Tropical Atlantic Regional Workshop was convened 28-29 April 2020. This event is being hosted by the Autonomous National University of Mexico (UNAM) and co-organized by the Government of Mexico with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) as coordinating body for the Decade and the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention (UN Environment). The Six Decade outcomes include:

- **A clean ocean** whereby sources of pollution are identified, quantified and reduced and pollutants removed from the ocean.
- **A healthy and resilient ocean** whereby marine ecosystems are mapped and protected, multiple impacts, including climate change, are measured and reduced, and provision of ocean ecosystem services is maintained.
- **A predicted ocean** whereby society has the capacity to understand current and future ocean conditions, forecast their change and impact on human well-being and livelihoods.
- **A safe ocean** whereby human communities are protected from ocean hazards and where the safety of operations at sea and on the coast is ensured.
- **A sustainably harvested and productive ocean** ensuring the provision of food supply and alternative livelihoods
- **A transparent and accessible ocean** whereby all nations, stakeholders and citizens have access to ocean data and information, technologies and have the capacities to inform their decisions.
- **An inspiring and engaging ocean** to engage new stakeholders, including local and indigenous local communities and young professionals.

IOC Recent Developments

- The U.S. anticipates renewing its non-binding MOU of Cooperation with the IOC in 2020.

- The IOC will publish its Second Global Ocean Science Report: Current Status of Ocean Science around the World in 2021.
- The IOC will convene its Executive Council virtually Feb 3-9, 2021.
- IOC-Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) is implementing its new ten-year strategic plan and preparing to implement the outcomes of the OceanObs 2019.
- The IOC approved a new governance framework for biogeochemical sensors for Argo floats at its July 2018 Executive Council meeting.
- IOC is currently developing a strategy for ocean data and information stewardship within the context of the UN Decade (SODIS).
- IOC revitalized its IOC Working Group on user requirements and contributions to the IOC-IHO bathymetric products, in support of IOC-IHO (International Hydrology Organization). It has encouraged the emergence of the international campaign to map the world's oceans, "Seabed 2030."
- The IOC has brought new international visibility to ocean acidification through its quadrennial Ocean in a High CO₂ World expert meetings. The 5th Symposium on the Ocean in a High-CO₂ World was organized by the Pedro Ruiz Gallo National University in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and IOC. 7-10 September in Peru.
- IOC will continue to evaluate what scientific support it can effectively provide to consultations on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction which may include a capacity building clearinghouse service.
- The IOC established a Group of Experts on Capacity Development to implement its adopted strategy and provide advice on implementing a capacity clearinghouse function consistent with the IOC Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology.
- Since 2005, the IOC and its member states created a global tsunami warning system (Pacific, Caribbean, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean/Atlantic). NOAA currently provides warning services for the Pacific and Caribbean regions. NOAA, USAID, State and USGS provide a suite of capabilities to the global system including U.S. warning services, research, modeling and capacity building/preparedness training. NOAA also hosts an International Tsunami Information Center in partnership with the IOC, based at the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre and its Caribbean Tsunami Program.

Working through the IOC's role as a convener of international expertise, capabilities, resources and common interests, the U.S. has helped to build key IOC programs and partnerships including the Global Ocean Observing System, hazard prediction, severe weather prediction, climate understanding, and large marine ecosystem management.

NOTE:

- The United States withdrew from UNESCO, (effective at the end of 2018). <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/10/274748.htm>
- As a UNESCO non-member state observer, the U.S. participates in UNESCO-related activities and bodies that align with U.S. interests and where UNESCO membership is not required.
- The U.S. intends to continue to participate as a member of the IOC, which does not require membership in UNESCO.
- The IOC remains the appropriate forum through which the United States can foster partnership for global ocean science for sustainable development.

Secretariat:

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of
UNESCO
7 Place du Fontenoy
75352 Paris Cedex 07 SP
France
Telephone: (33) 1 45 68 39 84
Fax: (33) 1 45 68 58 12/10
Email: ioc.secretariat@unesco.org
Web address: <http://ioc.unesco.org/iocweb>

Staff Contact

NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research:

Arthur Paterson
Program Manager
International Affairs Office
1315 East-West Highway, Rm 11326
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 734-1291
Fax: (301) 713-1459
Email: Arthur.E.Paterson@noaa.gov

IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE)

IOCARIBE is a sub-commission of the IOC of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The aim of IOCARIBE is to promote, develop, and coordinate IOC marine scientific research programs, ocean services, and related activities, including training, education and mutual assistance (TEMA), in the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions. In establishing its programs, it takes into account the specific interests and needs of the Member States in the region.

IOCARIBE Members are Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Netherlands Antilles, Nicaragua, Panama, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States, and Venezuela.

Web address: <http://iocaribe.ioc-unesco.org/>

The Major Objectives of IOCARIBE are to:

- Reinforce and broaden scientific co-operation, regionally and internationally through networking and institutional arrangements with organizations operating within and without the region, for example, UN bodies, IGOs, NGOs, the scientific community;
- Provide regional input to global ocean sciences and observation programs;
- Promote and facilitate implementation of IOC global science programs and ocean services at the regional level;
- Foster the generation of knowledge, sharing of information, expertise and experience on the wider Caribbean and its coastlines; and to
- Assist Member States to develop their capacity to formulate national policies and plans to meet their needs in marine science and technology.

Medium Term Strategic Science Plan:

IOCARIBE adopted its own Science Plan 2017-2026 during its biennial meeting in 2017. Its major lines of action are:

- Ocean and Climate
- Ocean Science, technology and sustainable use of Coastal and Ocean Resources with special emphasis on Large Marine Ecosystems and Integrated Coastal Area Management
- Extreme Natural Hazards

IOCARIBE Biennial Programs 2019 – 2021 include:

- In 2019-2022 IOCARIBE is also working with partners in the region to catalyze regional UN, Member State and stake holder engagement in the UN Decade of Ocean Science (see below).
- Design and development of a Sargassum and oil spill tracking and forecasting system
- Development of a Caribbean Marine Atlas which will complement other regional initiatives such as the large marine ecosystem program
- Enhancing regional participation in and the implementation of the IOC Ciguatera Strategy, as part of its regional Harmful Algal Bloom program (ANCA)
- Enhance regional understanding of ocean acidification and supporting global (GOA-ON) and Latin American/Caribbean OA networks
- Expanding capacity development activities through the Ocean Teacher/Global Academy Regional Training Center (based in Colombia)
- Supporting the Coastal Inundation Forecasting Demonstration Project for the Caribbean
- Supporting the Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions

- Partnering with UNEP to support the GEF-Integrating Water, Land & Ecosystems Management in the Caribbean SIDS (GEF-IWEco)
- Support Partnership for Sustainable Management of Ocean and Coasts in Latin America (Central and South America)
- Supporting Caribbean participation in the World Ocean Assessment
- CLME+ Catalyzing implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems
- Enhance hurricane forecasting in the region by encouraging member states to contribute to the IOCARIBE-GOOS pilot project by deploying instruments in the region, reporting deployment opportunities and facilities, and encouraging the facilitation of domestic marine scientific research clearances to facilitate instrument deployments.
- Support the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science by hosting a Regional Workshop for the Caribbean and Adjacent Region and by establishing an open-ended intersessional working group including member states and regional stakeholders as appropriate to develop a strategic approach to incorporate the Decade in the next biennial work plan.
-

Enhance Ocean Literacy in the region by developing a national and regional strategy for ocean literacy and identifying ways to disseminate and test the Ocean Literacy for All Toolkit.

United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

IOCARIBE and other regional institutions such as UNEP and the Autonomous University of Mexico organized the Western Tropical Atlantic Regional Workshop as a crucial opportunity to co-design mission-oriented ocean research strategies in line with the 2030 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SGD 14, the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean, and the SAMOA Pathway. The Workshop focused on Western Tropical Atlantic countries and territories needs and priorities in terms of transforming knowledge systems; accelerating transfer of technology; enabling training and education; fostering science-policy dialogues, and enabling scientific solutions to the Region's socio-economic challenges.

This event provided a two-day virtual forum to gather ocean leaders/champions/key stakeholders to further discuss and prioritize the issues identified at the First Global Planning Meeting. The Workshop facilitated regional, interdisciplinary discussions across sectors, such as ocean science and technology, ocean policy and sustainable development, business and industry, NGOs and civil society, and donors and foundations. The forum began the process to identify concrete deliverables and new and expanded partnerships to meet the Decade's six societal objectives: A Clean Ocean, A Healthy and Resilient Ocean, A Predicted Ocean, A Safe Ocean, A Sustainably Harvested and Productive Ocean and a Transparent and accessible ocean.

Over the coming Decade the region will develop collaborative cross-disciplinary partnerships to achieve more together than they could alone.

Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem+ Project

The Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME+) Project is a five-year project (2015-2020) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and co-financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It aims at facilitating **Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM)** and implementation of the **Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF)** in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+ region) in order to ensure the sustainable and climate-resilient provision of goods and services from shared living marine resources. The first phase of the project (2009-2014) produced a transboundary diagnostic assessment and [Strategic Action Programme](#) (CLME+ SAP)

The CLME+ SAP was endorsed by twenty-six States and territories in the CLME+ region, including the United States. All CLME+ States and territories are invited to participate in the CLME+ Project Steering Committee, which provides overall guidance for the project. A number of regional intergovernmental organizations also participate, including IOCARIBE, the UN Caribbean Environment Programme (Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention), and

the Western and Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (WECAFC). The IOCARIBE Offices of the IOC of UNESCO currently host the CLME+ Project Coordination Unit in Cartagena, Colombia.

Given its regional and comprehensive nature, the CLME+ Project is uniquely positioned to address the root causes of environmental degradation identified in the transboundary diagnostic assessment, in particular the gaps and weaknesses in **transboundary and cross-sectoral governance arrangements**.

In this same context, the project aims to assist stakeholders in achieving improved **coordination, collaboration and integration** among the wide array of ongoing and newly planned projects and initiatives that are of relevance to the wider objectives of the CLME+ SAP.

GEF contribution: US\$ 12,500,000. Partner Co-financing: US\$ 134,153,695 (*status: February 2015)*

CLME+ SAP Early Results:

- Establishment of CLME+ Partnership in 2017
- Establish of the Interim Fisheries Coordination Mechanism in 2016
- Regional Action Plan for management and conservation of the queen conch for WECAFC in 2016
- Regional Action Plan for spiny lobster fisheries
- Several new MPAs established in region
- 8^a simultaneous closed spiny lobster fisheries in Central American Integration System
- Marine Spatial Planning in region increasing
- Increase in ratification of UNEP protocols on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife, and Land-based Sources of Pollution
- Increased financial support

Recent Developments:

In order to meet project objectives, the CLME+ Project Steering Committee supported a no-cost extension of the project through October 2021. Discussions are underway to determine how CLME+ partners will continue to implement the CLME+ SAP after the project concludes. Options include applying for a third round of GEF funding.

