INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS CONCERNING

LIVING MARINE RESOURCES OF

INTEREST TO NOAA FISHERIES

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND SEAFOOD INSPECTION

2016

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Compiled and edited by:
Lauren G. Fields

Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection

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

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

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS CONCERNING LIVING MARINE RESOURCES OF INTEREST TO NOAA FISHERIES

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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 50 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, Guatemala, 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/ Corazon de Maria, 8
6th Floor
28002, Madrid
Spain

Executive Secretary: Mr. Driss Meski
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. ICCAT's financial situation has been strong in recent years. At its 2015 Annual Meeting, the Commission adopted a budget of 3,4 million Euros for 2016 and 3,6 million Euros for 2017. The U.S. contribution is 198,008 Euros for 2016 and 209,779 Euros for 2017. 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 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 and from ICCAT's Working Capital Fund. In 2014, ICCAT created a new MCS fund, in particular to assist developing states in implementing port inspection responsibilities [Rec. 14-08]. As no requests for support have yet been made with respect to implementing obligations under ICCAT's port inspection recommendation, ICCAT has not allocated monies to the MCS 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	Recreational	Commercial
Mr. Russell F. Smith Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries, NOAA HCHB, 14th & Constitution Ave NW Washington, D.C. 20230-0001	Mr. Raymond Bogan	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 Rachel O'Malley, 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. 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 chairman, vice-chairman, and representatives of not less than four nor more than eight Contracting Parties and which performs such functions as are assigned to it by the Convention or 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 review of the species under their purview; collection of scientific and other information; proposing conservation recommendations for joint actions; and recommending studies by the Contracting Parties. Currently, Panel 1 covers tropical tunas (bigeye, yellowfin, and skipjack). Panel 2 covers North Atlantic temperate tunas (northern bluefin and albacore). Panel 3 covers South Atlantic temperate tunas (southern bluefin and albacore). Lastly, Panel 4 covers other species, including swordfish, billfishes, and sharks.

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 Promote Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers [Rec. 13-18].

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 governments 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 during that period by concerned contracting governments. Each Contracting Party has the responsibility for implementing and enforcing the Commission's recommended conservation and management measures.

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. 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 has recently initiated a large-scale tagging program for tropical tunas to improve knowledge about the biology, distribution and movement of tropical tuna species.

The latest assessment of bigeye tuna (2015) found that the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. Yellowfin tuna was last assessed in 2011, and the SCRS estimated that the stock was overfished but overfishing was not occurring. The next stock assessment for yellowfin tuna will take place in July 2016. 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, a three-year TAC for bigeye (2012-15) was set at 85,000 mt per year. This recommendation also established management measures for yellowfin tuna, including an annual TAC of 110,000 mt, and expanded monitoring, control and surveillance measures in the tropical tunas fishery, including new logbook requirements for purse seine and bait boats, management plans for fish aggregating devices (FADs), vessel monitoring system requirements, and a regional observer program for vessels fishing in the closed area during the closed period. In 2014, the comprehensive measure for tropical tunas was revised. Specifically, certain management measures were extended to the eastern stock of skipjack tuna and a centrally run regional observer program was eliminated in favor of the use of national observers during the time/area closure [Rec. 14-01].

In 2015, in light of new scientific advice, ICCAT reduced the bigeye TAC to 65,000 mt and implemented a 10% quota reduction for developing countries and 25% quota reduction for developed countries. *Rec. 15-01* did not establish catch limits for minor harvesters without a specific quota, including the United States. However, CPCs that are not developing coastal States "shall endeavor" to maintain their annual catch at less than 1,575 mt (reduced from 2,100 mt under the previous measure) . *Rec. 15-01* further specifies that if the catch of bigeye tuna of any developing coastal CPC without a specified catch limit exceeds 3,500 mt, 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. 10-10* for large-scale purse seine and longline vessels.

The second meeting of ICCAT's Ad Hoc Working Group on FADs took place March 14-16, 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. The report of the Working Group, including its recommendations, will be considered by ICCAT at its 2016 annual meeting.

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. This was the first time that ICCAT articulated a rebuilding goal to guide its management actions and adopted a plan for achieving that goal. The initial annual TAC established

under the program was 2,500 mt, 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, initially shared by the United States, Japan, and Canada, and extended in 2010 to provide allocations to three minor harvesters (the United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda), France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), and Mexico), has been adjusted periodically since 1998 and other elements of the rebuilding program have also been altered, such as the tolerance for recreational catches of bluefin tuna weighing less than 30 kg (the current minimum size in the west). In 2010, ICCAT also, added some reporting obligations (in particular a requirement to provide provisional monthly catch reports to the Secretariat), and continued a bilateral quota transfer arrangement from Mexico to Canada. The annual TAC remained at 1,750 mt from 2011-14.

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 to 2,000 mt for 2015 and 2016, a level that is within the range of scientific advice and will allow for continued growth of the spawning stock biomass. The benchmark assessment for western Atlantic bluefin tuna, originally slated for 2016, has been postponed until 2017 to provide sufficient time for the SCRS to complete key data preparatory work.

Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna: The United States has long urged the adoption of strong conservation measures in the east in particular due to the growing evidence of stock mixing. 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. However, for many years, eastern harvesters failed to follow scientific advice on TAC levels and other actions and largely failed to effectively implement ICCAT recommendations. This situation began to improve in the late 2000s.

In 2008, ICCAT adopted a substantially strengthened recommendation for the eastern fishery that included a reduction in TAC, extension of the Mediterranean time and area closure, freezing and reductions of fleet capacity, and freezing of farming capacity. New monitoring and control measures were also introduced, 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. Significantly, the measure also required all parties to establish individual vessel quotas for their fleets. In 2009, ICCAT adopted a further reduction in the TAC to 13,500 mt, extended the length of the purse seine time and area closure in the Mediterranean, required further reductions in fishing capacity by 2013, 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. Since that time, ICCAT has tightened 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 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". Rec. 14-04 set the TAC at 16,142 mt for 2015, 19,296 mt for 2016 and 23,155 mt for 2017. The next benchmark assessment for eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna will take place in 2017, in conjunction with that for the western Atlantic stock.

Northern Albacore: At its 1998 meeting, ICCAT adopted a measure to limit fishing capacity in the northern albacore fishery. This action was intended to prevent further increases in fishing mortality given scientific advice at the time, which considered that the stock was close to full exploitation. 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 28,000 mt TAC aimed at recovering the stock by 2020. In 2013, the Commission agreed to maintain the 28,000 mt TAC for 2014 through 2016 [Rec. 13-05]. The U.S. quota of 527 mt was retained, and CPCs may continue to carryover 25% of their initial quota (to be used within two years from the year of catch).

To support decision making regarding the conservation and management of the fishery, ICCAT adopted Rec. 15-04, which defines the management objective for northern albacore, both during the rebuilding period and once rebuilt, and outlines the process by which candidate biological reference points (i.e., threshold and limit biomass levels and the target fishing mortality rate) and associated harvest control rules (HCRs) will be identified and tested by the

SCRS in 2016. The Commission will then adopt HCRs, including 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 May 2016 and an intersessional meeting of Panel 2 in July 2016 will discuss next steps in the development of HCRs for northern albacore.

Panel 3 - South Atlantic Bluefin Tuna and Albacore:

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.

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 24,000 mt, in line with scientific advice and a sharing arrangement was established for the major harvesters. ICCAT maintained the TAC for 2014-2016—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 the developing coastal states actively fishing for southern albacore that in total exceeded previous TAC levels, and instead established hard quotas. The southern albacore stock will be assessed along with the northern stock in 2016.

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 early1990s, 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 offered 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 13,700 mt TAC was extended through 2012-13, and subsequently Rec. 13-02 extended the TAC again for 2014-16, while continuing to preserve the U.S. share. While the sum of individual quota allocations exceeds the TAC, actual catches have not.

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. The recommendation adopted in 2006 set the TAC at the scientifically recommended level, but the sum of individual allocations was higher than the annual TAC. To help ensure that the TAC would not be exceeded, a provision required the Commission to adjust catch limits as necessary and appropriate so the overall catch for the period (2007-09) would not be exceeded. As some parties were not catching their full quotas, this provision was not needed. The South Atlantic swordfish TAC was reduced for 2010-13, then extended for 2014-2016; the measure was amended as Rec. 15-03 to clarify the minimum size.

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 addition month of 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 is below the level that can support MSY and that fishing mortality exceeds F_{msy} although no new management measures were proposed. The stock will be reassessed in 2016.

Billfishes:

Blue and White Marlin: In 1997, ICCAT adopted its first mandatory conservation measures for Atlantic blue and white marlin. A two-phase plan to rebuild depleted populations of Atlantic blue and white marlin 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 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 are designed to result in mortality reductions consistent with scientific advice. Rec. 12-04 also set Atlantic-wide recreational minimum sizes for blue and white marlin, 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].

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. SCRS conducted a new stock assessment for sailfish in May 2016.

Sharks: 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. 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. To increase the effectiveness of the 2004 measure, Belize, Brazil and the United States introduced a joint proposal in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 to require sharks to be landed with their fins naturally attached in ICCAT fisheries. Consensus on this measure could not be reached, but growing support for this approach was reflected in an increased number of co-sponsors. In 2015, the those countries co-sponsoring the fins-attached proposal with the United States included the following: Albania, Algeria, Belize, Brazil, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, EU, Ghana, Guinea Republic, Guatemala, Panama, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Venezuela, UK-OT, France (St. Pierre & Miquelon), Russia, Angola, Honduras, Mauritania, Nigeria, Namibia and Gabon. The proposal is expected to be considered again in 2016.

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. 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. 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; the resulting recommendation requires CPCs to provide additional information to ICCAT about how they monitor and manage

shortfin mako sharks [Rec. 14-06]. 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. Also at the 2015 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. Additional conservation measures will be considered if catches of porbeagle sharks increase beyond 2014 levels.

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 will explore best practices for estimation of total extrapolated turtle bycatch as a first step in the evaluation of the impact of ICCAT fisheries. Estimation of turtle bycatch in the longline fishery will be the main focus in 2016. The SCRS also plans to collect information from CPCs with gillnet fisheries and develop a research plan for sea turtle bycatch by gillnet and artisanal longlines.

Seabirds: In 2007, ICCAT adopted a recommendation requiring line weighting or use of tori lines on vessels fishing south of 20^{o} 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). In 2016, the SCRS plans to examine trends in seabird bycatch rates, as a first step in evaluating the effectiveness of seabird mitigation measures.

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 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.

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 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. 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.

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. The status of these programs will be considered by ICCAT at a July 2016 intersessional meeting of ICCAT's Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures.

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 Maritime) as a condition of listing and a prerequisite to 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 parties 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, expand the list to ICCAT member vessels, provide for the incorporation of IUU lists of other tuna RFMOs into the ICCAT list, and to reduce the minimum length of vessels that can be listed to 12 meters. The process for cross-listing IUU vessels from other RFMOs was clarified in Res. 14-11. The current authorized vessel list and IUU vessels list can be found on the ICCAT website.

Monitoring and Control: ICCAT's Contracting Parties have an obligation to immediately report sightings of vessels from non-contracting parties, entities or fishing entities that are fishing in contravention of ICCAT rules [Rec. 97-11]. Further, Rec. 98-11 requires the inspection of such vessels in port, and prohibits landings and transshipment if such vessels have onboard species subject to ICCAT conservation measures; unless the vessel establishes that they were harvested in accordance with ICCAT rules, or outside of the Convention area. A recommendation on chartering arrangements was first established in 2002, to ensure the registration of chartered vessels and consistency with applicable ICCAT measures in these fishing arrangements. Observer requirements have been strengthened for fishing vessels chartered by the Contracting Parties [Rec. 13-14].

Many of ICCAT's monitoring and control measures were developed through the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures, including flag state duties [Rec. 03-12], data recording systems for fishing vessels authorized to fish for species managed by ICCAT [Rec. 03-13], and vessel monitoring systems (since revised to require a more frequent reporting of vessel positions [see Rec. 14-09]). In 2005, a centralized at sea transshipment observer program was established; this measure has since been revised through Rec. 12-06. In 2010, ICCAT adopted a U.S. proposal establishing minimum standards for national observer programs, designed to ensure that important scientific information is collected in ICCAT fisheries [Rec. 10-10]. 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 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.

At the 2015 annual meeting, the United States and the EU again introduced a proposal to establish a comprehensive, modern high seas boarding and inspection scheme. Panama and Senegal joined as co-sponsors. This and other MCS issues are on the agenda for the next intersessional meeting of the IMM Working Group, in July 2016.

Compliance Committee:

The Compliance Committee 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 clarification of 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. In 2012, ICCAT adopted revised guidelines for Annual Reports, designed to standardize and improve reporting by parties on how they have implemented ICCAT requirements and to further facilitate the compliance review process. A "Schedule of Actions" has been used on a pilot basis to guide the Compliance Committee's decisions on appropriate steps in cases of non-compliance.

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. Under Rec. 06-13 on Trade Measures, if a CPC or non-member is found to be diminishing the effectiveness of ICCAT, that CPC or non-member is "identified" and ICCAT sends a letter notifying them of the identification, including the reasons for it, and asking them to rectify the situation. At the 2015 annual meeting, Trinidad and Tobago was identified pursuant to Rec. 06-13 as a result of significant overharvests of white marlin and blue marlin, as well as potential deficiencies in logbook and trade monitoring practices. 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. Following the 2015 annual meeting, 26 Contracting Parties and one Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (Guyana) received letters from the Commission concerning compliance issues. Primary issues of concern included late or incomplete reporting, lack of submission of swordfish management plans, retroactive vessel authorizations, and, in a couple of cases, quota overharvests. In addition, letters were sent to four non-CPCs (Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Lucia) seeking additional information on their catches and encouraging them to cooperate more fully with ICCAT. The Commission, at the request of Panel 2, also agreed to send a letter to Gibraltar regarding their self-declared bluefin tuna quota.

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, CPCs 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. Potential improvements to the compliance process were explored at a two-day intersessional meeting in March 2016 and ICCAT will consider these potential improvements at its 2016 annual meeting.

Cooperating Parties: ICCAT continues to encourage non-members interested in ICCAT species and fisheries 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 agree to abide voluntarily 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 four cooperating non-members: Bolivia, Chinese Taipei, Guyana and Suriname.

Performance Review:

ICCAT agreed to an independent performance review of the organization in 2008, using the criteria endorsed through the United Nations General Assembly. Recommendations of the ICCAT Independent Performance Review Committee highlighted the following issues: modernization of the Convention, adoption of a penalty regime, strengthened ties between science and management, and the provision of more complete and accurate data. Notwithstanding, the reviewers concluded that ICCAT has developed reasonably sound conservation and fisheries management practices, that the SCRS Panel structure is sound and that the Commission's subsidiary bodies provide timely advice to ICCAT. The performance of the Secretariat was also considered sound and well regarded as both efficient and effective by CPCs. The Independent Performance Review Committee also concluded that the SCRS carried out good work, but recognized the difficulties they faced in relation to data availability and quality.

In 2014, ICCAT established an *ad hoc* Working Group to prepare proposed terms of reference for a second independent performance review. Three experts (in fisheries management, fisheries science, and international law, respectively) were selected in early 2016 to conduct the review, which is expected to conclude before the 2016 annual meeting. ICCAT also agreed to a recruitment package for the next Executive Secretary that incorporates expanded leadership/governance and office management/operations requirements. Selection of the next Executive Secretary will occur at the 2017 ICCAT annual meeting.

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 by the terms of reference. The full suite of proposed Convention amendments, including two pending issues, will be considered by the Commission at its 2016 annual meeting with a view to concluding the negotiation. .

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*: 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].
- *Harvest strategies:* Building on earlier discussions of the Standing Working Group to Enhance Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers, ICCAT adopted *Rec. 15-07* to guide the development of HCRs and management strategy evaluation for ICCAT species.

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 they may need to be revised once ICCAT has gained some experience in their application.

