

Madrid – February XX, 2014

**ICCAT CIRCULAR # XXX/14**

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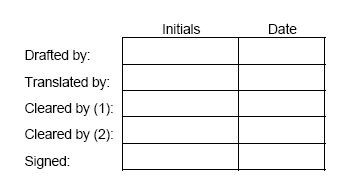
**Subject: 2014 BLUEFIN TUNA DATA-PREPARATORY MEETING *(Madrid, May 5 to 10, 2014)***

I have the honor to inform you that the Bluefin Data Preparatory Meeting will be held on May 5-10, 2014, at the Secretariat offices in Madrid. The main objective of the meeting will be to review and prepare the data required to carry out the 2014 update stock assessments and the next full assessment of the West Atlantic and the East Atlantic and Mediterranean stocks.

Attached please find the objectives, the tentative agenda of the meeting and an updated Bluefin Work Plan for 2014 as well as other relevant information about the organization. I would appreciate it very much if you distribute this announcement to scientists who may contribute by participating in the meeting. This announcement will also be published on our web site ([www.iccat.int](http://www.iccat.int/)).

In order to have an estimation of the number of participants in advance of the session I would also appreciate if you could send to the Secretariat a list of delegates who will participate in the meeting by **April 24, 2014**. It is also very important to note that it is requested to submit the required Task I and Task II catch and effort and size data (up to 2013) to the Secretariat by **May 31th**, at the latest.

Please receive the assurances of my highest consideration.

Driss Meski

*Executive Secretary*

**DISTRIBUTION:**

**2014 BLUEFIN DATA PREPARATORY MEETING**

**(*Madrid, Spain - May 5 to 10, 2014)***

**Objectives**

In 2013 the SCRS elaborated a work plan for 2014 which included a data preparatory meeting to incorporate the new catch and effort information in ICCAT databases and continuing working on new modeling platforms and inputs in a view to minimize uncertainties in the 2015 and ongoing assessments. The work plan approved by the SCRS did not include an update of the stock assessment in 2014, as stated by the ICCAT Recommendation [12-03] for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna. This decision was based in the lack of SCRS resources for conducting the update and undertaking the difficult task of preparing the 2015 assessment.

Nevertheless, the Commission at its 23th Regular Meeting requested the SCRS to implement Rec. [12-03], i.e., to update the stock assessment of East Atlantic and Mediterannean bluefin tuna. The following year the Commission also adopted Recommendation 13-09 which states: “In 2014, the SCRS will update the stock assessment for bluefin tuna for the western Atlantic stock”.

Hence, the work plan developed by the Bluefin tuna species group for 2014 has needed to be modified to include in 2014 an update of both the West and the East Atlantic and Mediterranean stock assessments and the corresponding data preparatory work. The new work plan elaborated by the Bluefin rapporteurs and the SCRS Chair is attached as **Annex 1**.

Following the revised work plan the objectives of this data preparatory meeting are the following:

1. Update fishery indicators in accordance Rec. [12-03], paragraph. 50.

2. Revise Task II by validating and integrating the catch at size statistics with new information from farms and other sources of information.

3. Update the length-weight relationship for both stocks, i.e. Western and Eastern / Mediterranean stocks.

4. Define the procedure to prepare CAS, CAA, WAA (total and per fleet) using the new length-weight relationship.

5. Review tagging past and recent data for bluefin tuna.

6. Complete outstanding tasks from the Biological Parameters meeting in Tenerife (age-length relationships, morphometric conversions, natural mortality, reproduction, etc.).

**Tentative Agenda**

1. Opening, adoption of the Agenda and meeting arrangements.

2. Review of historical and new information on biology

3. Review of old and new Task I after the incorporation of new information from GBYP and other sources

4. Review of old and new Task II catch/effort data after the incorporation of new information from GBYP and other sources

5. Review of old and new Task II size data

5.1 Review of new information from farms and other sources

5.2 Validation of the procedure followed to incorporate the information from farms and other sources into the ICCAT data base

6. Definition of a new procedure to estimate CAS, CAA and WAA using new information validated by the Group

7. Review of available indices of relative abundance by fleet

8. Definition of data inputs and specifications for the 2014 update assessment and advice framework.

9. Identification of the evaluation team and definition of the revision procedure

10. Develop a web app from the R-VPA2-BOX interface

11. Responses to the Commission

11.1 Develop updated growth tables

12. Recommendations

13. Other matters

14. Adoption of the report and closure

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS**

1**. Date and venue**

May 5 (Monday) to 10 (Saturday), 2014. (Registration starts at 09:00 am, May 5). Meeting hours will be approximately from 09:00 to 18:00.