Staff Contacts

IOCARIBE U.S. Focal Point:

Arthur Paterson
NOAA OAR International Activities Staff
1315 East West Highway, SSMC 3 Rm 11326
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: (301) 734-1291
Email: Arthur.E.Paterson@noaa.gov

IOCARIBE Regional Secretariat:

IOCARIBE
A.A. 1108
Cartagena de Indias
Colombia
Telephone: (575) 664-6399
Fax: (575) 660-0407
Email: iocaribe@col3.telecom.com.co
Email: iocaribe@cartagena.cetcol.net.co

CLME+ U.S. Focal Point:

Sammi Dowdell
NOAA Office of International Affairs
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20230
Telephone: (202) 482-5144
Email: Samantha.Dowdell@noaa.gov

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Climate change is a complex issue affecting the physical, chemical and biological components of the planet including people. Policymakers need an objective source of information about the causes of climate change, its potential environmental and socio-economic consequences, and the adaptation and mitigation options to respond to it. The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) was established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1988 to provide an authoritative statement of scientific opinion on climate change and its impacts on the planet.

The main activity of the IPCC is to prepare comprehensive assessment reports (AR) about climate change at regular intervals, typically of about five to seven years. IPCC reports are prepared by international experts selected to serve as Lead Authors on three Working Groups (WG). The first assessment report (AR1) was completed in 1990. The IPCC completed the [Fifth Assessment Report](#) in 2014. NOAA (including NMFS) scientists have been involved in preparing these IPCC reports.

The IPCC is currently in its [Sixth Assessment cycle](#). During this cycle, the Panel has already produced three Special Reports ([Global Warming of 1.5°C](#), [Climate Change and Land](#), [The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate](#)) and a report on [Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories](#), , The [Sixth Assessment Report \(AR6\)](#) composed of the three AR6 Working Group contributions and a Synthesis Report is in progress. The three AR6 Working Group reports will be finalized in 2021. The AR6 Synthesis Report will be finalized in 2022 in time for the first UNFCCC global stocktake when countries will review progress towards their goal of keeping global warming to well below 2 °C while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5 °C.

Definition of Climate Change: Climate change refers to a statistically significant variation in either the mean state of the climate or in its variability, persisting for an extended period (typically decades or longer). Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forces, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use.

Member Nations

It is open to all member countries of WMO and UNEP.

Secretariat

IPCC Secretariat
C/O World Meteorological Organization
7bis Avenue de la Paix
C.P. 2300
CH- 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
Telephone: +41-22-730-8208
Fax: +41-22-730-8025
Web address: <http://www.ipcc.ch>

Description

The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change. It was established by the [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) and the [World Meteorological Organization \(WMO\)](#) in 1988 to provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of knowledge in climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic impacts. In the same year, the UN General Assembly [endorsed the action by WMO and UNEP in jointly establishing the IPCC](#).

The IPCC is a scientific body under the auspices of the United Nations (UN). It reviews and assesses the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change. It does not conduct any research nor does it monitor climate related data or parameters.

Thousands of scientists from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC on a voluntary basis. Review is an essential part of the IPCC process, to ensure an objective and complete assessment of current information. IPCC aims to reflect a range of views and expertise. The [Secretariat](#) coordinates all the IPCC work and liaises with Governments. It is supported by [WMO and UNEP](#) and hosted at WMO headquarters in Geneva.

The IPCC is an intergovernmental body. It is open to all member countries of the United Nations (UN) and WMO. Currently 195 countries are members of the IPCC. Governments participate in the review process and the plenary Sessions, where main decisions about the IPCC work programme are taken and reports are accepted, adopted and approved. The IPCC Bureau Members, including the Chair, are also elected during the plenary Sessions.

Because of its scientific and intergovernmental nature, the IPCC embodies a unique opportunity to provide rigorous and balanced scientific information to decision makers. By endorsing the IPCC reports, governments acknowledge the authority of their scientific content. The work of the organization is therefore policy-relevant and yet policy-neutral, never policy-prescriptive.

The scientific evidence brought up by the first IPCC Assessment Report of 1990 underlined the importance of climate change as a challenge requiring international cooperation to tackle its consequences. It therefore played a decisive role in leading to the creation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the key international treaty to reduce global warming and cope with the consequences of climate change.

Since then, the IPCC has delivered on a regular basis the most comprehensive scientific reports about climate change produced worldwide, the Assessment Reports. It has also responded to the need for information on scientific and technical matters from the UNFCCC, through Methodology Reports and Special Reports, and from governments and international organizations through Special Reports and Technical Papers. Methodology Reports serve as methodologies and guidelines to help Parties to the UNFCCC prepare their national greenhouse gas inventories.

The IPCC Second Assessment Report of 1995 provided important material drawn on by negotiators in the run-up to adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. The Third Assessment Report came out in 2001 and the Fourth in 2007.

The Fourth Assessment Report paid greater attention to the integration of climate change with sustainable development policies and relationships between mitigation and adaptation.

At the end of 2007 the IPCC was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The participation of the scientific community in the work of the IPCC has grown greatly, in terms of the number of authors and contributors involved in writing and reviewing the reports, geographical distribution of authors, and the topics covered by the reports.

The IPCC completed the Fifth Assessment Report in 2014 (<http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/index.shtml>).

The IPCC reports are of high scientific and technical standards, based on scientific evidence, and reflect a range and diversity of views, expertise, and geographical coverage within the scientific community. The comprehensiveness of the scientific content is achieved through contributions from experts in all regions of the world and all relevant disciplines including, where appropriately documented, industry literature and traditional practices. The IPCC multi-stage review by experts and governments ensures an objective, unbiased, transparent, and comprehensive assessment of current scientific and technical information. Because of its intergovernmental nature, the IPCC is able to provide scientific technical and socio-economic information to decision makers in a policy-relevant but policy-neutral way.

Recent Activities

Completion of Special Reports in the Sixth Assessment cycle

During the [43rd Session](#) of the IPCC (Nairobi, Kenya, 11 – 13 April 2016), the Panel decided to produce three Special Reports during the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) cycle. The three Special Reports have been completed:

1. [The impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C](#) above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways
2. [The effects of climate change on oceans and the cryosphere](#); and
3. [The effect of climate change on land](#) including desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems.

The IPCC has also completed a report on [Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories](#).

A summary of the history and products of the IPCC can be found at https://www.ipcc.ch/news_and_events/docs/factsheets/FS_timeline.pdf.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Roger B. Griffis
Climate Coordinator
NMFS Office of Science and Technology
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (831) 427-8134
Email: roger.b.griffis@noaa.gov

International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC)

The ISC was established in 1995 through an intergovernmental agreement between the governments of Japan and the United States. Since then, it has undergone a number of changes including a name change in 2005 from “Interim Scientific Committee” to the current “International Scientific Committee” and to membership qualifications. Membership is open to coastal states and fishing entities that border the region or that have vessels fishing for tuna and tuna-like species in the region, and to relevant intergovernmental fishery or marine science organizations. Current members of the ISC are Canada, China, Chinese-Taipei, Japan, Korea, Mexico, and the United States. Non-voting members are the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the North Pacific Science Organization (PICES) and Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

The purpose of the ISC is to enhance scientific research and cooperation for conservation and rational utilization of the species of tuna and tuna-like fisheries which inhabit the North Pacific Ocean and to establish the scientific groundwork for the conservation and rational utilization of these species in the region. The Committee is organized into five Working Groups – Statistics, Pacific Bluefin Tuna, Albacore, Billfish, and Sharks -- that report to a Plenary body. Results of the ISC are made available to participating members and Highly Migratory Species Regional Fishery Management Organizations of the Pacific Ocean. Through a Memorandum of Understanding, the ISC provides scientific support for the work of the Northern Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

Highlights of the ISC19 Plenary Meeting

The 19th ISC Plenary, held in Taipei, Taiwan, July 11-15, 2019 was attended by Members from Canada, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and the United States as well as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). Observers from Monterey Bay Aquarium and the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council (WPFMC) also attended the ISC19 Plenary session. The Plenary reviewed results, conclusions, new data, and updated analyses of the Billfish, Albacore, Shark and Pacific Bluefin tuna Working Groups. The Plenary endorsed the findings that the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean (WCNPO) striped marlin stock (MLS) is overfished and that overfishing is occurring relative to MSY-based reference points and considers the WCNPO MLS stock assessment to be the best available scientific information on the stock. The Plenary also notes that limit and target reference points have not been established for the WCNPO MLS stock by the WCPFC, in whose convention area the range of this stock lies. The ISC Plenary re-iterated stock status and conservation information provided at ISC18 for North Pacific albacore (ALB), Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF), North Pacific blue shark (BSH), North Pacific shortfin mako shark (SMA), WCNPO Swordfish (SWO), Eastern Pacific Ocean Swordfish (EPO SWO) and Pacific blue marlin (BUM). The results of preliminary management strategy evaluation (MSE) for ALB were reviewed and input from the second management strategy evaluation workshop for PBF was discussed. The ISC Plenary also reviewed recommendations from the peer review report of stock assessment function that it commissioned and agreed that independent expert reviews could improve the quality and transparency of its stock assessments. A report of the Ad-hoc Workshop on the PBF Close-kin mark-recapture project was reviewed and it is noted that several years might be needed for each country to extract DNA from its samples and complete marker development. The ISC work plan for 2019-20 includes conducting benchmark stock assessments of ALB and PBF, updating information on biological reference points for ISC species of interest, improving catch and CPUE time series and advancing biological information for shark species, moving the MSE processes for ALB and PBF forward and enhancing database and website management. Shuya Nakatsuka (Japan) and Hirotaka Ijima (Japan) were elected for three-year terms as the Chairs of the PBFWG and BILLWG, respectively. The ISC Plenary was held virtually in July 2020, and the next ISC Plenary is currently planned to be held in the United States in July 2021.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Sarah M. Shoffler
Fishery Biologist
NOAA/NMFS/Southwest Fisheries Science Center
8601 La Jolla Shores Dr.
La Jolla, CA 92037
Telephone: 858-546-5678
Fax: 858-546-5655
Email: Sarah.Shoffler@noaa.gov
Website: <http://swfsc.noaa.gov>

Joint Project Agreement between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Korean Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) For Scientific and Technical Cooperation in Integrated Coastal and Ocean Resources Management

Basic Instrument

The main instrument is a Joint Project Agreement (JPA) between NOAA and the Korean Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF). The JPA is a scientific and technical cooperation agreement in integrated coastal and ocean resources management.

Member Nations

Republic of Korea and United States

Meetings

The parties meet annually, generally alternating annually between the United States or Korea to review accomplishments and plan cooperative projects for the following year. In addition, the subject Working Groups of the JPA meet separately on an annual or biennial basis to progress cooperative research projects.

U.S. Representation

The NOAA lead of the JPA is in the National Ocean Service, however that position is currently vacant. There are 5 Working Groups: Integrated Coastal Management, Marine Observation and Data Information, Sea Grant Cooperation, Fisheries, and Aquaculture. Overall coordination is with Steve Morrison of the National Ocean Service (steve.morrison@noaa.gov)

NMFS has representation on the Joint Committee through F/IA and Alaska Fisheries Science Center.

Description

The JPA provides for exchange of knowledge, data, and information between Korea and the United States to improve the application of sound marine resource management principles and assessment of global marine habitat status and trends. It facilitates communications and exchange of expertise and information between NOAA and Ministry of Oceans & Fisheries.

The projects in the Agreement are run by four Panels. The Panels for the projects are the (1) Integrated Coastal Management, (2) Marine Observations and Data Management Panel, (3) Fisheries Panel and (4) Aquaculture Panel. Each Panel has a Korean and U.S. lead. Each Panel runs agreed to cooperative research projects. Each project has a Korean and U.S. principal investigator. The National Ocean Service's Office of International Programs has the overall NOAA lead. NOAA Fisheries has the lead for two of the four Panels. The JPA is unique in the sense that direct project funding is provided by the Korean side. NOAA provides in-kind resources that are equivalent to the dollar funding through involvement of personnel and use of research equipment and facilities.