Elections: In 2015, ICCAT elected a new slate of Commission officers. Martin Tsamenyi (Ghana) was elected as Commission Chair; Stefaan Depypere (EU) was elected First Vice-Chair; and Raul Delgado (Panama) was elected Second Vice-Chair. Fabrizio Donatella (EU) will chair PWG; Derek Campbell (USA) will continue to chair the Compliance Committee; and Sylvie LaPointe (Canada) will continue to chair STACFAD. Regarding the Panels, Cote d'Ivoire was re-exlected 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 2017.

2016 Annual and Intersessional Meetings:

The 20th Special Meeting of the Commission will be held November 14-21, 2016, in Vilamoura, Portugal**.** The Commission also agreed to hold numerous intersessional meetings during 2016. Details are available at: http://www.iccat.int/en/meetingscurrent.htm.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Kimberly Blankenbeker
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8357
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: Kimberly.Blankenbeker@noaa.gov

Department of State:

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

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Members

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

Commission Headquarters

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

Secretary: Dr. Peter Huchinson
Tel: 44 131 228 2551
Fax: 44 131 228 4384
Email: hq@nasco.int
Web address: http://www.nasco.int/

Budget

The Convention provides that 30 percent of the Organization's budget will be borne equally by the Parties; 70 percent will be based on recent catches of salmon in intercepting fisheries. NASCO's 2017 budget totaled £653,400--of which the U.S. contribution is £30,070. The 2017 budget represents a 1.6% increase in real terms over the 2016 budget (£628,200). Overall, the budget places 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:

Daniel Morris
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 fishery 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: provides (1) 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 (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 to NASCO due to concerns about fishing for Atlantic salmon by non-Contracting Parties to the NASCO Convention. The protocol was designed to provide non-Contracting Parties 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 non-Contracting Parties 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 states in which vessels observed to be fishing on the high seas for Atlantic salmon are registered and are documenting and disseminating information on high seas fishing activities contrary to the protocol.

To date, no non-Contracting Parties have become bound by the protocol although certain non-Contracting Parties (i.e., Panama and Poland) have taken actions to address the problem of salmon harvesting vessels registered in their countries. There have been no sightings of non-Contracting Parties 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 non-member 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; by-catch 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 recent negotiated agreements. In recent years, 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 likely have also proved to be useful in reducing 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 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 subsistence 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. Following the 1995 Annual Meeting, the Parties considered a resolution to establish such a procedure, but for various reasons, NASCO was not able to adopt the resolution as presented. At the 1996 Annual Meeting, the Parties considered revised resolutions on the topic and 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 a 5-year 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 establishes 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 on 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, 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 is 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 they 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 with a minor wording change on an aquaculture related recommendation. 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 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.

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. Even in the absence of fishing mortality, there is a less than 10% chance of simultaneously meeting or exceeding the management objectives of the seven management units in the West Greenland stock complex.

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 (and NAC). The application in 2016 of the NASCO Framework of Indicators for the West Greenland fishery did not indicate the need for a revised analysis of catch options.

Management: In 2015, the WGC adopted a multi-annual regulatory measure for the West Greenland fishery for the period 2015-2017 that continued to require salmon be for internal use only, established that the maximum fishing season will be three months (August – October), required payback of any overharvest, and required stronger monitoring and control measures and timely reporting. The WGC was unable to agree, however, to a total catch limit for the fishery. Contrary to scientific advice, Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) unilaterally set an annual catch limit of 45 metric tons for 2015-2017. While the measure applies from 2015-17, its continued application in 2016 and 2017 can be reconsidered if any Commission member calls 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. In support of the meeting, information on the fishery was provided by ICES and Greenland. Greenland reported a harvest of 58.4 mt to NASCO, a significant overrun of its 45 t autonomous quota. Greenland reported slightly higher catch data to ICES (61.8 mt). Significant time was spent during the intersessional meeting trying to understand how such an overharvest occurred, the steps to be taken to ensure it did not recur, and the reason for the differences in the catch figures reported to ICES and NASCO so that an appropriate reduction in Greenland's autonomous quota could be applied in 2016. In the end, Greenland stated its intention to reduce its 45 t autonomous quota by 13 t and set a 2016 quota of 32 t. Greenland indicated that, in a return its pre-2012 management approach, it did not intend to allow factory landings in 2016. Greenland also indicated it would complete the process of extending its licensing system from only professional (commercial) fishermen to all fishermen in time for the 2016 fishery. The WGC agreed to meet intersessionally again in 2017 to review implementation of the regulatory measure prior to the 2017 NASCO 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 Framework of Indicators 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 these populations require alternative conservation actions in addition to very restrictive fisheries regulation to maintain their genetic integrity and persistence, where necessary implement habitat restoration. 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 having eliminated 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 a 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. Canada will continue monitoring this fishery.

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 that 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. In 2016, Canada noted that it is considering a proposal to allow the farming of Norwegian triploid stock in Newfoundland but that no decision has been made as the scientific reviews are still taking place.

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) when there are serious worries about the abundance of North American stocks and when strict harvest restrictions have been introduced throughout the North Atlantic due to the poor status of many populations of U.S. and Canadian origin salmon. Reported harvests in recent years have been generally between 3 and 4 t with 2013 being the highest on record at about 5.3 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 to encourage France (SPM) to improve the sampling of its catch, including instituting more robust genetics research, but with limited success. Genetics work is essential to understand the origin of fish taken in the SPM fishery and 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.

NEAC Discussions/Actions:

Scientific Information and Advice: ICES 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 Framework of Indicators 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.

Finnmark: The NEAC has also been discussing the management of the Finnmark fishery. In particular, the EU and Russia have expressed serious concerns about a Norwegian fishery in the Finnmark region of Norway that intercepts salmon originating in Finland and Russia. The NEAC has had robust discussions of this matter in the past. Norway has taken some actions to reduce catches in the Finnmark fishery but Russia, in particular, has called for more action given the significant numbers of Russian origin salmon intercepted in the fishery. Despite bilateral and trilateral efforts, no solution has yet been found with respect to this issue.

Genetics and research fishing: In 2015, ICES commented on the results of genetic analyses of historical samples from salmon taken in the Faroese fishery. These results indicated that the contribution to the Faroe Islands fishery of North American origin salmon was much higher than previously assumed (5.7% for 1SW fish and 20.5% for MSW). The analysis was based on scale samples collected during the 1993/94 and 1994/95 research fisheries. It should be noted that these results are based on a relatively low number of samples (~650), from only two fishing seasons, and from samples that are 20 years old that may not necessarily reflect the current day composition of the stock complex. In addition, there have been major changes in the continental composition of the catch at West Greenland over this time period, and there may have been similar changes in the eastern North Atlantic. In response to this 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. Notably, 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 33rd Annual Meeting from June 6-10, 2016, in Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, Germany, and has scheduled its 34th Annual Meeting for June 6-9, 2017, in Vargerg, Sweden. The United States intends to host the 2018 NASCO annual meeting in Maine.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Kim Blankenbeker
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8350
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: Kimberly.Blankenbeker@noaa.gov

Kim Damon-Randall
Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930
Telephone: (978) 281-9116
Fax: (978) 281-9394
Email: Kimberly.damon-randall@noaa.gov

Department of State:

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

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

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

Commission Headquarters

Executive Secretary:
Mr. Fred Kingston
Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
P.O. Box 638
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada, B2Y 3Y9
Telephone: (902) 468-5590
Fax: (902) 468-5538
Web address: http://www.nafo.int

Budget

NAFO adopted a 2016 budget of $1,997,000 CDN (approximately US$ 1,527,459). The preliminary US assessment for 2016 will be $292,090 CND (approximately US$ 223,412).

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:

Mr. K. John Bullard
Regional Administrator
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
National Marine Fisheries Service
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 10930-2298

Ms. Maggie Raymond
PO Box 287
South Berwick, ME 03908

Dr. Michael Sissenwine
39 Mill Pond Way
East Falmouth, MA 02536

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.

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 35º N latitude and west of 42º 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:

NAFO currently consists of a General Council, Fisheries Commission, Scientific Council, a Secretariat, and six standing committees. The General Council provides executive guidance for the Secretariat and provides a forum for member nations' approval of programs and regulations. The Scientific Council provides a forum for the exchange of scientific information and views relating to the fisheries of the Convention Area; compiles, maintains, and publishes statistics pertaining to the fisheries, including environmental and ecological factors in the Convention Area; provides scientific advice to coastal states when requested to do so; and provides scientific advice to the NAFO Fisheries Commission. The Fisheries Commission is responsible for the management and conservation of the fishery resources of the Regulatory Area. The Standing Committees consider and make recommendations in the areas of (1) finance and administration; (2) inspection and control; (3) fishery science; (4) research coordination; (5) publications; and (6) fisheries environment.

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. These amendments included key changes that addressed broad membership concerns, such as the objection procedure and dispute settlement, as well as key U.S. concerns relating to the dues assessment procedure. 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. These adopted amendments constitute the first formal step towards a reformed NAFO Convention. The adopted amended text now must be ratified by at least three-fourths of NAFO Contracting Parties to become legally binding. To date, six NAFO Parties have ratified the amended Convention. The U.S. Senate has provided advice and consent to the amended Convention. Once the amended Convention is ratified by the United States, it will be necessary to amend the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Convention Act of 1995, in order to ensure that the United States is able to fulfill its obligations under the amended Convention. Note that under the amended Convention, the functions of the General Council and Fisheries Commission are combined. Thus, the Organization shall consist of: a) the Commission; b) the Scientific Council; and c) the Secretariat. The functions of the current standing committees shall be re-organized to reflect this new structure and new rules of procedure will be adopted to ensure its effective implementation. More information on these activities can found on the NAFO website (http://www.nafo.int).

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 2015. 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/FC Doc. 14/1) can be found on the NAFO website at: http://www.nafo.int.

D. Current Issues of Interest:

2015 Annual Meeting: The 37th Annual Meeting was held during 21-25 September 2015, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The United States was generally satisfied with the outcomes of the 2015 annual meeting and was pleased by the increased level of coordination and collaboration that took place with other delegations. At this year's meeting, positive scientific advice resulted in notable increases in TACs for two NAFO stocks (Div 3M cod and redfish). The status of most other stocks remained unchanged, including a continued moratorium on Div 3L shrimp. In addition to agreement on TACs and other management measures for fish stock under its purview, NAFO adopted Terms of Reference for a virtual working group to discuss the timeline and scope of a second performance review of NAFO. The results of these WG deliberations will be presented during the 2016 NAFO annual meeting, with a view to completing such a performance review during 2017. Based on the recommendations of the Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Working Groups on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management, it was also agreed that bottom fishing (including exploratory fishing) shall be halted on all seamounts within the NAFO Regulatory Area. Gear specifications were also set in place for mid-water trawls. A number of additional technical measures were also adopted in order to improve compliance and enforcement in the NRA, including: establishment of a Catch Data Advisory Group; adoption of an Action Plan on the effective management and minimization of bycatch and discards; and a notification process was agreed for the closure of the Div. 3M redfish fishery to prevent the TAC overruns of the past.

Temur Tairov (Russian Federation) was elected to the Chair of the Fisheries Commission and Patrick Moran (U.S.A.) was elected as the Vice-Chair.

U.S. Allocations for 2016: At the 2015 NAFO Annual Meeting, the United States received fish quota allocations for two NAFO stocks to be fished during 2016. These stocks were: Division 3M redfish (69 mt) and Subareas 3 & 4 *Illex* squid (453 mt). 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 2016, "Others" category allocations available to U.S. fishermen include: Division 3NO white hake (59 mt); Division 3LNO skates (258 mt); Division 3M cod (56 mt), 3LN redfish (63 mt), Division 3NO witch flounder (22 mt), and Division 3O redfish (100 mt). 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) 1000 mt 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.

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 2016, 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 37th NAFO Annual Meeting will be held September 19-23, 2016 in Varadero, Cuba.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

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

Michael Ruccio
NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
55 Great Republic Drive Gloucester, MA 01930
Telephone: (978) 281-9104 Email:
Michael.Rucciol@noaa.gov

U.S. Department of State:

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

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

The Southeast Atlantic Fisheries Organization (SEAFO) 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 6º South parallel to the meridian 10° West, thence due north along the 10º West meridian to the equator, thence due west along the equator to the meridian 20° West, thence due south along the 20º West meridian to a parallel 50° South, thence due east along the 50º South parallel to the meridian 30° East, thence due north along the 30º East meridian to the coast of the African continent.

Economically important covered species include sedentary, discrete, and straddling stocks such as alfonsino, orange roughy, oreo, dories, armorhead, sharks, deepwater hake, and red crab.
Web address: http://www.fao.org/fi/body/rfb/SEAFO/seafo_home.htm

The 12th Annual Commission meeting was held November 30 – December 4, 2016, in Swakopmund, Namibia. The meeting reports can be found at http://www.seafo.org/MeetingsDetails?MeetingID=1ad6d66a-451b-4937-b28d-6f34cb33100f.

Secretariat:

South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)
133 Nangolo Mbumba Drive
Savvas Building
P.O. Box 4296
Walvis Bay, NAMIBIA
Tel: +264-64-220387
Fax: +264-64-220389
Email: info@seafo.org
Website: http://www.seafo.org/

NOAA Fisheries Contact:

Chris Rogers
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: 301-427-8375
mark.wildman@noaa.gov

Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC)

Basic Instrument

Article VI-1 of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Constitution. Resolution 4/61of 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 in writing to the Director-General of the Organization 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
P.O. Box 631C
Bridgetown, Barbados

Secretary: Raymon van Anrooy
Telephone: 246 426 7110
Fax: 246 426 7111

Web address: http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/wecafc/en
http://www.wecafc.org/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, 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 14th session of the Commission in 2012 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 15th biennial meeting of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) convened in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 26-28 March 2014. The meeting made significant progress in adopting recommendations for countries to adopt seasonal closures for fishing for Nassau grouper. The group also recommended specific management measures for queen conch, a species whose international trade is regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The meeting also adopted other proposals calling for member countries to collaborate to strengthen fisheries management in the region. The WECAFC meeting also adopted a resolution calling on member countries to become party to the FAO Agreement to collaborate in its implementation.

A resolution on transformation of WECAFC into a binding regional fisheries management organization was not adopted, with a number of countries indicating that the decision was premature. The European Union since then has funded a series of meetings in 2015 to consider this question with the same decision, which will also be addressed at the 16th biennial meeting scheduled for 20-24 June 2016. Other items to be addressed at the 16th biennial meeting include changes to the structure and responsibilities of WECAFC, possible new recommendations/resolutions on fisheries management, and regional collaboration to address IUU fishing.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Oriana Villar
National Marine Fisheries Service
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8384
Email: Oriana.Villar@noaa.gov

WECAFC Contact:

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

PACIFIC OCEAN

Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP)

Basic Instruments

The Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program, a legally-binding multilateral agreement which 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 2015, the United States had 15 purse seine vessels listed on the Active Purse Seine Vessel Capacity Register and one vessel listed on the Inactive Purse Seine Vessel Register. The total U.S. vessel assessments paid for 2015 is $396,816.

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 2016 is $6,774,232, 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 2015 was estimated to be 765 dolphins, compared to 975 mortalities in 2014. The observed mortalities in 2014 and 2015 both 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 (*S. attenuata*) and coastal spotted dolphin (*S. 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 FY 2015 were $2,951,521, while the AIDCP revenues for FY 2015 were $2,876,172.

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.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Barry Thom
Deputy Regional Administrator
West Coast Regional Office
National Marine Fisheries Service NOAA
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97232-1274
Telephone: 503-231-6226

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

Kristin Rusello
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East West Highway, SSMC3
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8376
Fax: (301) 713-2313

Department of State:

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

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

Basic Instrument and the Transition to the Antigua Convention

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

Antigua Convention.

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.

Commission Headquarters

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

8901 La Jolla Shores Drive
La Jolla, California 92037

Executive Director: Dr. Guillermo Compeán
Telephone: (858) 546-7100
Fax: (858) 546-7133
Web Address: http://www.iattc.org

Budget

As with most other decisions under the Antigua Convention, the budget of the Commission is adopted by a consensus decision of the Members of the Commission present at a given meeting. In formulating and approving a budget, the Antigua Convention directs the Commission to give due consideration to the principle of cost effectiveness. The Commission maintains separate accounts for the activities carried out by IATTC and the AIDCP. The Antigua Convention provides that the amount of the contribution of each Member of the Commission to the budget shall be determined in accordance with a scheme which 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 FY2016 is $6,774,232. The United States assessed contribution is $1,746,553 for FY2016.

