

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



**OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
AND SEAFOOD INSPECTION**

2018

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



Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection

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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.

Implementing Legislation

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

Members

There are currently 52 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, 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 (as of July 2018)
Telephone (from U.S.): (011) 34-91-416-5600
Fax: (011) 34-91-415-2612
Web address: <http://www.iccat.int>
General email requests: info@iccat.int

Budget

The Commission's Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD) approves a biennial budget during each regular meeting of the Commission. At its 2017 Annual Meeting, the Commission adopted a budget of 3.8 million Euros for 2018 and 4.0 million Euros for 2019. The U.S. contribution is 206,388 Euros for 2018 and 216,615 Euros for 2019. The United States and other ICCAT members have also periodically provided extra-budgetary funds to ICCAT to support various initiatives, including ICCAT's data fund for the improvement of ICCAT statistics, a fund to help developing States implement their port inspection responsibilities under [Rec. 14-08](#), and certain ICCAT research programs, such as the Atlantic-wide Bluefin Tuna Research Program and the Atlantic Ocean Tropical Tuna Tagging Program or AOTTP. In addition, a meeting participation fund makes financial support available to ensure the attendance of developing State members to various scientific and non-scientific ICCAT meetings. Money to support this fund has been provided from voluntary contributions, including from the United States, and from ICCAT's Working Capital Fund.

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. The Government Commissioner is not limited in the number of terms that he or she can serve. 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 similar knowledge and experience regarding recreational fishing. Non-Government Commissioners are not eligible to serve more than two consecutive 3-year terms.

B. U.S. Commissioners:

Government

Mr. John Henderschedt
Director, Office of International
Affairs and Seafood Inspection
NOAA Fisheries
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. The Committee consists of (1) “not less than five nor more than twenty individuals appointed by the United States Commissioners who shall select such individuals from the various groups concerned with the fisheries covered by the Convention” and (2) the Chairs (or their designees) of the New England, Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils (FMCs). Public Committee members serve 2-year terms and are eligible for reappointment. The Committee generally consists of the maximum 20 public members and the five FMC representatives.

Upon approval of the Committee by the Department of State, the directors (or their designees) of the fisheries agencies of each of the states, the residents of which maintain a highly migratory species fishery in the regulatory area of the Convention, may be invited to serve as *ex officio* members of the Committee. The Advisory Committee is invited to attend all non-executive meetings of the U.S. Commissioners and, at such meetings, shall have the opportunity to examine and to be heard on all proposed programs of investigation, reports, recommendations, and regulations of the Commission.

ATCA also provides that the Commissioners may establish species working groups for the purpose of providing advice and recommendations to the Commissioners and to the Advisory Committee on matters relating to the conservation and management of any highly migratory species covered by the Convention. Any species working group shall consist of no more than seven members of the Advisory Committee and no more than four scientific or technical personnel. The Commissioners have 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 23062. The Committee’s Executive Secretary is Terra Lederhouse, Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The Committee meets at least twice a year, usually in Silver Spring, Maryland. The Committee’s Statement of Operating Practices and Procedures is available from its Executive Secretary.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

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.

B. Organizational Structure:

ICCAT is comprised of (1) a commission, (2) a council, (3) an executive secretary, and (4) subject area panels, committees, and working groups. The Commission consists of not more than three delegates from each Contracting Party. The Council, if established, is an elected body within the Commission consisting of a chair, vice-chair, and representatives of not less than four and, because the current membership of ICCAT exceeds forty, not more than ten Contracting Parties. The Council performs such functions as are assigned to it by the Convention or Commission and has a particular responsibility for reviewing the second half of the biennial budget. On the basis of developments, the Council may authorize reapportionment of certain amounts for the second year of the budget within the total budget approved by the Commission. Although the Council is supposed to meet at least once between regular meetings (which occur every other year), since 1978, Special Meetings of the Commission have been held in lieu of meetings of the Council.

The Executive Secretary is responsible for coordinating the programs of investigation, preparing budget estimates, disbursing funds and accounting for expenditures; preparing the collection and analysis of data to accomplish the purposes of the Convention; and preparing scientific, administrative, and other reports for approval by the Commission.

Panels are established by the Commission and are responsible for keeping under review the species under their purview and collecting and considering relevant scientific and other information. Panels may propose to the Commission conservation and management recommendations for joint action by Contracting Parties and may recommend to the Commission studies and investigations needed to obtain information regarding the species they cover as well as coordination of programs of investigation by the Contracting Parties. Currently, 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). Lastly, Panel 4 covers other species, including swordfish, billfishes, sharks, seabirds, and sea turtles.

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.

C. Programs:

The Commission concerns itself with (1) joint planning of research, coordination of research carried on by agencies of the Parties in accordance with its plans, and joint evaluation of the results of such research; (2) the collection and analysis of statistical information relating to the condition of fishery resources in the Convention area; and (3) joint formulation of regulatory recommendations for submission to the Parties.

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 appropriate implementation and enforcement.

Additional information: The proceedings of ICCAT's annual meetings and a complete accounting of all ICCAT conservation and management measures, including those related to compliance issues, can be found on the ICCAT website (www.iccat.int). Specifically, recommendations (binding) and resolutions (non-binding) are available at: <http://www.iccat.int/en/RecsRegs.asp>.

Panel 1 - Bigeye, Yellowfin and Skipjack Tunas

Bigeye, yellowfin, and skipjack are tropical tunas most often found as mixed stocks in their juvenile phase in the Eastern Atlantic. 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. SCRS initiated a large-scale tagging program for tropical tunas (AOTTP) to improve knowledge about the biology, distribution and movement of tropical tuna species.

The 2015 assessment of bigeye tuna found that the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. Yellowfin tuna was last assessed in 2016; stock biomass was estimated to be about 5% below B_{msy} (overfished) and fishing mortality rates were about 23% below F_{msy} (no overfishing occurring). Skipjack tuna was assessed in 2014, and SCRS recommended that catch and effort levels in the eastern Atlantic not exceed the levels of recent years, while catches in the western Atlantic should not exceed MSY.

Management measures have been in place for bigeye tuna since 2004, including a total allowable catch (TAC) and capacity limits. A time/area closure off West Africa, first adopted in 1999, has been modified several times. At the 2011 annual meeting, the recommendation also established management measures for yellowfin tuna, including an annual TAC of 110,000mt, 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](#)).

In 2015, in light of new scientific advice, ICCAT reduced the bigeye TAC to 65,000mt and implemented a quota reduction. [Rec. 15-01](#) did not establish catch limits for minor harvesters without a specific quota, including the United States. However, Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) that are not developing coastal States "shall endeavor" to maintain their annual catch at less than 1,575mt (reduced from 2,100mt under the previous measure). [Rec. 15-01](#) also specified that if the catch of bigeye tuna of any developing coastal CPC without a specified catch limit exceeds 3,500mt, a catch limit will be established in the following years for that CPC.

The time/area closure for FADs, in effect for January and February, covers an expanded geographic area that is in line with the area specified in the 2004 bigeye measure. CPCs must have 100% observer coverage on purse seine vessels during the FAD closure. [Rec. 15-01](#) calls for mutual recognition of scientific observers within a specified area of the eastern Atlantic, such that a vessel fishing for tropical tunas in various coastal State EEZs need not change scientific observers when moving from one EEZ to another. A limit of 500 active FADs per vessel was also adopted, as was a provision encouraging CPCs to increase observer coverage beyond the 5% required by [Rec. 16-14](#) for large-scale purse seine and longline vessels.

In 2014, ICCAT established the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on FADs to review information on the impact of FAD use and provide management recommendations to the Commission. In 2016 the Working Group produced two documents: one on its findings regarding the use and impacts of FADs and a second containing recommendations on data reporting and analysis.

In 2016, given the results of the yellowfin assessment and new SCRS advice with respect to FAD data collection, ICCAT reviewed and amended the tropical tuna management measure. [Recommendation 16-01](#) encouraged full retention of tropical tunas; expanded and harmonized data reporting requirements on FADs and support vessels; and

advanced the HCR process through the establishment of indicative performance indicators. In addition, new entrant El Salvador received a capacity limit of four purse seine vessels. A provision was included in the measure requesting SCRS to assess the impacts of juvenile catch on MSY and corresponding B_{msy} . Rec 16-01 also required all CPCs to submit fishery development/management plans in 2017 to inform amendments to the tropical tuna measure in 2018 after the bigeye tuna stock assessment to be held earlier in the year.

In 2016, ICCAT amended the terms of reference for its FAD working group to clarify the role of that body in examining the impact of juvenile catch and to call for participation in a joint tuna RFMO FADs Working Group. The Joint Working Group met in April 2017 and developed a “toolbox” of considerations for RFMOs regarding data collection, analysis of FAD impacts on fisheries and associated ecosystems, and FAD management. The Joint Working Group also called for the establishment of a small technical working group to harmonize FAD research plans and conduct analysis of a more technical nature with respect to FADs. At its 2017 meeting, the ICCAT FAD Working Group reviewed and prioritized from an ICCAT perspective the outcomes of the Joint Working Group. The group supported the idea of a small technical working group and emphasized the need to establish clear management objectives with respect to both FADs and the tropical tuna fishery overall. It also emphasized the need for advice from the SCRS on the effect of catch composition on spawning stock biomass and corresponding MSY. The working group suggested that ICCAT adopt safe handling techniques for bycatch species such as elasmobranchs, turtles, and cetaceans, and stressed that biodegradable FADs and FAD beaching rates should be further studied. The working group also re-emphasized the importance of access to data by scientists and for increased observer coverage. To advance ICCAT’s FAD related work, the SCRS committed to preparing a FAD research work plan to coordinate the SCRS response to the recommendations made by the ICCAT FADs Working Group. This work plan will be reviewed by relevant SCRS subcommittees and at the SCRS plenary meeting in 2018.

At the 2017 ICCAT annual meeting, Panel 1 discussed the 2016 TAC overharvests for both bigeye and yellowfin tunas, the high juvenile mortality for these two species linked to purse seine fishing on FADs, and reducing discards. ICCAT adopted a proposal from Senegal and Cote d’Ivoire to prohibit discards in the tropical tuna purse seine fishery by 2020 by requiring full retention except in limited circumstances ([Rec 17-01](#)). The EU and South Africa introduced competing proposals to address the 2016 bigeye and yellowfin tuna TAC overharvests. Despite extensive discussion and debate, neither proposal achieved consensus. Panel 1 agreed that a provision in Rec. 16-01 requires CPCs to “repay” the amount of the bigeye tuna TAC that was overharvested. However, the amount of the TAC to be repaid will not cover the total amount of the overharvest.

A Panel 1 intersessional meeting scheduled after the bigeye tuna stock assessment in July 2018 is expected to help set the stage for the adoption of new, more effective conservation and management measures for tropical tunas, including on small fish, at the 2018 annual meeting. ICCAT also agreed to support the small technical working group on FADs, as recommended by the Joint Tuna RFMO FAD Working Group and the ICCAT FAD Working Group.

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 initial annual TAC established under the program was 2,500mt, inclusive of dead discards. The rebuilding program provided flexibility to alter the TAC, the MSY target, and/or the rebuilding period based upon subsequent scientific advice. The TAC was initially shared by the United States, Japan, and Canada; later allocations were specified for the following three minor harvesters: the United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda), France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), and Mexico. Other adjustments to the rebuilding program over the years included a decrease in the TAC for 2011-14, a change in specified tolerance for recreational catches of bluefin tuna weighing less than 30 kg (the current minimum size in the western Atlantic), a decrease in the amount of underharvest that parties can carry forward to the following year (from 100% to 50% to 10%), and the addition of new reporting obligations (in particular a requirement to provide provisional monthly catch reports to the Secretariat). In 2014, results of the stock assessment for western Atlantic bluefin tuna showed an improvement in the status of the stock, with overfishing no longer occurring. [Rec. 14-05](#) increased the annual TAC from 1,750 to 2,000mt for 2015 and 2016, a level within the range of scientific advice that allowed for continued growth of the spawning stock biomass under either a high recruitment scenario or low recruitment scenario.

The SCRS conducted a new stock assessment in 2017. For the first time, SCRS conducted analyses and provided advice based on fishing mortality reference points rather than biomass based reference points given significant uncertainties in some population characteristics, such as the stock-recruit relationship, that resulted in previous assessments generating highly divergent stock status estimates. 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 western Atlantic bluefin tuna rebuilding program while increasing the annual TAC to 2,350mt for each of 2018, 2019, and 2020. This TAC provides a buffer from the top end of the range in the scientific advice to ensure an additional layer of precaution given the uncertainties that are not fully accounted for in the assessment; it ensures a high probability of avoiding overfishing while also aiming to achieve short- and longer-term stability in the fishery. The SCRS and the Commission will work toward the anticipated adoption of a management procedure for western Atlantic bluefin tuna by 2020.

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. This situation began to improve in the late 2000s.

In 2008, ICCAT adopted a stronger management measure that included a reduction in TAC, an individual vessel quota system, freezing and reductions of fleet capacity, and freezing of farming capacity. New monitoring and control measures were also adopted, including a regional observer program for large-scale purse seine vessels, a ban on at-sea transshipment, a revised boarding and inspection regime, and enhanced control and reporting measures for caging transfer activities. In 2009, ICCAT further reduced the TAC, extended the length of the purse seine time and area closure in the Mediterranean, required further reductions in fishing capacity, and limited the level of joint fishing operations. The eastern bluefin tuna measure adopted in 2010 confirmed the goal of achieving B_{MSY} with at least 60% probability by 2022, reduced the TAC again, and established a new allocation arrangement.

ICCAT has continued to strengthen various monitoring and control measures in the eastern bluefin tuna fishery, compliance has improved substantially, and total catches have remained at or below the TAC in recent years. In 2014, a stock assessment update showed an increase in the spawning stock biomass, but both the speed and magnitude of the upward trend remain highly uncertain. The SCRS advised the Commission to consider a “modest and gradual increase,” perhaps over 2 or 3 years, to the “most precautionary MSY estimate.” ICCAT adopted [Rec. 14-04](#), setting the TAC at 16,142mt for 2015, 19,296mt for 2016 and 23,155mt for 2017.

The 2017 stock assessment found that overfishing is not occurring. The current status of the stock relative to $B_{0.1}$ depends on assumptions made about long-term future recruitment. At the 2017 annual meeting, the EU proposed extensive changes to Rec. 14-04 to transition from a recovery plan to a management plan. This proposal would have relaxed rules related to small-scale fisheries, including minimum size and bycatch restrictions. It did not initially specify a TAC level, nor did it propose changes to the allocation scheme. Norway proposed a stepwise TAC increase to 28,000mt for 2018, 32,000mt for 2019, and 36,000mt for 2020. The proposal also included special provisions to allow the retention and sale of bluefin tuna taken beyond quota limits for those CPCs with full retention requirements and that also denied fishermen any profit from the harvest. For many CPCs the issue of allocations was paramount. Efforts to develop a consensus text were not successful. Instead, a proposal from the Panel 2 Chair was adopted that rolled over most of the provisions of Rec. 14-04 while increasing the TACs to 28,200mt for 2018; 32,240mt for 2019 and 36,000mt for 2020 and providing an allocation adjustment for Algeria. The measure was adopted with the understanding that Panel 2 would hold an intersessional meeting in March 2018 to reconsider allocations for 2019 and 2020 using quota from the unallocated reserve. During the intersessional meeting, Panel 2 would also review and, as appropriate, endorse CPC fishing, inspection, and capacity plans (i.e., fishery plans) for the 2018 eastern bluefin tuna fishery. The meeting took place and a proposal was agreed that distributed most of the unallocated reserve for both 2019 and 2020. It will be forwarded to the 2018 ICCAT annual meeting for consideration and possible adoption. Panel 2 also endorsed all 2018 fishery plans during its intersessional meeting except for Norway, who has lodged a formal objection to recommendation 17-07 so

endorsement was not appropriate, and Syria, who could not attend the meeting. Questions on Syria's plan were addressed by correspondence and its plan endorsed.

North Atlantic (Northern) Albacore: At its 1998 meeting, ICCAT adopted a measure to limit fishing capacity in the northern albacore fishery. A TAC and other management measures were first adopted for the stock in 2000. Based on the 2009 stock assessment that indicated the stock was overfished with overfishing occurring, the Commission adopted a rebuilding program that included a 28,000mt TAC aimed at recovering the stock by 2020. In 2013, the Commission agreed to maintain the annual 28,000mt TAC for 2014 through 2016. In 2015, ICCAT adopted [Rec. 15-04](#), which defined the management objectives for northern albacore, both during the rebuilding period and once rebuilt. It also 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 (HCRs). The intent was that the Commission would eventually select one of these candidate HCRs, as well as pre-agreed management actions to be taken under various stock conditions (e.g., when the biomass levels are assessed to be below threshold or limit levels). The northern albacore stock was assessed in 2016 and found to be rebuilt with no overfishing occurring.

At the 2017 annual meeting, the EU tabled a proposal to establish an interim HCR for 2018-2020, with the goal of adopting a long-term HCR following further MSE testing over the next few years. This proposal was based on outcomes of an intersessional meeting of Panel 2 in July 2016, an intersessional SWGSM meeting in June 2017 and intersessional work by the SCRS to test a set of candidate HCRs. The adopted measure establishes 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), and includes the specific HCR formula and figures, as well as the formula for setting the appropriate fishing mortality rate and, in turn, the TAC. The 3-year constant annual TAC resulting from application of the interim HCR is 33,600mt for 2018-2020; this is a 20% increase from the 2017 TAC of 28,000mt and is consistent with the Commission's chosen stability clause that limits any increase to no more than 20%. Application of the existing northern albacore allocations results in a U.S. quota of 632.4, which is a 20% increase over the current 527-mt quota. The SCRS will develop criteria for the identification of exceptional circumstances that would signal a need to deviate from implementation of an adopted HCR and initiate a peer review of the MSE in 2018.

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 to the number of vessels authorized for Mediterranean swordfish (under Rec. 16-05), with a tolerance limit of 10% to this capacity limit, and establishes a closed fishing season for this species to align with the Mediterranean swordfish closure (i.e., Oct. 1-Nov. 30).

Panel 3 - South Atlantic Bluefin Tuna and Albacore

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 between the Convention areas of both ICCAT and CCSBT, ICCAT collaborates, as appropriate, in the scientific work of CCSBT regarding this species and monitors its management.

South Atlantic (Southern) Albacore: ICCAT adopted management measures for southern albacore for the first time in 1994. Southern albacore was managed under a multi-year management measure from 2005-11 that included a TAC but no country specific quota allocations for the major (i.e., active) fishing parties (e.g., Chinese Taipei, South Africa, Namibia, Brazil and Uruguay). Instead, near-real time reporting requirements were instituted for the active fishing parties so the fishery could be closed if the TAC was reached. The TAC for 2012 was reduced to 24,000mt, in line with scientific advice and a sharing arrangement was established for the major harvesters. ICCAT maintained the TAC for 2014-16—in part to accommodate growth in the fishery by some participants, such as Japan—despite scientific advice that called for a quota reduction. [Rec. 13-06](#) ended the previous sharing arrangement, which had provided aspirational individual catch limits to those developing coastal states actively fishing for southern albacore (that in total exceeded previous TAC levels at least on paper), and instead established hard quotas.

A 2016 stock assessment found that the stock is likely not overfished, nor undergoing overfishing, and recommended maintaining the current TAC of 24,000mt. ICCAT adopted a proposal by Japan to maintain the

annual TAC at 24,000mt through 2020 and roll over existing quota limits with one exception. The quota for the Philippines was re-allocated to China and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (adding to their quotas 100mt and 40mt respectively) as the Philippines has moved out of the fishery. No new proposals were considered in 2017.

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. An international rebuilding program adopted by ICCAT in 1999 was designed to rebuild North Atlantic swordfish to the biomass that would produce MSY within 10 years, with a greater than 50 percent probability. Among other things, the North Atlantic swordfish rebuilding program included a TAC and country specific quota allocations. A U.S. closed area in the Florida Straits, implemented to complement ICCAT conservation and management measures, offered additional protection to juvenile swordfish. Only seven years into the 10-year rebuilding program, the stock was almost completely rebuilt.

ICCAT adopted adjustments to its rebuilding program in the late 2000s, including a small increase in the TAC and greater access to the resource for some ICCAT members—largely due to U.S. flexibility. A stock assessment in 2009 concluded that the stock was fully rebuilt but scientific advice called for a modest reduction in the TAC. In 2010, ICCAT provided several developing states with an allocation from the TAC (rather than fishery access based on allocations from available underharvest) and established a requirement that all parties submit annual fishery management/development plans. These plans include information on the history of their fishery, monitoring and control measures, and how they take into account ecosystem considerations. The annual 13,700mt TAC was extended several times until new assessment results became available. While the sum of individual quota allocations exceeds the TAC, actual catches have generally been below this level. In addition, a provision was included requiring any overharvest of the TAC to be repaid in the following year.

The 2017 stock assessment for North Atlantic swordfish indicated that the stock remains rebuilt but has lower productivity than previously estimated. The EU introduced a proposal calling for a TAC reduction from 13,700mt to 13,200mt based on the scientific advice. The adopted measure, Rec 17-02, maintains existing allocations and quota carryforward provisions. Further, it extends through 2021 to avoid the need to renegotiate management measures for swordfish and bluefin tuna in the same year (2020). In addition, submission of fishery management/development plans are now only required when a CPC has updates to report on the management or development of its fishery.

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. A recommendation adopted in 2006 set the TAC at the scientifically recommended level, but the sum of individual allocations was higher than the annual TAC. Similar to the provision for the northern stock, a provision was included requiring payback of any TAC overharvest to ensure the overall catch for the period (2007-09) would not be exceeded. As some parties were not catching their full quotas, this provision was never utilized. The South Atlantic swordfish TAC was reduced for 2010-13 and subsequently extended for 2014-2016; the measure was further amended as [Rec. 15-03](#) to clarify the minimum size. At the 2017 ICCAT annual meeting, Recommendation 17-03 was adopted to apply for the 2018-21. period. It rolls over the majority of the provisions from Rec. 16-04 but reduces the TAC from 15,000mt to 14,000mt in line with scientific advice.

Mediterranean Swordfish: Following a stock assessment in 2003, ICCAT adopted [Rec. 03-04](#). It required CPCs to take the necessary measures 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, and in 2009, ICCAT adopted additional reporting and monitoring requirements, including a fishing vessel register for the Mediterranean swordfish fleet. [Rec. 13-04](#), currently in force, includes one additional month to the time/area closure, a minimum size, and gear limitations, although the measure still falls short of the scientific advice. The 2014 stock assessment found that the stock was below the level that can support MSY and that fishing mortality exceeded F_{msy} although no new management measures were proposed.

A stock assessment in 2016 found that the stock was overfished and subject to overfishing, and the SCRS advised that substantial reductions in harvest would be necessary for rebuilding. The EU introduced a proposal to lower fishing mortality and juvenile landings and improve monitoring and control through a suite of measures, including by setting catch limits, extending the time/area closure, further limiting the minimum size, limiting the use of hooks

at a certain depth, designating a port log scheme, requiring observers, and monitoring recreational fisheries. Some Mediterranean CPCs advocated for more gradual changes and/or less stringent measures. At its 2016 annual meeting, ICCAT adopted Rec. 16-05, which established a multi-annual recovery plan, with allocations to be agreed at a Panel 4 intersessional in 2017. The intersessional meeting was successful in developing an allocation arrangement for the stock, which was adopted by mail vote prior to the 2017 ICCAT annual meeting.

Billfishes:

Blue and White Marlins: In 1997, ICCAT adopted its first mandatory conservation measures for Atlantic blue and white marlins. A two-phased plan to rebuild depleted populations of both species was adopted in 2000 and has been amended several times over the years. In 2011, additional reductions in allowable catch were adopted for both blue marlin and white marlin taken by longline and purse seine vessels. Spearfish were explicitly included as part of the white marlin species complex per SCRS advice, and the SCRS was tasked with evaluating possible time/area closures. The SCRS and the Secretariat were 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 in these fisheries. In 2012, ICCAT established an overall landings limit for each stock with country-specific quotas, which were designed to result in mortality reductions consistent with scientific advice. [Rec. 12-04](#) also set Atlantic-wide recreational minimum sizes for blue and white marlins, and banned the sale of recreationally caught marlin. At the 2015 annual meeting, ICCAT extended the annual TAC for each stock through 2018 and maintained the other conservation and management measures in [Rec. 12-04](#). The measure also included some new language designed to improve data collection and reporting in advance of the next assessments, including with respect to artisanal fisheries in the Caribbean and Latin America ([Rec. 15-05](#)). Blue marlin will be re-assessed by SCRS in 2018 and white marlin in 2019.