Activities of the Fisheries Panel

NOAA Fisheries is involved mainly through two Panels of the JPA – the Fisheries Panel and the Aquaculture Panel. The Alaska Fisheries Science Center has the lead for the Fisheries Panel. The Panel's recent research projects for fall under 3 categories (1) fisheries surveys and monitoring, (2) climate assessments and ecosystems, (3) Applications of JPA research to Korean fisheries management and fisheries resources rebuilding.

Activities of the Aquaculture Panel

The recent projects for the Aquaculture Panel for are: (1) Meeting of the Joint Coordination Panel for Aquaculture Cooperation, (2) evaluation of pilot-scale, low-energy culture systems in Korea and US, (3) Cooperative Research

on the Production of Highly Valued Oyster, (4) Technical Approach on Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture, and (5) new feeding strategy for improved utilization of plant-based diets.

Next Meeting

The two countries have yet to schedule the annual Joint Project Agreement meeting for 2020 in the US to review accomplishments and plan cooperative projects for the following year.

Staff Contacts

NOAA NOS:

Trisha Bergmann, PhD (overall coordinator)
International Affairs Specialist
NOS/MBO/PCAD
Policy and Constituent Affairs Division
Email: Trisha.bergmann@noaa.gov
Telephone: (202) 482-2652

NOAA Fisheries:

Michael Abbey (Fisheries Panel/policy & management)
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10633
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8355
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: michael.abbey@noaa.gov

Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region

Basic Instrument

Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region

Member Nations

Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France for its Pacific Territories (New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna), New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States, Vanuatu

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

To provide an international framework for coordinated conservation efforts for the conservation of cetaceans and their habitats in the Pacific Islands Region, a Memorandum of Understanding (Pacific Cetaceans MoU) was launched on 15 September 2006. The Pacific Cetaceans MoU was negotiated under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), in collaboration with the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The Pacific Cetaceans MoU includes plans to protect and conserve Pacific cetaceans and their habitats, including their migratory corridors.

The Pacific Islands Region encompasses the following states and territories: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Island, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America (American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands), Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna. In many communities, there are significant cultural connections between cetaceans and humans. In much of the Pacific Islands Region, whale and dolphin watching is a growing tourist industry of importance to the region.

B. Organizational Structure:

The Secretariat to the Pacific Cetaceans MoU is articulated in the MoU text. The CMS Secretariat will act as the secretariat to this MoU. It may use the services of any reliable organization to support the coordination of this MoU. An organization to coordinate the implementation of this MoU will be determined by consensus of the signatories at their first meeting after consideration of all offers received. The signatories may also consider at their meetings suitable organizations to provide technical advice to support the implementation of this MoU. At this stage, the Secretariat point of contact for the Pacific Cetaceans MoU remains with the CMS Secretariat.

UNEP / CMS Pacific Cetaceans MoU Secretariat

United Nations Premises

Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10

53113 Bonn, Germany

Telephone: (+49 228) 815 2401 / 02

Fax: (+49 228) 815 2449

Email: secretariat@cms.int

Web: www.cms.int

Pacific Cetaceans MoU Technical Advisory Group Coordinator

Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society International (WDCS)

P.O. Box 228, Suva, Fiji

Telephone: (+679) 323 2940

Email: cara.miller@wdcs.org

Status

There have been three meetings of the Pacific Cetacean MoU, at the second meeting the Parties adopted the “Convention on Migratory Species Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region Whale and Dolphin Action Plan 2009-2012” (Action Plan). The Action Plan recognizes that the survival of many cetacean populations that frequent the waters of the Pacific Islands Region, particularly those that have been severely depleted, can be affected by interactions with fisheries, hunting, pollution, collisions with boats, noise, habitat degradation, climate change, disruption of food chains and irresponsible tourism. The Pacific Cetaceans MoU’s Action Plan addresses these and other threats to cetaceans in the Pacific Islands Region.

In March 2012, NOAA Fisheries participated in discussions to revise the Whale and Dolphin Action Plan; and submitted minor comments on the draft revised Action Plan to SPREP. At the third meeting of the Pacific Cetacean MoU, held in September 2012, the body adopted the revised Whale and Dolphin Action Plan 2013-2017, which sets priorities for addressing the threats faced by this species, as well as increasing capacity and public awareness in the region and guides the conservation actions of the Pacific Cetacean MoU in the Pacific Island region over the next five years. Through a correspondence process, the Signatories will identify ways to facilitate implementation of the actions with highest priority, including by linking this regional initiative to processes at the global level for the conservation of migratory species under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

The Pacific islands launched a "Pacific Year of the Whale" campaign in 2016. Science, conservation and education form major parts of the campaign which looks to further enhance whale conservation throughout the region. The campaign is being run by the [Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme \(SPREP\)](#). In 2017, as part of the Year of the Whale campaign, SPREP convened the Whales in a Changing Ocean conference. The conference discussed the many threats facing whales including entanglement in fishing nets, pollution and the possible consequences of climate change. Conference participants also worked to revise the Whales and Dolphin Action Plan 2018-2022. Adoption of the action plan is still pending by SPREP and the Pacific Cetacean MoU members.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Nina Young
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East- West Highway, Room 10632
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8383

Department of State:

Evan Bloom
Deputy Director, Office of Ocean Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520
Telephone: (202) 647-3262

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and Their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA) (concluded under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species)

The Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA) was completed on June 23, 2001, in Manila, Philippines. IOSEA is the second memorandum of understanding of its kind to be concluded under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species. It is a non-binding agreement and provides a framework through which States of the region--as well as other concerned States--can work together to conserve and replenish depleted marine turtle populations for which they share responsibility. It acknowledges a wide range of threats to marine turtles, including habitat destruction, direct harvesting and trade, fisheries bycatch, pollution and other human induced sources of mortality. The IOSEA recognizes the need to address these problems in the context of the socio-economic development of the States concerned, and to take account of other relevant instruments and organizations.

The IOSEA has a potential membership of at least 40 countries, covering the entire Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia. Activities may also be coordinated through subregional mechanisms in South-East Asia, as well as in the northern, western, and southwestern Indian Ocean. Thirty-five States have signed the IOSEA: Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Comoros, Egypt, Eritrea, France, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam, and Yemen. The fourth meeting of the Signatory States was held in Oman in March 2006. The fifth signatory state meeting was held in Bali, Indonesia in August 2008. The signatory states discussed and passed a fisheries bycatch resolution. The signatory states also discussed the impacts of coastal development on sea turtles, as well as funding for the agreement. The Sixth Signatory States meeting was in Bangkok, Thailand in January 2012. The major discussion topics included regional updates, illegal traffic of sea turtles, adoption of a site network and adoption of the work plan and budget. Intersessional work is focused on developing candidate sites for the Site Network of Important Marine Turtle Habitats. At the September 2014 meeting in Bonn, Germany, the Signatory States agreed to add ten sites to the Site Network. These sites were identified because of their critical importance for sea turtle conservation. The eighth signatory state meeting was held in October 2019 in Da Nang, Vietnam. An intersessional working group was established to review the national report format and advise on recommended changes. Other key topics included synthesis of recommendations from prior meetings, development of a draft work program for the next five years, illegal trade, RFMOs and bycatch reduction, and endorsement of inclusion of Con Dao National Park, Vietnam into the IOSEA Site Network. The Conservation and Management Plan, containing 24 programs and 105 specific activities, aims to reverse the decline of marine turtle populations throughout the region. The measures to be taken focus on reducing threats, conserving critical habitat, exchanging scientific data, increasing public awareness and participation, promoting regional cooperation, and seeking resources for implementation.

The Secretariat, located in Bonn, Germany, is under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species. The Advisory Committee consists of seven members with expertise from various disciplines, appointed by the Signatory States. The majority of the financial support has come from Australia, France, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States, Convention on Migratory Species Trust Fund, and United Nations Environment Programme. Web address: <http://www.ioseaturtles.org/>

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Barbara Schroeder/AnnMarie Lauritsen
Office of Protected Resources (F/PR)
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8450
Fax: (301) 713-4060

Department of State:

Joseph Fette
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350

National Marine Fisheries Service/Institute of Marine Research, Norway, Scientific Cooperation

Basic Instrument

The basic instrument establishing scientific cooperation between the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Norway's Institute of Marine Research (IMR) is the *First Addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] Between NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, USA, and the Institute of Marine Research, Norway, on Cooperation in Marine Ecosystems Research and Assessment* [the "Addendum"]. The Addendum became effective on February 16, 2012. It is an addendum to the *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation on Fisheries Issues Between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States of America and the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs of Norway* (discussed earlier in this publication). Due to the expiration of the MOU in 2018, this addendum no longer remains in effect, however, the annual bilateral coordination between NMFS and IMR continues.

Members

The United States and Norway.

Meetings

The Parties agreed that their designated representatives will meet as needed.

U.S. Representation

United States

Dr. Cisco Werner
Director of Scientific Programs and
Chief Science Advisor
National Marine Fisheries Service

Norway

Dr. Geir Huse
Institute of Marine Research

Pursuant to Article 5 of the Addendum, each Party agreed to appoint a coordinator for the joint program of cooperation. The coordinators will meet every two years to evaluate the joint program and to draft a cooperative work plan for the next two years. Following approval by the directors of the signatory institutions, the work plan will become the framework for cooperative activities for the next two years.

Description

The Addendum replaced separate scientific cooperation agreements between the IMR and the NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center and the NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center. The Addendum served to encourage and support cooperation in four areas: (1) joint sponsorship of workshops or symposia on the assessment and management of living marine resources of the northern hemisphere and aquaculture; (2) exchange of scientific expertise and information; (3) extended visits of scientists; and (4) cooperative research on common scientific issues and methodological problems.

Recent Activities

Representatives from NMFS, NOAA, and IMR met in Bergen, Norway during May 5-7, 2019 to continue dialog on collaborative research activities. The meeting offered the opportunity to have in-depth discussions on arrange of issues of mutual interest. The following issues were discussed in detail:

- Stock assessments
- Polar seas
- Oil and climate impacts on key Arctic fish species
- eDNA research
- Integrated ecosystem assessments
- Climate vulnerability assessments
- Machine Learning/Advanced technologies
- Aquaculture
 - o Role of public-private partnerships
 - o Research to execution
 - o ICES and AORA multilateral projects
 - o Science connections to regulatory and policy issues
- Scientist exchanges
- MOU renewal

Next meeting

The next science meeting was scheduled for May 2020, in Seattle, WA, USA. Due to complications and travel restrictions from COVID-19, this meeting has been postponed until a date yet-to-be-determined.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Headquarters:

Dr. Cisco Werner
Director of Scientific Programs and
Chief Science Advisor
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway, Room 14659
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Northeast Region:

Dr. John Hare, Director
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

OECD is a Paris-based international organization that provides a forum for consultations on a wide range of economic issues among developed countries. The OECD Committee for Fisheries (the Fisheries Committee) meets twice annually (in the spring and fall) and occasionally holds ad hoc technical meetings.