The meeting will be held at the ICCAT Secretariat: c/Corazón de María 8, Madrid, Spain. For a map with the Secretariat's location and information about Madrid please consult <http://www.iccat.int/Madrid.htm>

**2. Contact information**

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Secretariat Contact: Dr. Laurie Kell ([laurie.kell@iccat.int](mailto:laurie.kell@iccat.int))

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**3. Language**

The working language for the meeting will be English, as no simultaneous translation can be provided. Scientific documents can be written in English, Spanish or French.

**4. Call for scientific papers**

Participants are encouraged to submit relevant scientific papers. The titles, names of authors and abstracts of papers should be submitted to ICCAT ([info@iccat.int](mailto:info@iccat.int)) by **April 28, 2014.** Authors are requested to bring electronic versions of their papers and make them available at the start of the meeting. Authors are also encouraged to submit these electronic versions before the meeting in order to make them available on the Internet. Authors are reminded to closely follow the Guidelines for Authors of Scientific Documents for the ICCAT SCRS and Collective Volume series (http://www.iccat.int/Documents/SCRS/Other/ Guide\_ColVol\_ENG\_2009.pdf). Furthermore, the original documents (text, tables and figures) should be prepared in WORD or compatible software.

Since the Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods (WGSAM), at its 2012 meeting, established standard criteria to evaluate standardized catch rates, it is recommended that authors of documents on standardized CPUEs follow the instructions defined by the WGSAM describing the information required to facilitate the appropriate construction and evaluation of CPUE series. Instructions are included as **Annex 2** to this announcement.

**5. Provision of data**

The Commission at its 2013 meeting recognized the need for complete and accurate Task I and Task II data for 2013 from the main fisheries catching bluefin and requested CPCs to make an effort to revise the available information and submit it to ICCAT, following the ICCAT standards.

Parties should submit relevant information such as Task I and Task II catch/effort and size by **May 31** and index of abundance information through at least 2012, **two weeks** before the 2014 data preparatory meeting.

**6**. **Funding**

Funding is available to cover travel and subsistence expenses for a limited number of national scientists from developing coastal States who can provide information relevant to the meeting objectives, particularly in reference to provision of data on biology and CPUE series (Agenda items 2 and 7). Applications should be sent by **April 21** to the ICCAT Secretariat ([info@iccat.int](mailto:info@iccat.int)) including an explanation of the expected contribution to the meeting and how it relates to the meeting objectives. If a visa is required to enter Spain, applications should be sent by **April 7**. Successful applicants will be notified by **April 28**.

**7. Hotel information**

The following table shows some hotels located within walking distance of the Secretariat. The room rates shown are indicative and are not guaranteed. Participants are asked to make their own reservations.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hôtel** | **Single use (**€**)** |
| ABBA Madrid Hotel  Avda. América, 32  28028 Madrid, Spain  Tel +34 91 212 5000; Fax +34 91 212 5001  [http://www.abbahoteles.com](http://www.pastoral.or.jp/) | Double room single use: 95€  Double room: 105€  Breakfast included  (10% VAT included) |
| AC Avenida de América  C/ Cartagena, 83  28028 Madrid, Spain  Tel +34 91 724 4240; Fax +34 91 724 4241  reservas.acamerica@ac-hotels.com  <http://www.ac-hotels.com/> | Single room 120€ (+10% VAT)  Breakfast not included |
| Apartamentos Togumar  C/ Canillas, 59  28002 Madrid, Spain  Tel. + 34 91 519 00 51; Fax +34 91 519 48 45 | Double room : 75€  DUI room : 65€  (10% VAT included)  Breakfast included |
| Silken Puerta de América Hotel  Avda. América, 41  28002 Madrid, Spain  Tel +34 91 744 54 00; Fax +34 91 744 54 01  <http://www.hoteles-silken.com/hotel-puerta-america-madrid/>) | Double Deluxe room : 170€  (10% VAT included)  Breakfast not included (22€) |