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:

Barry Thom
Deputy Regional Administrator
West Coast Region
National Marine Fisheries Service NOAA
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97232-1274
Telephone: 503-231-6226

William (Bill) W. Fox, Jr., Ph.D.
Vice President and Managing
Director for Fisheries
World Wildlife Fund
P.O. Box 60633
San Diego, CA 92166
(619) 222-2489

Edward (Ed) Weissman
Retired general manager of Jorge Fishing
Inc., located in Panama
1857 Spindrift Drive

Donald (Don) Keith Hansen
Director of San Clemente Sportfishing, Inc., and
Vice President of the Sportfishing Association of California
79 Marbella

La Jolla, CA, 92037
(858) 333-2252

San Clemente, CA 92672
(949) 496-5794

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 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 m^3 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 IATTC measure on tropical tuna conservation (C-13-01) for 2014 through 2016 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 eastern Pacific Ocean. In 2014, the Commission adopted a two-year measure to further reduce catch limits of Pacific bluefin tuna from 2013 levels (C-14-06). The measure also specifies that Members and Cooperating Non-Members must take meaningful measures to reduce recreational catches of Pacific bluefin tuna to levels comparable to the commercial fisheries.

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), and mobulid rays (C-15-04). In addition, the Commission adopted a measure in 2013 (C-13-04) to collect data on fish aggregating devices (FADs), which was revised in 2015 (C-15-03) to establish a working group on FADs.

A list of active IATTC resolutions and recommendations can be found on the Commission's website (http://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).

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries - West Coast Region:

Heidi Taylor
HMS Branch Chief
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
501 W. Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, CA 90802-4213
Telephone: (562) 980-4039
Fax: (562) 980-4047

Department of State:

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

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

The United States and Canada

Commission Headquarters

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

Director: Dr. Bruce Leaman
Telephone: (206) 634-1838
Fax: (206) 632-2983
Web address: http://www.iphc.int

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

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

B. U.S. Commissioners:

James Balsiger, Ph.D.
Administrator, Alaska Regional Office
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Donald Lane
Owner, F.V. Predator
Homer, Alaska

Robert Alverson
Manager and Executive Secretary,
Fishing Vessel Owners Association of Seattle
Seattle, Washington

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 92nd Annual Meeting in Juneau, Alaska, on January 29, 2016, with Dr. James Balsiger presiding as Chair. More than 280 halibut industry stakeholders attended

the meeting, with over 80 more participating via the web. All of the Commission's public and administrative sessions during the meeting were open to the public and broadcast on the web.

The Commission is recommending to the governments of Canada and the United States catch limits for 2016 totaling 29.89 million pounds. The Commission also addressed other regulatory issues and took actions regarding assessment survey expansion and bycatch management. A news release issued January 29, 2016, announced the catch limits and fishing seasons for 2016, and that information is repeated in this news release. Documents and presentations from the Annual Meeting can be found on the Annual Meeting page of the IPHC website: http://www.iphc.int/meetings-and-events/annual-meeting.html

Stock Assessment and Harvest Advice

As has been the case since 2012, this year's stock assessment is based on an ensemble of models, incorporating the uncertainty within and among models. This approach reduces the potential for abrupt changes in management advice and provides a more realistic presentation of uncertainty and a stronger basis for risk assessment. As in 2014, the models included in the ensemble consist of two long time-series models, reconstructing historical dynamics back to the beginning of the modern fishery, and two short time-series models incorporating data from 1996 to the present, the period when all sources of removals and surveys are available for all regions. For each time-series length, one model is fitted to coastwide aggregate data and the other to data disaggregated into geographic regions.

The results of the 2015 stock assessment indicate that the Pacific halibut stock declined continuously from the late 1990s to around 2010. That trend resulted from decreasing size at age, as well as recent recruitment strengths that were smaller than those from the 1980s and 1990s. The estimated female spawning biomass appears to have stabilized near 200 million pounds, with a slightly increasing trend.

An executive summary of the 2015 stock assessment is posted on the IPHC website at: http://iphc.int/meetings-and-events/interim-meeting/im2015-documents.html

The complete report of the 2015 stock assessment is available on the IPHC website at: http://iphc.int/publications/rara/2015/RARA2015_12Assessment.pdf

As it has been since 2013, the 2016 IPHC staff harvest advice was presented in the form of a decision table that estimates the risks to stock and fishery status. The final version of the decision table for 2016, incorporating the adopted catch limits, is posted on the IPHC website at http://iphc.int/meetings-and-events/annual-meeting.html (titled "Adopted Catch Limits for 2016").

Catch Limits and Seasons

Catch Limits: The Commission received harvest advice for 2016 from the scientific staff, Canadian and United States harvesters and processors, and recommends to the two governments the following catch limits for 2016:

Regulatory Area	**Catch Limit (lb)**
Area 2A (California, Oregon, and Washington)	**1,140,000**
Non-treaty directed commercial (south of Pt. Chehalis)	193,364
Non-treaty incidental catch in salmon troll fishery	34,123
Non-treaty incidental catch in sablefish fishery (north of Pt. Chehalis)	49,686
Treaty Indian commercial	365,100
Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (year-round)	33,900
Sport – North of Columbia River	214,110
Sport – South of Columbia River	220,077
Sport-California	29,640
Area 2B (British Columbia) (includes sport catch allocation)	**7,300,000**

Area 2C (southeastern Alaska) (combined commercial/guided sport)[1]	**4,950,000**
Commercial fishery	4,044,000
Guided sport fishery	906,000
Area 3A (central Gulf of Alaska) (combined commercial/guided sport)[1]	**9,600,000**
Commercial fishery	7,786,000
Guided sport fishery	1,814,000
Area 3B (western Gulf of Alaska)	**2,710,000**
Area 4A (eastern Aleutians)	**1,390,000**
Area 4B (central/western Aleutians)	**1,140,000**
Areas 4CDE	**1,660,000**
Area 4C (Pribilof Islands)	733,600
Area 4D (northwestern Bering Sea)	733,600
Area 4E (Bering Sea flats)	192,800
Total	**29,890,000**

[1]The combined total includes estimated mortality from regulatory discards of sublegal halibut and lost gear in the commercial fishery, plus discard mortality in the guided sport fishery, as mandated in the U.S. Catch Sharing Plan.

Notes Regarding the Catch Limits for Specific Regulatory Areas

Area 2A

The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (PFMC) Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for Area 2A was accepted by the Commission and is reflected in the catch limits adopted for the Area 2A fisheries. The overall catch limit for Area 2A in 2016 is sufficient to permit non-treaty incidental harvest of halibut during the limited-entry sablefish longline fishery, under the provisions of the CSP.

Area 2B

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada (DFO) will allocate the Area 2B catch limit between commercial and sport fisheries.

Areas 2C and 3A

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's (NPFMC) CSP for Areas 2C and 3A was accepted by the Commission and is reflected in the catch limits adopted for Areas 2C and 3A. That CSP sets the allocation between the commercial and charter sport sectors in those two Regulatory Areas. Note that since 2014, the IPHC catch limits for Areas 2C and 3A include both sectors (commercial and recreational charter), plus discard and lost gear mortality estimates, as noted in the table footnote above. The Area 2C commercial fishery allocation is 3,924,000 pounds for the commercial fishery catch and 120,000 pounds estimated for incidental mortality within the fishery. The Area 3A commercial fishery allocation is 7,336,000 pounds for the commercial fishery catch and 450,000 pounds estimated for the incidental mortality within the fishery.

Area 4CDE

The IPHC sets a combined catch limit for Area 4CDE. The individual catch limits for Areas 4C, 4D, and 4E reflect the 4CDE CSP adopted by the NPFMC. The CSP also allows Area 4D Community Development Quota (CDQ) harvest to be taken in Area 4E, and Area 4C Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) and CDQ to be fished in Areas 4D and 4C.

Fishing Season Dates

The Commission approved a season of March 19 to November 7, 2016, for the U.S. and Canadian quota fisheries. Seasons will commence at noon local time on March 19 and terminate at noon local time on November 7, 2016 for the following fisheries and areas: the Canadian Individual Vessel Quota (IVQ) fishery in Area 2B, and the United States IFQ and CDQ fisheries in Areas 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E. All Area 2A commercial fishing, including the treaty Indian commercial fishery, will take place between March 19 and November 7, 2016. The Saturday opening date was chosen to facilitate marketing.

In Area 2A, eight 10-hour fishing periods for the non-treaty directed commercial fishery south of Point Chehalis, Washington, are recommended: June 22, July 6, July 20, August 3, August 17, August 31, September 14, and September 28, 2016. All fishing periods will begin at 8 a.m. and end at 6 p.m. local time, and will be further restricted by fishing period limits announced at a later date.

Area 2A fishing dates for incidental commercial 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 the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The remainder of the Area 2A CSP, 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 halibut fishery, and details for the sport fisheries, is available at the NMFS hotline (1-800-662-9825). The Area 2A IPHC licensing procedures did not change.

Regulatory Changes

Charter Halibut Sector Management Measures for Areas 2C and 3A

The Commission received a request from the NPFMC to adopt charter halibut sector management measures in accordance with the NMFS CSP for Areas 2C and 3A. The NPFMC proposal is designed to keep removals by the charter fishery within the limits of the CSP. After consideration of the advice of the Council, Commission staff, Canadian and United States harvesters and processors, and other fisheries agencies, the Commission approved the following measures:

In Area 2C, 1) a one-fish daily bag limit, and 2) a "reverse slot" • size limit restriction (â‰¤ 43 inches or â‰¥ 80 inches).

In Area 3A, 1) a two-fish daily bag limit, 2) a maximum size limit for the second fish of 28 inches, 3) a four-fish annual limit, 3) a vessel limit of one trip per calendar day, 4) a limit of one trip per charter permit per calendar day, and 5) a one-day-per-week closure of halibut charter fishing on Wednesdays throughout the year. In addition, immediately upon landing a halibut a harvest record is required, for which the angler must record the date and regulatory area in ink on the back of the State of Alaska sport fishing license.

The requirement to retain the filleted carcass on board the vessel until the fillets are offloaded will be removed from IPHC regulations. This requirement now appears in the NMFS regulations.

Longline Pot Gear

The NPFMC and NMFS are developing regulations that allow the use of longline pot gear, as defined by the the NPFMC, in the IFQ sablefish fishery in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). The NPFMC recommended that the Commission allow the retention of legal-sized halibut, if unused halibut IFQ is available, in longline pot gear during the commercial halibut fishery season in the GOA.

The Commission approved longline pot gear, as defined by the NPFMC, as legal gear for the commercial halibut fishery in Alaska when NMFS regulations permit the use of this gear in the IFQ sablefish fishery. The expectaton is

that NMFS will implement regulations to allow the use of pot gear in the GOA IFQ sablefish fishery in late 2016 or at the beginning of the 2017 fishery.

The Commission intends to review the use of pot gear as a legal gear for halibut in this fishery after three years.

Halibut with External IPHC Tags

The Commission approved the exemption of halibut with external IPHC tags from sport daily bag or possession limits, size limits, and season restrictions, and from personal use and subsistence daily bag or catch limits. Such tagged halibut are already exempt from commercial IVQs, IFQs, and CDQs, and this change was made to ensure IPHC receives information from all tagged halibut that are caught.

Use of the NMFS eLog in Alaska

The Commission approved the explicit addition of the electronic version of the NMFS Groundfish/IFQ Daily Fishing Longline and Pot Gear logbook to the list of acceptable logbooks for use in the Alaskan commercial halibut fishery.

Area 2A Fish Tickets

The Commission approved changing the wording of regulations to make it clear that the Tribal Identification Number and not the Vessel Identification Number should be recorded on the fish ticket in the Area 2A Treaty Indian fisheries.

Other Actions

Discard Mortality Rate

In response to a motion approved by the Conference Board, the Commission directed the staff to re-examine the appropriateness of of the 16% discard mortality rate (DMR) currently assigned to halibut released in the U.S. and Canadian directed halibut fisheries. The Commissioners noted that this would be part of a larger evaluation of DMRs that the IPHC and NMFS staffs are currently engaged in.

Nunivak Survey

In response to a Conference Board motion that the IPHC consider the feasibility of including in the annual IPHC setline survey additional sites around Nunivak Island, the Commission directed the staff to look at all available sources of information on abundance and distribution around Nunivak. The Commission invited fishers in that area to participate in the IPHC logbook program as a ready source of such information, and asked the staff to continue its outreach to the communities there.

Harvest Policy Analysis

The Conference Board recommended that the Commission prioritize and assign sufficient resources for the staff and the Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB), in conjunction with the Scientific Review Board, to review and update the harvest policy and harvest control rules. The Commission confirmed that such a review is a priority for the staff and the MSAB, and noted that it has provided additional resources for the project in this year's budget.

Halibut Bycatch

The Commission affirmed its commitment to bycatch reduction. The Commission directed the staff to continue its work to quantify bycatch and its impact on the halibut stock, and to promote the reduction of bycatch. The

Commission also noted that bycatch management is a primary focus of the IPHC's developing relationship with the NPFMC.

Expanded Survey

The Commission approved the next in a series of expansions to the Commission's standardized stock assessment survey. In 2016, the Commission's survey in the Area 4D Edge will be expanded. The purpose of the expansion series is to reduce potential biases in the surveys among regulatory areas and to encompass depths to which the commercial fishery has recently expanded. The Commission will continue to review survey expansion at the next Annual Meeting.

IPHC Merit Scholarship

The Commission honored Ms. Shalie Dahl of Petersburg, Alaska, as the fourteenth recipient of the IPHC Merit Scholarship. Ms. Dahl was able to attend the 2015 Interim Meeting in Seattle, but due to class commitments she was unable to be present at the Annual Meeting to accept the scholarship. The Commission decided to change the format of the scholarship to an award of $4,000 per year, renewable for up to four total years of study, with new scholarships awarded every other year. The first scholarship at the $4,000 level will be awarded in 2016, and the next will be awarded in 2018. Solicitation for the 2016 IPHC merit scholarship was announced in a recent news release (http://www.iphc.int/news-releases/444-nr20160201.html), with an application deadline date of June 30, 2016.

Upcoming Meetings

The Commission's 2016 Interim Meeting will be held November 29-30, 2016, in Seattle, Washington in a venue accessible to the public and will be webcast. The next Annual Meeting of the Commission will take place January 23-27, 2017 in Victoria, British Columbia. The 2018 Annual Meeting is planned for January 22-26, 2018 in Portland, Oregon.

Commission Membership

Canadian Government Commissioner Paul Ryall of Vancouver, British Columbia, was elected Chair for the coming year. United States Government Commissioner Dr. James W. Balsiger of Juneau, Alaska, was elected Vice-Chair. The other Canadian Commissioners are David Boyes of Courtenay, British Columbia, and Ted Assu of Campbell River, British Columbia. The other U.S. Commissioners are Robert Alverson of Seattle, Washington, and Jeffery Kauffman of Wasilla, Alaska.

Executive Director

The Commission announced the selection of Dr. David Wilson to succeed Dr. Bruce Leaman as its Executive Director.

Dr. Wilson comes to the IPHC with a wide range of experience in international and domestic fisheries management and administration. He is currently serving as Interim Executive Secretary of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). Prior to joining the IOTC, he was head of the International Fisheries Section of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resources Economics and Sciences, and he served as the head of the Australian scientific delegations to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the IOTC. Dr. Wilson has also spent time working for the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), and almost 10 years working in Panama (as a research fellow at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute), American Samoa (as a fisheries biologist at the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources), and the Turks and Caicos Islands (as director of the Boston University Center for Marine Resource Studies). Dr. Wilson earned his doctorate at James Cook University in 2001, in association with the Australian Institute of Marine Science and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute.