The Fisheries Committee has agreed on certain basic guidelines in developing its program of work:

- The Committee's role should mainly be to constitute a policy forum for an open and frank exchange of views and experiences on various fisheries matters;
- The Committee should carry out in-depth studies and objective analysis which should lead to potential solutions to problems common to Member countries;
- The Committee should address fishery economic and policy questions at the international level, while avoiding duplicating work done in other international organizations; and
- The Committee should take an interdisciplinary approach in its work, thus exploiting the OECD's comparative advantage.

The Fisheries Committees is in the process of developing its 2021-2022 program of work. The work program will align itself with the OECD Ministers' commitments to the Blue Economy and focuses on Promoting Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture. Refining data collection for the improvement of the Fisheries Support Estimates work will be a priority. The analysis contained in the FSE is valuable to the fisheries subsidies negotiations ongoing at the World Trade Organization.

These areas of work will be in addition to the *Review of Fisheries* which is a publication of the major events and developments in OECD countries' fisheries sector which is published every second year. Web address:

<http://www.oecd.org/>

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Greg Schneider; Senior International Trade Specialist
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8378
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: greg.schneider@noaa.gov

OECD Headquarters:

Roger Martini, OECD
2, rue André Pascal
F-75775 Paris Cedex 16
France
Telephone: (33-1) 45 24 17 40
Fax: (33-1) 44 30 61 21
Roger.Martini@oecd.org

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is the Pacific region's major intergovernmental organization charged with protecting and managing the region's environment and natural resources. It started as a small program attached to the South Pacific Commission (SPC) in the 1980s, and grew into an autonomous intergovernmental organization with the signing of the Agreement Establishing SPREP in 1993. The establishment of SPREP sent a clear signal to the global community of the deep commitment of the Pacific islands region to sustainable development, especially in light of multilateral attention to sustainable development issues facing small island developing states.

The United States is a party to the treaty establishing SPREP and participates in SPREP as a member. The U.S. islands of Guam, American Samoa, and Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas are also members of SPREP. The head office is based in Apia, Samoa with about 100 staff. SPREP has an annual budget of \$29 million in 2018.

Mandate

SPREP's mandate is to promote cooperation in the Pacific islands region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve its environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations.

Vision

SPREP's vision is "A resilient Pacific environment, sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures."

Members

SPREP has 26 members, including 21 Pacific island countries and territories (American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Northern Marianas, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Wallis & Futuna) plus five developed countries (the United States, Australia, New Zealand, France, and the United Kingdom).

Secretariat Headquarters

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
PO Box 240, Apia, Samoa
Telephone: +685 21929
Fax: +685 20231
Email: sprep@sprep.org
Website: <https://www.sprep.org/>

Programmes/Strategic Priorities

SPREP organizes its work under four strategic priority areas: (1) Climate Change Resilience; (2) Island and Ocean Ecosystems; (3) Effective Waste Management and Pollution Control; and (4) Environmental Governance. These core priorities tie into SPREP's four regional goals to achieving resilience and sustainable Pacific communities: (1) Pacific people benefit from strengthened resilience to climate change; (2) Pacific people benefit from healthy and resilience island and ocean ecosystems; (3) Pacific people benefit from improved waste management and pollution control; and (4) Pacific people and their environment benefit from commitment to and best practice of environmental governance.

NOAA's engagement with SPREP spans the breadth of NOAA's equities, including fisheries, oceans and coastal resource management, disaster risk reduction, etc. NOAA resources are often published to the SPREP website, including documents on coral reef conservation, ocean acidification, ocean noise, and marine debris, as well as coral

reef status reports. In 2016, NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and SPREP signed a Statement of Intent to work together to enhance marine mammal conservation in the Pacific. Most recently in 2020, NOAA has been engaged in coordination on oil spill response and prevention capacity building with Pacific Island countries, joining an interagency working group to provide expertise and technical resources in support of the implementation of the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PACPLAN), administered by SPREP.

NOAA Office of International Affairs provides a representative to SPREP, who is responsible for the coordination of NOAA's engagement.

Staff Contact

NOAA Office of International Affairs:

Dann Karlson
Deputy Director 1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230
Telephone: (202) 482-2570
Fax: (202) 482-4307
Email: daniel.karlson@noaa.gov

Protocol for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) in the Wider Caribbean Region to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention)

SPA was adopted in Kingston, Jamaica, by the member governments of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Caribbean Environment Programme on January 18, 1990. It entered into force on June 18, 2000, after ratification by its ninth Contracting Party. It is one of three Protocols to the Cartagena Convention--the other two deal with cooperation to combat oil spills, adopted in 1983, and land-based marine pollution, adopted in 1999. The SPA Protocol preceded other international environmental agreements in utilizing an ecosystem approach to conservation. It acts as a vehicle to assist with regional implementation of the broader and more demanding global Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The Cartagena Convention is the only legally binding environmental treaty for the Wider Caribbean Region. The Convention and its Protocols constitute a legal commitment by the participating governments to protect, develop, and manage their common waters individually or jointly. UNEP provides the Secretariat in Kingston for the Convention and its Protocols.

The stated objectives of the SPA program are:

- To significantly increase the number of and improve the management of national protected areas and species in the region, including the development of biosphere reserves, where appropriate;
- To develop a strong regional capability for the coordination of information exchange, training and technical assistance in support of national biodiversity conservation efforts;
- To develop specific regional, as well as national management plans developed for endangered, threatened or vulnerable species such as sea turtles, the West Indian manatee, black coral, and migratory birds;
- To coordinate the development and implementation of the Regional Program for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean, in keeping with the mandate of the SPA Protocol;
- To coordinate activities with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as other biodiversity-related treaties, such as the CITES, Ramsar, Bonn, and Western Hemisphere Conventions.

The Parties to the SPA Protocol are the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, the Netherlands, Panama, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, and Venezuela. On September 5, 2002, the United States Senate, with reservations, an understanding, and a declaration, gave its advice and consent to the ratification of the Protocol.

The SPA Protocol has three Annexes that pertain to threatened or endangered species of flora and fauna. Plant species subject to the highest levels of protection are listed in Annex I, and animal species subject to the highest levels of protection are listed in Annex II. Plants and animals subject to some management, but lesser protections than those afforded to species listed in Annexes I or II, are listed in Annex III.

The 9th Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the SPA Protocol is expected to be held in early 2021. The 11th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the SPA Protocol (SPA COP) has not been confirmed, but will likely take place in late 2021/early 2022.

Website address: <https://www.unenvironment.org/cep/>

Recent Developments

The 8th Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the SPA Protocol took place in Panama City, Panama, 5-7 December 2018. The STAC meeting provides the opportunity to review, evaluate, and refer proposals to the Parties for adoption at the SPA Conference of Parties. The 10th SPA COP took place 3 June 2019 in Roatán, Honduras. Contracting Parties agreed to list two additional species for protection under the Protocol: largetooth sawfish to Annex II and the silky shark to Annex III. Contracting Parties also approved two Protected Areas proposed by the Government of France, the National Natural Reserve of Kaw-Roura and the

National Natural Reserve of Amana in French Guiana, as well as the Mount Scenery National Park of Saba Island proposed by the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Immediately following the SPAW COP, the 4th Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS COP) was held on 4 June, and the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention was held from 5-6 June.

Staff Contacts

US Focal Point:

Sammi Dowdell
NOAA Office of International Affairs
U.S Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20230
Telephone: (202) 482-5144
Email: Samantha.Dowdell@noaa.gov

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

Historically, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) was not traditionally a forum for the discussion of fisheries issues, but this changed in the 1990s when it took up the problem of large-scale, pelagic driftnet fishing on the high seas. UNGA Resolution 44/225, adopted in 1990, called for a moratorium on the use of this fishing gear on the high seas by June 30, 1992. This Resolution was supplanted by UNGA Resolution 46/215, which delayed the effective date of the moratorium until December 31, 1992.

Since that time, the United Nations General Assembly has annually provided guidance for the sustainable management of global living marine resources in an annual Sustainable Fisheries Resolution. UNGA fisheries resolutions address: achieving sustainable fisheries; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; monitoring, control and surveillance as well as compliance and enforcement; fishing overcapacity; large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing; fisheries by-catch and discards; subregional and regional cooperation; responsible fisheries in the marine ecosystem; capacity building; implementation of the Food and Agriculture Organization Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas; and implementation of the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA).

In 2004, the UNGA Sustainable Fisheries Resolution included calls to States and RFMOs to take action regarding the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems from significant adverse impacts. In 2006, 2009, 2011 and 2016, the UNGA conducted, in conjunction with the annual negotiations, a review of progress by States and RFMOs in implementing these provisions of the Resolutions, with a view to providing further recommendations, where necessary.

Additionally, the UN General Assembly negotiates a resolution that focuses on broader oceans issues, which can affect fisheries management, such as initiatives to address marine debris, marine protected areas and coastal zone management. The United States is represented at each of these negotiations by the Department of State and supported by NOAA and NOAA Fisheries technical expertise.

Web address: www.un.org/Depts/los/index.htm

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Cheri McCarty
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8369
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: Cheri.McCarty@noaa.gov

U.S.-Canada International Joint Commission (IJC)

The IJC is an independent binational organization established by the U.S.-Canada Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. Canada and the United States created the IJC because they recognized that each country is affected by the other's actions in lake and river systems along their border. The IJC's purpose is to help prevent and resolve disputes relating to the use and quality of boundary waters and to advise Canada and the United States on related questions.

The IJC currently has six members—U.S. members are appointed by the President of the United States, with the advice and approval of the Senate, and Canadian members are appointed by the Governor in Council of Canada, on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Commissioners must follow the Treaty as they try to prevent or resolve disputes.

United States Section

- Jane Corwin, Chair
- Robert Sisson, Commissioner
- Lance Yohe

The Commission has set up more than 20 boards, made up of experts from the United States and Canada, to help it carry out its responsibilities.

Contact

U.S. Section, International Joint Commission
1717 H Street NW, Suite 801
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 202-736-9000
Fax: 202-632-2006
E-mail: commission@washington.ijc.org
Contact: Frank Bevacqua

Web address: <http://www.ijc.org/en/>

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick Moran
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Email: Pat.Moran@noaa.gov

U.S.-China Marine and Fishery Science and Technology Protocol (MFSTP)

The United States and China signed the U.S.-China Science and Technology Agreement in Washington, D.C., on [January 31, 1979](#). Under this Agreement is the Marine and Fishery Science and Technology Protocol which was signed on May 8, 1979 and renewed multiple times. The Protocol expired during its 40th anniversary in 2019. Renewal has been delayed due to international trade tensions and the Chinese reorganization of ocean science into the Ministry of Interior, part of the broader Chinese institutional reform.

NOAA is the lead U.S. agency for this Protocol; the Chinese Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), which absorbed the State Oceanic Administration (SOA), is the lead agency for China. Since its launch, NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) currently serves as the lead Line Office (LO) for the administration of this Protocol with the Assistant Administrator for Research, Craig McLean, serving as the U.S. Co-Chair. Joint Working Group (JWG) meetings are generally held on a biennial basis. A new Chinese counterpart has not yet been identified.

Reorganization

Following the Chinese State Council's national reorganization of governmental institutions and trade disputes, both sides have been slow to indicate renewal interest during this recent period of trade disputes. In addition, The Chinese Bureau of Fisheries (BoF) - under the Ministry of Agriculture - withdrew their Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences (CAFS) from the bilateral in 2018 in order to create its own bilateral science program with NOAA under BoFS direct leadership rather than through the Protocol. Negotiations on a new MOU between NOAA and BoF are currently underway.