Further information may be obtained in <http://www.iccat.int/en/Madrid.htm>

**ANNEX 1**

**2014 Bluefin Tuna Work Plan**

Recommendation [10-04] states “In 2012, and thereafter every three years, the SCRS will conduct a stock assessment for bluefin tuna for the western Atlantic and eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean and provide advice to the Commission on the appropriate management measures, inter alia, on total allowable catch levels for those stocks for future years.”

The Atlantic-wide Research Program for Bluefin tuna (GBYP) and various National programs have produced, and continue to produce, a great deal of new information on the biology and fisheries for bluefin tuna. In preparation for the planned 2015 assessment, time and resources of the SCRS are thus required to validate these data and to incorporate them in the ICCAT database as well as working on updated biological parameters and new modeling approaches. Therefore, the SCRS planned for several meetings in the 2012 work plan. The first two took place in 2013 and aimed at updating the biological parameters and comparing various modeling platforms. For 2014, the SCRS planned a data preparatory meeting (5-10 May) to incorporate the new catch and effort information in ICCAT databases and continuing working on new modeling platforms.

Recommendation [12-03] for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna further states “In 2014 the SCRS will conduct an update of the stock assessment and provide advice to the Commission.../... Furthermore, the SCRS shall work towards the development of new assessment modeling approaches and inputs, in a view to minimize uncertainties, which shall be used in a stock assessment in 2015 and thereafter every three years.” Finally, at its last session the Commission also adopted Recommendation 13-09 which states: “In 2014, the SCRS will update the stock assessment for bluefin tuna for the western Atlantic stock”.

To accommodate priorities to improve the scientific advice by 2015 and the latest commission requests, the SCRS proposes the following workplan for 2014, adapted from the plan approved by the SCRS in 2013:

1. Conduct an Inter-sessional Preparatory Workshop in early 2014 (6 days) that will focus on the following:

a) Update fishery indicators in accordance Rec. [12-03], paragraph. 50, except for the Spanish bait boat CPUE as their quota has been transferred to Spanish purse seiners since 2012. The Japanese CPUE will have to be split into two periods, before and after TAC implementation due to changes in spatial coverage of the fishery.

1. Revise Task II by validating and integrating the catch at size statistics with new information from farms and other sources of information.
2. Update the length-weight relationship for both stocks, i.e. Western and Eastern / Mediterranean stocks.
3. Prepare CAS, CAA, WAA (total and per fleet) using the new length-weight relationship.

e) Review tagging past and recent data for bluefin tuna.

f) Complete outstanding tasks from the Biological Parameters meeting in Tenerife (age-length relationships, morphometric conversions, natural mortality, reproduction, etc.).

2. Continue a series of workshops and related activities (to be sponsored by the GBYP and various national programs) in accordance with recommendations from the Biological Parameters Meeting (Tenerife) and the Bluefin Methods meeting (Gloucester) including:

a) Establish a reference collection for otoliths and hard parts and calibrate age estimates among readers.

b) Larval biology workshop.

c) Continue the development of new modeling platforms that can better take into account various sources of uncertainties.

3. Update the 2012 assessments of western and eastern/Mediterranean bluefin tuna using, insofar as is possible, the methods used during 2012.

There is thus a considerable amount of work to be done in 2014, i.e., validating and incorporating 10,000s of new files into the current ICCAT databases, calibrating and updating all the size and age conversion methods, updating previous assessments and continuing the development of new modeling platforms.