Sailfish: In 2009, SCRS conducted a sailfish assessment and expressed concern over incomplete reporting of catches. SCRS recommended that catches of the eastern stock be reduced and that catches of the western Atlantic stock not be increased. ICCAT considered conservation and management measures for sailfish in 2009, 2010, and 2012, but no consensus could be reached. 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, ICCAT adopted a measure at its 2016 meeting that 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 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. 1,271mt for the eastern stock and 1,030mt for the western stock) in any year, the Commission will review the measure (Rec. 16-11).

Sharks:

Shark Finning: At the 2004 ICCAT meeting, U.S. leadership resulted in adoption of a binding management 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, a major component of the measure was to require 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 were required to ensure that their vessels retain onboard 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 at ICCAT 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. Introduced at the 2017 annual meeting by Belize, El Salvador, the EU, Gabon, Honduras, Norway, Panama, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, South Africa, UK-OT and the United States, the number of co-sponsors and supporters has grown to well over half of ICCAT's membership in recent years although consensus has not yet been possible.

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](#)). To facilitate species identification, the SCRS completed a shark identification guide in 2011.

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. The EU and United States introduced a measure that would have capped landings of blue shark, consistent with scientific advice, but it was not adopted.

Porbeagle Shark: At the 2015 ICCAT annual meeting, the EU, Canada and the United States collaborated on a joint proposal for porbeagle shark. The agreed measure requires CPCs to release any incidental catches of porbeagle sharks that are alive when brought alongside the vessel ([Rec. 15-06](#)). Additional conservation measures will be considered if catches of porbeagle sharks increase beyond 2014 levels.

Shortfin Mako Shark: In 2014, the United States and others proposed to limit overall catches of shortfin mako sharks in the North and South Atlantic based on scientific advice. Consensus on the establishment of an annual catch limit could not be reached. A recommendation was agreed that required CPCs to provide additional information to ICCAT about how they monitor and manage shortfin mako sharks ([Rec. 14-06](#)). In 2017 a new stock assessment was conducted that indicated North Atlantic shortfin mako shark was overfished and subject to overfishing. The SCRS advised that to stop overfishing and start rebuilding, catches should be reduced to 500mt or less. In response to the scientific advice, the United States proposed a two-phase program to end overfishing and rebuild the stock. Phase 1 proposed a prohibition on retention of all shortfin mako sharks and a requirement that live sharks be promptly released to maximize survival, with limited exceptions, along with a TAC of 500mt in 2018 and 2019. Phase 2 requested the SCRS to provide additional information on rebuilding timeframes and probabilities to support establishment of a rebuilding program at the 2019 ICCAT annual meeting. Japan, Morocco, and the EU also introduced proposals. ICCAT adopted a compromise measure ([Rec. 17-08](#)) that (1) prohibits retention of live North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks and requires vessels to release them in a manner that causes the least harm; (2) allows 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) creates reporting and biological sampling requirements to improve the availability of scientific information. No TAC was established for North Atlantic shortfin mako although the measure is intended to stop overfishing and begin recovery. SCRS will evaluate the effectiveness of the measure in 2019, along with new scientific information, at which time the Commission will establish a formal rebuilding program for North Atlantic shortfin mako. The Commission will also conduct an initial evaluation of the measure in 2018 based on preliminary catch data provided for the first six months of 2018. Although several parties expressed disappointment that the measure did not establish a hard TAC, it was adopted by consensus. The EU also proposed a TAC for South Atlantic shortfin mako, but it was not adopted.

Implementation/Compliance Review: A recommendation adopted in 2012 requires reporting on implementation of and compliance with existing shark conservation and management measures to assist the Compliance Committee in its review. To facilitate this review, a shark checklist was adopted in 2016 ([Rec. 16-13](#)) in which relevant implementation information would be provided, including on each CPCs legislative and regulatory regimes for sharks. These compliance reports were due to the ICCAT prior to its 2017 annual meeting for review at that meeting. As the response rate was poor, ICCAT decided to continue to accept checklists prior to its November 2018 meeting and to review implementation of shark measures in depth at that meeting.

Bycatch and Discards

Sea Turtles: In 2010, ICCAT adopted a recommendation that requires 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 2014, productivity information for sea turtles was provided by several CPCs and detailed nesting data was provided by the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles. After reviewing the available information, the SCRS Subcommittee on Ecosystems decided that there was insufficient information to proceed with an ecological risk assessment. Instead, the SCRS decided to estimate the

total extrapolated turtle bycatch on pelagic longlines as a first step in the evaluation of the impact of ICCAT fisheries.

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 on the use of mitigation measures to reduce sea turtle bycatch in shallow-set longline fisheries. It called for (a) use of large circle hooks, which are fishing hooks originally designed and manufactured so that the point is turned perpendicularly back to the shank to form a generally circular, or oval, shape, and which, if offset, have an offset that does not exceed 10 degrees; or (b) use of whole finfish bait; or (c) other measures considered effective by the SCRS and approved by the Commission. The proposal emphasized existing bycatch and observer program reporting requirements. Brazil, Guatemala and Honduras joined as co-sponsors. Several CPCs expressed concerns about the impacts of the use of circle hooks on other species, including sharks. Despite additional supporting information, there was no consensus and the measure was not adopted.

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. Starting in 2017, collaborative work by several ICCAT CPCs has been underway to analyze seabird bycatch based on detailed operational level observer data. Additionally, the Common Oceans tuna project has an ongoing global seabird assessment that is expected to produce additional information.

Other: In 2011, ICCAT adopted a measure intended to harmonize requirements for parties to collect data on bycatch and discards and report this information to ICCAT, including a provision to allow developing coastal States with artisanal fisheries to develop alternative methods for such data collection ([Rec. 11-10](#)).

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 were 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, which required the use of an ICCAT-accepted reporting system to monitor trade in fresh and frozen bluefin tuna. In 2007, ICCAT moved to a catch documentation scheme for bluefin tuna, 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. The United States fully implements the Bluefin Catch Document (BCD) program but, along with other countries that have programs whereby each individual fish is tagged and equivalent data are collected, is exempt from some of its provisions—in particular, government validation requirements for tagged product. Revisions to the BCD program have been agreed numerous times over the years to clarify ambiguities, improve its functionality, and ease implementation for certain ICCAT members. Particular efforts have been made to assist parties in identifying the source and destination of bluefin tuna, especially those that farm or import live tuna, including prohibiting the co-mingling of catches made by vessels of different flags and to allow caged product to be covered by a grouped BCD in certain instances.

In 2011, ICCAT parties agreed on steps to implement an electronic BCD (eBCD), which is designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the program and further assist in the fight against IUU fishing. The complexity of information technology issues resulted in delays in the initial system development and implementation schedule. At the 2015 annual meeting, ICCAT adopted a new recommendation ([Rec. 15-10](#)) to clarify and amend aspects of the BCD program, including its implementation through the eBCD system, as well as provisions of the EBFT recommendation ([Rec. 14-04](#)). Consistent with [Rec. 15-10](#), CPCs began mandatory use the eBCD system starting in

May 2016, with limited exceptions. The system is currently in full use by all CPCs catching and/or trading Atlantic bluefin tuna.

At the 2017 annual meeting, the EU introduced a proposal to extend indefinitely two derogations from eBCD validation requirements for trade of processed products between EU Member States and for tagged bluefin below the minimum size. The agreed measure ([Rec. 17-09](#)) extends these derogations through 2020, outlines circumstances in which paper BCDs may be used if technical difficulties occur outside of working hours and establishes processes for notifications, and specifies that the eBCD system should be used as far as possible to meet the reporting requirements in paragraph 34 of Rec. 11-20. There will be a more comprehensive discussion of how the eBCD system can fulfill and simplify reporting requirements at an intersessional meeting of ICCAT's Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM) in April 2018.

Swordfish and Bigeye Tuna Trade Tracking. ICCAT adopted statistical document programs for swordfish (fresh and frozen) and bigeye tuna (frozen only) in 2001. A primary purpose of the programs has been to improve the reliability of statistical information on catches of these species, particularly in regards to Non-Contracting Parties, since some of these nations do not provide catch data to ICCAT. ICCAT's statistical document programs track trade and provide information on the flag State and name of the harvesting vessel, the location of harvest, the point of export, a description of the fish in the shipment, etc. At the 2017 annual meeting, the PWG discussed the implementation of ICCAT's Statistical Document Programs. Several CPCs pointed out the need for refinements to the statistical document programs to improve reporting, address duplication with other requirements, and expand their scope. This matter was referred to the 2018 IMM intersessional meeting for further discussion.

Vessel Lists. ICCAT first adopted a recommendation to establish a record of authorized vessels in 2002, which was later amended to reduce the minimum size of vessels on the record from those over 24 meters to those 20 meters and above, to include new data reporting requirements and to clarify deadlines for the submission of information. [Rec. 13-13](#) established amendments to ICCAT's authorized list of large scale vessels to require eligible vessels to obtain an International Maritime Organization-Lloyd's Register (IMO/LR) numbers (as issued by IHS Markit) as a condition of listing and a prerequisite for being able to fish for ICCAT species, and [Rec. 14-10](#) harmonized certain vessel list reporting deadlines in ICCAT's authorized vessel lists.

Also in 2002, ICCAT adopted a recommendation to establish a list of vessels presumed to have engaged in IUU fishing activities. 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. Since its adoption, the IUU vessel list measure has been amended to include provisions for the intersessional removal of vessels in certain instances, expand the list to ICCAT member vessels and to other vessel types (such as tugs and transshipment vessels that support fishing vessels), provide for the incorporation into the ICCAT IUU list of vessels listed as IUU by other tuna RFMOs, and reduce the minimum length of vessels that can be listed to 12 meters. The process for cross-listing IUU vessels from other tuna RFMOs was clarified in [Res. 14-11](#). The current authorized vessel list and IUU vessels list can be found on the ICCAT website.

At the 2017 annual meeting, the United States raised the ongoing problems with implementation of the cross-listing and intersessional delisting processes of the IUU vessel list recommendation. The PWG clarified that decisions to delist vessels intersessionally require an affirmative response from a majority of CPCs and that a lack of response should not be interpreted as agreement. To address any remaining confusion associated with the IUU vessel listing measure ([Rec. 11-18](#)) PWG agreed that matters related to the criteria for listing a vessel and the processes for cross-listing and delisting vessels should be further discussed at the intersessional IMM meeting in 2018.

Vessel Sighting and Transshipment Controls: 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, in particular Res. 94-09 and [Rec. 97-11](#). This latter recommendation also requires ICCAT members and cooperating non-members to only transship with other ICCAT members or cooperating parties. Further, in 2012, ICCAT adopted [Rec. 12-06](#) prohibiting at-sea transshipment except for large scale pelagic longline vessels (LSPLV) (24 meters or greater LOA) and only to carrier vessels on ICCAT's authorized list of carrier vessels who are carrying an observer deployed from ICCAT's transshipment regional observer program (ROP). All other vessels must transship in port with the

exception of harpoon vessels transshipping fresh swordfish. In 2016, ICCAT revised the rules on transshipment in [Rec. 16-15](#), extending the vessel listing requirement to carrier vessels receiving product in port as well as at sea and also requiring carrier vessels receiving transshipments in port to install VMS.

Port Inspection and Control: [Rec. 98-11](#) requires the inspection of non-member vessels sighted at sea fishing in a manner that may be contrary to ICCAT measures pursuant to [Rec. 97-11](#) to inspect the vessel if it 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 in accordance with ICCAT rules or outside of the Convention area. In 2012, ICCAT adopted a measure establishing minimum standards for port inspection ([Rec. 12-07](#)) to modernize and replace the port inspection scheme adopted in 1997 and enhance the fight against IUU fishing. Paragraph 26 of Rec 12-07 calls for CPCs to help developing member of ICCAT to implement port inspection requirements by providing assistance to them, either independently or through the Secretariat. In 2014, a U.S. proposal was adopted ([Rec. 14-08](#)) that set up a Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Fund (MCSF) that developing ICCAT members could access to support capacity building assistance needs. In 2016, ICCAT adopted a further proposal to clarify and supplement the process for seeking capacity building assistance ([Rec. 16-18](#)). It establishes an inclusive group of experts to develop port inspection training materials for use by ICCAT parties to support their implementation of Recommendation 12-07. The expert group, which is chaired by the United States, convened in 2017 and developed an assessment tool to assist developing States in determining their port inspection capacity building needs. The group will meet again in September 2018. At its 2017 meeting, ICCAT considered a performance review panel recommendations calling on the Commission to revise Rec. 12-07 to make it more consistent with the Port State Measures agreement. This issue was referred to a 2018 intersessional meeting of the IMM working group for further consideration.

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, the 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. In 2014, ICCAT adopted its most recent updates to these minimum standards. [Rec. 14-09](#) continues to requires all commercial vessels 24 m LOA and larger that are operating in ICCAT fisheries to have VMS and it increased the polling rate from 6 hours to 4 hours. The 2014 recommendation was to be reviewed in 2017 based on SCRS advice. In its 2017 report, the SCRS acknowledged that the higher the frequency of reporting the more useful the VMS data are, but the SCRS has not yet completed a full analysis of the optimum frequency of VMS transmission for different ICCAT fisheries. Nevertheless, the SCRS noted that 4-hour frequency of transmission in Rec. 14-09 is insufficient to detect fishing activity for many gear types. The PWG did not have time to undertake the required review, and the matter was referred as a priority to the 2018 IMM intersessional meeting for consideration.

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 revision in 2008, 2010, and 2012, it is not fully consistent with the HSBI principles found in the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA). Consensus on a new, binding HSBI measure has not yet been possible. To try to provide more flexibility on the matter, the United States, the EU, Senegal, and Panama co-sponsored a proposal in 2016 that would either establish a binding Joint International Inspection Scheme that would apply on the high seas in all ICCAT fisheries (a recommendation) or a model scheme to be activated on a fishery-by-fishery or other basis (a resolution). This approach was not adopted. In an effort to advance some aspects of the HSBI issue, the United States, EU, Liberia, and Senegal introduced a draft resolution at the 2017 ICCAT meeting to establish a pilot program for the voluntary exchange of inspectors to cooperate in conducting at sea boarding and inspections. While there was broad support for the non-binding proposal, there were several requests for clarification, including regarding the scope of the measure. There was not enough time during the 2017 PWG meeting to address these matters and the issue was referred to the 2018 IMM intersessional meeting for further consideration.

Observer Programs:

Scientific: In 2010, ICCAT adopted a U.S. proposal establishing minimum standards for national observer programs (Rec. 10-10). It was designed to ensure that important scientific information is collected in ICCAT fisheries, including bycatch data. Parties must ensure at least 5% coverage on their purse seine, pelagic longline, and baitboat fleets using an effort measurement rather than by number of vessels. In 2016, the minimum standards were revised through Rec. 16-14, maintaining the requirement for a minimum level of observer coverage of 5% using an effort measurement but expanding the fleets covered to include traps, gillnets, and trawls. The measure also continues to require reporting on the structure and design of each party's scientific observer programs as well as the number of vessels monitored and coverage level achieved. It also requires statistical data collected through such programs to be reported to SCRS. The measure retained the provision that, for vessels less than 15m, where an extraordinary safety concern precludes deployment of observers, CPCs can employ an alternative scientific monitoring approach. Any such alternative approaches are to be evaluated by SCRS and approved by the Commission prior to implementation. To date, only one CPC has provided information on their alternative approach (in 2011), and the SCRS was unable to evaluate this information as it was incomplete. Rec 16-14 also incorporated text on the use of electronic monitoring and its use in lieu of human observers. The final text requires both SCRS advice and Commission agreement before electronic monitoring systems could be used to replace human observers.

Compliance: ICCAT has adopted regional observer programs (ROPs) for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery (see [Rec. 17-07](#)) 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 (see [Rec. 16-15](#)). The primary purpose of these programs is to monitor implementation of applicable rules although they have scientific aspects as well. In 2013 and 2014, a requirement for the Secretariat to run the ROP was also in place for the Gulf of Guinea (GOG) tropical tuna fishery during the time and area closure period for FAD fishing – however, it was never implemented. At the 2014 ICCAT meeting, the tropicals ROP was replaced with a scheme of nationally placed observers that included additional reporting requirements through the Secretariat. This program was revised again in Rec. 15-01. Notably, a type of hybrid scheme was adopted that combined certain elements of domestic programs and regional programs. Most particularly, the scheme provided for mutual recognition of observers on vessels fishing for tropical tunas in certain areas of the eastern Atlantic Ocean. That is, observers deployed under the scheme would automatically be accepted and acceptable across the ICCAT membership. Thus, deployment of an ICCAT observer would supplant any coastal State requirement for a foreign vessel operating in its EEZ to accept an observer from that coastal State—unless a coastal State opted out of the program. This arrangement was maintained in the most recent revisions to the tropical tuna recommendation (Rec. 16-01).

Observer Health and Safety: In 2016 and 2017, the United States introduced proposals to establish stronger observer safety standards and processes. The 2017 proposal was limited to application in ICCAT's regional observer programs for the eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery and with regard to at sea transshipments. While many acknowledged the importance of protecting the health and safety of observers, a number of parties expressed concerns, including with regard to costs. Consensus could not be reached in the limited time available to the PWG for discussion in 2017 and the matter was referred to the 2018 IMM intersessional meeting for further consideration. **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](#)). ICCAT has also established new minimum standards for inspections in port to be more consistent with the 2009 FAO Port State Measures Agreement [[Rec. 12-07](#)], as well as model forms for use in port inspections.

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.

Since 2011, an *ad hoc* review group has assisted the Compliance Committee Chair in assessing relevant information and recommending actions for to address implementation and compliance concerns related to both members and

non-members. At the 2016 annual meeting, five proposals were adopted to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of COC operations and help ensure recommended decisions are more transparent, fair, and consistent:

- Resolution by ICCAT to Facilitate an Effective and Efficient Compliance Process ([Res. 16-22](#))
- Resolution Establishing an ICCAT Schedule of Actions to Improve Compliance and Cooperation with ICCAT Measures ([Res. 16-17](#))
- Recommendation by ICCAT for the Development of an Online Reporting System ([Rec. 16-19](#))
- Recommendation by ICCAT on Improvement of Compliance Review of Shark Conservation and Management Measures ([Rec. 16-13](#))
- Recommendation by ICCAT to Amend ICCAT Reporting Deadlines in Order to Facilitate an Effective and Efficient Compliance Process ([Rec. 16-16](#))

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. At the 2017 annual meeting, the Commission endorsed all quotas, catch limits, and harvests outlined in compliance tables following several revisions made throughout the meeting. Several countries overharvested their catch limits, and ICCAT payback rules were applied.

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, including the reasons for it, 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 under this instrument or its predecessors to several non-members and one ICCAT member.

Although letters are not part of the formal process established in [Rec. 06-13](#), they serve an important role in ICCAT’s compliance process, including reviews under Rec 06-13. Based on the 2017 COC review of fishery related activities of members and non-members, letters describing compliance concerns will be sent to 38 parties. The Committee lifted identifications of Liberia, Sao Tome et Principe, Trinidad and Tobago, Cambodia, and Grenada and maintained identifications of Sierra Leone and Dominica.

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. With the exception of Brazil who was granted a short extension to supply complete Task I data due to extenuating circumstances, parties who failed to submit their Task I data for some or all ICCAT species by December 1, 2017, have been prohibited from retaining those species. *Cooperating Parties:* ICCAT continues to encourage non-members interested in harvesting ICCAT species to become cooperating parties [[Rec. 03-20](#)]. Granting cooperating status helps ICCAT expand and improve its control over the fisheries under its purview. Non-members with this status voluntarily agree to abide by ICCAT’s rules and in return receive certain benefits, such as qualifying for quota allocations and placing their vessels on the authorized vessel list. In 2008, ICCAT expanded the ability of cooperating parties to participate in the work of the Commission, particularly with regard to enhanced speaking opportunities and more advantageous seating arrangements. In 2011, it was further agreed that cooperating non-members of ICCAT would be able to play a more active part in the work of the Commission, in particular through presenting or co-sponsoring proposals. Currently, ICCAT has five cooperating non-members: Bolivia, Chinese Taipei, Costa Rica, Guyana and Suriname.

Check Sheets: As noted in the discussion of sharks under the Panel 4 section above, Rec. 16-13 created a process and requirement for CPCs to report in 2017 on their implementation of all shark measures through the submission of a check sheet. Given that few CPCs responded by the required deadline, the Commission agreed to continue to receive such shark check sheets in 2018 and deferred the shark compliance review until the 2018 meeting. The Commission endorsed a recommendation for the COC and PA4 Chairs to develop a proposal for a billfish reporting check sheet similar to the shark check sheet for consideration at the 2018 annual meeting.

Online Reporting Technology Working Group: Many CPCs have highlighted difficulties in complying with reporting requirements and requested that the COC consider mechanisms to streamline the reporting process. In 2016, ICCAT adopted [Rec. 16-19](#) establishing the Online Reporting Technology Working Group charged with developing a plan for an online reporting system. Such a system will facilitate the timely and accurate submission of required information as well as review of that information to help evaluate each party's compliance with ICCAT measures. It was agreed that the working group should collaborate with SCRS on this project given SCRS needs and ongoing work on the area of electronic reporting. The Working Group is chaired by the United States. It worked electronically in 2017 and held its first in-person meeting in March 2018. At that meeting, it reviewed progress made to date and agreed a work plan for the completion of its terms of reference by the 2019 target deadline.

Other Actions: The Commission agreed that the Secretariat should communicate with WECAFC to request that its members, or WECAFC itself, report information to ICCAT about fishing activities for species managed by ICCAT, including catch data, in particular for billfish and fishing by ICCAT non-CPCs. The Committee agreed to send letters from Commission Chair to St. Kitts & Nevis and St. Lucia to encourage greater participation in the Commission, and to Gibraltar to request cooperation with ICCAT, including the submission of catch data as well as information on measures in place to manage and control its bluefin tuna fishery in a manner consistent with ICCAT measures.

Special COC Sessions: In line with Res. 16-12, the Commission will convene a special session of COC on November 10-11, 2018, just before the opening session of the Commission, , to provide additional time to conduct a CPC-by-CPC compliance review. The Commission endorsed a recommendation from the COC Chair for the Panels to add an item early in their respective agendas for the Annual Meeting to review and provide appropriate input on compliance tables, after which they will be forwarded to the COC for review and appropriate action. It was also agreed that the COC should take concrete steps at its 2018 meeting to implement the Schedule of Actions in Res. 16-17, which provides a more detailed way to assess non-compliance and provides a broader variety of actions that can be taken by ICCAT and its subsidiary bodies to address non-compliance.

Performance Review

In 2014, ICCAT established an *ad hoc* Working Group to prepare proposed terms of reference for an independent performance review. ICCAT had previously undergone an independent review in 2008. Three experts (in fisheries management, fisheries science, and international law, respectively) were selected in early 2016 to conduct this second independent review. The expert panel's overall assessment was positive, although little rationale was provided for some of its recommendations. To ensure full consideration of the issues raised by the expert panel, an *ad hoc* working group was established through [Res. 16-20](#) to consider the recommendations from the performance review and forward them, as appropriate, to the relevant ICCAT body (e.g., Panels, SCRS, COC, etc) for follow-up. The working group met in June 2017 and developed a table to assist the Commission with tracking progress on these matters. The Commission welcomed the output from the working group during its 2017 meeting and asked that each ICCAT body consider the recommendations relevant to them. The Commission also agreed to track progress annually on how the panel's recommendations were addressed and agreed a process and format in this regard.