Dr. Wilson is expected to join the IPHC staff in August 2016.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick Moran
Office of International Affairs (F/IA)
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10645
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: pat.moran@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Elana Katz-Mink
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW,
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-1073
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: Katz-MinkEH@state.gov

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

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

Commission Headquarters

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

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

Budget

The approved NPAFC budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014/2015 (July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015) is CAD$893,700 with each Party contributing CAD$180,000. The budget estimate for FY 2015/2016 is CAD$870,000 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. Commissioners (the Alaska position is currently vacant)

James Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region (F/AK)
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, AK 99802-1668

Gary T. Smith
Partner

Smith and Stark, LLC
3219 Point Place SW
Seattle, WA 98116
Earl E. Krygier (Alternate Commissioner from Alaska)
12840 Johns Road
Anchorage, AK 99515-3707
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 Advisory Panel members have expired. 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.

Outcomes of the 22nd Annual Meeting: The 24th Annual Meeting of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) was held from May 16 to 20, 2016, in Busan, Republic of Korea. At the Commission's Annual Meeting, Plenary Sessions and the Commission's three standing committees, Enforcement, Scientific Research and Statistics, and Finance and Administration, were convened to discuss issues related to salmon and steelhead in the NPAFC Convention Area, which is the high seas of the North Pacific. This year the Commission presented Ms. Wakako Morris, retired Administrative Officer of the NPAFC, with the 2016 NPAFC Award. This award was given to Ms. Morris in recognition of her career-long support of the Commission's operations. She was acknowledged for her

tireless dedication to increasing effective information sharing and coordinating efforts among NPAFC's fisheries enforcement agencies to detect illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Convention Area. Through her efforts and leadership, Ms. Morris has significantly advanced international cooperation among the member nations of the Commission.

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 United States fisheries enforcement aircraft from airports in Japan helped maximize the operational effectiveness. In a bilateral arrangement, the USCG hosted People's Republic of China Coast Guard law enforcement officers aboard the USCG cutter to further increase the effectiveness of ship patrols. These combined multilateral efforts resulted in no high seas driftnet or IUU fishing activities observed by enforcement agencies of NPAFC member countries in 2015. The coordinated enforcement work of member countries in 2015 resulted in patrolling substantial portions of the NPAFC Convention area and involved over 400 hours of aircraft flights and more than 100 ship days. In excess of 500 fishing vessels were sighted and none were detected conducting illegal fishing activities. Inspection of several transhipment vessels did not indicate retention of salmon captured on the high seas. This confirms that high level coordination, patrol, and inspection efforts act as strong deterrents to IUU fishing.

At the Commission's scientific meetings, leading salmon researchers from member countries reviewed commercial catch statistics compiled from information provided by each of the member nations. Preliminary 2015 North Pacific -wide salmon catches were 1.04 million metric tonnes (507 million fish). Pink salmon constituted the majority of the total commercial catch (44% by weight) followed by chum (34%) and sockeye salmon (18%). Coho comprised 3% of the catch, Chinook salmon was 1%, and each of cherry salmon and steelhead trout were < 1% of the catch by weight. In 2016, salmon research surveys are planned to take place in the Gulf of Alaska, the Bering Sea, the northwestern and central North Pacific, and the southern Sea of Okhotsk. Researchers will be examining conditions such as species abundance, migration, and distribution of salmon at sea.

Preparation for the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) continued at this year's meeting. The IYS is an intensive burst of internationally coordinated scientific research focused on understanding the impacts of climate change on salmon in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Their initiative represents a unique opportunity for countries to conduct joint surveys to better understand the factors affecting salmon distribution and abundance on the high seas. Upon completion of the IYS, we will be equipped with new techniques and analytical methods to better evaluate environmental challenges facing salmon and their refine strategies to mitigate these impacts to ensure healthy wild salmon stocks throughout their range.

The 2016-2020 NPAFC Science Plan was approved at the Annual Meeting. This Plan recognizes it is now more important than ever before to promote new cooperative international research that provides better scientific information on the ecological mechanisms regulating the distribution and abundance of anadromous populations and climate impacts in North Pacific marine ecosystems. The primary goal of the Science Plan is to understand variations in Pacific salmon productivity in a changing climate -- a goal in complete alignment with the IYS program.

Approaches to cooperative research under the Science Plan includes the collection and synthesis of existing data to generate and test hypotheses, integration of ecological monitoring programs in the ocean using research vessels and/or remote sensing, modeling, field and laboratory studies, and retrospective analyses. Scientific results from cooperative studies will progressively reduce major gaps in knowledge with respect to understanding variations in Pacific salmon productivity in a changing climate, as well as make significant contributions to the IYS initiative in collaboration with other international organizations. New scientific information will also contribute to effective coordinated enforcement activities by NPAFC member nations in protecting Pacific salmon from IUU fishing in the Convention Area. The five-day NPAFC Annual Meeting closed with an invitation from the Canadian Party to host the 2017 Annual Meeting in Victoria, British Columbia. This meeting will coincide with the Commission's 25th Anniversary.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick Moran
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10659
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email : pat.moran@noaa.gov

Department of State

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

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member States

The United States and Canada

Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) Headquarters

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

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

Budget

Each Party will contribute CAD $1,879,636 to the approved Commission budget of CAD $4,238,425 for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 (April 1, 2015 - March 31, 2016). In addition, the Parties have identified the need for supplementary funding over the next three years to mitigate the unfunded pension liability and relieve budgetary pressure on the Commission's depleted test fishing revolving fund.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

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

B. Commissioners:

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

Mr. Charles Swanton (Alaska Commissioner)
Deputy Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 20801
Juneau, AK 99802

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
510 Desmond Drive, S.E.
Lacey, WA 98503

C. Alternate Commissioners:

Mr. Mike Clark
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

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

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

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

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

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

B. Organizational Structure:

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

The Panels are responsible for providing advice to the Commission on the fishing regimes for the intercepting salmon fisheries in their respective regions, i.e., those in which one or both countries intercept salmon spawned in the other country. The fishing regimes in the Treaty are contained in Annex IV and must be renegotiated from time to time. This is done by reviewing technical data on annual fishing plans, regulations, and the salmon enhancement programs of each country. Based in part on the advice provided by the Panels, the PSC develops catch limits and

related provisions to present to the two governments. These recommendations, which become effective upon approval by both governments, are then implemented by each country's domestic management authorities.

C. Programs:

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.

2016 Update: The PSC held its 31st Annual Meeting on February 8-12, 2016, 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 3-7, 2016, in Vancouver, B.C. The PSC Post Season Meeting will be held January 9-13, 2017, in Vancouver, B.C. and the 32nd Annual Meeting will be held February 13-17, 2017, in Portland, OR.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Alison Agness, U.S. Section PSC Coordinator
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
7600 Sand Point Way
Seattle, WA 98115-0070
Telephone: (206) 526-4338
Fax: (206) 526-6534
Email: Alison.agness@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Mike Clark, Program Officer
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 2756
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-7487
Fax: (202) 736-7350
E-mail: ClarkML2@state.gov

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

Implementing Legislation

There is no implementing legislation for the Convention.

Parties

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

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The objectives of the Convention are:

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

B. Organizational Structure:

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

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

C. Advisory Body:

No formal U.S. advisory body has been legislated for the Convention. However, the U.S. Department of State has invited the 12-member "North Pacific and Bering Sea Fisheries Advisory Body," appointed to advise the U.S. Representative to the U.S.-Russia Intergovernmental Consultative Committee (ICC), to serve informally as the advisory body. This group consists of the following individuals:

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

D. Background:

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

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

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

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

Current Status

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.

20th Annual Conference

Mr. Douglas Mecum (United States) opened the 20th Annual Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea on 23 November 2015. It was the 6th Annual Conference to be conducted via electronic mail (e-mail). Mr. Mecum was elected Chair of the Annual

Conference. Mr. Paul Niemeier (United States) served as Rapporteur. Dr. Loh-Lee Low (United States) served as the Chair and Rapporteur for the Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting held on 14-25 September 2015. The following persons served as the contact points and "voices" for their respective Parties during Annual Conference e-mail exchanges: Takeshi Sato (Japan), Jeongseok Park (Republic of Korea), Louise Head (Poland/EU)), Alexander I. Glubokov (Russian Federation), and Douglas Mecum (United States). The People's Republic of China (China) did not participate.

The United States and Russian Federation provided a detailed review of Bering Sea pollock catch and effort statistics, pollock research survey results, and the status of pollock stocks since the 19th Annual Conference in the Report of the Scientific and Technical Committee. The United States conducts pollock research surveys of the Bogoslof Island pollock spawning grounds on a 2-year cycle. The last survey was conducted in March 2014; the next survey will be in March 2016. Consequently, there was no new scientific data to report for 2015. The 2014 Bogoslof Island area survey by the NOAA research vessel OSCAR DYSON resulted in a pollock biomass estimate of 112,000 t. Using the method prescribed by the Annex to the Convention, the entire Aleutian Basin pollock biomass was estimated to be 186,700 t. This is approximately 11 percent of the trigger biomass level to authorize an allowable harvest level (AHL). Given the current status of the Aleutian Basin pollock stock biomass, the Republic of Korea (Korea), Poland/EU, and the United States agreed that the AHL for 2016 should be set at zero. Since the AHL for 2016 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.

Trial Fishing

Japan, Korea, Poland/EU and the United States agreed to adopt the same terms and conditions for trial fishing in 2016 as was agreed at the 2010 Annual Meeting. Consequently, the Parties will continue the status quo for terms and conditions for trial fishing in 2016. Poland/EU encouraged Parties to the Convention to conduct trial fishing in the region in 2016 in line with the terms and conditions recommended by the Committee in order to obtain more scientific data and understanding concerning the distribution and status of the pollock stock in the Central Bering Sea. As in past Annual Conferences, the Parties recommended that countries planning to conduct trial fishing give at least one month lead time prior to fishing in order to facilitate enforcement efforts.

Poland/EU and the United States do not plan to conduct trial fishing in 2016 in the Convention Area. Korea also does not plan to conduct trial fishing in 2016 at this stage, but it will announce its plan in 2016 when it is available. In this case, Korea will notify all Parties of its plan at least one month prior to such fishing plan. None of the other Parties announced plans for trial fishing in 2016 in the Convention Area.

Future Annual Conferences

Parties agreed to continue the virtual meeting process in 2016. Japan will host the 21st Annual Conference and Scientific Technical Committee Meeting in the virtual format in 2016.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick E. Moran
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10659
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: pat.moran@noaa.gov

Region:

Dr. James W. Balsiger, Administrator
Alaska Region (F/AK)
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
709 W 9th Street
Juneau, AK 99802-1668
Telephone: (907) 586-7221
Fax: (907) 586-7249
Email: jim.balsiger@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Elana Katz-Mink
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-1073
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: Katz-MinkEH@state.gov

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Parties

The United States and Canada

Description

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. At this time, there are no plans for a new regime beyond 2016.

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 a full assessment most recently in 2014. The Albacore Working Group (ALBWG) to the ISC recommended no changes to its 2011 stock status determination, that is, the stock is considered healthy and neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The results of the 2014 ISC stock assessment concluded that the stock is not in an overfished condition and overfishing is not present and that the north Pacific albacore stock is healthy.

Fishing Pressure on North Pacific Albacore: During the years 2008-2012, fisheries based in Japan accounted for 64% of the total albacore harvest, followed by fisheries in the United States (19%), Canada (7%), and Chinese Taipei (4%).

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 remains 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 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 is planning to begin this process 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. The ISC is planning to undertake a management strategy evaluation that can inform the NC's consideration of target reference points and associated control rules.

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-05-02.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries Southwest Region:

Heidi Taylor
Highly Migratory Species Branch Chief
501 West Ocean Boulevard
Suite 4200
Long Beach, CA 90802-4213
Telephone: (562) 980-4039
Fax: (562) 980-4047
Email: Heidi.taylor@noaa.gov

NOAA Fisheries Headquarters:

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

Department of State:

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

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Parties

The United States and Canada

Description

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

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

Current Issues

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 16-18, 2016 in Vancouver, BC, to review and comment on the 2015 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 2016.

For 2015, the coastwise adjusted TAC was 440,000 metric tons. Preliminary indications show that the population size can support a 2016 TAC at the same level, and possibly higher. However, 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 2016 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 2016.

More information on the Pacific Hake/Whiting Agreement can be found at: http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/management/whiting/pacific_whiting_treaty.html.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries

Northwest Region

Frank D. Lockhart
Senior Policy Advisor, Groundfish and
Coastal Pelagic Species
Sustainable Fisheries Division
National Marine Fisheries Service – West Coast Region
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115
Telephone: (206) 526-6150
Email: frank.lockhart@noaa.gov

Headquarters

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

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Parties

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

Description

The SPTT entered into force in 1988. After an initial 5-year agreement, the SPTT was extended in 1993 and again in March 2003. At the same time, the related Economic Assistance Agreement between the United States and the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) was also extended for a term of 10 years. The Treaty provides licenses for up to 40 U.S. purse seine fishing vessels with an option for 5 additional licenses reserved for joint venture arrangements, to fish in the EEZ's of the Pacific Island Parties. The Treaty includes a number of requirements 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.

In 2013, the United States and the Pacific Island Parties (PIPs) agreed to extend the South Pacific Tuna Treaty for an interim period of 18 months. This interim arrangement maintains the treaty text, but adopted new financial terms and incorporates some new elements from the latest round of negotiations, including the use of a vessel day scheme. The interim arrangement was extended again in 2015 and 2016 to allow negotiators additional time to finalize the text of a renewed treaty. After several years of difficult renegotiation and mounting challenges regarding fishing access, the United States submitted its notice of withdrawal from the South Pacific Tuna Treaty in January 2016. The Treaty will cease to have effect one year from the notice of withdrawal. The United States continues to discuss with the Pacific Island parties whether the Treaty can be restructured in a way that is mutually acceptable and continues to provide benefits to both sides over the long term.

Budget

Under the interim arrangement for 2016, the industry financial terms amount to $45 million for 3,659 fishing days in the PIP EEZs for up to 40 U.S. purse seine fishing vessels.

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 $21 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.

Under the terms of the current arrangement, both the U.S. tuna industry and the U.S. Government annual payments total $66 million. In addition to paying vessel day 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. Under the interim agreement, the overall costs of the industry supported observer fund will be based on 40 vessels making an average of seven trips and an average observer placement cost of approximately $4,500 per trip. Also included are agreed costs for observer program management ($30,000) and training ($20,000) resulting in an additional estimated total cost to a U.S. vessel of approximately $2 million annually.

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

If a revised treaty is adopted, regulations will be developed to implement appropriate measures. If the United States withdraws from the treaty, regulations will be developed using other authorities as needed to manage the U.S. purse seine fleet.

Future Meetings

The Pacific Island Parties and the U.S. Government and industry have been meeting to modify the economic assistance agreement and extend the Treaty—the meetings are expected to continue in 2016.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

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

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 2016.

Commission Headquarters

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

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

Budget

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

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

The 9th Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) met during the Twelfth Annual Commission meeting in Bali, Indonesia, from December 3-8 2015 under the co-chairmanship of Paul Callaghan (U.S.) and J.

Samuelu Ah-Leong (Samoa). The total budget approved by the Commission for 2016 was $7,731,994, with the United States paying $1,088,322, or approximately 15% 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.

Russell Smith III
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for International Fisheries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Washington, DC 20230
Tel: (202) 482-5682

G. Kenny Alameda
Clipper Oil Company
2040 Harbor Island Dr., Suite 203
San Diego, CA 92101
Tel: (619) 692-0643

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

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

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

C. Advisory Body:

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

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

The Permanent Advisory Committee was initially established in 2008, with 20 members appointed by the Secretary of Commerce, in accordance with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act of 2007. The two-year terms of the 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 replaced in 2008 (CMM 2008-01) and again in 2013 (CMM 2013-01), and was most recently supplemented in 2015 with CMM 2015-01.