Although the bilateral has lapsed both parties continue technical conversations, maintaining technical contacts. Regarding ocean observations, technical experts participated in the organization of OceanObs 19 and continued to explore elements of a joint bilateral work plan in the event that the Protocol is renewed. The Living Marine Resources Panel - led by CAFS and NMFS - has resumed work independently of the Protocol, in anticipation of the new MOU between NOAA and BoF.

Background

The Objectives for the Marine and Fishery Science and Technology Protocol have been to:

- To promote diplomatic relations with China;
- To exchange spatial and historical data and information unique to the two countries;
- To make marine and fishery research more cost effective;
- To achieve more global coverage for marine and scientific studies, including PRC-controlled waters;
- To enhance marine and fishery science and technology activities; and
- To assist China in becoming a contributing member of the oceanographic research community.

The Protocol originally identified five major areas of cooperation where bilateral panels have been set up to meet periodically:

- Oceanographic Data and Information (this was terminated in 2016),
- The Role of the Oceans in Climate Change,
- Marine Policy, Management, and International Marine Affairs
- Living Marine Resources (no longer functioning under this MOU), and
- Polar Sciences

Joint Working Group

The 19th Joint Working Group (JWG) was held in 2016. The JWG, chaired by NOAA OAR AA Craig McLean, took place in the Washington D.C. area. Major outcomes of this meeting included:

- Completion of an Accomplishments Report
- Agreement on a new 2016-2018 Biennial Work Plan
- Renewal and amendment of a new five-year Framework of Cooperation which identifies potential cooperative areas

- Reorganization of 5 JWG Panels into 4 (terminating Oceanographic Data and Information)
- Establishment of a new Joint Scientific Experts Group.

The Chinese did not host a Joint Working Group in 2019 during the year that the bilateral expired.

Joint Scientific Experts Group (JSEG)

The purpose of the Joint Scientific Experts Group (or Experts Group) is to provide scientific advice and recommendations on ecological science, services, and management, as well as the effects of climate change on the oceans to the U.S.-China Joint Working Group and the four panels that operate under the Joint Working Group.

The first meeting of the JSEG was in China during the last week of July 2018. The JSEG consists of 7 U.S. and Chinese governmental and non-governmental members. There has been no formal review of the JSEG report due to the lapse of the bilateral Protocol; there was no Joint Working Group to receive the report.

U.S. Co-Chair

Joint Working Group Co-Chair

Craig McLean
NOAA Research Assistant Administrator
NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research

Fisheries Dialogue Lead

Francisco Werner
Chief Science Advisor &
Director of Scientific Programs
NOAA Fisheries

Staff Contact

NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research:

Arthur Paterson
Program Manager
International Activities Office
1315 East West Hwy
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 734-1291
Email: Arthur.E.Paterson@noaa.gov

U.S.-Vietnam Fisheries Cooperation Program

There is no formal bilateral between the two countries. However, the bilateral fisheries relationship continues through frequent, irregular engagements. Our current relationship with Vietnam was initiated in 1998 with an exchange of fishery scientists. Additionally, in October 1998, NMFS Assistant Administrator Rolland Schmitt led a U.S. fisheries delegation composed of government and private sector representatives to Vietnam. The visit resulted in agreement to continue cooperative exchanges in areas of mutual interest. During 1999 and 2000, a variety of scientific exchanges took place, the most notable being the participation of a NOAA Fisheries scientist on a Vietnamese fisheries research cruise during October 2000.

Although no formal U.S.-Vietnam bilateral meetings were held between 2007 and 2012, NMFS engaged in a number of training activities with Vietnam to build their capacity relative to at-sea observers, and seafood export safety standards. From 2012-2016, Michael Abbey led a NMFS IASI effort, through the capacity building program, to support Vietnam's effort to write provincial-scale Marine Spatial Plans with an emphasis on fisheries. Every year during that period there was a more advanced workshop given to provincial level bureaucrats in the natural resource divisions to help them write the plans. After four years, more than 200 people were trained, with at least 10 attending all four years, in all aspects of writing plans, including how to conduct public surveys and run public meetings. This project was undertaken in partnership with the World Bank, the Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development/Directorate of Fisheries and with support from the US Embassy in Hanoi, Vietnam.

There is an effort underway to understand what additional discussions would be valuable in order to further our needs.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Michael Abbey
Office of International Affairs & Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8355
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: michael.abbey@noaa.gov

World Trade Organization (WTO)

The WTO (formerly the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) was established in 1994 and is the international organization that negotiates and enforces trade rules and periodically convenes multilateral trade negotiations. The last completed multilateral trade negotiations, the Uruguay Round, began in 1986 and concluded in 1994. NOAA Fisheries has two broad fishery-related interests in WTO: (1) defending our conservation laws in WTO dispute settlement; and (2) negotiating fisheries tariffs, non-tariff barriers, and subsidies in the trade rounds.

WTO Members agreed in December 2017 in Buenos Aires at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference to continue to engage constructively in the fisheries subsidies negotiations with a view to adopting an agreement on comprehensive and effective disciplines that prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing and eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU-fishing by the Ministerial Conference in 2019, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing country Members and least developed country Members should be an integral part of these negotiations.

Members re-committed to implementation of existing notification obligations under Article 25.3 of the WTO Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures thus strengthening transparency with respect to fisheries subsidies. The routine work of the WTO including adjudicating trade disputes continues unabated. The 12th WTO Ministerial Conference scheduled for June 2020 was postponed on account of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Web address: <http://www.wto.org/>

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Greg Schneider
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8378
Email: greg.schneider@noaa.gov

PART V: APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Governing International Fishery Agreements (GIFAs) Between the United States and Foreign Entities

Pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), Title II, Section 201, foreign fishing within the U.S. 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) may be conducted only when a Governing International Fisheries Agreement has been concluded between the United States and a foreign nation.

GIFAs were concluded with a number of foreign nations in the early years of implementing the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, NMFS worked closely with the U.S. Regional Fishery Management Councils to determine which fish stocks within the U.S. EEZ had surpluses available for directed fishing by foreign-flagged vessels or could be harvested within the context of joint ventures between U.S. catcher vessels and foreign fishing companies.

As the United States developed its fishing fleet and expanded fishing activity within its EEZ, surpluses available for foreign fishing were greatly reduced. By 2020, all GIFAs have lapsed. The Agreement on Mutual Fisheries Relations with the Russian Federation (including the GIFA) expired on December 31, 2018. The United States and the Russian Federation have an interest in renewing that bilateral agreement and negotiations have continued in 2020.

APPENDIX II: Membership Lists for Selected Organizations / Agreements

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UNFSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
Afghanistan									P	
Albania		P							P	
Algeria		P							P	
Angola		P							P	
Antigua & Barbuda									P	
Argentina							P		P	P
Armenia									P	
Australia	P			P	P	P	P	A	P	P
Austria						P			P	
Bahamas						P				
Bangladesh				P					P	
Barbados		P				P				
Belarus									P	
Belgium						P	P	P	P	
Belize		P	P			P				
Benin									P	
Bolivia		CNP	CNP						P	
Bosnia and Herzegovina									P	
Brazil		P				P	P		P	P
Bulgaria						P	A		P	
Burkina Faso									P	
Burundi									P	
Cameroon									P	
Canada		P	P		P	P	A	P		
Cape Verde		P							P	
Central African Republic									P	
Chad									P	
Chile			CNP			P	P	A	P	P
China		P	P	P	P		P			
Colombia		CNP	P							
Comoros				P						
Congo									P	
D.R. Congo									P	
Cook Islands					P	P	A		P	
Costa Rica		CNP	P			P			P	
Cote d'Ivoire		P							P	
Croatia									P	
Cuba									P	
Curaçao		P			CNP					
Cyprus						P			P	
Czech Republic						P			P	
Denmark						P		P	P	
Djibouti									P	
Dominican Republic									P	

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UNFSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
Ecuador			P		CNP				P	P
Egypt		P							P	
El Salvador		P	P		CNP					
Equatorial Guinea		P							P	
Eritrea				P					P	
Estonia						P		P	P	
Eswatini									P	
Ethiopia									P	
European Union	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Fiji					P	P			P	
Finland						P	A	P	P	
France		P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Gabon		P							P	
Gambia		P							P	
Georgia									P	
Germany						P	P	P	P	
Ghana		P							P	
Greece						P	A	A	P	
Grenada (Republic of)		P								
Guatemala		P	P							
Guinea Rep.		P				P			P	
Guinea-Bissau		P							P	
Guyana		CNP								
Honduras		P	CNP						P	
Hungary						P			P	
Iceland		P				P		P		
India				P		P	P		P	
Indonesia	P		CNP	P	P	P				
Iran (Islamic Republic of)				P		P			P	
Iraq									P	
Ireland						P		P	P	
Israel									P	
Italy						P	P		P	
Jamaica										
Japan	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Jordan									P	
Kazakhstan									P	
Kenya				P		P			P	
Kiribati (Republic of)			P		P	P				
Korea (Republic of)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Latvia						P		P	P	
Lebanon									P	
Liberia		P	CNP	CNP	CNP	P			P	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		P							P	
Liechtenstein									P	
Lithuania						P		P	P	

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UNFSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
Luxembourg						P			P	
Macedonia (FYR of)									P	
Madagascar				P					P	
Malawi									P	
Malaysia				P						
Maldives (Republic of)				P		P			P	
Mali									P	
Malta						P			P	
Marshall Islands					P	P				
Mauritania		P							P	
Mauritius				P		P	A		P	
Mexico		P	P							
Micronesia (Fed States of)					P	P				
Moldova (Republic of)									P	
Monaco						P			P	
Mongolia									P	
Montenegro									P	
Morocco		P							P	
Mozambique				P		P			P	
Namibia		P				P	P			
Nauru					P	P				
Netherlands						P	P	P	P	
New Zealand	P				P	P	P	A	P	P
Nicaragua		P	P		CNP					
Niger									P	
Nigeria		P				P			P	
Niue					P	P				
Norway		P				P	P	P	P	P
Oman (Sultanate of)				P		P				
Pakistan				P			A		P	
Palau (Republic of)					P	P			P	
Panama		P	P		CNP	P	A		P	
Papua New Guinea					P	P				
Paraguay									P	
Peru			P				A	A	P	P
Philippines	CNP	P		P	P				P	
Poland						P	P	P	P	
Portugal						P		P	P	
Romania						P			P	
Russia		P				P	P	P		
Rwanda									P	
Saint Lucia						P				
Samoa					P	P			P	
Sao Tome e Principe		P							P	
Saudi Arabia									P	
Senegal		P		CNP		P			P	

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UNFSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
Serbia (Republic of)									P	
Seychelles				P		P			P	
Sierra Leone		P		P						
Slovakia						P			P	
Slovenia						P			P	
Solomon Islands					P	P				
Somalia				P					P	
South Africa	P	P		P		P	P	A	P	P
Spain						P	P	P	P	P
Sri Lanka				P		P			P	
St. Vincent, the Grenadines		P								
Sudan				P						
Suriname		CNP								
Sweden						P	P	P	P	
Switzerland									P	
Syrian Arab Rep.		P							P	
Chinese Taipei	P	CNP	P		P					
Tajikistan									P	
Tanzania				P					P	
Thailand				P	CNP					
Togo									P	
Tonga					P	P				
Trinidad and Tobago		P				P			P	
Tunisia		P							P	
Turkey		P								
Tuvalu					P	P				
Uganda									P	
Ukraine						P	P		P	
United Arab Emirates									P	
United Kingdom		P		P		P	P	P	P	P
United States of America		P	P		P	P	P	P		
Uruguay		P				P	P		P	P
Uzbekistan									P	
Vanuatu		P	P		P		A			
Venezuela		P	P							
Vietnam					CNP					
Yemen				P					P	
Zimbabwe									P	