Convention Amendment

In 2012, ICCAT agreed to launch a process to develop targeted amendments to its Convention and established the terms of reference for a Convention Amendment Working Group (CWG) ([Rec. 12-10](#)). The terms of reference outlined a three-year process to develop Convention amendments, which would then be considered by the Commission. The Commission is to develop proposed Convention amendments on the following issues, as set out in Annex 1 of the terms of reference: Convention scope, in particular shark conservation and management; decision-making processes and procedures (entry into force provisions, voting rules/quorum, objection procedures, and dispute resolution); and non-party participation. The CWG was also tasked with producing "draft recommendations or amendments to the Convention, if the draft recommendations cannot address the issue, with respect to the items identified in Annex 2," which include the precautionary approach, ecosystem considerations, capacity building and assistance, allocation of fishing possibilities, and transparency. The CWG, which is chaired by Ms. Deirdre Warner-Kramer (USA), has developed draft Convention text covering all of the issues identified in the terms of reference; however, two issues remain pending (i.e., dispute settlement and non-party participation

together with the related matter of depositary). ICCAT will convene a final Convention Working Group meeting in May 2018 to resolve the two remaining issues of substance as well as issues related to the process for adoption and entry into force of the amendments.

Enhancing Support for Scientific Work and Processes

Several recent 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](#)].
- *Standardization of SCRS scientific information*: ICCAT adopted a resolution that, among other things, directs the SCRS to include the Kobe matrices in its annual report for all species [[Rec. 11-14](#)]. A subsequent resolution further clarifies issues associated with standardizing the presentation of scientific information in the SCRS annual report [[Rec. 13-15](#)].
- *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](#)]. ICCAT adopted *Rec. 15-07* to guide the development of HCRs and management strategy evaluation for ICCAT species. A five-year work plan was agreed at the 2016 annual meeting and will be reviewed and revised at the SWGSM meeting in May 2018. The SWGSM will receive an update from SCRS on the progress of its MSE work, in particular for bluefin tuna and swordfish, and will be considering management objectives and performance indicators for these and other priority species (excluding northern albacore given progress already made on that stock).

In addition, a [Science Strategic Plan for 2015-2020](#) was adopted in 2014.

Other Issues

Data Confidentiality: In 2010, ICCAT adopted the SCRS proposed guidelines on data confidentiality. Adoption of these guidelines was particularly important to improve access to cannery and other data by the SCRS. The guidelines specify that parties will provide data to the extent consistent with their national confidentiality requirements, and it was noted that the guidelines may need to be revised once ICCAT has gained some experience in their application.

Elections: In 2017, ICCAT elected a new slate of Commission officers. Raul Delgado (Panama) was elected as Commission Chair; Stefaan Depypere (EU) was elected First Vice-Chair; and Zakia Driouich (Morocco) was elected Second Vice-Chair. Neil Ansell (EU) will chair PWG; Hasan Alper Elekon (Turkey) will chair STACFAD; and Derek Campbell (USA) will continue to chair the Compliance Committee. Regarding the Panels, Cote d'Ivoire was re-elected as Panel 1 chair, Japan as Panel 2 chair, South Africa as Panel 3 chair, and Brazil as Panel 4 chair. The next elections will be in 2019. The Commission also selected a new Executive Secretary, Mr. Camille Jean-Pierre Manel from Senegal, who will replace the outgoing Executive Secretary, Mr Driss Meski, and will begin his term in July 2018.

2018 Meetings: The 21st Special Meeting of the Commission will be held November 12-19, 2018, in Dubrovnik, Croatia. It will be preceded by two days of Compliance Committee sessions (November 10-11). The Commission also agreed to hold numerous intersessional meetings during 2018. In addition, the SCRS has a full slate of meetings in 2018. Details are available at: <http://www.iccat.int/en/meetingscurrent.htm>.

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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

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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 recent catches of salmon in intercepting fisheries. NASCO's 2018 budget totaled £641,400- of which the U.S. contribution is £29,620. The 2017 budget represents a 1.8% increase in real terms over the 2017 budget (£653,400). 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 (alternate appointment
pending Presidential action)
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

B. Advisory Structure:

The U.S. Section to NASCO was formally constituted to provide the U.S. Commissioners with advice, 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. Each year this body meets for an Assessment Meeting from which an assessment document is produced 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.

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 appear to correspond with 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 and the SAG continue 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 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 remains considerable variation in the level of detail provided by each jurisdiction in their APRs.

The next cycle of Implementation Plans will cover 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. This working group will report back to the Council at its 2018 annual meeting.

In recent years, NASCO has also held theme-based special sessions to consider in detail progress made by various jurisdictions in implementing NASCO agreements and to share information on other issues of common interest. In 2017, NASCO held a special session on hatchery supplementation of wild stocks. The session was successful in highlighting the risks of hatchery supplementation. This special session served as an important way to continue to improve the openness and transparency of NASCO.

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. The Council also accepted a proposal from Norway to hold a regional IYS symposium in conjunction with the 2019 annual meeting of NASCO. This would be in addition to NPAFC's 2018 symposium to launch the IYS initiative.

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 2017 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 2015 that maintained a prohibition on exports, established a maximum fishing season of three months (August – October), and required stronger monitoring and control measures and timely reporting. The WGC, however, was not able to agree on an annual catch limit as part of the measure. Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) sought a high quota level without compelling justification and, in the end, committed to set a unilateral catch limit of 45t annually for 2015-17. Although Greenland's catch limit was outside of the terms of the regulatory measure, a provision requiring payback of overharvest was included in that measure (e.g., equal reduction in the catch limit for the following year should Greenland exceed its autonomous quota in any year).

While the measure applied from 2015-17, it included a provision to require its reconsideration in 2016 and 2017 if any Commission member called for a review of its implementation. Upon adoption of the measure, the United States called for such a review to be undertaken prior to the 2016 NASCO meeting. Greenland reported that it had overharvested its 2015 autonomous quota of 45 t by about 13 t (excluding a 3 t unreported catch estimate) despite steps taken to improve reporting and an early closure of the fishery. Prior to the 2016 fishery, Greenland implemented the pay back provision of the regulatory measure, reducing its autonomous quota to 32 t. Greenland also committed to enhancing monitoring and control, including addressing the late reporting by a jurisdiction that led to the overharvest. Further, Greenland indicated that, in a return its pre-2012 management approach, it did not intend to allow factory landings in 2016 and would continue a phone survey begun in 2014 to help determine the completeness of catch reporting. The regulatory measure remained in place for the 2016 fishery.

The WGC agreed to meet intersessionally again before the 2017 annual meeting to review implementation of the regulatory measure for the 2016 fishing season. Reported catches for 2016 were about 5 t below the adjusted 32 t quota level. In addition, Greenland did not authorize factory landings in 2016 but continued its efforts to improve monitoring and control. The WGC agreed that the regulatory measure should continue to apply for the 2017 fishery. Greenland reinstated a 45 t autonomous quota in 2017. The WGC met intersessionally in March 2018 to review the results of the 2017 fishery and Greenland's progress in implementing the regulatory measure, and consider future conservation and management measures for West Greenland fishery. Preliminary data indicate a harvest of about 27 t. Factory landings were again not allowed. Greenland's efforts to improve the monitoring and control of its fishery have provided greater confidence that the catch data being reported are more accurate. Some important monitoring and control measures, however, remain partially or wholly unimplemented. In particular, Greenland has decided not to extend licensing requirements to non-professional fishermen for the time being. In addition, Greenland will not

implement a requirement to deny fishing licenses to fishermen that do not provide catch reports. In 2017, Greenland again conducted a phone survey to help determine the completeness of catch reporting. As the approach to the survey approach has been inconsistent, ICES has recommended development of a standardized survey design. Greenland has not pursued this suggestion to date. Taking into account the intersessional discussions held in March and possible additional intersessional consultations, NASCO will consider the possible development of a new regulatory measure for the fishery at West Greenland during its June 2018 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. In 2014, Canada presented a paper on the results of that work to NASCO. It indicated that this fishery has intercepted small numbers of U.S. origin salmon in the past. More recently, no U.S. origin salmon have been observed in the fishery. In 2017, Canada reported a reduction in total harvest reduction from 2015 levels as well as continued sampling, which confirmed that constraining the fishery to more inshore waters is likely responsible for the apparent absence of U.S.-origin salmon from the samples. 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.

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. At its 2016 meeting, NASCO asked France (SPM) to consider strengthening its management of the fishery, including eliminating its commercial fishery. In 2017, NASCO sent a letter formally requesting France (SPM) to join the organization and to take effective action to limit catches, as was done several years ago.

NEAC Discussions/Actions:

Scientific Information and Advice: ICES has provided catch options for 2016/2017 to 2018/2019 fishing seasons (October to May). There were no catch options for the Faroes fishery that would allow all stock complexes to achieve their conservation limits with a greater than 95% probability in any of the fishing seasons. 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 2017 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 does not set a quota but states that the Faroe Islands will manage any fishery on the basis of ICES advice. The regulatory measure will apply in the out 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 ISW 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 new 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>). The Council held its 34th Annual Meeting on June 6-9, 2017, in Varberg, Sweden. The 35th Annual Meeting of NASCO will be hosted by the United States in Portland, Maine, June 12-15, 2018.

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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:
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Budget

NAFO adopted a 2018 budget of \$2,297,000 CDN (approximately U.S. \$1,779,279). Following a subtraction from NAFO's accumulated surplus, the preliminary US assessment for 2018 will be \$161,792 CND (approximately U.S. \$125,326). Note that this represents a significant reduction in U.S. dues to the Organization from previous years. This reduction is due to entry into force of the Amended NAFO Convention, in which the United States negotiated significant changes to the NAFO dues assessment structure.

U.S. Representation

A. The 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:

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

PLEASE NOTE: The U.S. Federal Commissioner to NAFO recently retired from Federal Service and appointment of a new Commissioner is underway. Likewise, the U.S. Commissioner to NAFO representing the fishing industry recently completed the two terms of service legislatively allowed for this position and appointment of a new Industry Commissioner is also underway.

For further information regarding the U.S. appointment process, or the status of U.S. Commissioners to NAFO, please contact one of the Staff Contacts identified below.

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. 18/1) can be found on the NAFO website at: <http://www.nafo.int>.

D. Current Issues of Interest:

2017 NAFO Annual Meeting: The 39th Annual Meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) took place from 18 to 22 September in Montréal, Canada. The meeting marked a NAFO milestone, as it was the first Annual Meeting held under the amended NAFO Convention, which came into force May 18, 2017. The United States was generally pleased with the outcomes of the 2017 meeting. In addition to adoption of total allowable catches (TACs) and quota decisions, NAFO also made the following significant decisions: 1) adoption of a management strategy for Greenland halibut (through 2023) with annual TACs adjusted annually depending on the agreed Harvest Control Rule; 2) agreement to proceed with a second Organizational performance review (to be completed by the 2018 Annual Meeting) to focus on conservation and management, compliance and enforcement,

governance, science, international cooperation, and financial and administrative issues; 3) adoption of measures to further protect the New England Seamount chain and amendment of the boundary of the area closed to bottom fishing to include all peaks in the chain; and 4) agreement to undertake a benchmark assessment of cod on the Flemish Cap in 2018 to explore the robustness of the current assessment model and evaluate alternatives including multi-species models.

Additionally, Stéphane Artano (France in respect of Saint Pierre and Miquelon) was elected to a second term as NAFO President (Commission Chair), and Temur Tairov (Russian Federation) was elected as Commission Vice-Chair.

U.S. Allocations for 2018: At the 2017 NAFO Annual Meeting, the United States received fish quota allocations for two NAFO stocks to be fished during 2018. These stocks were: Division 3M redfish (69mt) and Subareas 3 & 4 *Illex* squid (453mt). 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 2018, “Others” category allocations available to U.S. fishermen include: Division 3NO white hake (59mt); Division 3LNO skates (258mt); Division 3M cod (45mt), 3LN redfish (85mt), Division 3NO witch flounder (11mt), and Division 3O redfish (100mt). Fishing is halted by NAFO when the “Others” allocation for a particular stock has been fully harvested.

Yellowtail Flounder: In 2008, the United States and Canada entered into 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. As this agreement will expire following the 2018 NAFO fishing season, 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 has harvested Atlantic halibut since 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 2018, 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 40th NAFO Annual Meeting will be held September 17-21, 2018 in Tallinn, Estonia.

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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 interest in the fishery. 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 resources status and on harvesting levels taking into consideration, among others, 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 covered species 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 14th Annual Commission meeting was held November 27 – 30, 2017, in Swakopmund, Namibia. The meeting reports can be found at: http://www.seafo.org/media/7a838fc6-e315-4ec8-ab65-e20be2e060fd/SEAFOweb/pdf/Meeting%20Files/2017/COMM/Commission%20Report%202017_pdf

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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, France, European Union, 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
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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.

The Working Groups that were established or confirmed by the 16th session of the Commission in 2016 are the following:

1. Working Group on Spiny Lobster
2. Working Group on Recreational Fisheries
3. Queen Conch Working Group
4. Working Group on Development of Sustainable Moored Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) Fishing in the Lesser Antilles
5. Flying fish in the Eastern Caribbean Working Group
6. Working Group on the management of deep-sea fisheries
7. Spawning Aggregations Working Group
8. Sharks
9. IUU Fishing
10. Shrimp and Ground Fish

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 and are time bound.

Recent Developments

The 16th biennial meeting of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) convened in Gosier, Guadeloupe, 20-24 June 2016. The meeting made significant progress in adopting five recommendations, which promote harmonized sub-regional/regional fisheries conservation, management, and development; establish regional measures; and endorse FMPs for sub-regional/regional implementation on queen conch, spiny lobster, flyingfish, deep sea fisheries on the high seas, and shrimp and groundfish. The group also recommended specific management measures for sea cucumber fisheries management and the use of marine protected areas as fishery management tools. The Commission emphasized the need for member countries to collaborate to strengthen fisheries management in the region through improving data collection and harmonization of data.

WECAFC currently operates as a regional fisheries body (RFB) under Article VI of the FAO Constitution and acts as an advisory body. In 2012 WECAFC, for the third time since it was first established in 1973, agreed to look into a strategic reorientation of the organization with the following main objectives: become an organization with binding authority over decisions to ensure the sustainability of the resources in the area of competence; increase regional cooperation; further manage the shared, transboundary, stocks; and improve data collection. WECAFC members agreed to launch a process to establish a mechanism, which will provide a binding framework.

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PACIFIC OCEAN

Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP)

Basic Instruments

The Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program, a legally binding multilateral agreement that entered into force in February 1999, established this program and strengthens and replaces the 1992 Agreement on the Conservation of Dolphins (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)

Member Nations

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

States Which Are Applying the Agreement Provisionally

Bolivia and Vanuatu

Secretariat Headquarters

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
8604 La Jolla Shores Drive
La Jolla, California 92037-1508

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

Budget

The expenses of the International Dolphin Conservation Program are shared by the Parties through fees paid by their vessels. 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 purse-seine vessels in excess of 363 metric tons of carrying capacity that are authorized to fish for tuna in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean (ETP) pay assessment fees at a rate of US\$14.95 per cubic meter of well volume. The approximate AIDCP budget for FY 2016 is \$3,121,237. In 2018, the United States had 34 purse seine vessels 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 2017 was \$452,026.

While vessel assessments cover the majority of AIDCP costs, a portion of the AIDCP budget is 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. 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. Since the U.S. tuna market became “dolphin-safe” in mid-1994, U.S. utilization of the catch has greatly diminished, causing a decrease

in the U.S. contribution to IATTC. Further, the Department of State has indicated that future U.S. contribution may be further reduced. The approved IATTC budget for FY 2018 is \$7,997,003, of which the United States assessed contribution is \$1,746,553.

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, including nations and regional economic integration organizations, and a Secretariat headed by a Director of Investigations, which is shared with the IATTC. Approval of decisions, resolutions, recommendations and publications is achieved by consensus of all Parties to the AIDCP. The Director of Investigations 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.

International Review Panel: The International Review Panel (IRP) follows a general procedure for monitoring compliance by vessels with measures established by the AIDCP for minimizing the mortalities of dolphins during fishing operations and reporting on compliance to appropriate governments. 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 governments of the Parties in which the vessels are registered for investigation and possible action. The governments 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 ETP. 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 from time to time, recommends improvements to the system. In June 2001, the PWGTT developed an international dolphin-safe Certification Program to provide a method of documenting the dolphin-safe status of ETP 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 International Dolphin Conservation Program (IDCP), as well as its conservation successes. Additionally, those Members that utilize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System also look for means of promoting and increasing consumer understanding of the AIDCP Dolphin Safe 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 IDCP 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 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 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 ETP aggregated beneath schools of dolphin stocks. Soon after that discovery, the predominant tuna fishing method in the ETP was to intentionally encircle a school of dolphins with a fishing 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. The number of U.S. vessels setting on dolphins greatly decreased soon after the advent of “dolphin safe” tuna in the U.S. marketplace, and no U.S. large purse seine vessel has set on dolphins since 1993. However, foreign participation in setting on dolphins in the ETP fishery continued to increase such that total ETP dolphin mortality was approximately 133,000 in 1986. Yet due to conservation measures, the number has declined to less than 2,150 dolphins per year since 1998. The incidental dolphin mortality in the fishery for 2016 was estimated to be 702 dolphins, compared to 765 mortalities in 2015. The observed mortalities in 2016 represent a total reduction in dolphin mortality of approximately 99% compared to 1986 levels. It should be noted that U.S. large purse seine vessels still do fish in the ETP, however, those vessels make sets on floating objects and sets on un-associated schools of tuna.

In the fall of 1992, the nations participating in the ETP 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 ETP 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 ETP 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 Marine Mammal Protection Act (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 ETP negotiated the AIDCP, a legally-binding instrument for dolphin conservation and ecosystem management in the ETP. 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 ETP in compliance with those measures access to the lucrative U.S. market for their tuna.

Despite successes in reducing observed dolphin mortality in the ETP 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. Investigations into the potential causes of this apparent lack of recovery are ongoing.

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 U.S. is 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.” Also, captains other than ETP large purse seine vessels must also certify that he/she has completed the National Marine Fisheries Service Tuna Tracking and Verification Program’s Dolphin-safe Captain’s Training Course.

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 work groups dealing with specific management issues: (1) fishing by non-parties to the AIDCP and (2) vessel assessments and financing the AIDCP.

The Working Group on Vessel Assessments and Financing was established and met for the first time in 2002. The Working Group was created with the objective of addressing the long-term budget issues faced by the AIDCP. In 2006, the Parties adopted a new approach to collect vessel fees, or assessments. The previous approach, established in 2003, connected calculation of vessel assessments with the IATTC Capacity Resolution of 2002, requiring that owners of all vessels listed on the register of vessels authorized to purse seine for tuna in the ETP, whether the vessel is active or inactive, pay annual assessments. The approach established in 2006 mirrors the approach used prior to 2003, where only Class 6 purse seine vessels required to carry observers (i.e., in excess of 400 shorts tons, 362.8 metric tons, carrying capacity) pay assessments. The AIDCP expenditures for 2016 were \$3,057,224, while the AIDCP revenues for 2016 were \$3,437,180.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the AIDCP currently does not require that vessels in size classes 1-5 (i.e., of 400 short tons, 362.8 metric tons, carrying capacity or less) carry observers. However, in light of the concern that some Class 1-5 vessels are setting purse-seine nets on dolphins, in contravention of the AIDCP, the Parties adopted measures to require purse-seine vessels identified by the IRP to have intentionally set on dolphins to carry observers on subsequent trips.

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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; 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](#)) (TIAS 2044).

The Antigua Convention entered into force on August 27, 2010. The Antigua Convention 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 fifteen 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, and the United States. Additionally, Taiwan 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, Peru, Vanuatu, and Venezuela are Members of the IATTC under the 1949 Convention, but have not yet ratified the Antigua Convention.

Cooperating Non Parties

Cooperating non-member status was renewed for Bolivia, Honduras, Indonesia, and Liberia. Chile was added as a cooperating non-member at the July 2017 meeting in Mexico City, Mexico.

Commission Headquarters

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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 FY2017 is \$6,737,489. The United States assessed contribution is \$1,746,553 for FY2017.

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. 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:

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Edward (Ed) Weissman
 Retired general manager of Jorge Fishing
 Inc., located in Panama
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Vacant

C. Advisory Structure:

The Tuna Conventions Act, as amended, provides that the Secretary, 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 and 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 Parties. 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 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 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. The Commission could not agree on a long-term measure for 207 and adopted a one 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. Since 2012, the Commission has adopted measures to establish catch limits for Pacific bluefin tuna in the EPO. In 2016, the Commission adopted a two-year measure that maintained catch limits of Pacific bluefin tuna from 2016 levels (C-16-08) and outlined a long-term management framework.

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-07-03](#)), sharks ([C-05-03](#); [C-11-10](#); [C-13-04](#); [C-16-06](#); and [C-16-05](#)), and mobulid rays (C-15-04). In addition, the Commission adopted a measure in 2013 (C-13-04) on fish aggregating devices (FADs), which was revised in 2015 (C-15-03), and again in 2016 (C-16-01).

A list of active IATTC resolutions and recommendations can be found on the Commission's website (<http://www.iattc.org/ResolutionsActiveENG.htm>).

Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

The IATTC has adopted measures to establish a vessel monitoring system for vessels that are at least 24 meters in length (C-14-02), regulate transshipments (C-12-07), require International Maritime Organization's (IMO) numbers for vessels at least 100 gross tons (C-14-01), and list and sanction vessels engaged in IUU fishing (C-15-01). 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

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>).

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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

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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:

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NOTE: As of April 1, 2018, the two non-Federal IPHC Commissioner positions are vacant. The process appointing new non-Federal Commissioners these is under way. Please contact one of the Staff Contacts (below) for current information.

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) completed its 94th Annual Meeting (AM094) in Portland, OR, U.S.A. on 26 January 2018. More than 200 Pacific halibut stakeholders attended the meeting, with

approximately 100 more participating in web broadcasts of the meeting. The Report of the AM094, associated meeting documents, and presentations are available at the IPHC website (<https://iphc.int>).

The 2017 Stock Assessment and 2018 Harvest Advice

Sources of mortality: In 2017, total removals were below the 100-year average, and have been stable near 42 million pounds (19,050 t) from 2014 to 2017. In 2017, 83% of the total removals from the stock were retained, compared to 80% in 2016.

Fishing intensity: The 2017 mortality from all sources corresponds to a point estimate of Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) = 40% (there is a 75% chance that fishing intensity exceeded the IPHC’s reference level of 46%). In order to reach the interim reference level, catch limits would need to be reduced for 2018. The Commission does not currently have a coastwide limit fishing intensity reference point.

Stock status (spawning biomass): Current female spawning biomass is estimated to be just above 200 million pounds (90,700mt), which corresponds to only a 6% chance of being below the IPHC threshold (trigger) reference point of SB30%, and less than a 1% chance of being below the IPHC limit reference point of SB20%. Therefore, no adjustment to the target fishing intensity is required, and the stock is not considered to be ‘overfished.’ Projections indicate that the target fishing intensity is likely to result in similar but declining biomass levels in the near future.

Stock distribution: Regional stock distribution has been stable within estimated credibility intervals over the last five years. Region 2 (IPHC Regulatory Areas 2A, 2B, and 2C) currently represents a greater proportion, and Region 3 (IPHC Regulatory Areas 3A and 3B) a lesser proportion, of the coastwide stock than observed in previous decades.

The complete reports of the 2017 stock assessment and 2018 harvest advice are available on the IPHC website at <https://iphc.int/venues/details/94th-session-of-the-iphc-annual-meeting-am094> (please see papers IPHC-2018-AM094-08 through -11).

Catch Limits and Fishing Periods

Catch Limits

The Commission did not agree on new Pacific halibut catch limits for 2018, and therefore the catch limits adopted in 2017 remain in place for 2018. Both Contracting Parties, Canada and the United States, indicated at the Annual Meeting their intention to pursue lower domestic catch limits for 2018 via their national regulatory processes. Both Parties also committed to meeting at the Commissioner-level to discuss how to increase the likelihood of agreement on catch limits in the future.

Since the IPHC annual meeting, Canada, via Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has announced the implementation of the following catch limits for fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Area 2B:

IPHC Regulatory Area 2B	Catch limit (pounds)	Catch limit (metric tons)
Commercial Total Allowable Catch	5,295,995	2,402.25
Recreational Total Allowable Catch	927,990	420.93

Details of catch limits and management measures implemented by the United States of America, via NOAA-Fisheries for IPHC Regulatory Areas in U.S. waters are not yet available. Please see the IPHC website or contact NOAA Fisheries or U.S. Department of State staff contacts (noted below) for further information.