CMM 2008-01, due to expire at the Eighth Regular Annual Session of the WCPFC (WCPFC8) in March 2012, had Commission Members, Cooperating Non-Members and Participating Territories (CCMs) take specific measures aimed at reducing the fishing mortality rate of WCPO bigeye tuna and controlling the fishing mortality rate of WCPO yellowfin tuna. Measures included fishing effort limits in purse seine fisheries, seasonal periods during which purse seine fishing on fish aggregating devices is prohibited, areas of high seas closed to purse seine fishing, requirements to retain all purse seine catches of tunas, 100% observer coverage in purse seine fisheries, bigeye tuna catch limits in longline fisheries, and limits on fishing capacity in other commercial tuna fisheries. CMM 2008-01 was extended for a one year period at WCPFC8 as CMM 2011-01 and a new conservation and management measure CMM 2012-01, which replaced and built on CMM 2011-01 and included WCPO skipjack tuna as an additional subject stock, was adopted in 2012. In December 2013 the Commission adopted a replacement measure, CMM 2013-01, is applicable from 2014 through 2017. This new measure includes further restrictions on the use of fish aggregating devices, reductions in bigeye tuna catch limits for longline fleets, reductions in high seas purse seine fishing effort, and limits on purse seine and longline fishing capacity. At the 11th Regular Session of the WCPFC (WCPFC11) in 2014, Commission Members adopted CMM 2014-01 which replaced and built on CMM 2013-01 by

including measures to address Member submission of operational level catch data. CMM 2014-01was most recently replaced with 2015-01 which is generally applicable for the 2015-2017 period.

The WCPFC also has CMMs in place addressing other living marine resources, including North Pacific striped marlin, South Pacific striped marlin, Pacific bluefin tuna, North Pacific albacore, South Pacific albacore, 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 had 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 Twelfth Regular Session of the WCPFC is available at:
https://www.wcpfc.int/meetings/12th-regular-session-commission

2016 meetings

The WCPFC will hold its Thirteenth Regular Session in December 2016. The Scientific Committee is provisionally scheduled to meet August 3-11, 2016. The Northern Committee is provisionally scheduled to meet in September 2016. The Technical and Compliance Committee is scheduled to meet September 21-27 2016.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries, Pacific Islands Region:

Raymond Clarke
National Marine Fisheries Service,
NOAA IRC
1845 Wasp Blvd., Building 176
Honolulu, HI 96818
Telephone: (808) 725-5031
Fax: (808) 725-5215
Email: raymond.clarke@noaa.gov

NOAA Fisheries Headquarters:

Oriana Villar
Office of International Affairs
and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries
Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8384
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: oriana.villar@noaa.gov

Department of State:

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

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

N/A, 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. The U.S. domestic process to ratify the Convention and enact implementing legislation remains ongoing.

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) and Vanuatu

Cooperating Non-Contracting Non Parties

Colombia, Liberia, Panama, and the United States

Secretariat Headquarters

SPRFMO Secretariat
PO Box 3797,
Wellington 6140,
NEW ZEALAND
Tel: +64- 4- 499 9889
FAX: +64- 4- 473 9579

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

Budget

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

U.S. Representation

If the United States ratifies the Convention, the U.S. representation will be determined in the implementing legislation.

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 meeting of the Commission took place from 2 to 6 February, 2015.

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.

C. Programs

The fourth Commission meeting was held in Valdivia, Chile, January 25-29, 2016.The meeting report and associated annexes can be found at https://www.sprfmo.int/meetings/comm/4/.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

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

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

Department of State:

Kelly Kryc
U.S. Department of State
2201 C. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-1952
Email: krycka@state.gov

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

N/A, the United States signed the NPFC Convention on May 2, 2012. The U.S. Senate has provided advice and consent for the Convention and the Congress is currently evaluating implementing legislation for the treaty.

Member Nations

The Members include Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Canada and China. The United States participates as an observer.

Cooperating Fishing Entities

Chinese Taipei is a Cooperating Fishing Entity.

Interim Secretariat Headquarters

Web Address: http://nwpbfo.nomaki.jp

Budget

The budget for 2015/2016 is $1,078,041.

U.S. Representation

The United States Delegation was been led by the U.S. Department of State during the negotiations to develop the Convention. If the United States ratifies the Convention, the U.S. representation will be determined in the implementing legislation.

Description

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

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

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

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

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

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

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

Loh-Lee Low
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
7600 Sand Point Way, NE
Seattle, WA 98115-0070
Telephone: 206-526-4190
Email: Loh-Lee.Low@noaa.gov

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

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

Basic Instrument

Convention 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: Andrew Wright
Telephone: 61 3 6210 1111
Fax: 61 3 6224 8744
Email: ccamlr@ccamlr.org
Web address: www.ccamlr.org

Budget

The Commission adopted a budget for 2015 of AU$4,656,000 (approximately US$3,458,800). The U.S. contribution for its dues in 2016 is AU$125,375 (approximately US$93,140). Aggregate Member contributions for 2016 were maintained at the 2015 level, continuing the trend of remaining below the zero real growth budgetary target for the Commission.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

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

B. U.S. Representative to the Commission:

Evan Bloom
Director, Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs
OES/OA, DOS - Room 5801
Washington, D.C. 20520
Telephone: (202) 647-3925

U.S. Representative to the Scientific Committee:

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

C. Advisory Structure:

The U.S. Commissioner receives advice from the 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 which form part of the Antarctic marine ecosystem. The Antarctic Convergence is deemed to be a line joining the following points along parallels of latitude and meridians of longitude: 50˚S, 0˚; 50˚S, 30˚E; 45˚S, 30˚E; 45˚S, 80˚E; 55˚S, 80˚E; 55˚S, 150˚E; 60˚S, 150˚E; 60˚S, 50˚W; 50˚S, 50˚W; 50˚S, 0˚.

B. Organizational Structure:

The components of CCAMLR are the Commission, Scientific Committee, and the Secretariat. The Commission consists of one representative from each member country. 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 reviews and assesses the implementation of, and compliance with, CCAMLR's conservation measures and reviews information on IUU fishing. SCAF provides advice related to the budget and Secretariat operations.

The Scientific Committee is composed of scientific advisors from the member countries. 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 focuses on 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 and management 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.

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 (VMS) requirements, the toothfish catch documentation scheme, procedures related to listing IUU vessels, a scheme to promote compliance by Contracting Party nationals, notifications of certain transshipments, and a compliance evaluation procedure for Contracting Parties.

In 2015, CCAMLR adopted many of the recommendations from the VMS Technical Working Group including a 1-hour VMS position reporting frequency for finfish (i.e., toothfish and icefish) vessels, a reduction in the time that Contracting Parties have to forward position reports from toothfish vessels to the Secretariat from four hours to one hour, and adoption of minimum standards for VMS units. The frequency of VMS vessel position reporting for non-finfish vessels (e.g., krill vessels) will not be similarly increased until December 1, 2019. The time period that Contracting Parties have to forward position reports from non-toothfish vessels to the Secretariat was not changed from the current requirement of 10 working days following departure from the Convention Area.

The Commission adopted the compliance evaluation procedure in 2012 to give the Secretariat a formal mechanism to capture and record information on the implementation of conservation measures by Members. 2015 was the third year CCAMLR applied its Compliance Evaluation Procedure and the process went smoothly. Discussion focused on how the process itself could be improved, as well as issues with ambiguity within conservation measures and problems in obtaining complete information related to compliance (specifically related to how observer reports reflect the circumstances surrounding discharges of offal and organic waste).

Members agreed in 2015 to implement advice received from the CDS Working Group that will help to make the CDS more transparent through the collection of the date a fishing vessel leaves port and the date on which it returns to port, along with the GPS coordinates of a fishing vessel during any transshipment at sea. The Commission also supported an additional intersessional meeting of CCAMLR CDS technical experts to begin the process of building a new platform for the CDS. Some of the goals for the new CDS platform include greater transparency regarding transshipments as well as the possibility of giving industry limited access to the system to submit catch information electronically.

There was significant discussion during the 2015 meeting regarding IUU fishing in the Convention Area and members highlighted the role of cooperative efforts, both amongst members and globally (e.g., through INTERPOL and the Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices Including Combatting IUU Fishing (RPOA-IUU) in Southeast Asia), in recent successes in combating IUU fishing activity in the Southern Ocean. These efforts resulted in enforcement action against 5 of the 6 known IUU vessels that have operated in the Convention Area in recent years.

The United States proposed revisions to existing CMs 10-02 (licensing) and 10-09 (transshipment) to strengthen monitoring and control of transshipments in the Convention Area. The proposal was scaled down during the 2015 meeting based on comments from members, but agreement could not be reached.

The Commission adopted a non-binding resolution noting the role that stateless vessels play in the global problem of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and encouraging Members to take action with respect to such vessels, including by adopting legislation to prevent stateless vessels from operating in the Convention Area and preventing stateless vessels that have engaged in IUU fishing from landing or transshipping catch in their ports.

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 near zero in recent years.

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 2015, the United States, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, and the European Union tabled a proposal to amend the conservation measure to require that any sharks incidentally caught in the Convention Area be kept with all fins naturally attached to the point of first landing. The proposal is similar to that proposed during the 2011, 2013, and 2014 annual meetings. Many members spoke in strong support of the proposal but consensus on the change could not be reached.

Fishery regulations:

The conservation measures for the fishery regulation category identify fishing seasons, catch limits, bycatch limits, and closed areas. Members currently target toothfish, icefish, and krill.

For krill in Statistical Area 48, the current spatial distribution of the interim trigger level (620,000 metric ton catch limit) among four Subareas has been in place since 2009. The conservation measure which sets out spatial distribution of krill fishing in this area will lapse in 2016, allowing concentrated fishing anywhere absent consensus agreement to extend these provisions. The Commission agreed that future revisions to the spatial distribution should consider how the fishery is spatially arranged to avoid impacts on predators.

In 2013, the Commission endorsed a work plan to develop a feedback management strategy for the krill fishery in the Atlantic Sector. Feedback management is a strategy for regularly revising catch limits and the geographic distribution of fishing on the basis of monitoring results that indicate the status of the krill stock, the performance of krill-dependent predators such as seals and penguins, and the performance of the fishery. The Scientific Committee and its working groups are continuing its work to develop feedback management.

In the Pacific Sector, the catch limit for the exploratory fishery in the Ross Sea region was updated on the basis of a revised stock assessment, and portions of this catch limit were reserved for the conduct of research surveys on the continental shelf and in the northwestern Ross Sea region (the latter survey will be conducted during the austral winter). Catch limits established for the Amundsen Sea will remain unchanged for the 2015/16 fishing season. The Commission also agreed that catch limits for research fishing in the Atlantic Sector will remain unchanged for the 2015/16 fishing season. In the Indian Ocean Sector, the Commission endorsed plans by Australia, France, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Spain to coordinate research fishing activities by allocating research catch limits (which will be similar to those established for the 2014/15 fishing season) among themselves.

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. For the fifth time in 2015, the United States and New Zealand's proposed an MPA in the Ross Sea region. Australia, France, and EU proposed, also for the fourth time, a representative system of MPAs in East Antarctica. Consensus was not reached on either proposal.

Climate Change:

During the 2015 meeting, of the proposals related to climate change impacts, CCAMLR adopted one by Australia and Norway to establish an Intersessional Correspondence Group (ICG) to consider approaches for integrating climate change into the work co CCAMLR. Included in the Terms of Reference is the consideration of implementing outcomes from the joint workshop between SC-CAMLR and the Committee for Environmental Protection, which will be co-chaired by the United Kingdom and the United States in 2016.

D. Activities and Meetings

The following meetings will take place in 2016:

Subgroup on Acoustic Survey and Analysis Methods (SG-ASAM) March 21 to 25 in La Jolla, USA;
Working Group on Statistics, Assessments and Modeling (WG-SAM-16) June 27 to July 1 in Genoa, Italy;
Working Group on Ecosystem Monitoring and Management (WG-EMM-16) July 4 to 15 in Bologna, Italy;
Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment (WG-FSA-16) October 3 to 14 in Hobart, Australia;
Scientific Committee (SC-CAMLR) October 17 to 21 in Hobart, Australia; and
Commission (CCAMLR) October 17 to 28 in Hobart, Australia

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

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

Department of State:

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

Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals (CCAS)

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

None

Member Nations

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

Commission Headquarters

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

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Nina Young
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East- West Highway, Room 10631
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: 301-427-8383

Department of State:

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

Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)

Basic Instrument

Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, 1994

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations/Entities of the Extended Commission

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

Cooperating Non Parties

Philippines

Commission Headquarters

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

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 (0.03-0.07 SSB_0). The 2014 stock assessment suggested that the SBT stock remains at a very low state; estimated to be 9% of the initial SSB, and below the level to produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY). However, there has been some improvement since the 2011 stock assessment. The 2014 scientific aerial survey index of relative juvenile (2-4 year old) abundance is the highest value seen in the time series. Between 2010 and 2014 the index has shown more variation but with an increasing trend.

There were mixed signals from the indicators in 2015. Longline CPUE indices for the Japanese fleet for age 5 to 7 are well above the historically lowest levels observed in the mid-2000s, but the index for age 12+ decreased from 2008 to 2011 and has fluctuated around at a low level after that. Monitoring of length and age of Indonesian catches on the spawning ground indicate a substantial shift towards smaller and younger size and age classes since 2012.

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. For the second (2015-2017) and subsequent three-year TAC setting periods, there will be a one year lag between TAC calculation and implementation of that TAC (i.e. the 2015-2017 TAC will be calculated in 2013).

The TAC for 2014 was 12,449 tons and the TAC for 2015 to 2017 is 14,647 tons. The Management 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. In 2011, the CCSBT adopted a Compliance Plan that provides a framework for the CCSBT, Members and Cooperating Non-Members to achieve full compliance with CCSBT's conservation and management measures. The Compliance Plan includes a three-year action plan to address priority compliance risks. The action plan 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 2015 – 2017 in October 2014.

Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS): Since 2005, the CCSBT maintains 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 Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) came into effect in 2008. 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.

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 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.

As one of the largest non-cooperating, non-member importers of SBT, the United States will begin providing import data from CDS forms starting in 2016.

Staff Contact

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

INDIAN OCEAN

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

Basic Instrument

The Agreement for the Establishment of the IOTC, 1996

Implementing Legislation

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

Contracting Parties (Members)

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

Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties

Bangladesh, Djibouti, Liberia, and Senegal

Commission Headquarters

IOTC Secretariat
Le Chantier Mall (2nd floor)
PO Box 1011
Victoria Mahé – SEYCHELLES

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

Description

The aim of the IOTC is 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. While there are general conservation, management, and rebuilding measures, IOTC has yet to adopt catch limitations any of the species it manages.

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 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. The Data Collection and Statistics Working Party was transformed into a sub-Committee of the Scientific Committee in 2004. 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 in the purse-seine fishery, and measures regarding sea turtles and sea birds. In March of 2011, with input from the United States, IOTC adopted a binding measure prohibiting vessels from intentionally fishing in association with data buoys. The IOTC conservation and management measure for tropical tunas adopted in April 2012 ended in 2014. At its 2014 meeting, the Commission agreed to establish an allocation system or any other relevant measures based on the IOTC Scientific Committee recommendations for IOTC main target species, although they did not set a deadline for accomplishing this.

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.

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.

Staff Contact:

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

Emma Htun
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8361
Fax: (301) 713-2313
emma.htun@noaa.gov

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, 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. Argentina and Chile are the most recent Parties 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. As appropriate 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, clogging 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 was renewed in June 2011 at the 5th Conference of Parties, as well as in June 2013 at the 6th Conference of Parties and then intersessionally in 2014. The Parties are in the process of trying to establish the Secretariat Permanently in the United States. The official website for the organization is http://www.iacseaturtle.org/

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.

Future Meetings

The next Conference of Parties will be held in 2017. The major agenda topics include additional work on Pacific leatherback conservation and the Permanent location for the Secretariat.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Alexis Gutierrez / Barbara Schroeder
Office of Protected Resources, F/PR2
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8441
Fax: (301) 713-4060

Department of State:

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

GLOBAL

Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)

Basic Instrument

Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Member

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

Secretariat Headquarters

Marco Favero
Executive Director
ACAP Secretariat
27 Salamanca Square
Battery Point, Tasmania 7004, Australia
Phone: +61-03 6165-6674
Fax: +61-04- 3932-3505
Email: marco.favero@acap.aq
Website: www.acap.aq

Description

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

Budget

ACAP's annual budget for 2016 is AU $768,622 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 at this time. However, it is estimated that joining ACAP would require the United States to pay membership dues of approximately U.S. $159,000 annually.