P: Party

CNP: Cooperating non party

A: Affiliate

Country Name	NAFO	NASCO	NPAFC	NPFC	IPHC	PSC	SPTT	SEAFO	SPRFMO
Angola								P	
Australia							P		P
Canada	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Chile									P
China				P					P
Colombia									
Cook Islands							P		P
Curaçao									CNP
Cuba	P								P
Denmark	P	P							P
Ecuador									P
European Union	P	P						P	P
Federated States of Micronesia							P		
Fiji							P		
France	P								
Iceland	P								
Japan	P		P	P				P	
Kiribati (Republic of)							P		
Korea (Republic of)	P		P	P				P	P
Liberia									CNP
Marshall Islands (Republic of)							P		
Namibia								P	
Nauru							P		
New Zealand							P		P
Niue							P		
Norway	P	P						P	
Palau (Republic of)							P		
Panama									CNP
Papua New Guinea							P		
Peru									P
Russia	P	P	P	P					P
Samoa							P		
Solomon Islands							P		
South Africa								P	
Chinese Taipei				P					P
Tonga (Kingdom of)							P		
Tuvalu							P		
Ukraine	P								
United Kingdom	P								
United States of America	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		P
Vanuatu				P			P		P

P: Party

CNP: Cooperating non party

A: Affiliate

**APPENDIX III:
List of Selected Acronyms**

Acronym/ Short Form	Meaning
ACAP	Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
AIDCP	Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
APFIC	Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission
CAFF	Program for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna
Cartagena Convention	Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCAMLR	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
CCAS	Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals
CCSBT	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
CDHC	Coral Disease and Health Consortium
CEC	Commission for Environmental Cooperation
CECAF	Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
COFI	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Committee on Fisheries
FAO	Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FTAs	Free Trade Agreements
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIFAs	Governing International Fishery Agreements
GLFC	Great Lakes Fishery Commission
GLOBEC	Global Ocean Ecosystem Dynamics
GOMC	Gulf of Maine Council
GOOS	Global Ocean Observing System
IAC	Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles
IATTC	Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
ICC	U.S.-Russia Intergovernmental Consultative Committee
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IJC	U.S.-Canada International Joint Commission
IOC	International Oceanographic Commission
IOCARIBE	IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions
IOSEA	Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and Their Habitats Of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

IPHC	International Pacific Halibut Commission
IPY	International Polar Year
ISC	International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean
IWC	International Whaling Commission
JPA	Joint Project Agreement
LMEs	Large Marine Ecosystems
MIFAFF	Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (Republic of Korea)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
NASCO	North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
NMFS	NOAA's National Marine Fishery Service
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPAFC	North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission
NPFC	North Pacific Fisheries Commission
NSF	National Science Foundation
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PICES	North Pacific Marine Science Organization
PSC	Pacific Salmon Commission
RUSALCA	Russian-American Long-term Census of the Arctic
SEAFO	Convention on the Conservation and Management of Fishery Resources in the Southeast Atlantic Ocean
SIOFA	Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SPRFMO	South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
SPTT	South Pacific Tuna Treaty
UN	United Nations
UNFSA	United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission
WHO	World Health Organization of the United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organization

APPENDIX IV: Geographic Delimitations

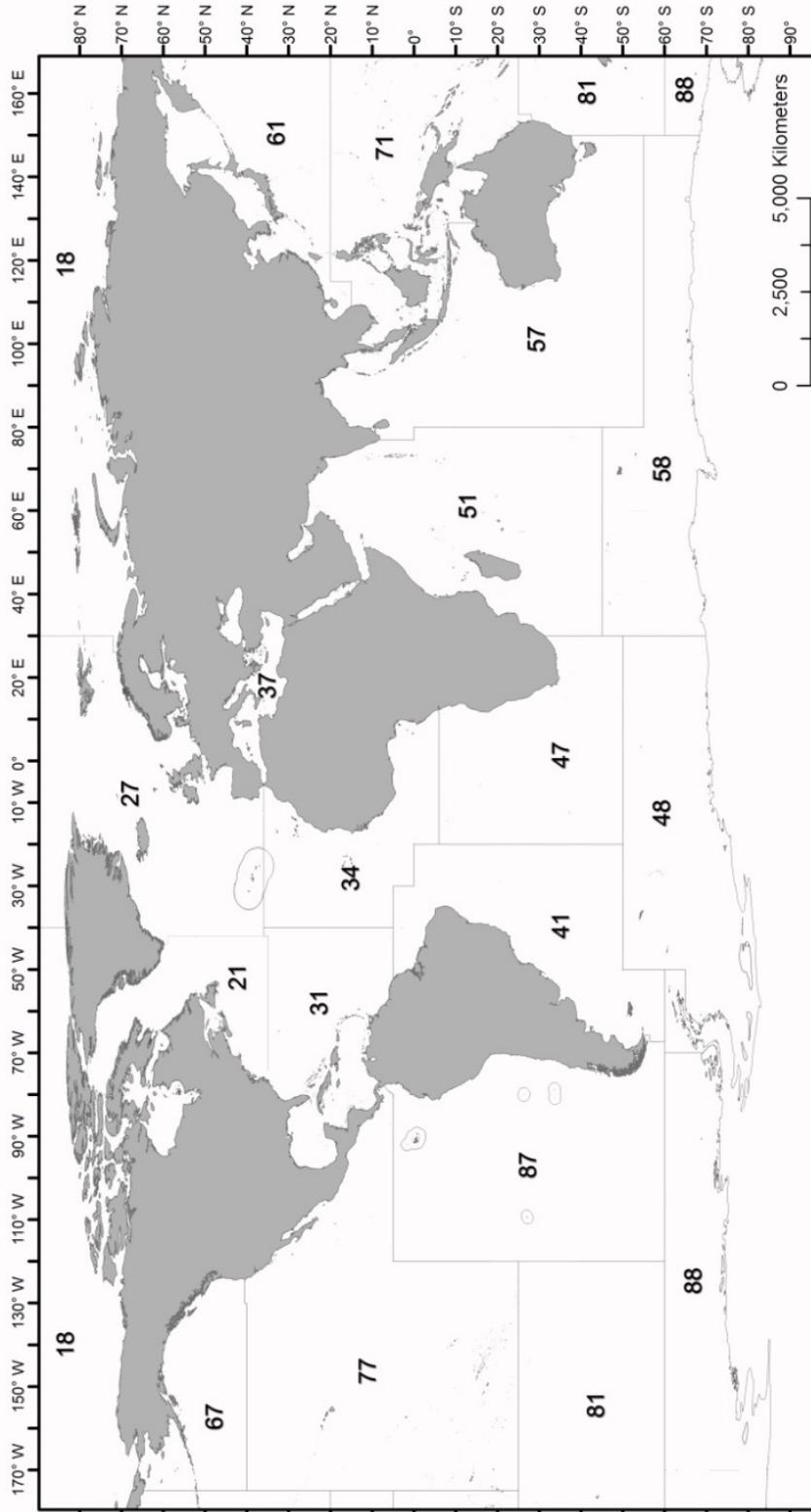


Figure 1. Global Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) statistical fishing areas. From upper left to lower right: Area 18 (Arctic Sea); Area 67 (Pacific, Northeast); Area 77 (Pacific, Eastern Central); Area 81 (Pacific, Southwest); Area 87 (Pacific, Southeast); Area 88 (Pacific, Antarctic); Area 27 (Atlantic, Northeast); Area 21 (Atlantic, Northwest); Area 31 (Atlantic, Western Central); Area 34 (Atlantic, Eastern Central); Area 37 (Mediterranean and Black Sea); Area 41 (Atlantic, Southwest); Area 47 (Atlantic, Southeast); Area 48 (Atlantic, Antarctic); Area 51 (Indian Ocean, Western); Area 57 (Indian Ocean, Eastern); Area 58 (Indian Ocean, Antarctic and Southern); Area 61 (Pacific, Northwest); Area 71 (Pacific, Western Central). See <http://www.fao.org/fishery/area/search/en> for source material and interactive maps.

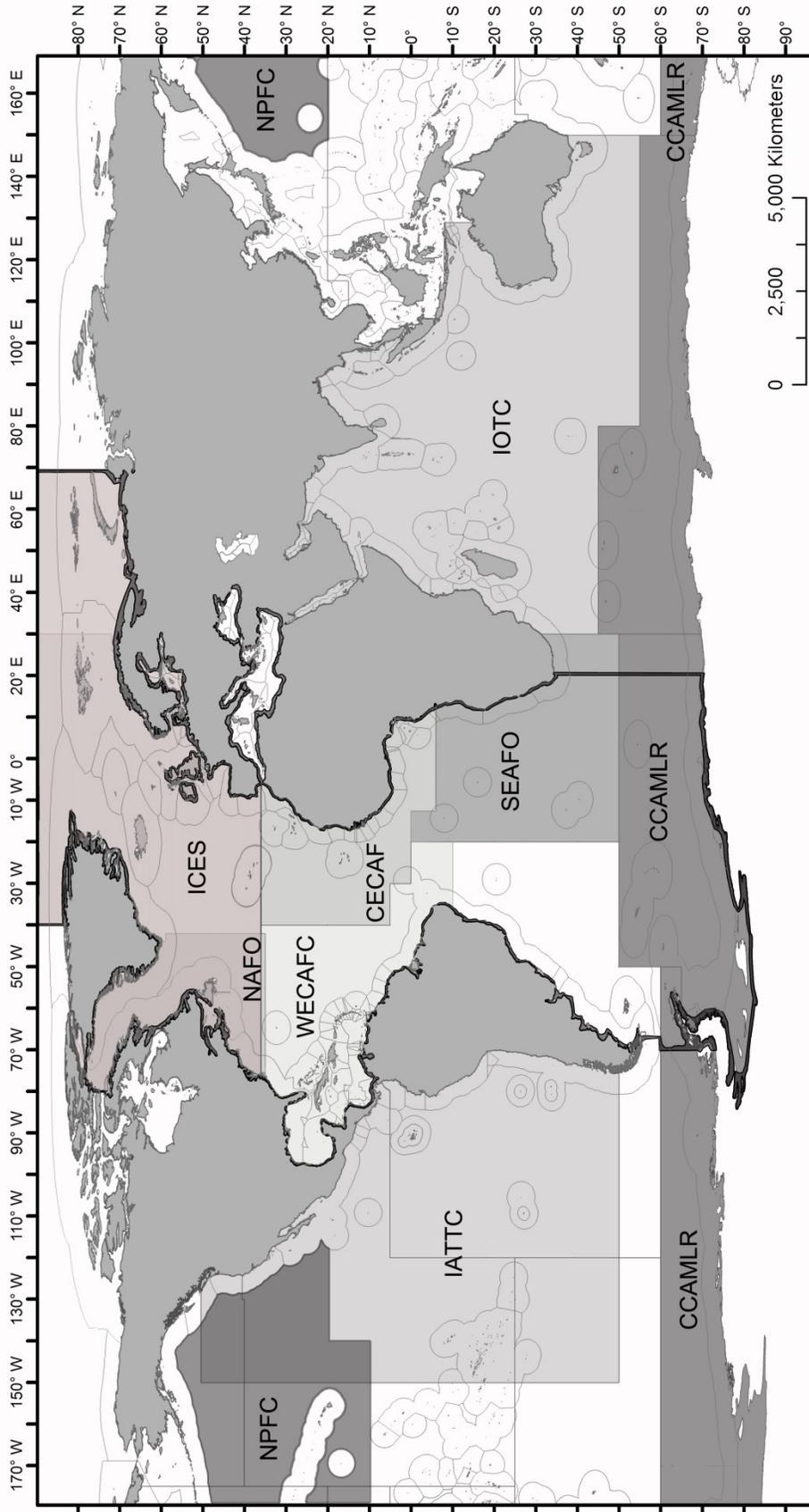


Figure 2. Approximate spatial extent of select Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Scientific Councils including the boundaries of country-specific exclusive economic zones (EEZs). The thick black outline around the Atlantic Ocean represents the spatial extent of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). NPFC: North Pacific Regional Fishery Management Organization; IATTC: Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission; CCAMLR: Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Living Marine Resources; NAFO: North Atlantic Fishery Organization; ICES: International Commission for the Exploration of the Seas; WECAFC: Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission; CECAF: Fishery Committee for the East Central Atlantic; SEAFO: Southeast Atlantic Fishery Organization; IOTC: Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. Modified from: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/area/search/en>