The work plan for 2014 is detailed in a table of the main tasks, responsibilities, deadlines and priorities which is provided as an annex to this document. The first priority will be to conduct an update of the 2012 stock assessment for western and eastern/Mediterranean stocks using catch data and abundance indices updated through 2013. The second priority will be to incorporate the new information (trade, farms, biology) into the Task I and Task II data base (catch, catch-at-size, catch-at-age, weight-at-age). A preliminary assessment of the eastern/Mediterranean stock based on these revised Task I and Task 2 data will be attempted, but priority will be given to completing the update assessment stipulated by the relevant Commission Recommendations”. This line of priorities defines the order of the work that will be undertaken. Each priority must be completed in order for the group to move forward to the next step. The SCRS proposes that an additional inter-sessional meeting be planned in September 2014, during the species group meetings, to conduct the update of the 2012 stock assessment of eastern and western Atlantic stocks and, if time permits, a preliminary new assessment for the eastern stock. . This new preliminary stock assessment for the East will apply the current VPA software (VPA-2BOX) to the revised catch data using the new information (farm, trade, biological parameters). Initial ‘pilot’ updates of the 2012 SA (east and west) and the new preliminary SA for the East will be completed before the species group by the co-chairs and volunteer scientists and circulated prior to the species group meeting in September as an SCRS document. Any proposed revisions to the assessment will be addressed during the beginning of the Bluefin species group meeting to allow time for any additional runs and incorporation of the results into the executive summary. However, even if the new data are available this new stock assessment is unlikely to reduce substantially most of the unquantified uncertainties.

The following table summarized the activities defined in the work plan and its priorities.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TASK** | **Responsability** | **Deadline** | **Deliverable** | **Priority** |
| **Request the CPCs the submission of Task I & II by the end of May** | Secretariat | February | Circular | 1 |
| Circulate the 2014 BFT adapted Work Plan | Secretariat | February | Circular | 1 |
| **Revise 1950-(2013) Task I (aggregated catch, by gear/fleet) data by including new data recovered by the GBYP** | Secretariat and CPCs | Data Prep. meeting | SCRS documents  Revised Task I | 1 |
| **Other Data (trade statistics, additional size data from farms, other)** | External expert/CPCs/Secretariat | Data Prep. meeting | SCRS documents | 1 |
| **Update the length-weight relationship for both stocks** | CPCs | Data Prep. meeting | SCRS documents | 2 |
| **Revise 1950-(2013) Task II by validating and integrating the catch at size statistics with new information from farms and other sources.** | Secretariat | Data Prep. meeting | Revised Task II | 1 |
| **Update 1950-2013 CAS, CAA, WAA (total and per fleet) using the current Task I, Task II and the current LW relationship.** | Secretariat | July | CAS, CAA, WAA  updated | 1 |
| **Prepare new 1950-2013 CAS, CAA, WAA (total and per fleet) using the revised Task I, Task II and the new LW relationship.** |  |  |  | 2 |
| * Redefine the procedure to calculate CAS, CAA, WAA | Data Prep. Meeting Group | Data Prep. meeting | Detailed procedure (in the report) |  |
| * Prepare 1950-2013 CAS, CAA, WAA | Secretariat | July | CAS, CAA, WAA  Revised and SCRS document |  |
| **Update fishery indicators. The Japanese CPUE will have to be split into two periods, before and after TAC implementation due to changes in spatial coverage of the fishery.** | CPCs | Data Prep. meeting | SCRS documents following the standards provided by the WGSAM | 1 |
| **Prepare a provisional CPUE evaluation table** | Rappporteurs and national scientists | Prior to Data Prep. meeting | Provisional CPUE evaluation table | 1 |
| **Decide all inputs and specifications for the 2014 assessment and identify the evaluation team** | Data Prep. Meeting Group | Data Prep. meeting | Section of the report | 1 |
| **Develop a web app from the R-VPA2-BOX interface** | Secretariat  BFT WG chairs | Data Prep. meeting | “friendly” web app | 4 |
| **Conduct a pilot update of the 2012 stock assessments of East and West stocks (CAS, CAA, WAA: current updated 1950-2013)** | BFT WG chairs and volunteer scientists | August | Detailed reports as SCRS documents | 1 |
| **Conduct a pilot preliminary new assessment of the Eastern stock (CAS, CAA, WAA: new revised 1950-2013)** | BFT WG chairs and volunteer scientists | August | Detailed report as SCRS document | 3 |
| **Review the pilot updated assessments of East and West stocks and the pilot preliminary new assessment of Eastern stock** | CPCs | September |  | 1/2 |
| **Conduct final updated assessments (East and West) and the final preliminary new assessment (East)** | Spp. Group | Spp. Group meeting | Executive Summary  Detailed reports as SCRS doc (updated) | 1/2 |
| **Develop updated growth tables (COM request)** | Data Prep. Meeting Group | Data Prep. meeting | Section of the report | 2 |
| **Evaluate the program of 100% coverage with stereoscopical cameras (COM request)** | CPCs | Spp. Group meeting | Section of the report | 2 |
| **Answer questions by the EU to the SCRS [PA2-615] (attached as Appendix 4 to ANNEX 9) (COM request)** | Spp. Group | Spp. Group meeting | Section of the report | 2 |
| **Review tagging past and recent data for BFT** | Secretariat  CPCs | Data Prep. meeting | SCRS documents | 4 |
| **Complete tasks from the 2013 Biological Parameters meeting (age-length relationships, morphometric conversions, M, reproduction,..)** | CPCs | Data Prep. meeting | SCRS documents | 2 |