Organizational Structure

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 8 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. ACAP's conservation provisions are implemented by its Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee meets annually 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 has been attending since this group's first meeting in 2007. 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 is 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, 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 (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 and the Advisory Committee undertook a major revision of ACAP's pelagic longline mitigation advice. Best practice measures in the updated advice include using a combination of branchline weighting, night setting, and streamer lines. The advice for streamer lines is split between vessels less than 35m and those greater than 35m to reflect operational differences. Prior to 2014, the mitigation advice included those recommended and those not recommended. During the 8th Meeting of the Advisory Committee, a new category was included for measures that have been effective in particular regions. This change allows for inclusion of side-setting (used in combination with weighted branchlines and bird curtain) in the advice for pelagic longline mitigation. Side-setting is a mitigation measure that has been shown to be effective in the Hawaii longline fishery and is currently used by some vessels in the Hawaii longline fisheries. In 2016, the 9th Meeting of the Advisory Committee added hook-shielding devices to its mitigation advice and updated its advice on line weighting configurations.

Work was undertaken before and during the 2014 meetings to identify seabird populations that are conservation priorities, including those that are vulnerable to bycatch in fisheries. A presentation on the Wandering Albatross (South Georgia population) showed the overlap of the population with fisheries in the southwest Atlantic of several Range States (Chinese Taipei fleets having the largest overlap), and modeling showed that even the loss of 95 birds per year can result in substantial declines in populations. The presentation resulted in calls for outreach to countries that have fleets in the overlap areas, increased observer coverage in key areas, possible time/area closures, and possible use of this population as a flagship on the issue of seabird bycatch.

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. The focus of the work in 2014 by this working group was refining land-based threat prioritization methods and identifying remaining gaps in the ever-improving ACAP database of species, breeding sites, and population trends. Five high priority populations were identified that require urgent action and the working group requested that the Advisory Committee write a letter to the relevant authorities regarding the urgent need to eradicate the introduced house mouse at Gough Island. 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.

During the 9th Advisory Committee meeting, Parties agreed to hold a one-day workshop to discuss *Pterodroma* species, a taxon that is at risk mostly due to land-based threats. The objective of the workshop is to advance understanding about best approaches for international cooperation in the conservation of *Pterodroma* and other small burrowing petrel species.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

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

Department of State:

Dave Hogan
Office of Marine Conservation
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

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.

NOAA Fisheries Contact:

Cheri McCarty
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: 301-427-8369
cheri.mccarty@noaa.gov

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, impacts of fishing on associated and dependent species be managed, pollution be minimized, and overfishing and excess fishing capacity be prevented or eliminated. The UNFSA has provisions which 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, 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.

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.

NOAA Fisheries Contact:

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

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

As of January 2014, 193 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 163 nations. The Protocol entered into force on September 11, 2003. As a non-Party to the Convention, the United States cannot become Party to the Protocol.

Secretariat Headquarters

World Trade Centre
393 St Jacques Street, Office 300
Montréal, Québec, Canada H2Y 1N9
Tel: +1-514-288-2220
Fax: +1-514-288-6588
Email: secretariat@biodiv.org
Web address: http://www.biodiv.org

Executive Secretary: Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaf

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 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 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 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 Protocol establishes a process for considering more detailed identification of LMO commodities in international trade.

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 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be held in Cancun, Mexico, in December 2016.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Elizabethann English
Office of International Affairs
Foreign Affairs Specialist
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10649
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8362
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Web address: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ia/

Department of State:

Ms. Barbara M. De Rosa-Joynt
Chief of Biodiversity
Office of Conservation and Water, OES/ECW
HST Room 2658
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520
Telephone: (202) 647-4511
FAX (202) 736-7351
Email: derosabm@state.gov
Web address: http://www.state.gov/www/global/oes

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

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 May 2016, 123 nations are party to the CMS. The United States is not a party.

Commission Headquarters
Bonn, Germany

Budget
The approved budget for 2015 is € 2,375,561.

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 eleventh Meeting of the COP was held November 4-9, 2014, in Quito, Ecuador. The documents from the meeting can be found at: http://www.cms.int/en/meeting/eleventh-meeting-conference-parties-cms

Future Meetings

The twelfth Meeting of the COP will be hosted by the Philippines in Manila, October 22-28, 2017.

Web address:

http://www.cms.int/

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

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

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

Basis Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531-43)

Member Nations

There are 182 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, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Secretariat Headquarters

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

Budget

The budget for the triennium 2014-2016 approved by the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties shall be covered by the Trust Fund budget in the amount of USD 5,836,735 for 2014, USD 6,018,089 for 2015 and USD 6,655,307 for 2016. 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 DOI) to implement the Convention. FWS is also responsible for inspections of shipments of wildlife through designated ports of entry. The majority of CITES-listed species are under the management jurisdiction of FWS. However, many 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, porbeagle sharks, oceanic whitetip sharks, whale sharks, seahorses, queen conch, manta rays and all hard coral species listed either on Appendix I or II.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the Department of Agriculture inspects imports of plant species listed on the treaty.

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, including management questions, 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 Seventeenth Meeting of the CoP (CoP17) will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, 24 September-05 October 2016. Delegations will come together to deliberate actions to address the international trade of chambered nautiluses, mobulid rays, several shark species, freshwater stingrays, several coral reef fish, precious corals, and many other species.

The United States, joined by the nations of Fiji, India, and Palau, submitted a proposal for consideration at CoP17 to list the entire family of chambered nautiluses (Nautilidae) in Appendix II of CITES. NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have collaborated for several years with other range countries and researchers to assess the impact of international trade on these iconic species. A year-long investigation, conducted by TRAFFIC/World Wildlife Fund and funded by NOAA Fisheries, to better understand the impact of trade on chambered nautiluses was released in April 2016. This report on the harvest and trade of chambered nautiluses in key Southeast Asian fishing locations, including Indonesia and the Philippines, and in major consumer markets in the United States and Europe, found that there is substantial harvest and trade that may threaten the conservation of chambered nautiluses.

The United States is co-sponsoring a proposal submitted by the Government of Fiji to list mobulid rays (*Mobula* spp.) in Appendix II of CITES.

With respect to the shark proposals that will be considered at CoP17, the Government of the Maldives submitted a proposal to list silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis)* in Appendix II of CITES, and Sri Lanka submitted a proposal to list thresher sharks (*Alopias* spp.).

The Government of Bolivia submitted a proposal to list the ocellate river stingray (*Potamotrygon motoro) in Appendix II of CITES.*

*At CoP17, CITES Parties will also consider a proposal submitted by the European Union to list b*anggai cardinalfish (*Pterapogon kauderni) and a proposal submitted by Mexico to list* clarion angelfish (*Holacanthus clarionensis). Both species are being proposed for listing in Appendix II of CITES.*

The United States submitted a decision document for consideration at CoP17, which calls for a study of the trade in precious corals (black, red and pink corals).

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

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

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

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

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

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

International Whaling Commission (IWC)

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

There are currently 88 member nations: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, People's Republic of China, 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

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

Secretary: Dr. Simon Brockington
Phone: +44-1223-233-971
Fax: +44-1223 232-876
Email: secretariat@iwc.int

Budget

The Commission approved a budget of £2,086,301 (British Pounds) for 2016. The United States contribution for 2016 is £83, 124 (British Pounds).

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:

US Commissioner:

Russell F. Smith, III
Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room 61013
Washington, DC 20230

Deputy U.S. Commissioner:

Mr. Ryan Wulff
West Coast Regional Office
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100
Sacramento, WA 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, Secretariat, and subject area committees. The Commission is composed of one member from each Contracting Government, may be accompanied by one or more experts and advisors. Each member government has one vote. 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.

C. Programs:

The IWC normally meets once every other year 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 66th meeting of the IWC will be held October 20-28, 2016 in Portoroz, Slovenia.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Chris Rogers
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: 301-427-8375

Department of State:

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

PART II: BILATERAL CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

NORTH AMERICA

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

Basic Instrument

None

Authorities

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

Member Nations

United States and Canada

Meetings

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

Description

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

One day of the meeting is generally dedicated to 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, 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. Discussions on multilateral issues typically focus on issues of mutual interest within 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 broader issues associated with tuna RFMOs.

The second meeting day is generally devoted to global fisheries/policy issues. These discussions tend to touch 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. Finally, these consultations are used for discussion of species of mutual concern at the global level, such as sea turtles, sea birds and sharks.

Recent Activities

Representatives of the United States and Canada met in Silver Spring, Maryland during 21-22 July 2015, 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, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. 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 2016.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick E. Moran
Office of Sustainable Fisheries (F/SF4)
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: pat.moran@noaa.gov

Department of State:

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

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

Basic Instrument

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

Authorities

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

Member Nations

United States and Canada

Meetings

Bilateral meetings are held, often on the margins of multilateral events, to review past practices and discuss new standards, policies, and strategies for cooperation. Periodic meetings between fisheries enforcement officials in each country are held, often on a regional basis, to discuss cooperation on law enforcement matters and joint enforcement operations.

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), National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans (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. Canada and the U.S. have attended INTERPOL FCWG's annual meetings and attended INTERPOL's 2nd Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Committee (ECEC) Meeting, where both the U.S. and Canada presented on combating 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 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 are investigating the smuggling of narwhal tusks from Canada to the U.S. NOAA-OLE is working 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 and are currently working closely on this matter, which has led to charges and convictions in both countries on numerous defendants. 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 two U.S.-registered vessels participating in the NAFO fishery during 2015. 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. From May 19, 2015 through December 14, 2015, a total of 190 NAFO catch reports were submitted.

In August 2015, DFO requested that NOAA investigate suspected illegal U.S. fishing gear set in Canadian waters pursuant to the U.S./Canada Fisheries Enforcement Agreement (50 CFR 300.140). A joint NOAA General Counsel Enforcement Section and NOAA-OLE review of the evidence could only determine that one of numerous trawls (belonging to different fishermen) was set 1.2 miles into Canadian waters and identity of the offending vessel could not be determined. NOAA-OLE estimates that similar incursions into Canadian waters may occur in the summer of 2016 once inshore lobster fishing begins and additional collaboration between NOAA-OLE and DFO will be initiated during the planning phases of enforcement operations.

DFO and NOAA-OLE officers continue to collaborate on permitting and compliance along their shared border, including inspections for proper documentation and labeling of seafood imports. These efforts include assistance from law enforcement partners in USFWS, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the Canadian Seafood Inspection Agency.

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 Orca whales.

There are currently no active cases involving NOAA-OLE and DFO.

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.

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.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:
Todd Dubois
Assistant Director, Office of Law Enforcement (F/EN)
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway SSMC3
Silver Spring, MD 20910-5612
Telephone: (301) 427-8243
Fax: (301) 427-2055
Todd.Dubois@noaa.gov

US Coast Guard:
LCDR Luke Slivinski, USCG Liaison to NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement
1315 East-West Highway SSMC3
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-2300
Fax: (301) 427-2055
Luke.M.Slivinski@uscg.mil

United States-Mexico Fisheries Cooperation Program

Basic Instrument

The U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) and the predecessor agency to the Mexican Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación (SAGARPA) informally agreed in 1983 to meet annually to review the broad range of issues involved in the United States-Mexico Fisheries Cooperation Program (FCP) and the bilateral fisheries relationship. There are three memoranda of understanding (MOU) since agreed to by NOAA Fisheries Service and SAGARPA to formalize different aspects of the fisheries relationship: (1) MEXUS-Golfo research program, (2) MEXUS-Pacífico research program, and (3) information exchange.

Implementing Legislation

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Act), particularly 16 U.S.C. 1822(a), authorizes the negotiation of international fishery agreements to further the purposes, policy, and provisions of the Act.

Member Nations

United States and Mexico

Budget

There are no funds specifically budgeted for the program; costs are assumed in the operating budgets of the participating NOAA Fisheries offices. Annual costs of the program including staff time, travel, translation services, and miscellaneous expenses which total about $60,000 annually, during years when Fishery Cooperation Talks (FCTs) occur. This does not include the cost of various working group meetings, such as the annual MEXUS-Golfo and MEXUS-Pacífico meetings, the fisheries policy meeting, or special meetings.

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, 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, 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 April 21-23, 2015, in Washington, DC, along with meetings of the MEXUS-Golfo and MEXUS- Pacífico scientific working groups, and a Law Enforcement Cooperation Meeting. Prior to this, the last FCT meetings were held on July 23-24, 2014, in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico. The delegations to the 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-Pacífico bilateral agreements, and the participation of the two countries in fisheries related international organizations. Parties agreed to exchange information and to work together in these areas. Both sides have agreed to continue regular bilateral exchanges. The two parties are working to schedule a meeting in 2016.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Kristin Rusello
International Fisheries Division
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Hwy
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8376
Fax: (301) 713-2313

SOUTH AMERICA

United States-Chile Fisheries Cooperation Program

Basic Instrument

The basic instrument establishing the United States-Chile Cooperation Program is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) and the Chilean Servicio Nacional de Pesca (SERNAPESCA) signed in 1995 and extended in 2004.

Implementing Legislation

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Act), particularly 16 U.S.C. 1822(a), authorizes the negotiation of international fishery agreements to further the purposes, policy, and provisions of the Act.

Member Nations

The United States and Chile

Budget

There are no funds specifically budgeted for the program; costs are assumed in the operating budgets of the participating NOAA Fisheries Service offices. Annual expenditures for the program including staff time, travel, translation services, and miscellaneous expenses total less than $20,000 annually.

Representation

The meetings are coordinated by NOAA Fisheries Service and SERNAPESCA. Both agencies often invite other agencies to participate in the meetings. NOAA Fisheries Service has 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.

Future Meetings

The next United States-Chile Fishery Cooperation Talk will convene in 2017 in Chile.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

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

SERNAPESCA:

Alejandro Covarrubias Pérez
Head of International Affairs Unit
National Fisheries and Aquaculture Service
National Subdirection
Av. Victoria 2832, Valparaíso.
(56-32) 28 19 445

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 and China continued joint operations in the North Pacific Ocean in 2015 pursuant to the terms of the MOU. The MOU established boarding procedures for law enforcement officials of either country to board and inspect U.S. or Chinese-flagged vessels suspected of high seas driftnet fishing. The MOU also established a "shiprider" program, which allows Chinese enforcement officials to embark on USCG vessels or aircraft. These officials are generally instrumental in facilitating communications between the USCG and China's Coast Guard, as well as with Chinese fishing vessels encountered on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean. The USCG has had a strong working relationship with China for more than 20 years. This working relationship increases opportunities for cooperation on both high seas fisheries enforcement efforts and training. This cooperation has led to interdictions and enforcement actions against numerous vessels engaged in large-scale high seas driftnet fishing activity.

The USCG Cutter MELLON hosted six fisheries law enforcement shipriders from the China Coast Guard Fisheries Law Enforcement Division in 2015. These officials were instrumental in facilitating communications between the USCG and the China Coast Guard, and effectively expanded the jurisdictional reach of both enforcement agencies.

No fishing vessels suspected of employing large-scale high seas driftnets were detected during the course of 2015 operations.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries

Melanie King
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10659
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8371
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: melanie.king@noaa.gov

U.S. Coast Guard:

LCDR Luke Slivinski
Liaison, U.S. Department of State
Office of Marine Conservation
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520
Telephone: (202) 647-3177
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: luke.m.slivinski@uscg.mil

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

The first meeting was held in April 13-14 2016 in Ningbo 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

To provide an opportunity for the United States and China to interact on fisheries specific issues both complementary to existing dialogues but also independent of them. And to discuss issues on a technical basis that might not always be appropriate for general US-China engagements.