Fishing Periods (Season dates)

The Commission adopted fishing periods for 2018 as provided below, thereby superseding Section 8 of the IPHC Pacific halibut fishery regulations:

1. a) IPHC Regulatory Area 2A (Non-Treaty Direct Commercial): 27 Jun, 11 July, 25 July, 8 August, 22 August, 5 September, 19 September 2018.
2. b) Canadian and U.S. quota-share fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E: Opening: 24 March – Closing: 7 November 2018.

IPHC Regulatory Area 2A fishing dates for incidental commercial Pacific halibut fisheries concurrent with the limited-entry sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis and the salmon troll fishing seasons will be established under U.S. domestic regulations by NMFS. The remainder of the IPHC Regulatory Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) allocations, including sport fishing seasons and depth restrictions, will be determined under regulations promulgated by NMFS. Further information regarding the depth restrictions in the commercial directed Pacific halibut fishery, and details for the sport fisheries, is available at the NMFS hotline (1-800-662-9825). The IPHC Regulatory Area 2A licensing procedures did not change.

Regulatory Changes

The IPHC adopted a number of regulatory changes to update and clarify existing regulations, including:

- A change to allow the use of leased IFQ by CDQ organizations in IPHC Regulatory Areas 4B, 4C, 4D and 4E
- A change to allow the use of pot gear for directed Pacific halibut fishing in areas where such gear is allowed by Contracting Party domestic regulations.
- Clarifications to the regulations for landing catch with the head on, reflecting the experience gained since this regulation was first adopted in 2017.

A complete summary of the regulatory actions taken by the IPHC for 2018 can be found in the report of the 94th Annual Meeting, posted on the IPHC website.

Harvest Strategy Policy

The IPHC provided direction to the Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB) for further work on harvest strategy policy development, including consideration of both scale – the level of removals from the stock – and distribution – how the catch is distributed across the range of the stock.

Expanded fishery-independent setline survey (FISS)

The IPHC approved the next in a series of expansions to its annual fishery-independent setline survey. The purpose of the expansion series is to provide more accurate and precise estimates among regulatory areas and to encompass all depths over which the stock is distributed. In 2018, the setline survey in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2A, 2B, and 2C will be expanded beyond the standard grid of setline survey stations fished each year.

Upcoming Meetings

The IPHC's 2018 Interim Meeting will be held 27-28 November 2018, in Seattle, Washington. The next Annual Meeting (AM095) will take place 28 January-1 February 2019 in Victoria, British Columbia. The IPHC's 96th Annual Meeting (AM096) is planned for 27-31 January 2020 in Sitka, Alaska.

Commission Membership

Canadian Government Commissioner Mr. Paul Ryall was elected Chairperson for the coming year. United States Government Commissioner Dr. James Balsiger was elected Vice-Chairperson.

The other Canadian Commissioners are Mr. Jake Vanderheide and Mr. Ted Assu. The U.S. non-Federal Commissioner positions are currently vacant. Appointments of new non-Federal Commissioners are underway. Please contact staff (below) for more information.

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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
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Budget

The approved NPAFC budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016/2017 (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017) is CAD\$847,400 with each Party contributing CAD\$180,000. The budget estimate for FY 2017/2018 is CAD\$862,500 with each Party contributing CAD\$180,000. The budget estimate for FY2018/2019 is CAD \$866,500 with each Party contributing CAD\$180,000.

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. Commissioner

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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 expired in February 2018 and the Alaska Advisory Panel members' terms will expire in October and November of 2018. The Secretary of State is in the process of appointing a new roster of Advisors.

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

Outcomes of the 25th Annual Meeting: The 25th Annual Meeting of the NPAFC was held from May 15 to 19, 2017, in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. 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. The Annual Meeting marked the 25th anniversary of the NPAFC. A special celebration event took place on the first day of the meeting and included presentations by special invited speakers who recounted NPAFC’s many successes in salmon conservation and future perspectives on protection and sustainable management of salmon in the NPAFC Convention Area. The Commission presented Dr. Loh-Lee Low of the United States with the prestigious NPAFC Award for his sustained scientific contributions to the NPAFC’s mission since its inception.

At the Commission’s enforcement meetings, multilateral cooperative enforcement operations and regular information exchanges between NPAFC-member enforcement agencies were reviewed. Patrols by Canadian and U.S. fisheries enforcement aircrafts from airports in Japan helped maximize operational effectiveness. In a bilateral arrangement, the USCG hosted People’s Republic of China Coast Guard law enforcement officers aboard a USCG cutter to further increase the effectiveness of ship patrols. In addition, two vessels were added to the NPAFC Vessel of Interest List subsequent to the results of the sharing of sighting reports during the 2016 patrol period.

At the Commission’s scientific meetings, leading salmon researchers from member countries reviewed and compiled commercial catch statistics provided by each of the member countries, and reviewed the research progress for the NPAFC 2016–2020 Science Plan. Preliminary 2016 North Pacific-wide salmon catches were 853 thousand metric tonnes (436.9 million fish). Pink salmon constituted the majority of the total commercial catch (41.4% by weight) followed by chum (33.4%) and sockeye salmon (21.5%). Coho comprised 2.6% of the catch, Chinook salmon was 0.9%, and each of cherry salmon and steelhead trout was < 1% of the catch by weight.

At this meeting, scientists also continued their efforts to promote and implement the IYS. It was agreed that the First NPAFC–IYS Workshop on Pacific Salmon Production in a Changing Climate will be convened May 26–27, 2018 in Khabarovsk, Russian Federation.

The five-day NPAFC Annual Meeting closed with an invitation from the Russian Party to host the 26th Annual Meeting May 21–25, 2018 in Khabarovsk, Russian Federation.

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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

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Budget

Each Party will contribute CAD \$1,879,636 to the approved Commission budget of CAD \$4,238,425 for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 (April 1, 2017 - March 31, 2018). In addition, the Parties have identified the need for supplementary funding over the next ten years to mitigate the Commission's unfunded pension liability. Further, test fishing finances continue to be a significant issue for the Parties, after extremely low returns of Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon in 2015, 2016, and 2017. The low returns precluded the capture and sale of adequate fish to recover test fishing costs in those years. As a result, the Parties have provided supplemental contributions to the Commission's test fishing revolving fund in recent years.

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:

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Mr. Charles Swanton (Alaska Commissioner)
Deputy Commissioner
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Mr. McCoy Oatman (Tribal Commissioner)
Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee
PO Box 305
Lapwai, ID 83540

Mr. Robert Turner (Federal Commissioner)
National Marine Fisheries Service
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C. Alternate Commissioners:

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Ketchikan, AK 99901

Mr. W. Ron Allen (Tribal Alt. Com.)
Tribal Chairman
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Mr. Rick Klumph (Oregon Alt. Com.)
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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:

During May 2008, the Pacific Salmon Commission successfully concluded two years of negotiations to update the fishing regimes contained in Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 of Annex IV of the Pacific Salmon Treaty and recommended their adoption to the Governments of the United States and Canada. The Governments adopted the updated regimes through an exchange of diplomatic notes on December 23, 2008. These new Chapters will be in place from 2010 – 2018 and are intended to protect, rebuild and provide for fair sharing of salmon stocks subject to the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The Fraser River sockeye and pink fishing regime, contained in Chapter 4 of Annex IV, is on a different expiration schedule than the other Chapters and was scheduled to expire at the end of 2012, but has now been extended through 2019.

The 2008 agreement maintains abundance-based fishing regimes, based on run strength, for the major salmon intercepting fisheries in the United States and Canada. Larger catches will be allowed when abundance is higher and catches will be constrained in years when abundance is down. 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 funds are used to improve fisheries management and aid efforts to recover weakened salmon stocks. 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. The importance of habitat protection and restoration in achieving the long-term objectives of the Parties relative to salmon also remains a goal of the Treaty, as is a commitment by the two countries to improve how scientific information is obtained, shared, and applied to the management of the resource.

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

Transboundary Rivers (Chapter 1): This fishing regime provides for sockeye, coho, chinook, and pink salmon management for several rivers that flow from Canada to the Pacific Ocean through the Alaskan panhandle, including the Stikine, Taku and Alsek Rivers. An attachment to this Chapter describes programs and associated costs for joint enhancement of sockeye salmon in the Taku and Stikine rivers.

Northern British Columbia and Southeast Alaska (Chapter 2): This Chapter addresses the management of sockeye, pink and chum salmon fisheries in 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 sockeye in Alaska's purse seine fisheries near Noyes Island (District 104) and the gillnet fishery at Tree Point (District 101), and Canada's various marine net fisheries for pink salmon and its troll fishery for pink salmon in specific Canadian fishing areas.

Chinook Salmon (Chapter 3): Because they pass through fisheries regulated by many jurisdictions in both Canada and the United States, chinook salmon have been the focus of increasing concern and controversy in recent years. Although some chinook populations are relatively healthy, others remain listed by the U.S. Federal Government under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The new chinook regime encompasses marine and certain freshwater fisheries in Alaska, Canada, Washington and Oregon. All chinook fisheries will be managed based on abundance. Two types of fisheries have been designated: (1) those that will be managed based on the aggregate abundance of Chinook salmon present in the fishery, and (2) those that will be managed based on the status of individual stocks or stock groups in the fishery. The 2008 agreement reduces the Chinook harvest in Alaska and off Canada's west coast of Vancouver Island by 15% and 30%, respectively, compared to the 1999 agreement that it replaced.

The agreement provides a degree of flexibility to allow management agencies to decide how best to distribute the harvest impacts across their various fisheries to reflect domestic fishery priorities, provided the over-all reductions are achieved. For some chinook stocks, the total reductions will have to be much greater than the general obligation, due to the need to provide extra protection for certain very depressed stocks. The general obligation will not apply to hatchery stocks or healthy natural stocks that are achieving escapement objectives and can support harvest. In addition to predetermined harvest schedules, the agreement contains provisions that specify conditions under which even greater harvest reductions will apply. These so-called “weak stock” provisions serve as a safety valve to afford additional protection to stocks that may fail to respond to the recovery programs.

Fraser River Sockeye and Pink Salmon (Chapter 4): The PSC concluded negotiations in February 2013 for a new fishing regime for Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon (Chapter 4, Annex IV of the Pacific Salmon Treaty). Domestic (Canadian) consultations were concluded in the spring of 2013 and the new agreement for 2014-2019 was approved by the governments of Canada and the United States.

Coho Salmon (Chapter 5): The coho agreement essentially provides a blueprint and specifications (biological criteria) for a conservation-based regime for border area fisheries in southern British Columbia and Washington State. The specifics of the regime were bilaterally developed and were agreed to in February 2002 and remain in effect under the May 2008 agreement. 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): This chapter incorporates certain refinements to the provisions that trigger fisheries directed at chum salmon in the Strait of Georgia and Puget Sound. These refinements will have only a minor impact on the allocations of catches, but will improve the effectiveness of the regime. Additionally, at the request of the United States, Canada agreed to require the live release of chum salmon in certain of its net fisheries in its southern boundary areas at those times of the year when “summer chum,” a species recently listed as threatened under the ESA, may be present in the areas. Both countries agreed to collect better data relating to these fish.

The 2008 agreement can be found at the PSC website at <http://www.psc.org>.

2018 Update: The PSC held its 33rd Annual Meeting on February 12-16, 2018, in Vancouver, B.C. At this meeting the PSC focused on issues relating to the implementation of the 2008 agreement and negotiations for a new agreement by the end of 2018.

Future Meetings: The next Commission Session of the PSC will be held October 15-19, 2018, in Vancouver, B.C. The PSC Post Season Meeting will be held January 14-18, 2019, in Vancouver, B.C. and the 34th Annual Meeting will be held February 11-15, 2019, in Portland, OR.

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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

Mr. Jiro HYUGAJI (Japan) opened the 21st Annual Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea on 31 October 2016. It was the 7th Annual Conference to be conducted via electronic mail (email).

During the conference, there was no consensus among the Parties on how to set the Allowable Harvest Level (AHL). Consequently, the process described in Article VII. Part 1 of the Annex to the Convention was followed and the AHL for 2017 was set at zero.

Since the AHL for 2017 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.

There was no trial fishing in 2017.

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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

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.

Albacore Status Determination: The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) conducts stock assessments on North Pacific albacore and completed an assessment in 2017. The Albacore Working Group (ALBWG) to the ISC recommended no changes to its 2014 stock status determination, that is, the stock is neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The results of the 2017 ISC stock assessment concluded that the stock is not in an overfished condition and overfishing is not present.

Fishing Pressure on North Pacific Albacore: During the years 2011-2015, fisheries based in Japan accounted for 61.9% of the total albacore harvest, followed by fisheries in the United States (16.9%), Canada (5.4%), China (4.3), and Chinese Taipei (3.9%).

Domestic and International Management: The U.S. North Pacific albacore fishery is managed under the West Coast Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan and is one of the Pacific Fishery Management Council’s (Council) few remaining open access fisheries. In June 2011, the Council tasked the HMS Management Team (HMSMT) and HMS Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) to begin developing a proactive management framework for North Pacific albacore that could be proposed at the international level through U.S. delegations. The HMSMT presented a report to the Council at their June 2013 meeting entitled *North Pacific Albacore Precautionary Management Framework* that provided candidate management objectives, target and limit reference points, harvest control rules, and management measures. The Council adopted the report and submitted it to NMFS for use in developing U.S. positions at international meetings. The United States sponsored a proposal for North Pacific albacore (IATTC-87 PROP J-1) at the 2014 annual meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) to begin the process, called management strategy evaluation (MSE), of applying a precautionary approach by evaluating reference points and harvest control rules. Although the IATTC could not reach consensus to adopt the proposal, the ISC began development of an MSE for North Pacific albacore as described below.

At their September 2014 meeting, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission’s Northern Committee (NC), following several years of effort led by the United States and Canada, considered a proposal from Canada to establish a precautionary approach management framework for North Pacific albacore. The NC agreed on a revised version of the proposal. The management framework includes a B-limit (20% of the spawning biomass in the absence of fishing), which replaces the F-limit that had been in place since 2008, and calls for an analysis to enable determination of an appropriate target reference point. Subsequently, the ISC is began an MSE that can inform the NC’s consideration of target reference points and associated control rules. The ISC has hosted three stakeholder workshops since 2015 to first explain the concept of an MSE; second, develop management objectives; and, third, refine the management objectives, determine performance metrics, and develop candidate reference points and harvest control rules to test in the first round of the MSE. The ISC will present the results of this round of MSE to the NC in September 2018.

At their 2013 annual meeting, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) adopted Resolution (C-13-03), which supplements Resolution C-05-02 on North Pacific albacore and requires all members to submit their

catch and effort for years 2007-2012. The purpose of the supplemental resolution was to evaluate the effectiveness of the original resolution. The IATTC scientific staff presented trends of fishing effort for fisheries targeting North Pacific albacore in the eastern Pacific Ocean at the 2014 Scientific Advisory Committee meeting. At the 2014 meeting of the IATTC, the Commission agreed to maintain Resolution C-05-02 and C-13-03.

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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

Both countries have appointed all of their respective members to the Agreement's four panels and committees—the Joint Technical Committee, Scientific Review Group, the Advisory Panel, and the Joint Management Committee.

The United States and Canada will meet on March 5-7, 2018 in Lynnwood, WA, to review and comment on the 2018 Pacific hake stock assessment. Based on the Joint Technical Committee's stock assessment, the review by the Scientific Review Group, and advice from the Advisory Panel, the Joint Management Committee will recommend to the Parties a total allowable catch (TAC) for 2018.

For 2017, the coastwise adjusted TAC was 597,500 metric tons. Preliminary indications show that the population size is still at a very high level, but that it may be beginning to decline. The parties are discussing various management strategies for whiting and progress continues on a "management strategy evaluation" to better inform these discussions. Following the March 2018 meeting, each Party will review and make a decision on the Joint Management Committee's recommendation via its own internal process. A final decision is expected from both parties in late April or early May 2018.

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.

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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.

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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

Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Liberia, Thailand, and Vietnam have been granted Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) status for 2018.

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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 11th Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) met during the Fourteenth Annual Commission meeting in Manila, Philippines, from December 3-7 2017 under the co-chairmanship of delegates from

Samoa and Japan. The total budget approved by the Commission for 2018 was \$8,028,552, with the United States paying \$1,064,569, or approximately 14% 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.

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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 18 individuals appointed in 2015 will expire on August 15, 2017. 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, and CMM 2016-01). The most recent version of the measure, CMM 2017-01, was adopted in 2017.

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 14th Regular Session of the Commission (WCPFC14) in 2017, Commission members adopted CMM 2017-01, which replaced and built on CMM 2016-01. CMM 2017-01 is generally applicable for the period 2018-2020, 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 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, 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 VMS, regulate transshipment, list and sanction IUU fishing vessels, and establish high-seas boarding and inspection procedures, and has been implementing a compliance and monitoring scheme. More information on the relevant MCS CMMs can be found on the WCPFC website (<http://wcpfc.int/conservation-and-management-measures>).

Additional Resources

A summary report of the Fourteenth Regular Session of the WCPFC is available at: <https://www.wcpfc.int/meetings/wcpfc14>

2016 meetings

The WCPFC will hold its Fifteenth Regular Session in December 2018. The Scientific Committee is scheduled to meet August 8-16, 2018. The Northern Committee is scheduled to meet September 3-7 2018. The Technical and Compliance Committee is scheduled to meet September 26 - October 2 2018.

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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

Colombia, Curacao, Liberia, and Panama

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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.

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 30 January to 3 February 2018 and was preceded by the fifth meeting of the Compliance and Technical Committee from 26-28 January 2018.

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 sixth Commission meeting was held in Lima, Peru from 30 January to 3 February 2018 and was preceded by the fifth meeting of the Compliance and Technical Committee on 26-28 January 2018. The meeting documents can be found at <https://www.sprfmo.int/meetings/comm6/>.

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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 is 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.

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Budget

The budget for 2016/2017 is \$ 1,262,944.

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.

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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](#) for 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.*)

Member Nations/Acceding States

Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, People's Republic of China, European Union, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Namibia, 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, Netherlands, 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

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Web address: www.ccamlr.org

Budget

The Commission adopted a budget for 2018 of AU\$4,937,000 (approximately US\$3,905,400). The U.S. contribution for its dues in 2018 is AU\$126,628 (approximately US\$100,170). Members' assessed contributions for 2018 reflected an increase of 2.5%.

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:

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U.S. Representative to the Scientific Committee:

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C. Advisory Structure:

The U.S. Commissioner receives advice from the members of the U.S. delegation. The delegation includes representatives from the Department of State, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Science Foundation, Marine Mammal Commission, fishing industry, 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 annually until 2009 to address seabird mortality incidental to fishing, last met in 2011.

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, fishery regulations, 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. At 1.55 million square kilometers (598,200 square miles), the MPA is the world's largest and protects an area greater than twice the size of Texas. 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) (Figure 1).

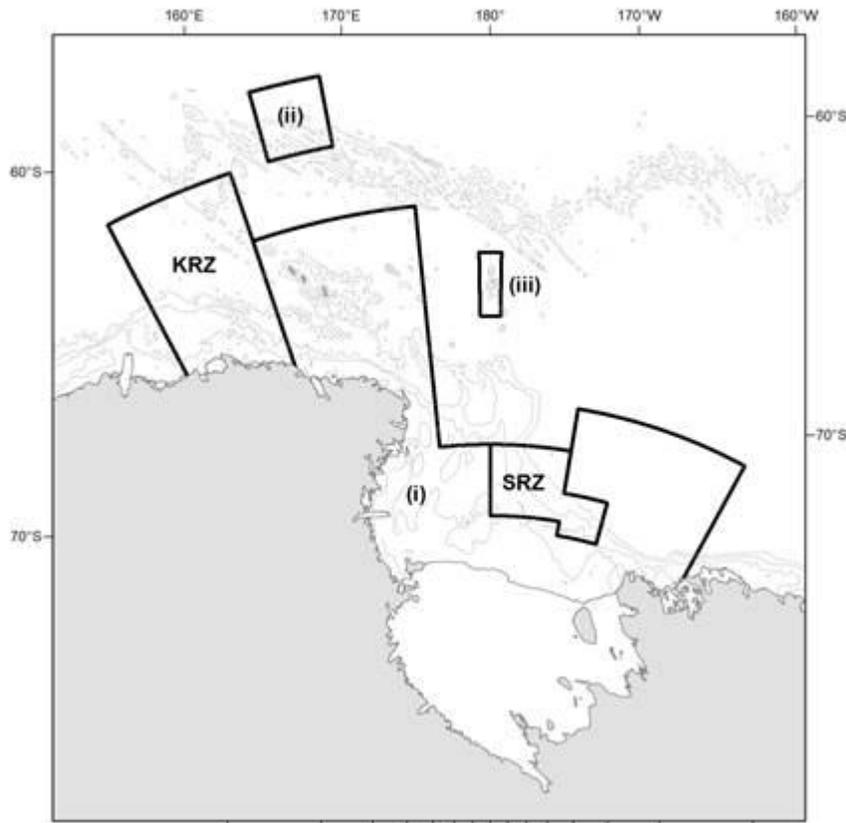


Figure 1: The Ross Sea Region Marine Protected Area, including the boundaries of the General Protection Zone (i, ii, iii), Special Research Zone (SRZ), and Krill Research Zone (KRZ).

At the 2017 CCAMLR meeting, the United States and New Zealand pursued several initiatives related to implementation of the MPA. The United States and New Zealand submitted the Research and Monitoring Plan for the MPA. Procedures for monitoring vessel traffic within the MPA and catch limits for toothfish in the Ross Sea outside the MPA were established, in accordance with provisions stipulated in the conservation measure establishing the Ross Sea region MPA.

Australia and the EU proposed, for the sixth time, a representative system of MPAs in East Antarctica. Additional proposals presented in 2017 included the proposal for the Weddell Sea MPA sponsored by the EU, and an MPA in the Antarctic Peninsula region co-sponsored by Argentina and Chile. Consensus was not reached on these proposals.

Compliance

In the compliance category, 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.

2016 was the fourth year CCAMLR applied its Compliance Evaluation Procedure (CEP). While the process went generally smoothly, there were issues with Members failing to address issues of non-compliance, both those identified in earlier CEPs and in the 2016 report. The CEP in 2017 was the first year that the procedure was applied to all conservation measures in force (it had only previously applied to a small number of measures).

A CDS Technical Working Group met in July 2016 where participants tested a new electronic Catch Documentation Scheme (eCDS) that had improved security and data quality constraints. The new eCDS was launched in early 2017. In 2017, the Commission considered a trade data analysis, comparing different sources of toothfish (*Dissostichus* spp.) trade data with the data from the eCDS. Further analyses of trade data will be undertaken and assist with reconciling trade data with eCDS data, but would also contribute to a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the eCDS and support the implementation and possible expansion of the non-contracting party engagement strategy.

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, 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.

In the 2016/17 fishing season, for the first time since 1996, fishing for krill occurred in the East Antarctic (Statistical Area 58). Catch of krill in this area represents a change in fishery distribution compared to the past two decades, during which krill fishing exclusively occurred in Area 48.

In the Pacific Sector, the catch limit for the exploratory fishery in the Ross Sea region was updated on the basis of a recent stock assessment. With the Ross Sea region MPA entering into force on December 1, 2017, directed fishing for toothfish is prohibited in the MPA's General Protection Zone. The catch limit is distributed among three areas as stipulated in the conservation measure establishing the Ross Sea region MPA, two of these areas occur outside the MPA and the third area is the Special Research Zone within the MPA. Catch limits established for the Amundsen Sea remain unchanged for the 2017/18 fishing season. Catch limits for longline fisheries targeting toothfish in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Sectors were also updated for the 2017/18 fishing season, with these updates based either on new stock assessments or on a new process for estimating catch limits in "data poor areas."

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 plans for research fishing occurring in areas otherwise closed to fishing in the Convention Area. Documenting the research plans in this manner will promote transparency of the research fishing that takes place in areas closed to fishing. This new conservation measure goes into effect starting with the 2018/19 season.