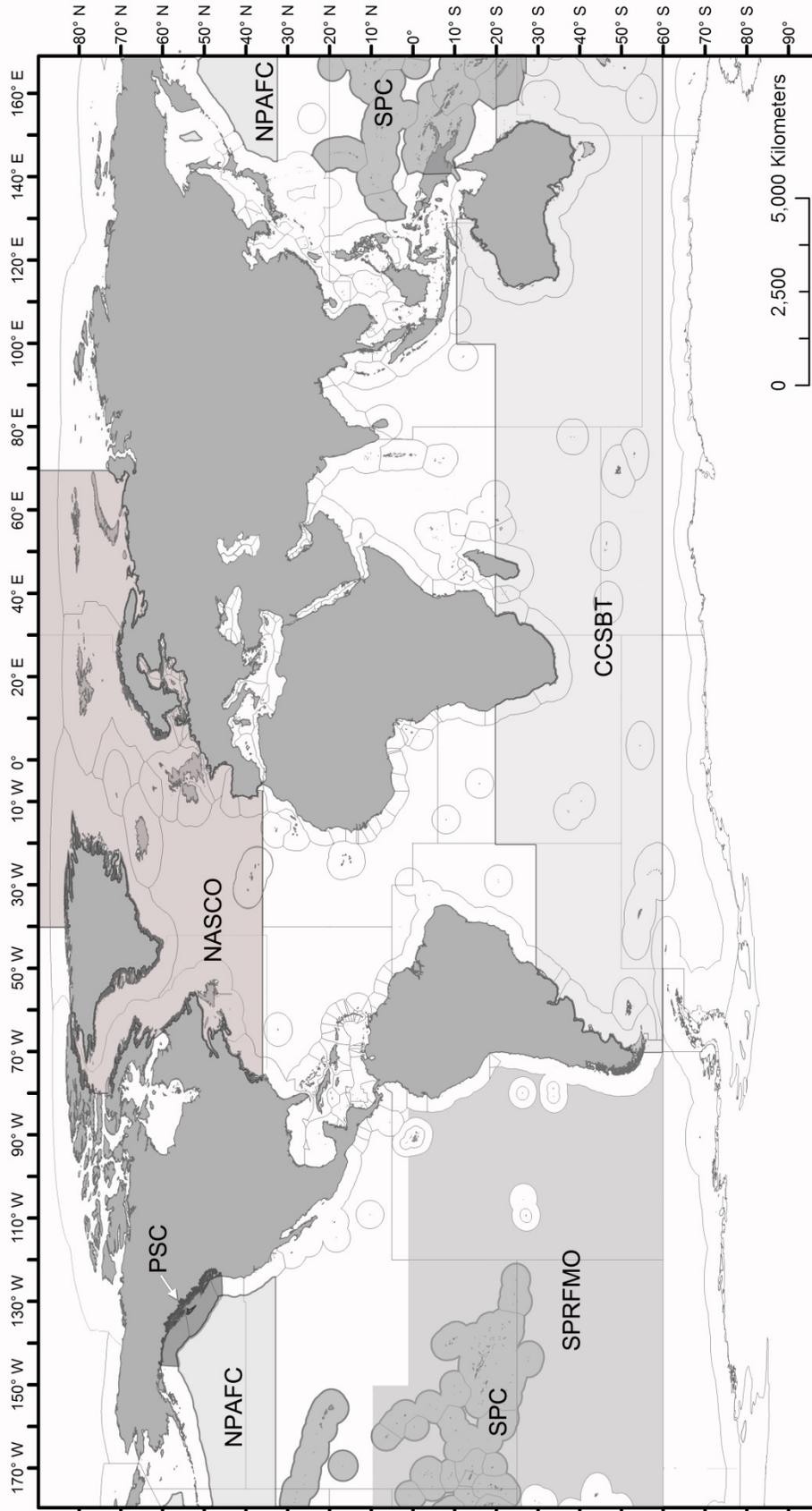


Figure 3. Approximate spatial extent of select Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Scientific Councils including the boundaries of country-specific exclusive economic zones (EEZs). PSC: Pacific Salmon Commission; NPAFC: North Pacific Anadromous Fishery Commission; SPC: Secretariat of the Pacific; SPRFMO: South Pacific Regional Fishery Management Organization; NASCO: North Atlantic Salmon Commission; CCSBT: Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna. Modified from: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/area/search/enj>

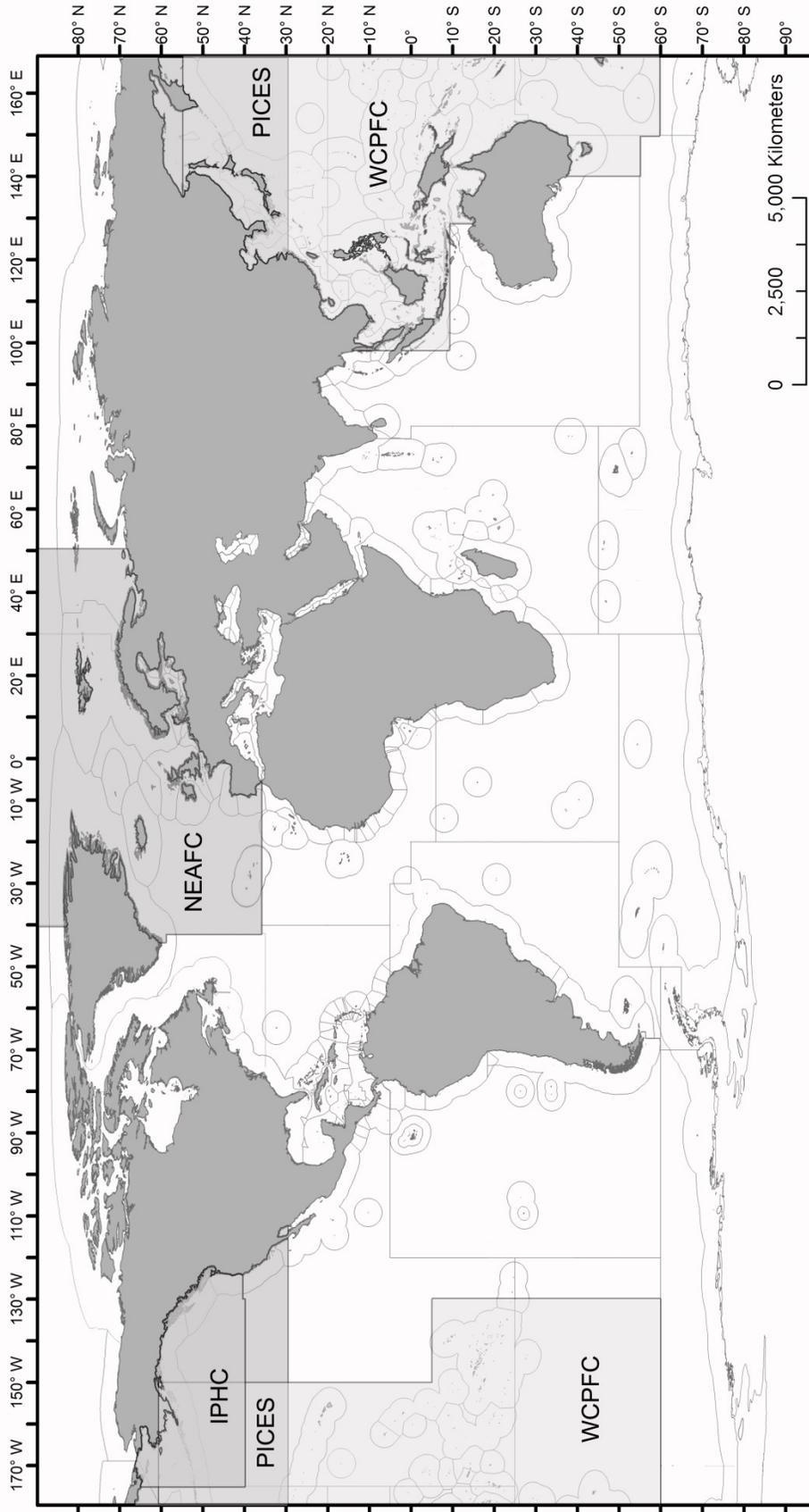
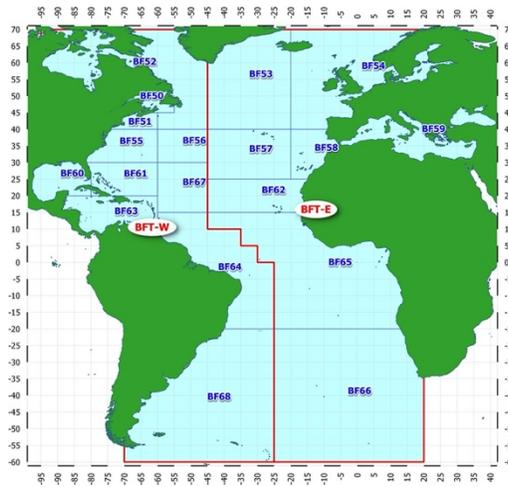


Figure 4. Approximate spatial extent of select Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Scientific Councils including the boundaries of country-specific exclusive economic zones (EEZs). IPHC: International Pacific Halibut Commission; PICES: North Pacific Marine Science Organization; WCPFC: Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission; NEAFC: Northeast Atlantic Fishery Commission. Modified from: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/area/search/en>

Temperate tunas

Atlantic bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) – *BFT*

Stocks: 2
 BFT-W: Western stock
 BFT-E: Eastern stock
 Statistical areas: n/a
 Sampling areas: 19



Albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) – *ALB*

Stocks: 3
 ALB-N: Northern stock
 ALB-S: Southern stock
 ALB-M: Mediterranean stock
 Statistical areas: n/a
 Sampling areas: 5