Recent Activities

The purpose of the Delegation is to visit with China to carry out a fisheries bilateral meeting as set by the S&ED in 2014. And to discuss several topics of interest with both China and Embassy Beijing including the Presidential Task Force on Combatting IUU and Seafood Fraud/traceability rule, Marine Mammal Protection Act, enforcement-related and several RFMO-related issues. The particular goal of this meeting is to create and begin to institutionalize a more fluid and multi-(bureaucratic) level of discussion between China and the US on fisheries-related issues.

Future Meetings

The second meeting will be hosted by the United States at a date and location to be determined.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Melanie King
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Suite 10657
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8366
Email: Melanie.King@noaa.gov

Department of State:

David Hogan
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 2758
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: HoganDF@state.gov

Memorandum of Understanding between the American Institute in Taiwan and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States Concerning Cooperation in Fisheries and Aquaculture

Basic Instrument

The basic instrument establishing U.S.-Taiwan cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in the United States Concerning Cooperation in Fisheries and Aquaculture. The MOU was originally signed by AIT and TECRO on July 30, 2002. Due to its five-year duration, it was renewed 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) Taiwan 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 Taiwan 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, the U.S. Coast Guard, and Taiwan met on several occasions during 2012 and 2013 to negotiate renewal of the MOU, with official renewal occurring in June 2013. Ambassador David Balton, DOS, is the lead for the U.S. delegation. During these discussions Taiwan's head of delegation was James Sha, then Director-General of the Fisheries Agency of Taiwan, who is now the Deputy Minister of the Council of Agriculture . Other negotiators for the U.S. delegation include Bill Gibbons-Fly, DOS, and DAS Russell F. Smith III, NOAA. For Taiwan, Mr. Kuei-son (Jack) Sheu, Deputy Director of TECRO's Economic Division, is a key negotiator and contact. In November 2013, a small DOS and NOAA delegation visited Taiwan to formally recognize the MOU renewal, and in January of 2015 a small delegation again visited Taiwan for amplifying discussions.

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.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Melanie King
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Suite 10657
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8366
Email : Melanie.King@noaa.gov

Department of State:

David Hogan
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 2758
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: HoganDF@state.gov

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:

Nicole Kimball, Federal Fisheries Coordinator, Anchorage, Alaska

Alaska

David Benton, Juneau, Alaska
Alvin Burch, Executive Director, Alaska Draggers Association, Kodiak, Alaska
Howard Hull, Hull Fisheries LLC, Anchorage, Alaska

Frank Kelty, Resource Analyst, City of Unalaska, Unalaska, Alaska
Simon Kinneen, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation, Nome, Alaska

Washington Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Representative
William Tweit, Distant Waters and Columbia River Policy Lead, Olympia, Washington

Washington State

David W. Benson, Trident Seafoods Corporation, Seattle, Washington
Mark Gleason, Executive Director, Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers, Seattle, Washington
John Henderschedt, Executive Director, Fisheries Leadership and Sustainability Forum, Seattle, Washington
Paul MacGregor, Partner, Law Firm of Mundt, MacGregor, Happel, Falconer, Zulauf, and Hall, Seattle, Washington
Marlyn Twitchell, Consultant, Seattle, Washington

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 negotiating a bilateral fisheries management agreement for the Northern Bering Sea and 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 26th Session of the ICC on Fisheries in Portland, Oregon, on September 9-11, 2015. . 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 touched on a variety of issues and areas of mutual interest, including: the status of stocks and species of mutual concern (Bering Sea pollock, walruses, 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 U.S. IUU Task Force. It was noted that the IUU agreement would be signed on Septeinber 11, 2015, and the proposed shiprider agreement would be discussed at the upcoming North Pacific Coast Guard Forum.

Russia proposed hosting the 27th ICC meeting in September 2016.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick E. Moran
International Fisheries Affairs Division (F/IA1)
Office of International Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway,
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone : 301-427-8370
Email: pat.moran@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Michael Clark
Office of Marine Conservation
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 2758
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-3010
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: ClarkML2@state.gov

Memorandum of Understanding 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

Basic Instrument

The basic instrument establishing U.S.-Norway cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture is 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*. The MOU became effective October 1, 2008, and expired on September 29, 2013. The two Parties intend to renew the MOU in 2014.

Members

The United States and Norway

Meetings

The Parties agreed that their designated representatives will meet annually, or as needed, alternating between the United States and Norway.

U.S. Representation

Pursuant to Article 2 of the MOU, the Parties established a Joint Committee. The Joint Committee consists of one Representative and advisors from each Party. The Representative for NOAA will be the Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs or his designee, as appropriate. The Representative for the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs will be the Secretary General, or his designee, as appropriate.

Description

The general purpose of the MOU 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 6th US-Norway Fisheries Consultations were held in Tromsø, Norway during 16-17 September 2015. Mr. Russell Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries (NOAA) and Mr. Samuel Rauch, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Affairs (NOAA Fisheries) 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.

Both sides presented updates on national fisheries developments since the last meeting in 2015. Topics discussed during the consultations included: activities underway in the FAOrganization Committee on Fisheries; areas of mutual interest in Regional Fisheries Management Organizations; developments in the OECD Committee for Fisheries; polar issues; scientific cooperation; marine mammals; Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and fisheries crime; seafood and food security; and UN processes (including UNSFA Review Conference planning, the UNGA, vulnerable marine ecosystems, and marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

Future Meetings: Norway agreed to host the 6th Joint Committee Meeting in 2015--place and exact time to be determined.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Patrick E. Moran
International Fisheries Affairs Division (F/IA1)
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10659
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Fax: (301) 713-2313Email: pat.moran@noaa.gov

United States-European Union High Level Fisheries Consultation

Basic Instrument

There is no formal instrument.

Implementing Legislation

None

Members

The United States and the European Union (EU)

Meetings

The United States and the EU normally meet on an annual basis, alternating venues between the United States and the EU.

U.S. Representation

The Consultation consists of one representative from each Government, as well as support staff and advisors. The current U.S. Representative is Ambassador David Balton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and Fisheries, Department of State.

Description

The United States and the EU first met in 1997 to promote cooperation in the field of fisheries and fisheries research. Since then, they have held annual consultations to review fishery issues of mutual concern, although no meetings were held 2008-2011.

Recent Activities

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 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 8-9, 2016, in Brussels, Belgium, for the 15th 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 Russell Smith, NOAA Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries, 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. The delegations also discussed follow-up actions to the US-EU Joint Statement on IUU fishing signed by EU Commissioner for Maritime Affairs Maria Damanaki and NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco on September 7, 2011.

Next Meeting

The date and venue of the next (16th) session of the U.S.-EU High Level Fisheries Consultations remains to be determined, but it is projected to be early in 2017 in Washington, DC .

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

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

Department of State:

Deirdre Warner-Kramer
Office of Marine Conservation (OES/OMC)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 2758
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
Telephone: (202) 647-2335
Fax: (202) 736-7350
Email: warner-kramerdm@state.gov

PART III: SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS AND COUNCILS

PACIFIC OCEAN

North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES)

Basic Instrument

Convention for a North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES)

Implementing Legislation

No implementing legislation: self-executing treaty; under the general authority of the Secretary of State.

Member Nations

Canada, Japan, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, and the United States of America

Organization Headquarters

Executive Secretary
Mr. Robin Brown
PICES Secretariat c/o Institute of Ocean Sciences
P.O. Box 6000
Sidney, B.C., Canada V8L 4B2
Telephone: (250) 363-6364
Fax: (250) 363-6827
Email: Robin.Brown@pices.int
Email: Secretariat@pices.int
Web address: www.pices.int

Chair of Governing Council
Dr. Laura Richards
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Pacific Biological Station
3190 Hammond Bay Rd.
Nanaimo, BC
Canada V9T

Vice Chair:
Dr. Chul Park
Department Oceanography
Chungnam National University
79 Daehangro, Yuseong-gu
Daejeon
Korea, R 305-764

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. John Stein
Northwest Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
2725 Montlake Blvd.E.
Seattle, WA 98112
PH: (206) 860-3200
FAX: (206) 860-3217
Email: John.E.Stein@noaa.gov

Academic Representative:
Dr. Enrique N. Curchitser
Environmental Sci./Institute of Marine and Coastal Science
Rutgers University
14 College Farm Rd.
New Brunswick, NJ
U.S.A. 08901
Phone: (848) 932-7889
Email: Enrique@esm.rutgers.edu

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The PICES area is defined by the Convention as the temperate and sub-Arctic region of the North Pacific Ocean and its adjacent seas, especially northward from 30 North Latitude. Activities of the organization may, for scientific reasons, extend farther southward in the North Pacific Ocean.

The primary role of PICES is to promote and coordinate marine research undertaken by the Parties in the Convention Area; advance scientific knowledge about the ocean environment, global weather and climate change, living resources and their ecosystems, and the impacts of human activities; and promote the collection and rapid exchange of scientific information on these issues. PICES provides an international forum to promote greater understanding of the biological and oceanographic processes of the North Pacific Ocean and its role in the global environment.

B. Organizational Structure:

PICES is comprised of (1) a Governing Council, (2) a Science Board, (3) such permanent or *ad hoc* scientific groups and committees as the Governing Council may from time to time establish, and (4) a Secretariat.

Governing Council: The Governing Council oversees the administration and science activities of the organization, including the Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations; amendments to the Convention; adoption of the annual report of the organization; the annual budget and financial accounts of the organization; appointment of the Executive Secretary; contact with other international organizations; and management of the overall activities of the organization. The Finance and Administration Committee (F&A) reports directly to the Governing Council.

Science Board: The Science Board identifies research priorities and problems pertaining to the Convention Area and appropriate methods for their solution; recommends coordinated research programs and related activities pertaining to the Convention Area through the national efforts of the participating Contracting Parties; promotes and facilitates the exchange of scientific data, information and personnel; considers requests to develop scientific advice pertaining to the Convention Area; organizes scientific symposia and other scientific events; and fosters the discussion of problems of mutual scientific interest. The Science Board also oversees the activities of the four scientific committees, the technical committee, and the scientific program. Its membership includes an overall chairman, as well as the chairmen from each of the six scientific committees.

Committees:

- BIO - Biological Oceanography;
- FIS - Fisheries Science;
- 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-26: Working Group on Jellyfish Blooms around the North Pacific Rim: Causes and Consequences (Oct. 2010-2013). Final report will be submitted in 2016.
- WG-27: Working Group on North Pacific Climate Variability and Change (Jun. 2011-Dec. 2015). Final Report will be submitted in 2016.
- WG-28: Working Group on Development of Ecosystem Indicators to Characterize Ecosystem Responses to Multiple Stressors (Jun. 2011-2015). Final Report will be submitted in 2016.
- WG-29: Working Group on Regional Climate Modeling (Jan. 2011-Dec. 2015). Final Report will be submitted in 2016.
- 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)

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.

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-HD: Section on Human Dimensions of Marine Systems (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-CERP: Study Group on Common Ecosystem Reference Points across PICES Member Countries (Oct. 2015 - Oct. 2016)
- SG-CEP: Study Group on Climate and Ecosystem Predictability (Oct. 2015 - Oct. 2016)
- SG-SEES: Socio-Ecological-Environmental Systems (Jan. 2014 - Dec. 2015). Final Report will be submitted in 2016.
- SG-NPESR3: Study Group on North Pacific Ecosystem Status Report (Jan. 2015 - Oct. 2016)

- SG-SCISC: Study Group for Scientific Cooperation of ISC and PICES (Apr. 2015 - Apr. 2016)
- SG-RSP: Study Group on Revising the Strategic Plan (Jan. 2015 - Oct. 2016)

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:

- CREAMS-AP: 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-).

Task Teams

Currently, there are no active Task Teams.

Recent Activities

The 2015 PICES Annual Meeting was held October 15 – 25 in Qingdao, China on the topic of "Change and Sustainability of the North Pacific." Information of other meetings, symposia and workshops held in 2015 can be found at the PICES website: http://pices.int/meetings/

Forthcoming activities, including those co-sponsored with other organizations, include:

Year	Date	Type	Location	Title	Sponsors
2015	Oct 14-25	Annual Meeting	Qingdao, China	2015 PICES Annual Meeting under the theme "*Change and Sustainability of the North Pacific*"	PICES
2016	Jan 26-29	Scientific Conference 2016	Sydney, Australia	9th International Conference on Marine Bioinvasions.	PICES, , Australian Agencies
2016	May 9-13	Symposium 2016	Bergen, Norway	6th International Zooplankton Production Symposium: *New Challenges in a Changing Ocean*	PICES, ICES, IMR-Norway
2016	May 30-June 3	Symposium 2016	Brest, France	Symposium on "*Understanding marine socio-ecological systems: including the human dimension in integrated ecosystem assessments*."	ICES, PICES, NOAA, CSIRO,
2016	Feb 17-28	Japan Tsunami Debris Project Meeting	Tokyo, Japan	PICES/Moe Project Science Team Meeting	MoE, PICES
2016	Mar 8-10	FUTURE SSC meeting	San Diego,CA, USA	FUTURE Scientific Steering Committee Meeting	PICES
2016	May 30-Jun 1	PICES Inter-sessional Science Board Meeting	Hangzhou, China	Science Board-General oversight of the scientific interest of Council and its scientific work and research.	PICES, China (SOA)
2016	Jun 1-Jun 2	PICES Inter-sessional Governing Council	Hangzhou, China	Governing Council -General oversight of PICES program and operations, including plans for 25th Anniversary Meeting hosted by USA.	PICES, China (SOA)

		Meeting			
2016	Jun 28-30	NPESR meeting	Victoria, BC, Canada	Inter-sessional NPESR-3 workshop for time series evaluation & synthesis	PICES
2016	Sep 19-23	Joint Theme Sessions 201b	Riga, Latvia	ICES/PICES Theme Sessions at the 2016 ICES Annual Science Conference: –Session I: "*Seasonal-to-decadal prediction of marine systems: opportunities, approaches, and applications"* – Session O: ""*When is enough, enough?" Methods for optimizing, evaluating, and prioritizing of marine data"*	ICES, PICES
2016	Nov 1- 13	Annual Meeting	San Diego, CA, USA	2016 PICES Annual Meeting under the theme "*Celebrating the past, Imagining the Future*". This is the 25th Annual Meeting of the organization.	PICES
2017	Mar 6-11	Symposium	Victoria, BC, Canada	International Symposium on *"Drivers of dynamics of small pelagic fish resources*"	PICES, ICES, FAO, DFO
2017	May 29 – Jun 2	Symposium	Busan, Korea	3rd PICES/ICES Conference for Early Career Scientists	PICES, ICES, Korea
2018	Dates TBD	Symposium	USA (location TBD)	4th International Symposium on the effects of Climate Change on the World's Oceans	PICES, ICES, IOC-UNESCO, NOAA

Budgetary Matters

The contracting parties are assessed approximately $127,700 annually.

Appointments and Elections

Governing Council

Dr. Carmel Lowe (Canada) to replace Mr. Robin Brown as the national delegate of Canada;
Dr. Arran McPherson (Canada) to replace Mr. David Gillis as the national delegate of Canada;
Mr. Noritsuga Takahashi (Japan) to replace Mr. Yoshiaki Takahashi as the national delegate of Japan;
Dr. Haiwen Zhang PR China) to replace Dr. Zhanhai Zhang as the national delegate of PR China
Dr. Fangli Qiao (PR China) to replace Mr. Lifeng Cui as the national delegate of PR China
Mr. Man Wook Heo to replace Mr, Jong-Ho Yun as the national delegate for the Republic of Korea.

F&A Committee

Ms. Darlene Smith (Canada) to replace Mr. Robin Brown as the Canadian member
Dr. Michael Seki (USA) to replace Dr. Patricia Livingson as a US member
Ms. Lisa Phelps (USA) to replace Ms. Elizabeth Tirpak as a US member
Dr. Ken Mori (Japan) to replace Mr. Hiroyuki Shimada as a Japan member
Ms. Dongmei Tang (PR China) to replace Ms. Jing An as a PR China member
Ms. Rui Zheng (PR China) to replace Mr. Xiaobing Liu as a PR China member
Mr. Man Wook Heo to replace Mr, Jong-Ho Yun as a Republic of Korea member.