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. 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.

D. Scheme of International Scientific Observation:

In line with domestic priorities, the United States is actively advancing the issue of observer safety in international fisheries. 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. CCAMLR also agreed on additional provisions to increase an observer's safety of life at sea and the United States will continue to propose additional measures to increase observer safety on high seas fishing vessels.

E. Activities and Meetings:

The following meetings will take place in 2018:

- Workshop for the Development of a *Dissostichus mawsoni* Population Hypothesis for Area 48 (WS-DmPH) February 19 to 21 in Berlin, Germany;
- Subgroup on Acoustic Survey and Analysis Methods (SG-ASAM-18) April 30 to May 4 in Punta Arenas, Chile;
- Independent Review of Integrated Stock Assessment Methods June 18 to 22 in Norwich, United Kingdom;
- Working Group on Statistics, Assessments and Modeling (WG-SAM-18) June 25 to 29 in Norwich, United Kingdom;
- Workshop on Spatial Management July 2 to 6 in Cambridge, United Kingdom;

- Working Group on Ecosystem Monitoring and Management (WG-EMM-18) July 9 to 13 in Cambridge, United Kingdom;
- Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment (WG-FSA-18) October 8 to 19 in Hobart, Australia;
- Thirty-seventh Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC-CAMLR-XXXVII) October 22 to 26 in Hobart, Australia; and
- Thirty-seventh Meeting of the Commission (CCAMLR-XXXVII) October 22 to November 2 in Hobart, Australia.

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Department of State:

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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 Depositary 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 Depositary 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.

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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

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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 actively participate 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.

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 is 14,647 tons and the TAC for 2018 to 2020 will be 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.

Compliance. Compliance continues to be a major focus of the CCSBT annual meeting. 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 first three-year Action Plan finished in 2014. 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 has attended Compliance Committee and Annual meetings since 2014 as an invited observer.

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.

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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, 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, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, and Yemen.

Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties

Bangladesh, Liberia, and Senegal

Commission Headquarters

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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 maintain this institutional link with FAO has been raised periodically and will be discussed by the Commission in May 2018.

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, trade restrictive measures, statistical document requirements for bigeye tuna, a shark finning ban, port state measures, a ban on discards of tropical tunas in the purse-seine fishery, a prohibition on vessels intentionally fishing on data buoys, and measures regarding sea turtles and sea birds.

In 2016, IOTC adopted measures on rebuilding yellowfin tuna, a harvest control rule for skipjack tuna, criteria for a 2nd Performance Review, penalties for noncompliance with reporting obligations, electronic reporting for PSMA, prohibitions on aircraft and unmanned vehicles as fishing aids, and prohibitions on the use of artificial lights to attract fish. The second meeting of the Technical Committee on Management Procedures created a revised schedule of work for the development of management strategy evaluation, which was endorsed by the Commission to guide future progress. In 2017, IOTC adopted a requirement to land sharks with fins naturally attached (with an exception for frozen landings, which continue to be subject to the 5% fin-to-carcass ratio). The 2016 measure on yellowfin tuna was amended to place further restrictions on distant water purse seine fleets through reductions on the number of active buoys permitted and a limit on the number of support vessels. The parties expanded the existing discard ban for purse seine fisheries for some other species in addition to tropical tunas, to the extent practicable; the measure also encourages full retention by gear other than purse seine.

The 1st Technical Committee on Performance Review was held in February 2018 to review progress on the implementation of recommendations arising from the report of the 2nd Performance Review Panel. The 1st Session of the Working Party on Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures was held in March 2018, and a five year workplan for this group (2018-2023) was developed. IOTC is also engaged in an intersessional process to work on development of allocation criteria.

The 2018 Annual Meeting of IOTC will take place May 21-25 in Bangkok, Thailand, and will be preceded by meetings of the Compliance Committee, the Standing Committee on Finance and Administration and the Technical Committee on Management Procedures.

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.

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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.

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.

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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

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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. 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 2018 is AU \$802,100 based upon ACAP's membership fee schedule, which assigns dues (up to a maximum of 22%) 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 Parties meet every 3 years. In each of the intervening years, the Advisory Committee 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.

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. NOAA Fisheries participates on the established Seabird Bycatch Working Groups and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service participates in the Population and Conservation Status Working Group. This participation has granted the United States influence over some ACAP proceedings, although only full Parties have

voting rights and the ability to Chair any of ACAP's working groups or propose amendments to the Agreement. The United States had 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 international 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 the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, providing technical assistance and expert advice regarding minimization of bycatch of albatrosses and petrels in high seas longline and trawl fisheries.

At the 3rd Meeting of the Parties in May 2009, ACAP added the three North Pacific albatross species to Annex 1 of the Agreement. These three species breed in the United States. During the 4th Meeting of the Parties in Lima (2012), Peru, the Balearic shearwater, a species that breeds in the Balearic Islands of Spain, was added to Annex 1 of the Agreement. The pink-footed shearwater, a species that breeds in Chile but migrates as far north as the waters off of Alaska, was added during the 5th Meeting of the Parties (2015; Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain).

ACAP develops and updates advice for reducing the impact of fishing on seabirds, including technical specifications for some mitigation measures. In 2011, the Seabird Bycatch Working Group (SBWG) and the Advisory Committee undertook a major revision of ACAP's pelagic longline mitigation advice. Best practice measures include using a combination of branchline weighting, night setting, and streamer lines. In 2016, the 9th Meeting of the Advisory Committee added hook-shielding devices to its best practice bycatch mitigation advice and updated its advice on line weighting configurations. 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 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.

The Advisory Committee adopted in 2017 a strategy for engagement with RFMOs and CCAMLR, containing the following elements: (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.

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 2016, this working group developed for the ACAP website (www.acap.aq) a list of all banding authorities for those seeking to identify the age and banding site of any particular marked bird that they observe. It has also made available on the website guidance for census of burrowing petrels and guidelines for sampling the tissue of dead birds. In 2017, the working group members shared information on efforts to eradicate non-native species, particularly work on eradication of invasive species (e.g., house mice). The members also agreed to update several existing best-practice guidelines, such as adding techniques to minimize the transmission of pathogens following an outbreak of disease to existing biosecurity guidelines, revising the Seabird Bycatch Identification

Guide, and encouraging the development of guidelines and best practice advice to mitigate bird strikes in relation to artificial light.

During the 10th Advisory Committee meeting, Parties held a one-day workshop to discuss *Pterodromas* and other small burrowing petrels, a taxon that is at risk mostly due to land-based threats. The objective of the workshop was to advance understanding about best approaches for international cooperation in the conservation of *Pterodroma* and other small burrowing petrel species. The workshop resulted in a number of recommendations, such as updating of ACAP conservation guidelines to ensure they cover gadfly petrels and smaller Procellariiformes and improving links to existing international conservation efforts for land-based threats.

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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 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.

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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>

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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

As of February 2018, 196 nations had 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 171 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 105 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.

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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 inter-sessionally of *ad hoc* technical expert groups or liaison groups on specific issues. 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 (<http://www.biodiv.org/>).

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 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 objective 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 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will tentatively be held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2018.

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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 December 2017, 126 nations are party to the CMS. The United States is not a party.

Commission Headquarters

Bonn, Germany

Budget

The approved budget for 2018-2020 is €8,156,202.00.

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 inter-sessionally.

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

Recent Activities

The twelfth Meeting of the COP was held October 23-28, 2017, in Manila, Philippines. The documents from the meeting can be found at: <http://www.cms.int/en/cop12docs>.

Future Meetings

The thirteenth Meeting of the COP will be hosted by India in 2020.

Web address:

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

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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

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Email: info@cites.org
Web address: <http://www.cites.org/>

Budget

The budget for the triennium 2017-2019 approved by the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties shall be covered by the Trust Fund budget in the amount of USD 5,911,418 for 2017, USD 5,999,700 for 2018 and USD 6,643,674 for 2019. 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, six seal species, coelacanths, some sturgeon species, basking sharks, great white sharks, hammerhead sharks (great, scalloped, and smooth), porbeagle sharks, oceanic whitetip sharks, silky sharks, all thresher sharks, whale sharks, seahorses, queen conch, devil rays, manta rays and all hard coral species.

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.”

Upcoming Activities

The Eighteenth Meeting of the CoP (CoP18) will be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 23 May – 3 June 2019. Delegations will come together to deliberate actions to address the international trade of species that are included or proposed for inclusion in the CITES Appendices.

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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 87 member nations: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, People's Republic of China, Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, The Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Republic of Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Laos, 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, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, San Marino, Senegal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Togo, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, Uruguay, and the United States.

Commission Headquarters

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Budget

The IWC Financial Year runs from 1 January to 31 December. In 2017, the Commission approved a budget of GBP1,655,368. The United States' dues in 2017 were GBP 82,556 and the United States' voluntary contributions in 2017 were USD 128,000.

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
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Deputy U.S. Commissioner:
Mr. Ryan Wulff
Assistant Regional Administrator
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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
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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 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 Dr. Joji Morishita (Japan) and vice-chaired by Mr. Andrej Bibic (Slovenia), 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 2016-18 are Japan (Chair), Slovenia (Vice Chair), USA (Chair, F&A), and Argentina, Australia, Ghana and St Lucia. Brazil is a member of the Bureau in its capacity as host of the next Commission meeting.

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
 - Steering Group to review the effectiveness of the International Whaling 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
 - IWC Expert Panel on Bycatch (pending 2018)
 - Working Group on Voluntary National Reports on Cetacean Conservation
 - Conservation Committee Planning Group
- Scientific Committee
 - The Sub-committee on the Revised Management Procedure (RMP)
 - Standing Working Group on Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Management Procedures (AWMP)
 - Sub-committee on Northern Hemisphere Whale Stocks (NH)

- Sub-committee on In-Depth Assessments (IA)
- Sub-committee on other Southern Hemisphere Whale Stocks (SH)
- Working Group on Conservation Management Plans (CMP)
- Working Group 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)
- Ad hoc Plenary sessions on Special Permits (SP)
- Working Group on Databases and catalogues (DB)
- Working Group on interactions between the SC and the Conservation Committee (SC/CC)
- Joint Working Group between the Scientific and Conservation Committees
 - Working Group on establishment of a database of recommendations
- Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Sub-committee
 - Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Working Group
- Infractions Sub-committee
- Working Group on Whale Killing Methods and Welfare Issues
 - Intersessional Working Group on Welfare
 - IWC Global Whale Entanglement Response Network
 - IWC Expert Panel on Strandings

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 generally 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 67th meeting of the IWC will be held September 3-14, 2018 in Florianopolis, Brazil.

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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 in Silver Spring, Maryland during 19-20 June 2017, 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 included specific 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 Ottawa, Canada, during summer 2018.

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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. An operational fisheries law enforcement meeting between the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) and the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Conservation and Protection is expected to occur in 2018 to discuss national level law enforcement cooperation and coordination of joint enforcement operations. 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 interested in maintaining 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 hope to increase cooperation on global high seas issues such as boarding and inspection and enforcement regimes being developed and/or implemented within regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs) such as 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).

The United States and Canada are members of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and work cooperatively on operational issues with INTERPOL's other 188 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. NOAA OLE's Northeast Division (NED) has renewed its active participation in the US delegation to NAFO sending personnel to the 2017 STACTIC Intersessional Meeting and the 2017 Annual Meeting.

NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement's (OLE) Northeast Division (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. NOAA-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 NOAA-OLE's NED and DFO detachments around New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

NOAA-OLE in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) and Environment Canada have completed an investigation into the smuggling of narwhal tusks from Canada to the U.S. NOAA has worked closely with Environment Canada on record requests, search warrants in Canada, surveillance in both countries, trial preparation interviews, meetings, field interviews, and production orders on Canadian banks, shipping and phone companies. All agencies have worked closely on this matter, which has led to charges and convictions in both countries on numerous defendants. Most notable is the sentencing of Greg Logan on September 20, 2017 to 62 months incarceration for his involvement in the smuggling conspiracy. These cooperative efforts resulted in the largest narwhal tusk smuggling case ever prosecuted in North America.

The Northeast Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Team, within NOAA-OLE, monitored the activities and maintained communications with the four U.S.-registered vessels actively participating in the NAFO fishery during 2017. The vessels 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 NOAA-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.

In 2017, NOAA OLE has investigated and submitted for prosecution (4) cases involving US fishermen actively fishing in Canadian waters. NOAA-OLE and DFO will continue to collaborate formally and informally periodically throughout the fishing year to discuss the US/Canada Fisheries Enforcement Agreement.

DFO and NOAA-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. LE collaborators have also worked towards ensuring that seafood is labelled at the Port of Entry (POE).

The primary threat for illegal incursions in the Pacific Northwest occurs in the vicinity of the San Juan Islands during crab 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.

NOAA OLE and DFO completed a nine-month pilot project to probe the extent to which certain prohibited fish species are available within their respective markets. The DFO Conservation and Protection Branch (C&P) developed a collaborative plan with the NOAA OLE to conduct a market probe aimed at detecting possession and illegal sales of prohibited fish species. The main objective of the operation was to obtain a better understanding of the markets of targeted protected species, both domestically and globally, by utilizing a multijurisdictional and multinational operational approach facilitated by the Safe Ocean Network. The operations highlighted not only the benefit of joint state, federal and international law enforcement operations but also the value of integrating trade analysts into the operational enforcement activities. This integration not only maximized effectiveness through intelligence driven enforcement activities but also to gather information in these operations that can benefit development of intelligence products to detect and disrupt trafficking in protected marine species.

North Pacific Ocean (high seas)

NOAA-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.

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.

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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 February 6-8, 2018, in Silver Spring, MD, along with meetings of the MEXUS-Golfo and MEXUS- Pacifico scientific working groups, and a Law Enforcement Cooperation Meeting. Prior to this, the last FCT meetings were held on September 7-9, 2016, in Campeche, Mexico. The delegations to the 2018 FCT meeting discussed sustainable fisheries management, the protection and conservation of species such as sea turtles, applicable domestic updates, collaborative scientific research in the framework of the MEXUS-Golfo and MEXUS-Pacifico 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 2019.

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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 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 during the first few years of the cooperative program. The two Parties now intend to meet every 18-24 months. Recent 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. 2015 Meeting:

The most recent Fishery Cooperation Talks 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 workplan for our cooperation. The Fishery Cooperation Talks scheduled for 2017 in Chile did not happen and a new date has not yet been agreed. 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 Fishery Cooperation Talks again in the near future.

Future Meetings

The next meeting will likely be held in 2019 in Chile.

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ASIA

Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Effective Cooperation and Implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/215 of December 20, 1991

Basic Instrument

Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Effective Cooperation and Implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution (UNGA) 46/215 of December 20, 1991. The MOU was first signed in Washington, D.C. on December 3, 1993.

Implementing Legislation

None

Member Nations

The United States and the People's Republic of China (China)

Meetings

Representatives meet periodically in the United States or China.

Description

For over two decades, the U.S. Coast Guard, in conjunction with the National Marine Fisheries Service, has embarked members of China's Coast Guard on Coast Guard assets patrolling the highest threat areas in the North Pacific Ocean for high seas driftnet fishing pursuant to the terms of the *Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Effective Cooperation and Implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/215 of December 20, 1991*, signed in Washington, DC on December 3, 1993. These patrols support the global large-scale high seas driftnet moratorium called for by UNGA Resolution 46/215 and provisions of the *Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean*. They also enable China to more effectively enforce its domestic laws that prohibit high seas driftnet fishing by Chinese-flagged vessels in the North Pacific. The current Memorandum of Understanding (also known as the U.S.-China Shiprider Agreement) was renewed in 2014 for another five years.

Recent Activities

The United States Coast Guard's annual fisheries enforcement operation, known as Operation North Pacific Guard, was conducted from June 25 to September 25, 2017. The focus of this Operation is to detect, deter, and eliminate IUU fishing activity on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean and includes identifying large-scale high seas driftnet fishing activity and any prohibited high seas capture of anadromous species. Operation North Pacific Guard 2017 was planned and executed by the Commander of U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) District 17 in coordination with the multilateral enforcement focus of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) Enforcement Coordination Committee and the North Pacific Coast Guard Forum (NPCGF). In addition, Operation North Pacific Guard implemented the *Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Effective Cooperation and Implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/215 of December 20, 1991*.

Three deployments by a USCG HC-130 maritime surveillance aircraft from USCG Air Station Kodiak were staged out of Misawa Air Base, Japan. With these aircraft, the USCG conducted a total of 29 maritime air sorties in the North Pacific Ocean amounting to a total of 262 patrol hours. The USCG Cutter *DOUGLAS MUNRO* patrolled the NPAFC Convention Area from July through September 2017, for a total of 91 days. While this year's operations

did not result in the detection of any fishing vessels suspected of employing large-scale high seas driftnets, the coordinated USCG enforcement efforts covered a significant portion of the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean and visually identified 1,119 vessels operating in compliance with international standards.

During the patrol, *DOUGLAS MUNRO* conducted four boardings pursuant to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's (WCPFC) Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2006-08 - High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSB&I) Procedures. The vessels boarded were the *TAKE MARU (Japan)*, *YUUIJIN MARU NO. 2 (Japan)*, *HE JI FA (Taiwan)*, and *SHUN MAN FA NO. 2 (Taiwan)*. The *TAKE MARU* and *YUUIJIN MARU NO. 2* were found to be in violation of the WCPFC CMM's.

TAKE MARU was boarded by *DOUGLAS MUNRO* on September 8 on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean. *TAKE MARU* was a long liner targeting highly migratory tuna stocks inside the WCPFC Convention Area. The boarding was conducted to evaluate compliance against WCPFC CMMs. The boarding team observed that the vessel failed to maintain sufficient records of catch and catch related data in accordance with the Commission's reporting requirements. *MELLON*'s boarding team suspected that the vessel was in violation of WCPFC CMM 2006-08 and WCPFC CCM 2013-05, which are both designed to require tracking of catch and effort while fishing with a longline within the convention area. *TAKE MARU* was also found to be in violation of CMM 2008-03 requiring safe release sea turtle mitigation measures. The Coast Guard boarding team documented the WCPFC CMM violations and educated the master on the proper protocol. D17 reported the boarding and results to both the WCPFC Secretariat and flag of registry (Japan) in accordance with standard WCPFC reporting procedures. The enforcement results of this inquiry are expected to be reported during the WCPFC annual meeting.

YUUIJIN MARU NO. 2 was boarded by *DOUGLAS MUNRO* on September 11 on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean. *YUUIJIN MARU NO. 2* was a long liner targeting highly migratory tuna stocks inside the WCPFC Convention Area. The boarding was conducted to evaluate compliance against WCPFC CMMs. *YUUIJIN MARU NO. 2* was found to be in violation of CMM 2008-03 requiring safe release sea turtle mitigation measures. The Coast Guard boarding team documented the WCPFC CMM violations and educated the master on the proper protocol. D17 reported the boarding and results to both the WCPFC Secretariat and flag of registry (Japan) in accordance with standard WCPFC reporting procedures. The enforcement results of this inquiry are expected to be reported during the WCPFC annual meeting.

The WCPFC HSB&I regime, developed in part with USCG involvement, has proven to be a critical tool for patrolling USCG cutters to employ in the pursuit of addressing IUU fishing activity on the high seas; including enforcement against the practice of large-scale high seas driftnet fishing. In cases where a species regulated by the WCPFC could be found on a vessel in the North Pacific, the WCPFC HSB&I regime provides USCG patrol assets with a mechanism for establishing jurisdiction to board foreign fishing vessels on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean. Boardings conducted pursuant to these procedures ensure compliance with the provisions of the Convention and the CMMs adopted by the Commission (including a prohibition against large-scale high seas driftnet fishing). The WCPFC HSB&I regime facilitates reporting to flag state authorities and requires transparency on flag state actions taken pursuant to reports of suspected violations of WCPFC regulations.

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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 a second meeting was held in June 2017 in Seattle, Washington, USA. Building on past discussions through the S&ED process and other fora, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to jointly combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; strengthen cooperation under bilateral frameworks and in regional fisheries management organizations and 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 and trade information. 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 third meeting will be hosted by China at a date and location to be determined.

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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 for on April 21, 2008. A third renewal of the MOU was signed in June 2013, again for a duration of five years.

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

Representatives of the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Department of State (DOS), the U.S. Coast Guard, and Taiwan met on September 11, 2017 at NOAA's Southwest Fisheries Science Center in La Jolla, California. The purpose of the meeting was to carry out bilateral discussions on fisheries as well as agree to a schedule on which to negotiate the renewal of the MOU and the updating of the work plan. Ambassador David Balton, DOS, is the lead for the U.S. delegation and Mr. Hong-Yen Huang is the Deputy Director-General of the Fisheries Agency for Taiwan.

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 MOU is valid for 5 years after the latest signature. As such, the MOU will lapse on 18 June 2018, with renewal negotiations projected to be held throughout 2017 and early 2018. In the meantime, the U.S. and Taiwan will continue to collaborate on fisheries issues through international fora, periodic "report card" reviews covering progress on the MOU and Workplan, and other relevant discussions as determined by DOS and NOAA.

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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 Ambassador David Balton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and Fisheries Affairs. 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

Trent Hartill, Federal Fisheries Coordinator, 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. The agreement expires on December 31, 2018.

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 28th Session of the ICC on Fisheries in La Jolla, California in September 2017. The Russian delegation was led by Ilya Shestakov, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Head of the Federal Agency for Fisheries and 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, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Coast Guard, was led by Ambassador David Balton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State 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 crabs); 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.

Russia proposed hosting the 29th ICC meeting in September 2018.

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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 was not renewed, but both the policy and scientific dialogues continue.

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.

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 9th US-Norway Fisheries Consultations were held in Annapolis, Maryland, USA during 25-26 September 2018. Mr. Andrew Lawler (NOAA Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries), Mr. Samuel Rauch (NOAA Fisheries Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Affairs), Mr. Paul Doremus (NOAA Fisheries Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations), and Mr. John Henderschedt (Director NOAA Fisheries Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection) co-led the U.S. delegation, which 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 and fisheries 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.

Future Meetings: Norway agreed to host the 10th Informal Fisheries Consultation in 2019--place and exact time to be determined.

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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), U.S. Department of State (DOS), and U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) representatives met with representatives of the European Commission's Directorate-General (D-G) for Fisheries and Marine Affairs on February 21-22, 2018, in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA, for the 17th 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 Bill Gibbons-Fly, Director of the Office of Marine Conservation, U.S. Department of State, and John Henderschedt, Director of the NOAA Fisheries Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, co-led the U.S. delegation.

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 (18th) session of the U.S.-EU High Level Fisheries Consultations remains to be determined, but it is projected to be early in 2018 in Brussels, Belgium.

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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
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Chair of Governing Council
Dr. Chul Park
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Vice Chair:
Prof. Enrique Curchitser
Environmental Sci/Institute of Marine and Coastal Sci.
Rutgers University
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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. Cisco Werner
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Academic Representative:

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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-30: Working Group on Assessment of Marine Environmental Quality of Radiation around the North Pacific (Aug. 2013-2016).
- WG-31: Working Group on Emerging Topics in Marine Pollution (Jan. 2014-2016).
- WG-32: Working Group on Biodiversity of Biogenic Habitats (Jan. 2015-2017).
- WG-33: Joint PICES/ICES Working Group on Climate Change and Biologically-driven Ocean Carbon Sequestration (Oct. 2015 - 2018)
- WG-34: Joint PICES/ISC Working Group on Ocean Conditions and the Distribution and Productivity of Highly Migratory Fish (Oct. 2015 - 2018)
- WG 35: Working Group on Third North Pacific Ecosystem Status Report (WG-NPESR3) (May 2016 – Nov. 2019)
- WG 36: Working Group on Common Ecosystem Reference Points across PICES Member Countries (Nov. 2016 – Oct. 2019)
- WG 37: Zooplankton Production Methodologies, Applications and Measurements in PICES Regions (Nov. 2016 – Oct. 2019)
- WG 38: Mesoscale and Submesoscale Processes (Nov. 2016 – Oct. 2019)
- WG 39: Joint PICES/ICES/PAME Working Group on an Integrated Ecosystem Assessment for the Central Arctic Ocean (Nov. 2016 – Oct. 2018)
- WG 40: Working Group on Climate and Ecosystem Predictability (Jul. 2017- Oct. 2020)
- WG 41: Working Group on Marine Ecosystem Services (Sept. 2017 - Sept. 2020)

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 (Oct. 2015 - 2020)
- S-CCME: Section on Climate Change Effects on Marine Ecosystems (Jan. 2012–Dec. 2017)
- S-HAB: Section on Ecology of Harmful Algal Blooms in the North Pacific (Oct. 2003–Dec. 2017)
- S-CC: Section on Carbon and Climate (Oct. 2005–Dec. 2016)

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-PICES-NPFC: Joint PICES-NPFC Study Group for Scientific Cooperation in the North Pacific Ocean (Oct. 2017 – Oct. 2018)
- SG-MMP: Study Group on Marine Microplastics (Oct. 2017 – Oct. 2018)

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 2017 PICES Annual Meeting was held September 22 to October 1 in Vladivostok, Russia on the topic of “Environmental Changes in the North Pacific and Impacts on Biological Resources and Ecosystem Services.” Information of other meetings, symposia and workshops held in 2017 can be found at the PICES website: <http://pices.int/meetings/>

Budgetary Matters

The contracting parties are assessed approximately \$127,700 annually as of 2016.