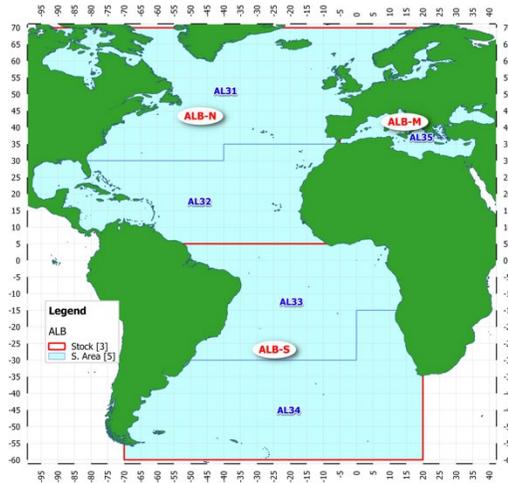
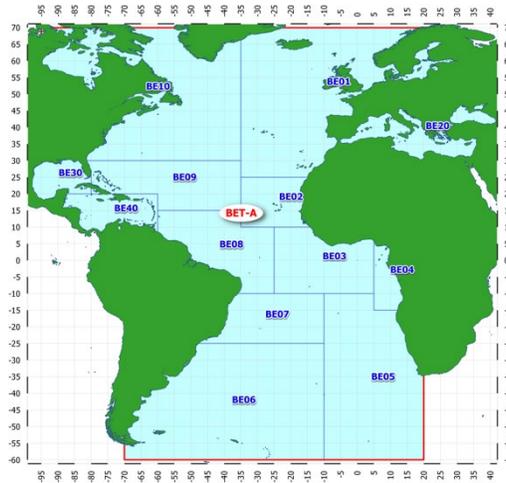


Figure 5. International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) geographical delimitations including stock boundaries (red lines and lettering), sampling areas (blue lines and lettering), and statistical areas (green lines, if applicable) for temperate tunas. Source: https://www.iccat.int/Data/ICCAT_maps.pdf

Tropical tunas

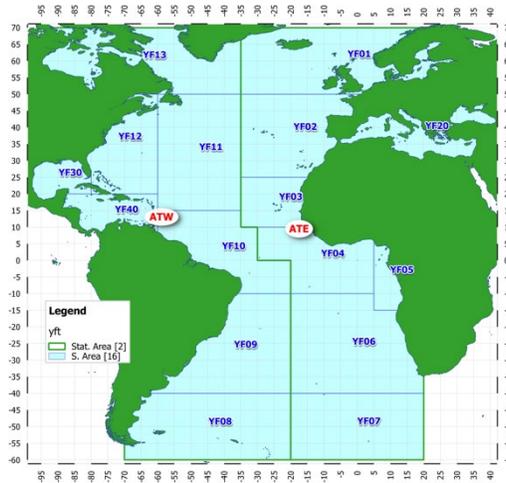
Bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) -
BET

Stocks: 1
Statistical areas: n/a
Sampling areas: 13



Yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) – YFT

Stocks: 1
Statistical areas: 2
Sampling areas: 16



Skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) – SKJ

Stocks: 2
SKJ-W: Western stock
SKJ-E: Eastern stock
Statistical areas: n/a
Sampling areas: 12

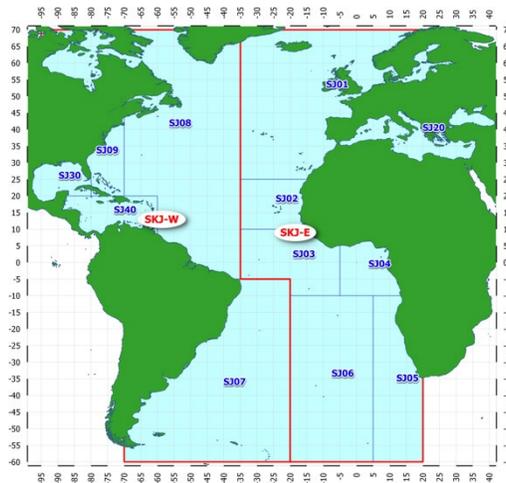


Figure 6. International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) geographical delimitations including stock boundaries (red lines and lettering), sampling areas (blue lines and lettering), and statistical areas (green lines, if applicable) for tropical tunas. Source: https://www.iccat.int/Data/ICCAT_maps.pdf

Selected billfishes

Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) -SWO

Stocks: 3

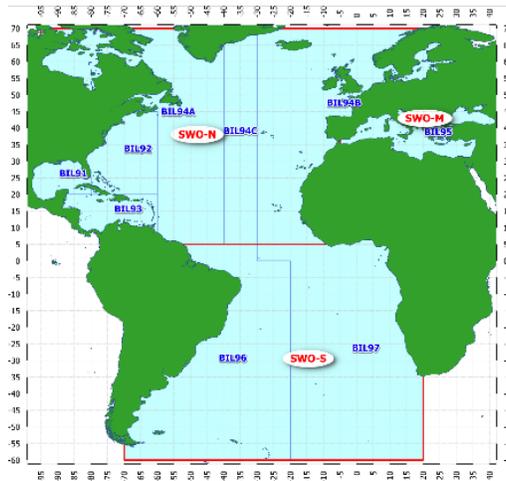
SWO-N: Northern stock

SWO-S: Southern stock

SWO-M: Mediterranean stock

Statistical areas: n/a

Sampling areas: 9

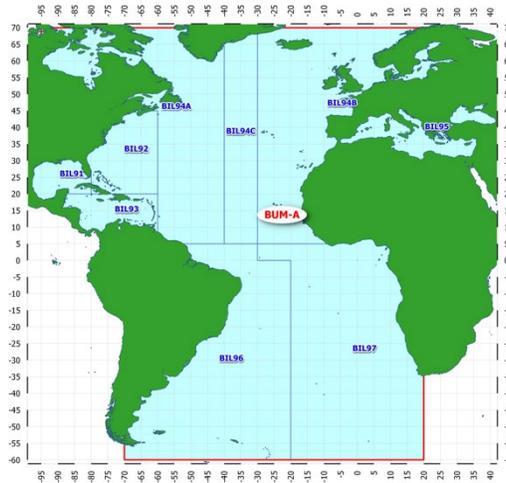


Atlantic blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*) – BUM

Stocks: 1

Statistical areas: n/a

Sampling areas: 9



Atlantic white marlin (*Tetrapturus albidus*) - WHM

Stocks: 1

Statistical areas: n/a

Sampling areas: 9

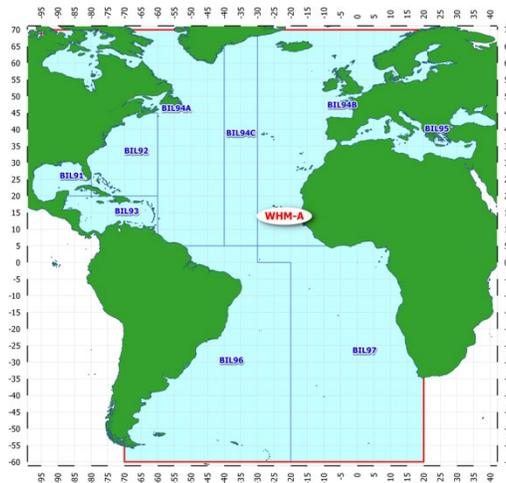
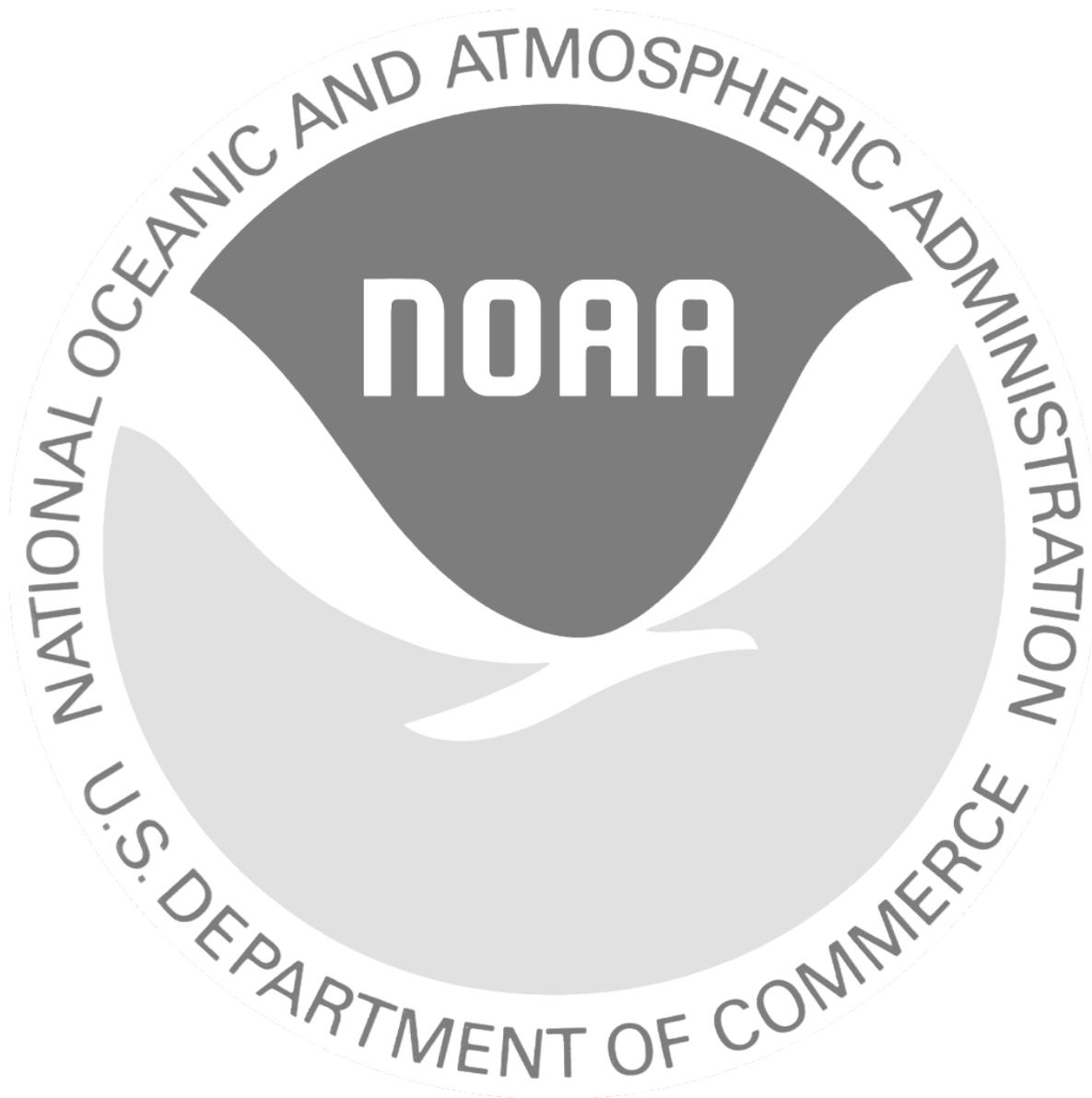


Figure 7. International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) geographical delimitations including stock boundaries (red lines and lettering), sampling areas (blue lines and lettering), and statistical areas (green lines, if applicable) for selected billfish. Source: https://www.iccat.int/Data/ICCAT_maps.pdf



Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection

**National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, USA**

**Telephone: (301) 427-8350
Fax: (301) 713-2313**