**ANNEX 2**

**Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods Instructions for Authors Describing the Information Required to Facilitate the Appropriate Construction and Evaluation of CPUE Series**

**DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA SOURCE**

1. Fishery-independent indices

a) Describe the survey design.

b) Describe sampling methodology.

c) Describe any changes in sampling methodology.

d) Describe the variables used in the development of the index.

e) What species or species assemblages are targeted by this survey.

f) Describe the size/age range that the index applies to. Include supporting figures.

2. Fishery-dependent indices

a) Describe the data source, type of fishery and target species.

b) Describe any changes to reporting requirements, variables reported, etc.

c) Describe the variables used in the development of the index, including variables related to targeting.

d) Describe the size and/or age range that the index applies to. Include supporting figures.

e) Description of changes in the fishery that might affect catch rates such as changes in fishing power, market conditions etc.

**METHODS**

1. Data reduction and exclusions

a) Identify any data exclusions and the rationale used.

b) Provide an assessment of the quality of the data used.

2. Management Regulations

a) Provide a history of management regulations in the fishery.

b) Identify the potential effects of management regulations on CPUE.

c) Discuss methods used (if any) to account for the potential effects of management measures and their implementation on the CPUE series.

3. Describe analysis dataset (after exclusions and other treatments).

a) Provide tables and/or figures of number of all observations and, where relevant, positive observations by factors (including year, area, etc.) and interaction terms.

b) Provide an evaluation of the annual spatial extent of the fishery noting any changes.

c) Describe the effort catch variables and the units. If more than one effort variable is present in the dataset, justify selection.

4. Model standardization

a) Provide the rationale for the standardization technique.

b) GLM model standardization:

i) Describe model structure (e.g., delta-lognormal).

ii) Describe construction of GLM components (e.g., how were covariates chosen, etc.).

iii) Describe inclusion criteria for factors and interactions terms.

iv) Are YEAR\*FACTOR interactions included in the model? If so, how (e.g., fixed effect, random effect)? Were random effects tested for significance using a likelihood ratio test?

v) Provide a table summarizing the construction of the GLM components.

vi) Summarize model statistics of the mixed model formulation(s) (e.g., log likelihood, AIC, BIC, etc.).

vii) Report convergence statistics.

c) If other modeling standardization approaches were used:

i) Describe the model used, criteria for the selection of factors, and report relevant statistics.

**MODEL DIAGNOSTICS**

1. Provide appropriate model diagnostics

**MODEL RESULTS**

1. Provide a table including, at the minimum, nominal CPUE, standardized CPUE and coefficients of variation (CVs). Other statistics may also be appropriate to tabulate.

2. Figure of nominal and standardized index with measure of variance (i.e. CVs).

**IF MULTIPLE MODEL STRUCTURES WERE CONSIDERED**: (***Note:*** *This is always recommended but required when model diagnostics are poor*.)

1. Plot of resulting indices and estimates of variance

2. Table of model statistics (e.g., AIC criteria)