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. Toshiaki Kobayashi (Japan);
Ms. Dongmei Tang (PR China);
Dr. Fangli Qiao (PR China);
Mr. Man Wook Heo (Republic of Korea);
Dr. Cisco Werner (USA).

F&A Committee

Dr. Carmel Lowe (Canada), Chair;
Ms. Andrea White (Canada);
Dr. Michael Seki (USA);

Ms. Allison Reed (USA);
Dr. Nobuaki Suzuki (Japan);
Dr. Igor Shevchenko (Russia);
Ms. Dongmei Tang (PR China);
Ms. Rui Zheng (PR China);
Dr. Wonjoon Shim (Republic of Korea);
Mr. Jaekwan Chung (Republic of Korea).

Science Board

Dr. Jennifer Boldt (Canada), MONITOR Chair;
Dr. Motomitsu Takahashi (Japan);
Prof. Kiroaki Saito (Japan), SB Chair;
Dr. Igor Shevchenko (Russia);
Dr. Chuanlin Hua (PR China), MEQ Chair;
Prof. Xianshi Jin (PR China), FIS Chair;
Dr. Se-Jong Ju (Republic of Korea), BIO Chair;
Dr. Sukyung Kang (Republic of Korea), FUTURE-SSC Co-chair;
Dr. Joon-Soo Lee (Republic of Korea), TCODE Chair;
Dr. Steven Bograd (USA), FUTURE-SSC Co-chair;
Dr. Keith Criddle (USA), HD Chair;
Prof. Emanuele Di Lorenzo (USA), SB Vice-Chair, POC Chair

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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 Nordurlod, 600 Akureyri, Iceland. Email address: CAFF@caff.is; telephone: +354 462 3350.

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United States 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 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 the Arctic ecosystem 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 has 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). The Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group has been incorporated into the CBMP-Marine Implementation Program. 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, in addition to developing seabird initiatives for CAFF.

CBird has four products coming out in the near future: (1) Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Framework, (2) Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan, (3) International Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy and (4) Harvest of Seabirds in the Arctic. 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/adminstrative-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 Integrated Monitoring Plan for Pan-Arctic Marine Biodiversity which was delivered to the CAFF Board in January 2011. Plans for the Terrestrial and Freshwater Expert Monitoring Groups have also been developed, and a Coastal Ecosystem Monitoring Plan is under development. The CBMP-Marine Group drafted and released its State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR) in 2018 (available at: <https://www.arcticbiodiversity.is/marine>).

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.

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 2013-2015 Work Plan places 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 Plan emphasizes cooperation and collaboration with other Arctic Council Working Groups, and organizations outside of the Arctic Council, and makes efforts to actively contribute to the global conservation agenda. The plan describes CAFF main areas of emphasis in the coming years as: (1) Monitoring, (2) Assessment, (3) Strategies, (4) Data Management, (5) Communications, and (6) Cooperation.

E. Meetings:

CAFF meets in plenary every two years. United States 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>.

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Russian-American Long-term Census of the Arctic (RUSALCA)

The Russian-American Long-term Census of the Arctic (RUSALCA) program is a cooperative framework for scientific cruises, monitoring sites and synthesis work jointly conducted by researchers from the Russian Federation and the United States. RUSALCA stems from a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) for World Ocean and Polar Regions Studies between NOAA and the Russian Academy of Sciences. The focus of RUSALCA is on monitoring and repeat surveys of biological, geological, chemical and physical parameters in the Bering Strait and the Chukchi Sea. The purpose is to understand the evolving impacts of climate change on these indicators in the Arctic. The first RUSALCA cruise was conducted in 2004 and involved both sampling and the deployment of moorings. Subsequent work has repeated initial sampling tracks and extending the observational moorings. This program has not been active since 2015.

Website: <http://www.arctic.noaa.gov/rusalca/>

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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

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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):

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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 2012, at the 100th statutory meeting of the ICES Council, Dr. Paul Connolly (Ireland) was elected ICES President for a three-year term (November 2012–October 2015) succeeding Mike Sinclair. Dr. Connolly is the Director of Fisheries Ecosystems Advisory Services (FEAS) at the Marine Institute in Galway, Ireland. In 1999 he became Ireland's Delegate to ICES, and in 2003 was elected Vice President of ICES and served on the ICES Bureau until 2005. In 2005, ICES appointed Dr. Connolly as chair of a committee that conducted a root and branch reform of ICES and the way the organization delivers its scientific advice. These reforms focused on making the scientific advice more transparent to stakeholders, more integrated, and more in tune with the needs of clients. The reforms were adopted by ICES in 2008. He was elected First Vice President of ICES in 2006. In 2011, Dr. Connolly chaired

the Bureau Working Group that established the Terms of Reference (TORs) and schedule for the international review of ICES advisory services.

For information on recent activities, please consult <http://www.ices.dk/>.

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GLOBAL

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Basic Instrument

Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility (GEF). Participating countries initially approved the Instrument in March 1994 and 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, 183 member governments, including both recipient governments and donor governments, participate in the GEF. See www.thegef.org for a complete list.

Secretariat Headquarters

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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 4,000 projects in more than 170 developing countries and countries with economies in transition. These grants amount to \$17 billion from the GEF alongside an additional \$88 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 20,000 small grants directly to civil society and community based organizations, totaling \$1 billion.

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. NOAA also often collaborates with implementing agencies to provide technical and capacity-building support to recipient countries on project activities.

Description

I. Mission/Purpose

The GEF is a global partnership between 183 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 and the ecosystem goods and services that it provides to society." The GEF's four biodiversity objectives are to (1) improve sustainability of protected area systems; (2) reduce threats to biodiversity; (3) sustainably use biodiversity; and (4) mainstream conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into production landscapes/seascapes and sectors. The IW focal area helps governments collectively manage transboundary water resources. 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. 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 global sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation through the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) program, part of the IW focal area 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 ABNJ Program was approved by GEF Council in November 2011. Since then, the GEF has provided \$50M of grants in the Biodiversity and IW focal areas, leveraging over \$269.7M 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.

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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 8th meeting of the APEC Oceans and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG8) was held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea from March 4-5, 2018 on the margins of the second APEC Senior Officials Meeting of the year. Fifteen APEC member economies attended the meeting: Canada, Chile, the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States. A liaison from the APEC Policy Partnership on Science, Technology and Innovation and a representative of the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) also participated in the meeting. External guests included representatives from the Association of Pacific Rim Universities and the Nature

Conservancy. 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).

APEC 2018 host, Papua New Guinea, opened the meeting with an emphasis on sustainable development, trade facilitation and food security. Numerous projects were also presented on topics including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, marine debris, and the blue economy, among others. Additional discussion focused on expanding cross-fora collaboration and engaging industry in both meetings and project work. The working group agreed that continued joint meetings with the Policy Partnership on Food Security (PPFS) are desirable, but also noted that the schedule of these meetings should be adjusted to allow for fuller participation by both groups. OFWG and PPFS held a very successful joint working session on the afternoon of March 5th and it was agreed that the two groups should collaborate closely to engage industry in future work. ABAC was represented at a joint meeting with PPFS as well and supported this initiative. The next joint meeting will be held in August 2018 during APEC Food Security Week.

Upcoming Meetings

The OFWG will meet once again in Papua New Guinea in August 2018 during APEC Food Security Week. The OFWG meeting will be followed with a PPFS meeting and interactions with a range of other APEC fora are likely to take place.

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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.

The Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) will hold the 7th Regional Consultative Forum Meeting on 7-9 May and the Thirty-fifth Session from 11-13 May and in Bohol, Philippines. The theme is "Sustainable Development for Blue Growth of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Asia-Pacific.

The Commission identified a number of thematic areas for the second fishery theme for the work of the Commission.

- Practical adaptations for climate change in fisheries and aquaculture lessons learned and best practices from the APFIC region; – Capturing the opportunities of the value chain to promote Blue Growth;
- Risk of antimicrobial resistance in aquaculture and required coping strategies;
- APFIC member countries progress in combatting IUU fishing, with latest developments in managing fleets, fisheries and their activities, the sharing of lessons learned, and capacity building in the region; and
- Review of effectiveness of fishery management in APFIC member countries, the opportunities and lessons learned for using EAF as a planning framework for Blue Growth in fisheries.

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.

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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 2018 meeting of the Trilateral will be held April 9-12 at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV.

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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, creating the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC). The CEC Council has structured its work around three main themes: (1) Climate Change; (2) Green Growth; and (3) Sustainable Communities and Ecosystems. Crosscutting themes include: (a) Learning from and assisting vulnerable groups and indigenous communities; (b) Enhancing the alignment of environmental regulatory standards, enforcement and compliance; and (c) Enhancing information, transparency, capacity building and communication. Projects focus on the protection of the North American environment, and therefore trilateral environmental problems, issues and cooperation are given priority in funding.

The 2017–2018 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; 2) Finding Community Solutions to Marine Litter; and 3) Conserving Shorebirds through Community Engagement.

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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.

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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.

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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). As of December 2015 FAO employed 1738 professional staff and 1510 support staff. Approximately 57 percent are based at headquarters in Rome, while the remainder work in offices worldwide. During the last 15 years, the proportion of women in the professional staff category has nearly doubled, from 19 percent to 37 percent.

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, José Graziano da Silva was elected in June 2011 and was re-elected for a term that expires on July 31, 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. More than 60 percent of Field Program finances come from national trust funds and nearly a quarter is provided by the United Nations Development Program. FAO contributes through its Technical Cooperation Program (TCP).

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 2016-17 is USD 2.6 billion. 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. The voluntary contributions are expected to reach approximately USD 1,6 billion in 2016-17.

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 will meet in Rome July 9-13, 2018.

Website: <http://www.fao.org>

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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).

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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 sponsored by the Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission (IOC), 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.

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 Joint World Meteorological Organization (WMO)-IOC Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM) 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 Toulouse manages deployments of the array of over 3400 Argo floats and 1250 surface drifters throughout the ocean, with IOC/UNESCO's support. More than 2000 deployments per year are required to maintain the two global arrays. Argo sampling is global and year-round. Argo's 1 millionth profile was collected in November 2012. As of March 2016, 33 Argo floats equipped with BioGeoChemical (BGC) sensors have been deployed in the Southern Ocean south of 30° S with an additional 17 to be deployed by May of 2016.

The eighth session of the GOOS Regional Alliance (GRA) convened in Singapore on 5-7 September 2017. The Forum provided an opportunity to discuss the highlights, progress, and challenges over the last two years. The Forum discussed the agreed GRA priorities including actions from GRA VII (including asset mapping and modeling inventories), cross-GRA pilot projects, and new observing networks (ocean gliders, high-frequency radar).

The Forum also explored the potential for new partnerships between GRAs and other programs relevant to GOOS, with an emphasis on capacity development in: 1) Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON); 2) Regional ocean observing initiatives; 3) Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs); 4) Modelling and Forecasting.

The GOOS Regional Council agreed on eighteen actions. Moreover, there is a need to explore stronger engagement of national programs (such as those emerging in Canada and South Africa) in the GOOS regional observing enterprise, as well as stronger interlinkages between GRAs. It was agreed that IMOS (Tim Moltmann) would pass the Chair of the GRA Regional Council to EuroGOOS (Glenn Nolan) at the end of 2017, with IO GOOS (Dr Satheesh Shenoi) taking up the role of Vice Chair.

The Fourth Meeting of the GOOS Steering Committee in May 2015 noted the development of activities:

- Physics Panel (OOPC, technical secretariat: Katy Hill, Global Climate Observing System, Geneva)
- Biogeochemistry Panel (led by Toste Tanhua Germany))
- Biology and Ecosystems Panel (international project officer: Patricia Miloslavich, AIMS Townsville, Australia and Ward Appeltans (Sam Simmons leader; Nic Bax co-chair)
- This has created a distributed GOOS Office coordinated through the IOC Secretariat in Paris, building as well on the secretariats of the GOOS Regional Alliances. These project-based and in-kind contributions have allowed a fuller set of GOOS activities to advance, notably in biogeochemical and biological observations.

GOOS has also begun a project approach to build readiness for sustained ocean observations.

- Tropical Pacific Observing System in 2020 project (TPOS 2020) and its plans to draft recommendations for a step change in tropical Pacific observations.
- The Committee also reviewed progress in setting up a Deep Ocean Observing Strategy project, and emphasized the importance of maintaining strong links with the AtlantOS project (aiming to leave a legacy for GOOS of better integrated and sustained observations for all countries around the Atlantic) and the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network.

The WCRP-IOC Regional Sea Level Changes and Coastal Impacts: conference statement concluded in October 2017:

- “The present state of sea-level science provides unambiguous evidence that sea level is rising and that the increase will continue to accelerate with unmitigated emissions. This requires that scientists closely collaborate with the stakeholder community to develop plans for responding to sea-level change affecting their coasts and to implement adequate adaptation measures. Without urgent and significant mitigating action to combat climate change, continue greenhouse gas emissions will almost certainly commit the world to several meters of sea-level rise in the next few centuries.”

The GOOS Steering Committee has begun planning for the Ocean Obs'19 meeting, September 16-20, in Hawaii which will build 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. Each conference of the OceanObs series has focused and will focus on a new area in need of enhanced guidance. OceanObs'09 resulted in an internationally coordinated system for physical climate and ocean carbon observations. OceanObs'09 expanded the range of communities working together to undertake more comprehensive and sustain ocean observations and led to the Framework for Ocean Observing. OceanObs'19 will seek to better connect observers with end user communities.

GOOS Steering Committee Co-Chairs

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Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

Founded in 1960, The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO mission is to: “promote international cooperation and to coordinate programmes in research, services and capacity building, in order to learn more about the nature and resources of the ocean and coastal areas and to apply that knowledge for the improvement management, sustainable development and protection of the marine environment and the decision making process of its Member States.” The IOC’s high level objectives in this 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

The U.S. and NOAA have been deeply involved in IOC since its inception through such IOC programmes as:

- UNESCO-IOC oversees a Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) to observe, model and analyze marine and ocean variables, supported by U.S. including NOAA for global GOOS instrumentation, financial support, data management and scientific leadership. GOOS implementation is supported by JCOMM, the Joint Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology. JCOMM is an intergovernmental body of technical experts that provides a mechanism for international coordination of oceanographic and marine meteorological observing, data management and services, combining the expertise, technologies and capacity building capabilities of the meteorological and oceanographic communities. The data the system yields are used to provide accurate descriptions of the present state of the oceans, including living resources; continuous forecasts of the future conditions of the sea for as far ahead as possible, and the basis for climate forecasts and marine meteorology and in the future, ecosystem based management. In 2014, IOC completed its coastal GOOS program and much of the coordination is accomplished through the GOOS Regional Alliance.
- U.S. support to the ocean carbon program (through staff support and scientific leadership formerly at IOC) through the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) plays a key role in advancing international knowledge on ocean acidification and promotes development of a global network of ocean carbon observations for research. The IOC has brought new international visibility to ocean acidification through its quadrennial Ocean in a High CO₂ World expert meetings. The IOC and IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) are developing a joint secretariat capacity to support the global ocean acidification observing network (GOA-ON). IOC also provides limited financial support to the World Climate Research Program and seeks to expand its work in climate change adaptation, with special focus in Africa.
- Following devastating tsunamis generated from earthquakes in Chile (1960) and Alaska (1964), the newly created IOC established an International Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific, with the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (PTWC) and the International Tsunami Information Centre (ITIC) in Honolulu, Hawaii Islands (USA). 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.
- IOC’s twenty year program on Harmful Algal Blooms has been instrumental as a catalyst to national programs (including US ECOHAB), publication of IOC standards manuals, extensive international training programs, and establishment of science and communication centers in Denmark and Spain. Over the past 20 years, IOC has by itself or with partners organized training courses in species identification, toxicity testing, and monitoring and management strategies. The IOC is implementing a Ciguatera Strategy in cooperation with the WHO and FAO and by coordinating research needed by Member States through the Global HAB Programme.

- IOC's participation in the International Large Marine Ecosystem partnership for twenty years has been instrumental in forging scientific and management collaboration through the Global Environment Facility, with key U.S. scientific engagement. The IOC now coordinates a GEF program on inter-regional LME capacity building.
- In 2011, it commemorated its 50th year to facilitate the exchange of oceanographic data and information between participating Member States, and by meeting the needs of users for data and information products. Program emphasis has been on building a global network for Oceanographic Data Centres (especially in Africa), and integration with IOC programs such as GOOS/JCOMM, tsunamis, HAB, long-term accessibility and archival of oceanographic data, meta-data and information, regional seabed data atlases, etc. IOC is expanding its data management focused Ocean Teacher Program into a Global Academy (with regional centers) for expanded regional and distance learning opportunities on all topics of IOC interest.
- In December 2015, the IOC launched the second five year International Indian Ocean Expedition.
- In June 2015, the IOC adopted two new strategies, Ciguatera and Capacity Building, which will be implemented in 2016-2017.

In 2015, the IOC published the results of the first cycle of the Regular Process (2010–2014) under the United Nations, which will result in the first integrated global marine assessment of the world's oceans and seas, including socio-economic aspects, also known as the World Ocean Assessment (WOA).

A growing area for substantial new IOC and U.S. engagement will be the Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment (GRAME) now under review at the United Nations General Assembly and climate change adaptation.

Recent Developments

- The United Nations adopted the IOC proposed UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development in 2017 and requested an implementation plan for the Decade which will begin in 2021.
- The IOC published its first Global Ocean Science Report: Current Status of Ocean Science around the World
- For the first time in 58 years, the U.S., while remaining a member of the IOC Assembly, will be an observer to the IOC Executive Council in 2018 as a result of the election process in 2017. See also note below.
- IOC-GOOS is developing a ten-year strategic plan and preparing for participation with the global science community in OceanObs 2019. IOC will also consider a governance framework for biogeochemical sensors at its upcoming July 2018 Executive Council meeting.
- IOC is currently developing a strategy for an ocean data and information system that may include an Ocean Data Portal
- The IOC sponsored a symposium in February 2018 on enhancing existing operational tsunami forecasting to further develop warning products and enhancing timely, accurate, reliable and effective decision-making and community response.
- IOC established an IOC Working Group on user requirements and contributions to the IOC-IHO bathymetric products, in support of IOC-IHO (International Hydrology Organization) and the international campaign to map the world's oceans, "Seabed 2030."
- The IOC will continue to provide technical and scientific support the second cycle of the Regular Process for the World Ocean Assessment
- 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.
- 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.

NOTE:

- The United States has decided to withdraw from UNESCO and to seek to establish a permanent observer mission to the organization (effective at the end of 2018).
<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/10/274748.htm>

- As a non-member state observer, the U.S. can continue to participate 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 in 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.

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IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE)

IOCARIBE is a subcommission of the IOC of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The aim of IOCARIBE is the same as that of the IOC--to promote marine scientific investigations and technology and related ocean services with a view to learning more about the nature and resources of the oceans through the concerted action of IOCARIBE Members States.

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, Russia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States, and Venezuela.

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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 include:

- Design and development of a Sargasum 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)
- Support establishment of an IOCARIBE-GOOS Working Group and pilot program
- 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

Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem+ Project

The UNDP/GEF CLME+ Project aims at facilitating Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) and implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) in the CLME+ region, in order to ensure the sustainable and climate-resilient provision of goods and services from shared living marine resources.

Given its regional and comprehensive nature, the CLME+ Project is uniquely positioned to address the root causes of environmental degradation, in particular the gaps and weaknesses in transboundary and cross-sectoral governance arrangements.

In this same context, the project will 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+ Strategic Action Programme](#).

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 spin lobster fisheries
- Several new MPAs established in region
- 8th simultaneous closed spin lobster fisheries in Central American Integration System
- Marine Spatial Planning in region increasing
- Augmentation in ratification of UNEP protocols on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife, and Land-based Sources of Pollution
- Increased financial support

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Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Climate change is a very complex issue. 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 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.

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 (<http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/index.shtml>). 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 will produce three Special Reports, a Methodology Report on national greenhouse gas inventories, and the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6). The 43rd Session of the IPCC held in April 2016 agreed that the AR6 Synthesis Report would 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. The three Working Group contributions to AR6 will be finalized in 2021.

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.

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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

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 Special Report topics are:

1. The impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways
2. Effect of climate change and oceans and the cryosphere; and
3. The effect of climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems.

These will be prepared as early as possible in the cycle for completing the next IPCC Assessment Report (AR6).

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.

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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 ISC17 Plenary Meeting

The 17th ISC Plenary, held in Vancouver, British Columbia Canada from 12-17 July 2017, was attended by Members from Canada, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea, Mexico and the United States, as well as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Management Commission and the North Pacific Marine Science Organization. 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 North Pacific albacore tuna (NPALB) is not experiencing overfishing and is not overfished, and considers the NPALB stock assessment to be best available scientific information. The Plenary also endorsed the findings that North Pacific blue shark (BSH) is not experiencing overfishing and is not overfished, and considers the North Pacific BSH stock assessment to be best available scientific information. It re-iterated stock status and conservation information proffered at ISC16 for North Pacific swordfish, Pacific blue marlin, North Pacific striped marlin, and North Pacific shortfin mako shark. It reiterated stock status condition proffered at ISC16 for Pacific bluefin tuna, and provided revised conservation information based on extensive harvest scenario testing requested by WCPFC and IATTC. A science seminar on HMS tagging and lessons learned was held and the Plenary agreed to assess the feasibility of developing an multinational North Pacific bluefin tuna tagging program. Observers from Pew Charitable Trusts, World Wildlife Fund for Nature – Japan, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Wild Oceans, Tohoku University, Waseda University, and American Fisherman’s Research Foundation/American Albacore Fishing Association attended. The ISC workplan for 2017-18 includes completing Pacific Bluefin tuna, North Pacific shortfin mako shark, and North Pacific swordfish assessments, improving catch and CPUE time series and advancing biological information for shark species, conducting the third MSE workshop, developing protocols for an ISC stock assessment review process, and enhancing database and website management. John Holmes (Canada) was elected as the new ISC Chair and Shui-Kai (Eric) Chang (Chinese Taipei) as Vice Chair. The next Plenary will be held in the Korea in July 2018.

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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 2014 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 research projects for 2016 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 projects for the Aquaculture Panel for 2015 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 scheduled the annual Joint Project Agreement meeting for 2018 in the US to review accomplishments and plan cooperative projects for the following year.

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Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs)

Description

The NOAA Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) Program, coordinated through the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office of Science and Technology (OST), partners with United Nations (UN) agencies and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to provide scientific and technical support to developing countries for the implementation of ecosystem-based management (EBM) of transboundary marine resources.

NOAA developed the LME approach over 30 years ago. In 1991, the GEF adopted this framework as the marine component of their International Waters Focal Area. Through multi-national projects, the GEF and partners have assisted over 124 countries to work together within 23 of the world's 66 LMEs to implement ecosystem-based approaches to assess, manage, recover, and sustain marine resources. All projects begin with a science-based analysis that defines key transboundary marine resource priorities, as well as identifies the root-causes of challenges to those resources. This is called the transboundary diagnostic analysis, or TDA. From the TDA, the projects identify policy-based actions that the participating countries can take collectively to address the identified resource issues and move toward sustainable use and conservation. This results in the development of a Strategic Action Programme, or SAP, which is endorsed by representatives from each participating country. The TDA/SAP process ensures that conservation and management measures for shared marine resources are based on the best available scientific information.

Through the NOAA LME program, OST identifies areas of potential collaboration and facilitates NOAA partnerships with LME projects to provide relevant scientific and technical expertise and support the implementation of ecosystem-based management. NOAA partners have included, among others, the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Marine Protected Areas Center, the Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory, Fisheries Science Centers (e.g. Southeast, Pacific Islands), and the NOAA Office of General Counsel, International Section.

If you are interested in engaging in LME projects and the global network of LME partners, please reach out to the NOAA LME Program staff contacts listed below.

LME Projects

The GEF and other donors have catalyzed financial support for LME projects. NOAA partners with UN agencies (e.g. UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO, FAO, and IOC-UNESCO), the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), and NGOs (e.g. IUCN, CI, WWF) to provide scientific and technical support to the LME projects.

The GEF committed financial assistance to the following LME projects:

1. [AGULHAS AND SOMALI CURRENTS LME PROJECT](#)
2. [BAY OF BENGAL LME PROJECT](#)
3. [BENGUELA CURRENT LME, BENGUELA CURRENT COMMISSION AND CONVENTION](#)
4. [BLACK SEA LME PROJECT](#)
5. [CANARY CURRENT LME PROJECT](#)
6. [CARIBBEAN SEA LME PROJECT](#)
7. [GUINEA CURRENT LME PROJECT](#)
8. [THE GULF OF MEXICO LME PROJECT](#)
9. SOUTH CHINA SEA LME PROJECT
10. [HUMBOLDT CURRENT LME PROJECT](#)
11. INDONESIA SEA LME PROJECT
12. MEDITERRANEAN SEA LME PROJECT
13. PATAGONIAN SHELF LME PROJECT
14. SULU-CELEBES SEA LME PROJECT
15. YELLOW SEA LME PROJECT

Recent Activities

NOAA, through the NMFS OST, is a member of the Steering Committee of a global LME partnership community called "LME:LEARN" - or *Strengthening Global Governance of Large Marine Ecosystems and Their Coasts*

through Enhanced Sharing and Application of LME/ICM/MPA Knowledge and Information Tools. The overarching goal of LME:LEARN is to establish a sustained global community of practice to enhance the network of partners providing consistent ecosystem-based methods and technical support to the LME projects. This effort is coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, and has a strong emphasis on the development and application of diverse capacity building tools and opportunities to synthesize and incorporate knowledge into policy-making.

These tools and opportunities include knowledge management, such as the development of a series of linked, complementary toolkits (e.g. governance, ecosystem-based management, economic valuation, marine spatial planning) that collectively promote capacity building. LME:LEARN supports a series of regional networks (Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific) to improve regional governance and cooperation within LME regions, as well as coordination between LME, marine protected areas (MPA), marine spatial planning (MSP), and integrated coastal zone management (ICM) projects. LME:LEARN also supports “twinning” exchanges between LME projects, other GEF ICM/MPA/MSP projects, various intergovernmental and governmental institutions, and educational and research institutions. These interactions enable participants to share experiences and best practices, learning from each other to more effectively manage transboundary resources.

For more information on LME:LEARN, the LME projects, community and approach, please visit <http://marine.iwlearn.net/>, as well as the Large Marine Ecosystems Hub at <http://www.lmehub.net/>. To learn more about the LME regional networks, please visit <http://marine.iwlearn.net/services/regional-networking>.

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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.

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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.

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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 next Signatory States meeting is tentatively planned for the fall of 2018.

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/>

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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).

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 replaces separate scientific cooperation agreements between the IMR and the NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center and the NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center. The Addendum serves 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 Woods Hole, Massachusetts, USA during May 3-4, 2018 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:

- Aligning science and policy agendas

- Joint Program of Arctic Scientific Research and Monitoring
- Aquaculture research and technology
- Stock assessment methods and ecosystem modeling
- Data and visualization
- Climate vulnerability assessments
- Advanced technologies
- Integrated Ecosystem Assessments and Socioeconomics
- Scientist exchanges

Next meeting

The next science meeting is scheduled for May 2019, in a location yet to be determined.

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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 2019-2020 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.

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. The *Review* contains a table reporting Member government support programs to the fisheries sector. This compilation has been renamed the Fisheries Support Estimate but remains the only place in the world where this information is collected in one place. Web address: <http://www.oecd.org/>

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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.

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 plus the United States, Australia, New Zealand, France, and the United Kingdom.

Programmes/Strategic Priorities

SPREP organizes its work under four strategic priorities: 1) Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management; 2) Climate Change; 3) Environmental Governance and Monitoring; 4) Waste Management and Pollution Control.

Website: <http://www.sprep.org>

NOAA's engagement with SPREP spans the breadth of NOAA's equities, including fisheries, oceans and coastal resource management, disaster risk reduction, etc. NOAA's representative to SPREP is responsible for the coordination of NOAA's engagement and is in the NOAA Office of International Affairs.

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Protocol for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA W) 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 W 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 W 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 area. 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 W 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 W 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 W Protocol are the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guyana, 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 8th Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the SPA W Protocol is expected to be held in the summer of 2018. The SPA W STAC meeting will likely run back-to-back with the LBS Protocol STAC meeting. The 10th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the SPA W Protocol has not been confirmed, but will take place in late 2018/early 2019.

Website address: <http://www.cep.unep.org/cartagena-convention>

Recent Developments:

The 7th Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the SPA W Protocol took place in Miami, FL, 2-4 November 2016. The STAC meeting provides the opportunity to review, evaluate, and refer proposals to the Parties for adoption at the SPA W Conference of Parties. The 9th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the SPA W Protocol took place 13-17 March 2017 in Cayenne, French Guiana. The Parties agreed to list 12 additional species for protection under the Protocol, including NOAA's proposal to list Nassau Grouper to Annex III. Other species of interest to NOAA approved for listing included: the smalltooth sawfish to Annex II and the oceanic whitetip shark, manta ray, hammerhead shark and whale shark to Annex III. The Parties also approved the submission by Cuba to list the National Park Cayos de San Felipe as a protected area.

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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

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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 five 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

- Lana Pollack, Chair
- Rich Moy, Commissioner

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.

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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 that was signed on May 8, 1979. The Protocol was renewed and extended on December 28, 2009 and 2014 for a five-year term. NOAA is the lead U.S. agency for this protocol; the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) is the lead agency for China. 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 serving as the U.S. Chair. Joint Working Group (JWG) meetings are generally held on a biennial basis.

The Objectives for the Marine and Fishery Science and Technology Protocol are:

- 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, 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.

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 will be in China during the last week of July 2018. The JSEG consists of 7 U.S. and Chinese governmental and non-governmental members.

U.S. Co-Chair:

Francisco Werner
Chief Science Advisor &
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U.S.-France Cooperative Program

Under the U.S.-France Cooperative Program in Oceanography, the Director of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center serves as the U.S. Program Leader for the Living Resources Panel. French and U.S. scientists have collaborated on various projects including: (1) Technological Interactions in Multi-Species Fisheries; (2) Age Composition of Fisheries Catch; (3) Genetic Manipulation: Shellfish and Marine Invertebrates; (4) COADS (Comprehensive Ocean-Atmosphere Data Set) Data Bank for Fisheries; (5) CEOS (Climate and Eastern Ocean Systems); (6) Spatio-temporal Scales in the Dynamics of Exploited Populations; and (7) Automated Image Processing Techniques for Classification and Assessment of Living Resources.

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U.S.-Morocco Cooperation

The United States established fisheries ties with Morocco in 1975, when a U.S. Regional Fisheries Attaché position was placed in Casablanca. These ties were formalized in 1983 through documents that called for cooperative exchanges between fisheries scientists at the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Miami and the Institut Scientifique des Peche Maritimes in Casablanca. In 1996, a delegation from NMFS visited Morocco to encourage marine scientific exchanges and help establish a science-based fisheries management program similar to that of the United States. During that visit, both the United States and Morocco expressed interest in: (1) rebuilding and maintaining sustainable fisheries, (2) promoting the recovery of protected or endangered species, and (3) protecting and maintaining the health of coastal marine habitats.

Morocco and the United States share access to many commercially-important highly migratory fish stocks, such as North Atlantic swordfish, and are both members of the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). One issue of key concern has been a 2003 ICCAT Recommendation to prohibit the use of driftnets in Mediterranean large pelagic fisheries. NMFS offered technical assistance to support this transition in Morocco, including two workshops held in 2008 (in Tangier and Agadir) to demonstrate the use of circle hooks in longline fisheries, as well as safe handling and release techniques for sea turtles. After several years of delays during which it cited economic hardship, Morocco finalized domestic legislation in 2010 to prohibit the use of driftnets after December 31, 2011. To carry out this prohibition, Morocco has adopted regulatory changes, vessel conversion strategies, a government buyout for some vessel owners, and supplemental training programs for their fishermen.

In 2010, NMFS participated in an interagency ceremony formalizing a multi-year work plan for the U.S.-Morocco Working Group on Environmental Cooperation. (The U.S.-Morocco Joint Statement on Environmental Cooperation was signed in 2004, related to the U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement.) In the context of this work plan, environmental cooperation between the United States and Morocco aims to support effective enforcement of environmental laws, to strengthen economic incentives for environmental protection, and to increase public awareness of environmental issues. The U.S. Department of State provided some funding to support the testing of alternative fishing gear types, recognizing eradication of driftnets as one element of the 2010-2012 work plan.

In 2012, a team of U.S. scientists traveled to Morocco to conduct workshops on the use of buoy gear as an alternative to driftnets. This gear has been used effectively in small-scale U.S. fisheries for swordfish in the Florida Straits with minimal bycatch.

Representatives from the United States and Morocco have also exchanged information on best practices to support sustainable marine aquaculture. In 2012, a team of U.S. scientists from NOAA and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute met with officials from the Moroccan Agency for Aquaculture Development (ANDA) and toured existing and potential aquaculture sites. A draft work plan was developed that focuses on 1) developing tools for coastal managers in Morocco to site and manage marine aquaculture in a sustainable manner, and 2) technology transfer to exchange information on coastal shellfish aquaculture techniques. NOAA and ANDA officials continue to seek funding partners for this work.

NOAA's Deputy Assistant for International Fisheries has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Ocean Fisheries of the Ministry of Agriculture and Ocean Fisheries of the Kingdom of Morocco. The Kingdom of Morocco hosted a formal signing ceremony in Agadir in November 2012.

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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.

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World Trade Organization (WTO)

The WTO (formerly the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) was established in 1947, 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.

Building on the progress made since the 10th Ministerial Conference as reflected in documents TN/RL/W/274/Rev.2, RD/TN/RL/29/Rev.3, 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.

Web address: <http://www.wto.org/>

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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 only be conducted 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 vessels or harvested within the context of joint ventures between U.S. 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 2018, all GIFAs, except the Mutual Fisheries Agreement with Russia, have lapsed. The GIFA with Russia was renewed in December 2013 for five years, and is set to expire on December 31, 2018. The United States and Russia have both expressed interest in extending the GIFA and negotiations are underway.

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
Australia	P			P	P	P	P	A	P	P
Austria						P			P	
Bahamas						P				
Bangladesh									P	
Barbados		P				P				
Belarus									P	
Belgium						P	P	P	P	
Belize		P	P	P		P				
Benin									P	
Bolivia			CNP						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						P	P	A	P	P
China		P	P	P	P		P			
Colombia			P							
Comoros				P						
Congo									P	
D.R. Congo									P	
Cook Islands					P	P	A		P	
Costa Rica			P			P			P	
Cote d'Ivoire		P							P	
Croatia		P							P	
Cuba									P	
Curaçao		P								
Cyprus						P			P	
Czech Republic						P			P	
Denmark						P		P	P	
Djibouti									P	
Ecuador			P		CNP				P	P
Egypt		P							P	
El Salvador		P	P		CNP					

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UNFSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
Equatorial Guinea		P							P	
Eritrea				P					P	
Estonia						P		P	P	
Ethiopia									P	
European Union	CNP	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	
Georgia									P	
Germany						P	P	P	P	
Ghana		P							P	
Greece						P	A	A	P	
Guatemala		P	P							
Guinea Rep.		P		P		P			P	
Guinea-Bissau									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	
Ireland						P		P	P	
Israel									P	
Italy						P	P		P	
Jamaica									P	
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	
Liberia		P	CNP		CNP	P			P	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		P							P	
Liechtenstein									P	
Lithuania						P		P	P	
Luxembourg						P			P	
Macedonia (FYR of)									P	
Madagascar				P					P	
Malaysia				P						
Maldives (Republic of)						P				
Mali									P	
Malta						P			P	

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UN FSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
Marshall Islands					P	P				
Mauritania		P							P	
Mauritius				P		P	A		P	
Mexico		P	P		CNP					
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	A	P	P	
New Zealand	P				P	P	P		P	P
Nicaragua		P	P							
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	
Serbia (Republic of)									P	
Seychelles				P		P			P	
Sierra Leone		P		P						
Slovakia						P			P	
Slovenia						P			P	
Solomon Islands					P	P				
Somalia									P	
South Africa	CNP	P		CNP		P	P	A	P	P

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UN FSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
Spain						P	P	P	P	P
Sri Lanka				P		P			P	
St. Vincent, the Grenadines		P								
Sudan				P						
Suriname		CNP								
Swaziland									P	
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				
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	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					P
China									P
Colombia									CNP
Cook Islands							P		P
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	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				CNP					P
Tonga (Kingdom of)							P		
Tuvalu							P		
Ukraine	P								
United Kingdom								A	
United States of America	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	CNP
Vanuatu							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
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

Geographic limits for Food and Agricultural Organization fishery statistical regions, convention areas of select regional fishery management organizations, scientific councils, fishing entities, and interest areas within the Arctic, Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans.

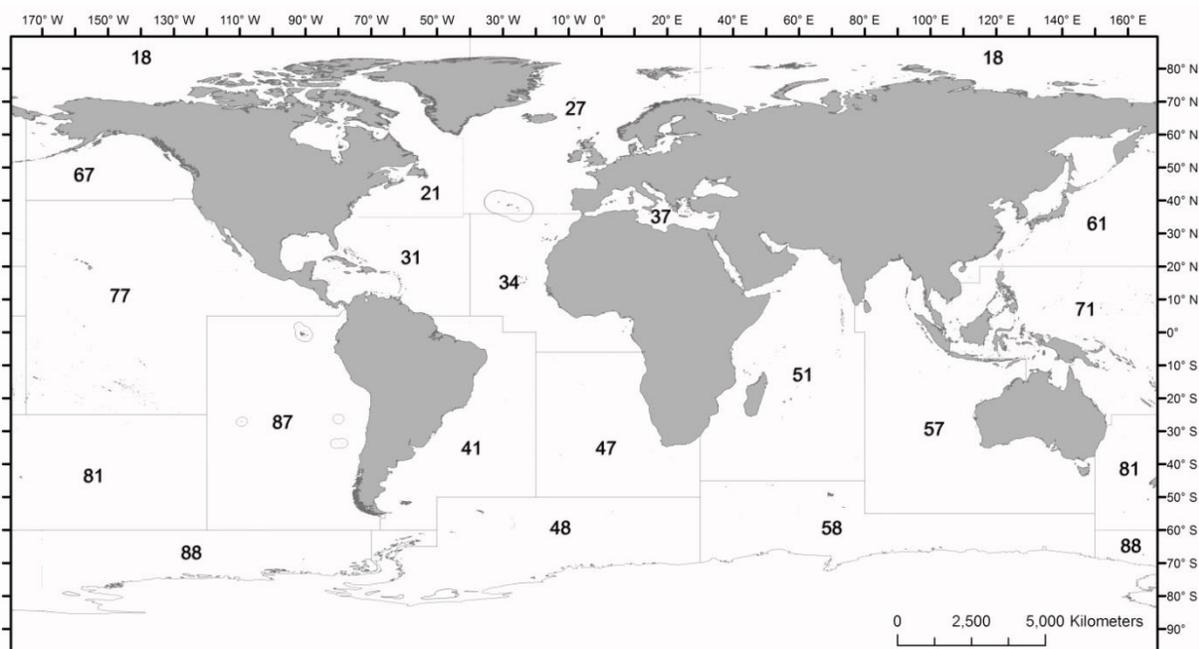
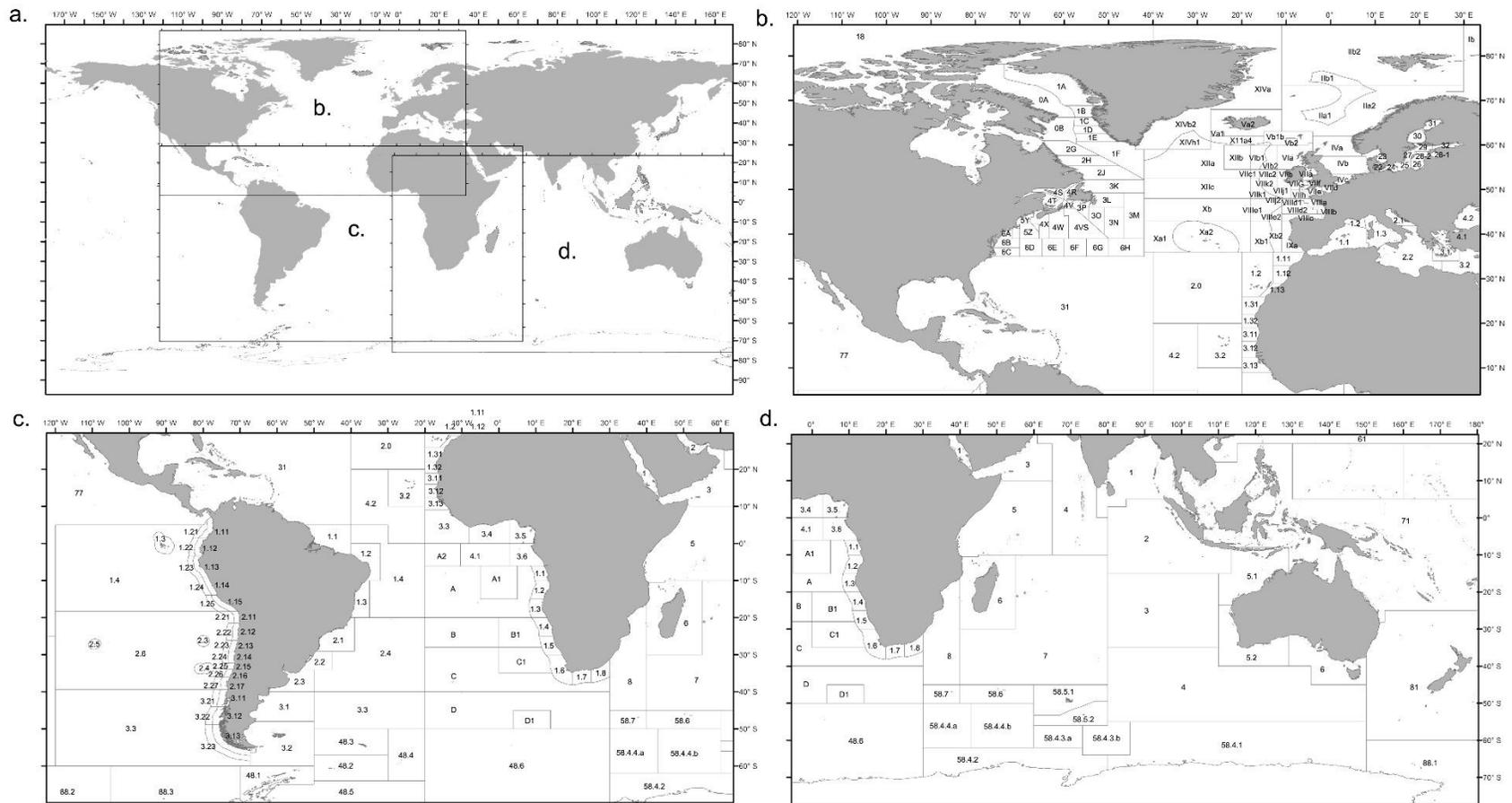


Figure 1 Global Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) statistical fishing areas. From upper left to lower right: Area 18 (Arctic Sea); Area 67 (Pacific, Northeast); Area 77 (Pacific, Eastern Central); Area 81 (Pacific, Southwest); Area 87 (Pacific, Southeast); Area 88 (Pacific, Antarctic); Area 27 (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). Modified from: ftp://ftp.fao.org/fi/maps/world_2003.gif



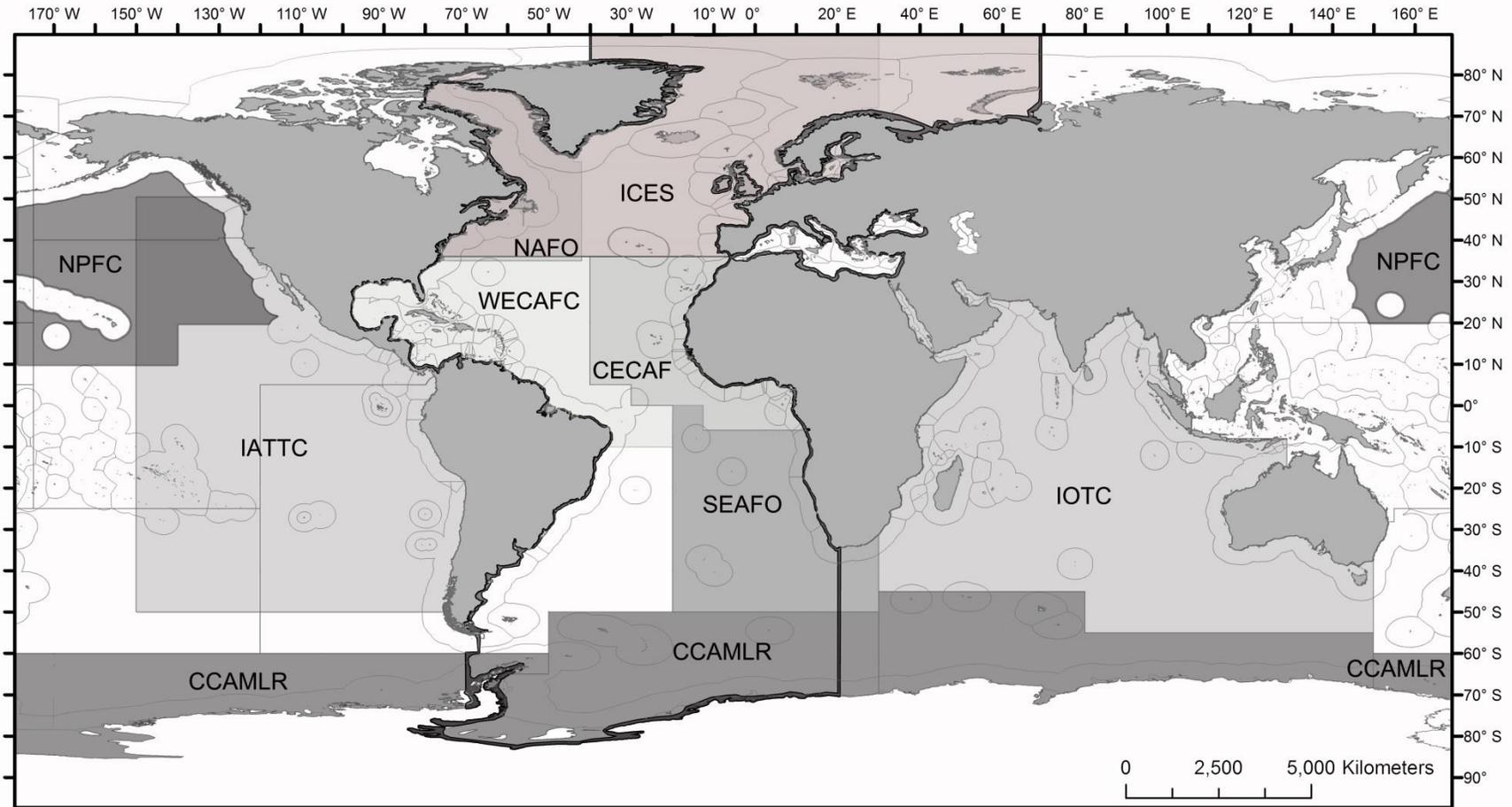


Figure 3 Spatial extent of select Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Scientific Councils including the boundaries of country-specific exclusive economic zones (EEZs). The thick black outline around the Atlantic Ocean represents the spatial extent of the International Commission for the Conservation 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>

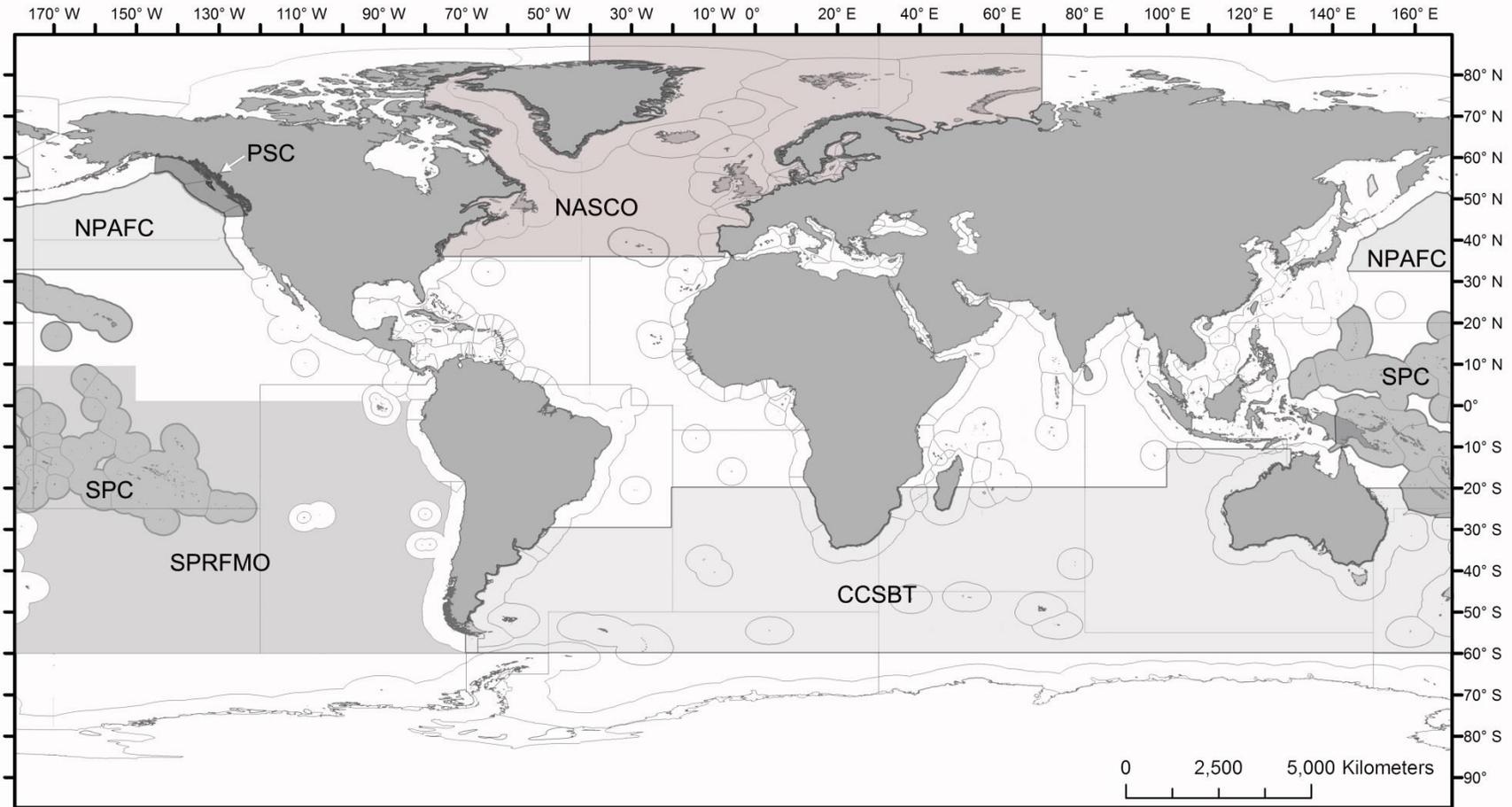


Figure 4 Spatial extent of select Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Scientific Councils including the boundaries of country-specific exclusive economic zones (EEZs). PSC: Pacific Salmon Commission; NPAFC: North Pacific Anadromous Fishery Commission; SPC: Secretariat of the Pacific; SPRFMO: 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/en>

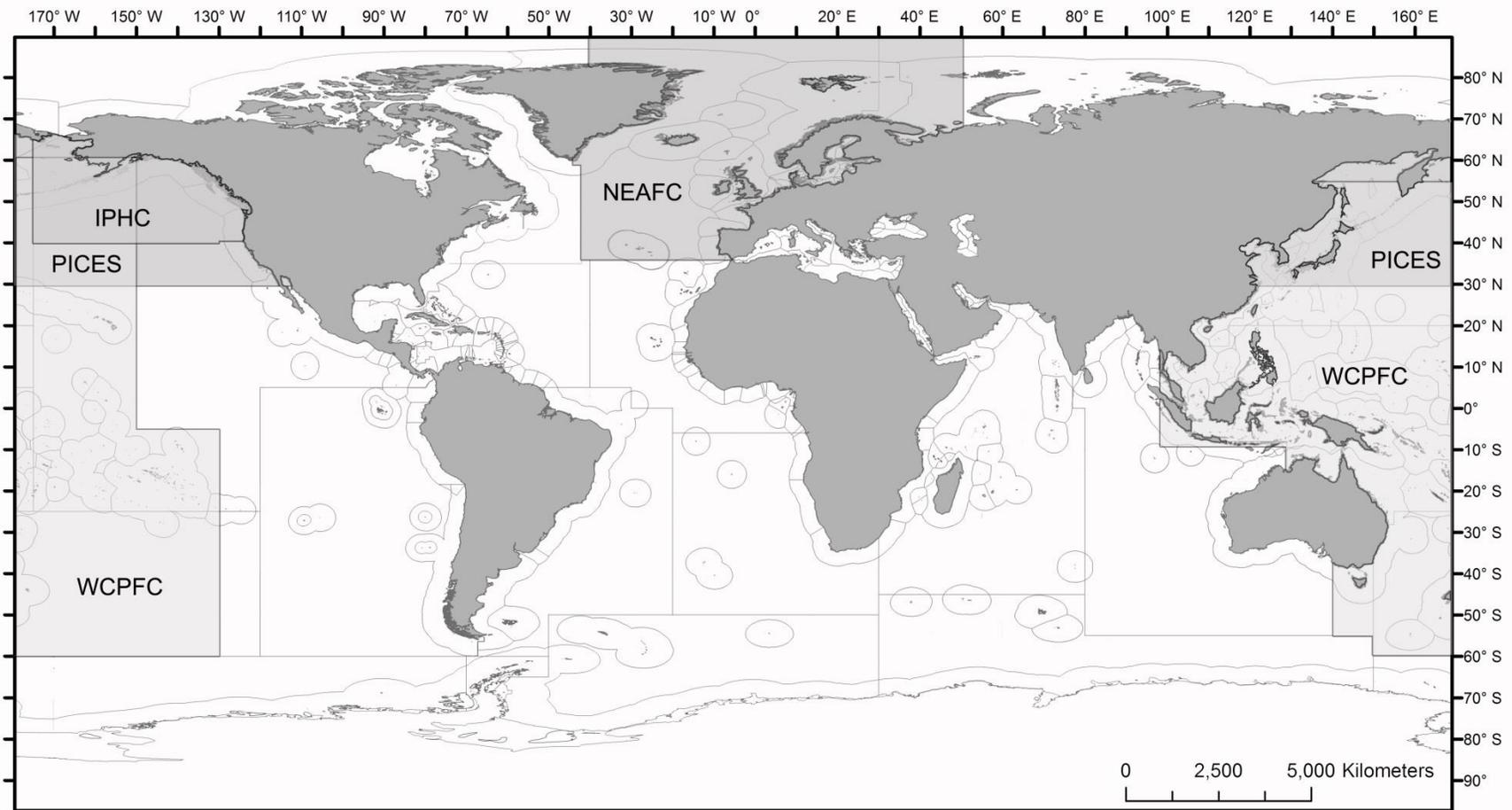


Figure 5 Spatial extent of select Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Scientific Councils including the boundaries of country-specific exclusive economic zones (EEZs). IPHC: International Pacific Halibut Commission; PICES: North Pacific Marine Science Organization; WCPFC: Western Central Pacific Fishery Commission; NEAFC: Northeast Atlantic Fishery Commission. Modified from: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/area/search/en>

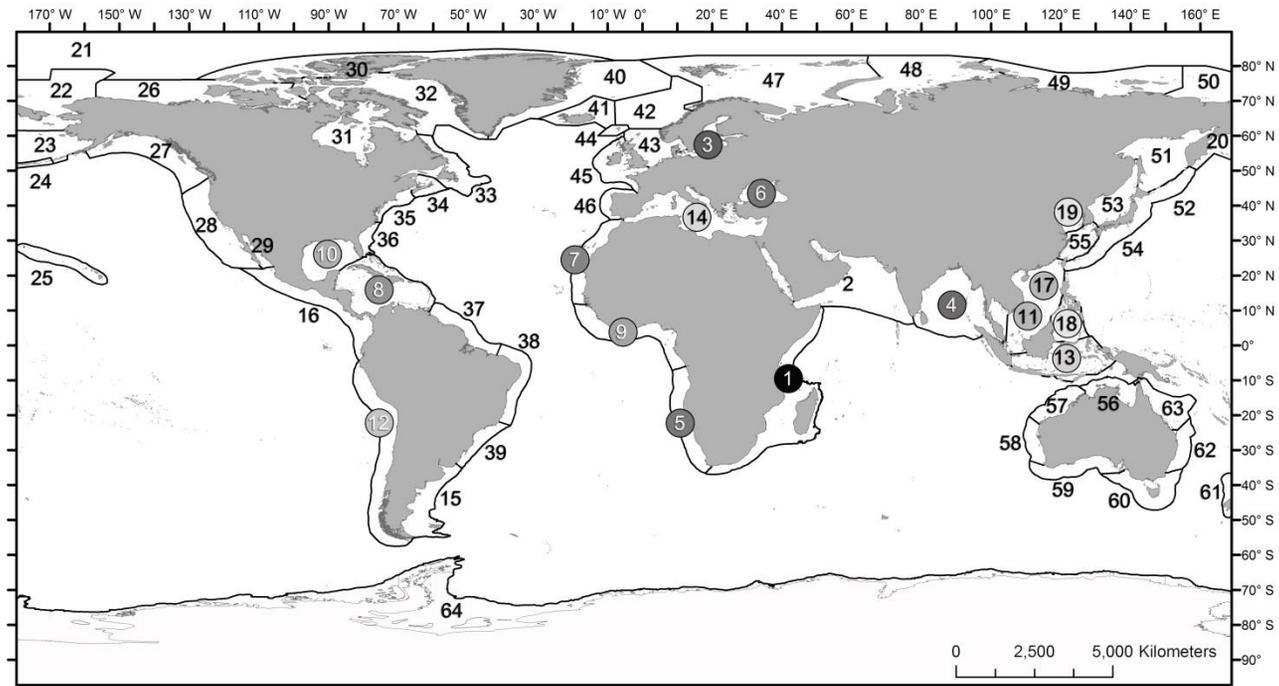


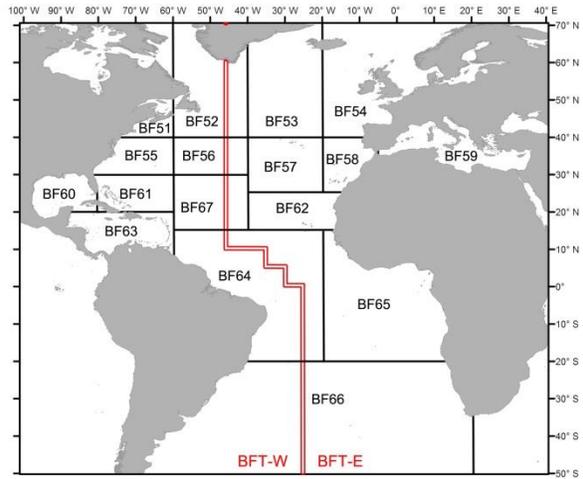
Figure 6 Global distribution of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs). The numbers in the ovals correspond to the LMEs that are currently active as described on page 206 of this compendium. 1. Agulhas and Somali Current Project; 2. Arabian and Red Sea Project; 3. Baltic Sea Project; 4. Bay of Bengal Project; 5. Benguela Current Project; 6. Black Sea Project; 7. Canary Current Project; 8. Caribbean Sea Project; 9. Guinea Current Project; 10. Gulf of Mexico Project; 11. Gulf of Thailand and South China Sea Project; 12. Humboldt Current Project; 13. Indonesian Sea Project; 14. Mediterranean Sea Project; 15. Patagonian Shelf Project; 16. Pacific Central American Coastal Project; 17. South China Sea Project; 18. Sulu-Celebes Sea Project; 19. Yellow Sea Project; 20. West Bering Sea Project; 21. Central Arctic Ocean; 22. Northern Bering-Chukchi Seas; 23. East Bering Sea; 24. Aleutian Islands; 25. Insular Pacific-Hawaiian; 26. Beaufort Sea; 27. Gulf of Alaska; 28. California Current; 29. Gulf of California; 30. Canadian High Arctic-North Greenland; 31. Hudson Bay Complex; 32. Canadian Eastern Arctic-West Greenland; 33. Newfoundland-Labrador Shelf; 34. Scotian Shelf; 35. Northeast U.S. Continental Shelf; 36. Southeast U.S. Continental Shelf; 37. North Brazil Shelf; 38. East Brazil Shelf; 39. South Brazil Shelf; 40. Greenland Sea; 41. Iceland Shelf and Sea; 42. Norwegian Sea; 43. North Sea; 44. Faroe Plateau; 45. Celtic-Biscay Shelf; 46. Iberian Coastal; 47. Barents Sea; 48. Kara Sea; 49. Laptev Sea; 50. East Siberian Sea; 51. Sea of Okhotsk; 52. Oyashio Current; 53. Sea of Japan/East Sea; 54. Kuroshio Current; 55. East China Sea; 56. North Australian Shelf; 57. Northwest Australian Shelf; 58. West-Central Australian Shelf; 59. Southwest Australian Shelf; 60. Southeast Australian Shelf; 61. New Zealand Shelf; 62. East-Central Australian Shelf; 63. Northeast Australian Shelf; 64. Antarctic. Modified from: <http://lme.edc.uri.edu>

Northern bluefin tuna (BFT)

Thunnus thynnus

Stocks

- BFT-E: Eastern stock
- BFT-W: Western stock

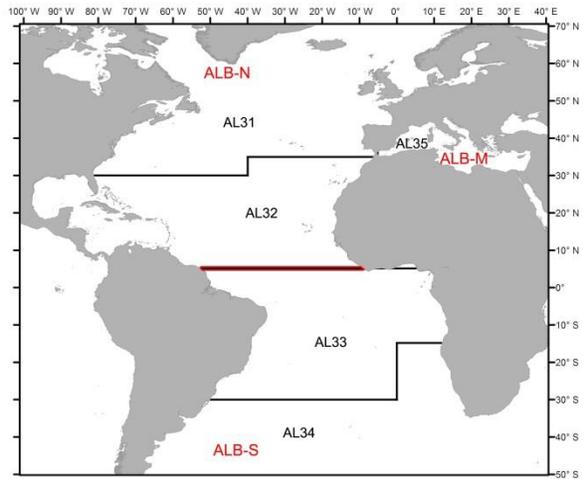


Albacore

Thunnus alalunga

Stocks

- ALB-N: Northern stock
- ALB-S: Southern stock
- ALB-M: Mediterranean stock



Swordfish (SWO)

Xiphias gladius

Stocks

- SWO-N: Northern stock
- SWO-S: Southern stock
- SWO-M: Mediterranean stock

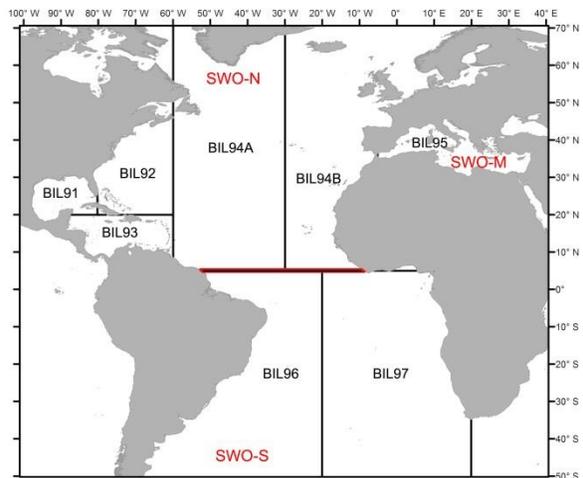


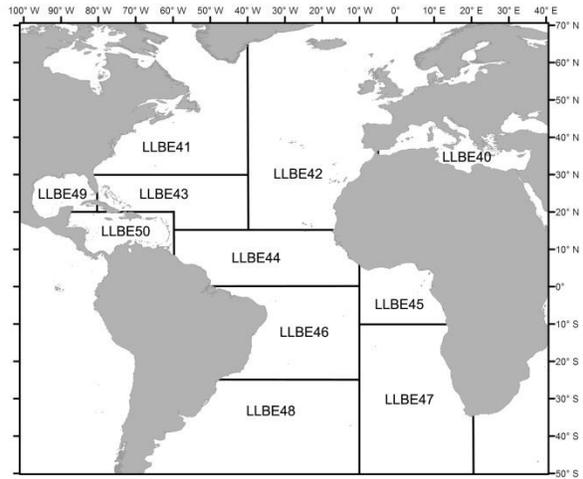
Figure 7 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) geographical delimitations including stock boundaries (red lines and lettering) and sampling areas (black lines and lettering) for Atlantic bluefin tuna, albacore, and swordfish. Modified from: <http://www.iccat.int/Data/ICCATMaps2011.pdf>.

Bigeye tuna (BET): Longline sampling areas

Thunnus obesus

Stocks

Single Atlantic Stock

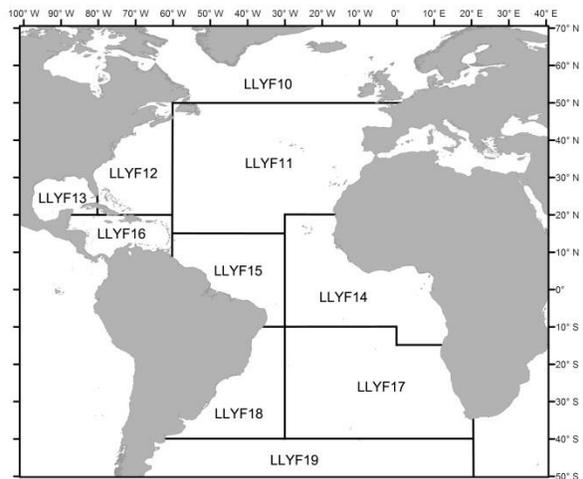


Yellowfin tuna (YFT): Longline sampling areas

Thunnus albacares

Stocks

Single Atlantic Stock



Bigeye and Yellowfin Tuna: Surface gear sampling areas

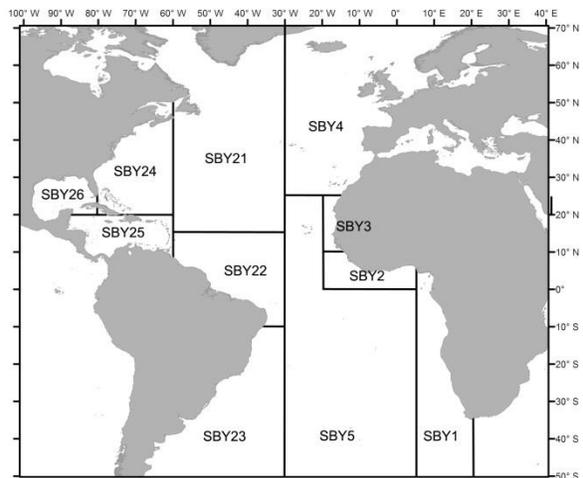


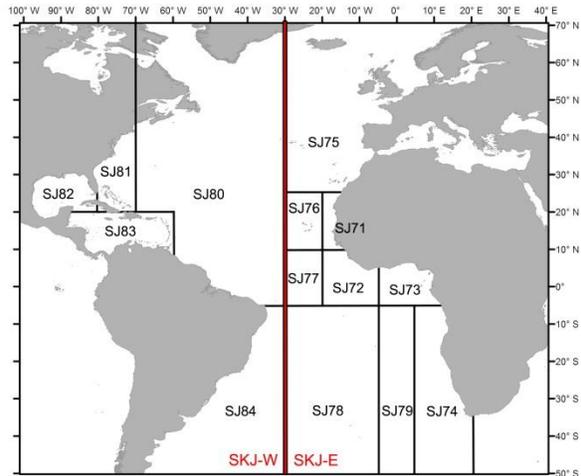
Figure 8 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) geographical delimitations including stock boundaries (red lines and lettering) and sampling areas (black lines and lettering) for bigeye and yellowfin tuna. Modified from: <http://www.iccat.int/Data/ICCATMaps2011.pdf> .

Skipjack tuna (SKJ)

Katsuwonus pelamis

Stocks

- SKJ-E: Eastern stock
- SKJ-W: Western stock

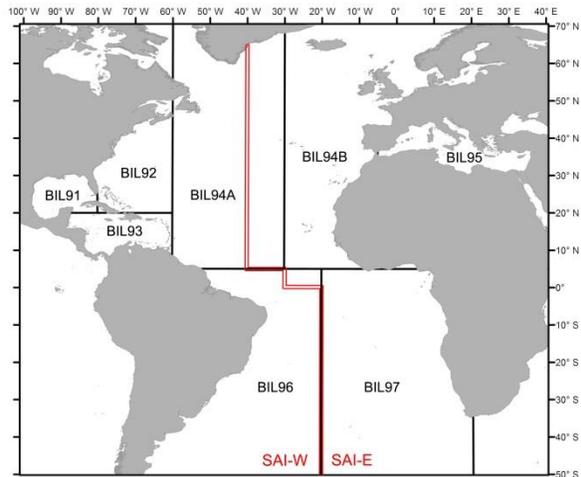


Atlantic sailfish (SAI)

Istiophorus albicans

Stocks

- SAI-E: Eastern stock
- SAI-W: Western stock



Blue and white marlin, other billfish, tuna, and sharks

Blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*): BUM

Stocks

- BUM-N: Northern stock
- BUM-S: Southern stock

White marlin (*Tetrapturus albidus*): WHM

Stocks

- WHM-N: Northern stock
- WHM-S: Southern stock

*Other billfish, tuna, and sharks under ICCAT management use these sampling areas

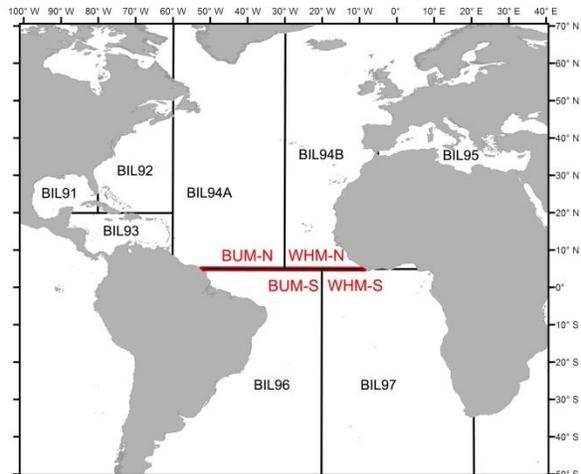


Figure 9 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) geographical delimitations including stock boundaries (red lines and lettering) and sampling areas (black lines and lettering) for skipjack tuna, sailfish, blue and white marlin. Modified from: <http://www.iccat.int/Data/ICCATMaps2011.pdf>.



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