Science Board

Dr. Phillip Mundy stepped down from Science Board following the disbandment of AP-SOFE.

Committees

No changes

Subsidiary Expert Groups

Dr. Tsuneo Ono (Japan) was approved as the Co-Chairman of the Section on *Carbon and Climate* (S-CC) to replace the late Dr. Toshiro Saino (Japan);

Dr. Shin-ichi Ito (Japan) was approved as the PICES Co-Chairman of the PICES/ICES Section (Strategic Initiative) on *Climate Change Effects on Marine Ecosystems* (S-CCME) to replace Dr. Suam Kim (PICES/Korea).

Scientific Program

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.

The current scientific program is FUTURE: Forecasting and Understanding Trends, Uncertainty and Responses to the North Pacific Marine Ecosystems. This program was established on October, 2009.

The Governance structure of FUTURE was reorganized from three Advisory Panels to a Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) following recommendations from a mid-term review of PICES-FUTURE. Thirteen scientists (3 from Japan and 2 from each other contracting party) were nominated to the SSC. Dr. Hiroaki Saito (Japan) and Dr. Stephen Bograd (USA) were nominated and approved as co-chairs of FUTURE SSC.

Future PICES Scientific Conferences

See above table of forthcoming activities for a list of conferences and meetings.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries (U.S. government delegate):

Dr. John Stein
Northwest Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
2725 Montlake Blvd. E.
Seattle, WA 98112
PH: (206) 860-3200
FAX: (206) 860-3217
Internet: John.E.Stein@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Ms. Allison Reed
Office of Oceans and Polar Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 2665
Washington, D.C. 20520-7818
PH: (202) 647-0238
Fax: (202) 647-1106
Email: reedad@state.gov

ARCTIC OCEAN

Working Group for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)

Basic Instrument

The Arctic Council's Working Group for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) was established to address the special needs of Arctic species and their habitats in the rapidly developing Arctic region. It forms one of four working groups 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 Rovianemi, 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: The Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan council, Gwich'in council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North and the Saami Council.

Organization Headquarters

The CAFF International Secretariat is located at CAFF Secretariat, Borgir Nordurslod, Nordurslos 600 Akureyri, Iceland.

Executive Secretary: Tom Barry
Telephone: 354 461 3352
Mobile: 354 861 9824
Fax: 354 462 3390
Email: tom@caff.is

Norway 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 Network.

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, Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and non-governmental organizations.

C. Interagency Arctic Policy Group (APG)

U.S. participation in CAFF is also informed and advised by the Interagency Arctic 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 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 five year Implementation Plan for the CBMP is available at cbmp.arcticportal.org.

The CBMP takes an ecosystem-based management approach, functioning as a coordinating entity for existing site-based monitoring networks for species and habitats. To date, thirty-three Arctic biodiversity monitoring networks are operating and linked to the CBMP. Many 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 is currently working on drafting a 2017 State of the Arctic Marine Environment Report.

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. Norway is presently serving as the CAFF Chair. The National Representatives to CAFF meet on an approximately every 6-month basis to address administrative and organizational matters. The meeting is referred to as a CAFF Management Board Meeting.

The Senior Arctic Officials meet approximately every six months.

A calendar of CAFF meetings and listing of goals of the various projects is available at: http://caff.arcticportal.org

Staff Contacts

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:

John L. Bengtson (CBMP Marine Steering Committee)
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
NOAA Fisheries
7600 Sand Point Way N.E.
Seattle, WA 98115
Phone: (206) 526-4016
Fax: (206) 526-6615
Email: john.bengtson@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Julie Gourley
Office of Ocean Affairs (OES/OA)
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW, Room 5801
Washington, D.C. 20520
Telephone: (202) 647-3262
Fax: (202) 647-9099

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:

Office of Science and Technology (F/ST7)
NOAA Fisheries
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8152

Fish and Wildlife Service:

Gilbert Casstellanos
Fish and Wildlife Service
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99503
Telephone: (907) 786-3544
Fax: (907) 786-3640
Email: Gilbert_Castellanos@fws.gov

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. A RUSALCA cruise is planned for 2016 to extend further north into the Pacific Arctic and to support sampling for the Distributed Biological Observatory (DBO).

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

Staff Contacts

Jeremy Mathis
Arctic Research Program Director
NOAA Arctic Research Program (ARP) Director
Climate Observation Division (COD)
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
E-mail: jeremy.mathis@noaa.gov
Telephone: (301) 427-2470

ATLANTIC OCEAN

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

Basic Instrument

The Council was established by an exchange of letters on July 22, 1902, in Copenhagen, Denmark, with eight countries representatives in attendance (Denmark, Germany, Norway, Russia, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Ireland). The United States has been associated since 1912, and joined formally as a contracting party in 1972. From 1902 until 1964, the Council operated in a "gentlemen's agreement" fashion. On September 12, 1964, the Council membership concluded the Convention for the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, 1964 (TIAS 7628), giving it true and full international status. The Convention fixed the seat of the Council at Copenhagen and, by the end of 1967, all Contracting Parties had ratified the Convention, which came into force on July 22, 1968.

Member Nations

ICES coordinates and promotes marine research in the North Atlantic, working with an international community of over 1600 marine scientists from 20 member countries. Belgium, Canada, Denmark (including Greenland and Faroe Islands), Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. There are also a number of countries that have affiliate status with ICES. The Affiliate Countries are: Australia, Chile, Greece, New Zealand, Peru, and South Africa. Non-governmental organizations with formal observer status: Worldwide Fund for Nature and Birdlife International.

Council Headquarters

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
H. C. Andersens - Boulevard 44-46 DK-1553 Copenhagen V Denmark
Tel: +45 3338 6700; Fax: +45 3393 4215 info@ices.dk

General Secretary: Dr. Anne Christine Brusendorff
Email: Anne.Christine@ices.dk
Web address: http://www.ices.dk/
US focused web address: http://ices-usa.noaa.gov/

Budget

The ICES annual budget is approximately $5.5 million USD. The U.S. contribution, paid by the Department of State, is 1,182,000 DKK which is approximately USD $247,000.

U.S. Representation

A. Process:

Each of the member countries elects two delegates who represent their country on the ICES Council. The ICES Council is the principal policy and decision-making body of ICES. NMFS, through NOAA and DOC, and the National Science Foundation provide the Department of State with recommendations for the U.S. representatives (delegates and advisors) to the annual meeting.

B. U.S. Representation (Delegates):

Dr. Bill Karp
NOAA Fisheries, Northeast Fisheries Science Center

166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543
Phone: 508-495-2233 Fax: 508-495-2232
Email: Bill.Karp@noaa.gov

Dr. Steve Murawski, Professor
University of South Florida, College of Marine Science
140 7th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Phone: 301-404-7619
Email: smurawski@usf.edu

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/.

Staff Contact

Dr. Bill Karp
NOAA Fisheries, Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street Room
Woods Hole, MA 02543
Phone: 508-495-2233 Fax: 508-495-2232
Email: Bill.Karp@noaa.gov

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 Fourth GEF Assembly in 2010.

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

The GEF Secretariat
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433
Telephone: (202) 473-0508
Fax: (202) 522-3240/3245
Email: secretariat@thegef.org
Website: http://www.thegef.org
GEF Chief Executive Officer and Chairman: Naoko Ishii

Budget

Today, the GEF is the largest multilateral fund for projects that improve the global environment, and the U.S. has historically been the largest contributing member government. Since its establishment in 1991, the GEF has provided funds for more than 3,900 projects in more than 165 developing countries and countries with economies in transition. These grants amount to $13.5 billion from the GEF alongside an additional $65 billion in cofinancing. 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. 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, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants.

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 environmental 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. Seven 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; and the International Fund for Agricultural Development

Marine issues

Marine projects of interest to NMFS may be funded under either the biodiversity focal area or the international waters focal area. Coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems represent one of four operational programs in the biodiversity focal area, and the objective of the program is the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources in these ecosystems. Under the international waters focal area, the GEF has funded several large marine ecosystem projects, for which NOAA often provides in-kind technical and capacity-building assistance. The objective of international waters projects is to help governments collectively manage transboundary water resources.

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, GEF os funding global sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation through the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) Program, which 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 mostly far from coasts, making the sustainable management of the fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation in those areas extremely difficult and 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 International Waters Focal Areas, leveraging over $269.7M so far 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 is a partner in two of the programs under the ABNJ project focusing on tuna and deep sea fisheries conservation.

Staff Contact

NOAA:

Elizabeth McLanahan, Deputy Director
NOAA - Office of International Affairs
14th and Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230
Telephone: (202) 482-5140
Fax: (202) 482-4307
Email: elizabeth.mclanahan@noaa.gov

PART IV: OTHER INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OF INTEREST

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)
Oceans and Fisheries Working Group

Background: 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 6th meeting of the APEC Oceans and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG6) was held in Arequipa, Peru from May 5-7, 2016, on the margins of the second Senior Officials Meeting of the year. Thirteen APEC member economies attended the meeting: Chile, the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States. OFWG guest participants included a representative from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and a representative of the Chinese firm Shanghai Rainbowfish Ocean Technology Co. The meeting was chaired by the OFWG Lead Shepherd (LS) Atty. Asis Perez of the Philippines. The U.S. delegation was led by the Department of State and consisted of members from State (OES/OPA, EAP/EP offices) and NOAA.

Numerous projects were presented on fisheries, marine debris, blue economy and other topics. Peru opened the meeting with a very clear emphasis on fisheries and food security and won support for its host-year focus on regional food markets. The working group approved in the intersession prior to the meeting the nomination of a U.S. delegation member from NOAA to be the new OFWG liaison to the Policy Partnership on Food Security (PPFS), and the two groups held their first joint working session on the afternoon of the first day. The OFWG liaison presented on the Food Security Action Plan at the joint meeting and noted that the two groups would have to collaborate closely to highlight the important role of aquaculture and fisheries to food security of the APEC Region. Member economies demonstrated new levels of interest in the topic of marine debris through presentations and bilateral meetings. Discussions also touched on issues associated with "blue economy".

Meeting Recommendations:

The group encouraged itself to work intersessionally via e-mail. The group also encouraged itself to enable more private sector engagement in future meetings and engage those economies not present, encouraging them to attend future OFWG meetings.

Endorsed/Agreed During Arequipa OFWG Meeting May 5-7, 2016:

1. The OFWG endorsed the self-funded concept note from the United States: "Overcoming Barriers to Financing Waste Management Systems".

2. The OFWG endorsed the self-funded concept note from Chinese Taipei: "18th APEC Roundtable Meeting on the Involvement of the Business/Private Sector in Sustainability of the Marine Environment"

Proposed Intersessional Actions:

1. OFWG members with proposed concept notes, and those who develop concept notes in the meantime, will circulate the concept notes broadly prior to the deadline in order to secure feedback and potential co-sponsors.

2. The Lead Shepherd will respond to the SCE regarding the recommendations stemming from the 2015 Independent Assessment, in line with the discussion at OFWG6.

Upcoming Meetings: The OFWG will meet once again in Piura, Peru on 19-21 in September 2016, during Food Security Week (Sept. 19-27). The OFWG meeting will be followed with a PPFS meeting on September 23-24, which the OFWG Liaison will attend. The outcomes of these meetings will feed into a Food Security Ministerial Meeting on September 26-27. For more information on the activities of the OFWG, see the APEC web site: http://www.apec.org/ or contact one of the individuals identified below.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries International Affairs:

Patrick E. Moran
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8370
Email: pat.moran@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Matthew Malone
Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, OES
Telephone: (202) 647-3073
Email: MaloneMA@state.gov

Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC)

The Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) was established under the APFIC agreement as the Indo-Pacific Fisheries Council in 1948 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. APFIC is an Article XIV FAO Regional Fishery Body established by FAO at the request of its members. The Secretariat is provided and supported by FAO.

The subregions used marine subregions that 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) held its Thirty-fourth Session from 12-14 February 2016 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The session was attended by 29 representatives of 15 member countries of the Commission and the APFIC Secretariat. There were also 9 observers from other FAO Member countries and representatives of partner organizations.

The biennium has seen promotion and the further development of the “Regional trainers for the Essential Ecosystem Approach to Fishery Management” training course. The training course is completed and all materials are posted on the APFIC and partner websites. A one-day training course “Lead EAFM” had been developed with APFIC partners BOBLME, NOAA and SEAFDEC.

At its 33rdSession, the Asia-Pacific Commission was informed that although IUU fishing occurred in the region, there was a lack of detailed information regarding its scale, characteristics and its drivers. The Commission recommended the development of better methods to estimate the types and scale of IUU fishing in the APFIC region to inform discussion and support the development of cooperative approaches to combat IUU fishing. The Secretary presented the working paper APFIC/16/06 Rev 1, which detailed the action taken by the APFIC Secretariat to develop a draft regional review (APFIC/16 INF 7) that responds to this recommendation of the Commission. This has developed an approach to characterize IUU fishing and to derive some estimates of its scale in terms of tonnages and values, as well as locations, numbers of vessels involved and the nature and drivers of the IUU fishing activity.

The agreed upon focus areas for 2016-2018 biennial are:

The Commission identified a number of thematic areas for the second fishery theme for the work of the Commission. These suggestions would be placed before the 76th Executive Committee for selection of a theme and for the development of a detailed agenda.
− 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;
− 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;
− 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.

Secretariat:
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
39 Phra Atit Road, Bangkok 10200, Thailand
Telephone: +66 2 281 7844
Fax: +66 2 280 0445
Web address: http://www.apfic.org

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Michael Abbey
NMFS Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
Lead for Asia-Pacific Capacity Building
1315 East West Highway
Cubicle 10644
Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910
301.427.8355 (direct)
301.938.9544 (Govt cell phone, international access)
Michael.Abbey@noaa.gov
skype: meabbey

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 21st meeting of the Trilateral met May 16-19th, 2016 in Ottawa, Ontario, with a plenary focus on conservation of migratory birds in North America. The 2017 meeting of the Trilateral has not yet been set.

Web address: http://www.trilat.org/

Staff Contacts:

NOAA Fisheries

Liz English
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3281
Telephone: (301) 427-8362
Fax: (301) 713-3110
Email: liz.english@noaa.gov

Lauren Wenzel
National Marine Protected Areas Center
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3281
(301) 713-7265
Fax: (301) 713-3110
Email: Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov

Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

The signing of the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) in 1993 created the world's largest trading bloc. At the same time, the NAFTA partners (Canada, Mexico, and the United States) sought to build environmental safeguards into the trade liberalization pact and signed the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, 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.

From 2013-2015, CEC's Operational Plan funded a project on North America's Blue Carbon: Assessing the Role of Coastal Habitats in the Continent's Carbon Budget. This project advances the conservation and restoration of coastal blue carbon habitats by improving data, mapping and approaches necessary to develop and apply the appropriate carbon budgets. Adequately protected coastal ecosystems, including salt marshes, mangroves and seagrass beds offer carbon sequestration and long-term carbon storage. By contrast, when these coastal habitats are destroyed, they change from being net carbon sinks to net carbon emitters.

CEC recently approved its 2015-2017 Operational Plan. It includes ongoing support for the Blue Carbon project and a new project on Marine Protected Areas: Strengthening Management Effectiveness and Supporting Coastal Community Resilience. The MPA project aims to support marine protected area networks, seascape-level Marine Park Partnerships, climate–smart adaptation and mitigation activities, and the integration of traditional knowledge and community–level awareness and engagement. It is working with the private sector, indigenous and local communities to better understand and ameliorate the ecological, social, cultural, and economic vulnerability of fisheries, traditional and nature-based activities within North American seascapes.

Headquarters

Commission for Environmental Cooperation
393, rue St-Jacques Ouest
Bureau 200
Montréal (Québec)
H2Y 1N9 Canada
Telephone: (514) 350-4300
Fax: (514) 350-4314
Email: info@ccemtl.org
Web address: http://www.cec.org/home/index.cfm?varlan=english

Staff Contacts:

NOAA Office of International Affairs
Herbert C. Hoover Building, Room A300
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20235
Phone: (202) 482-6196
Fax: (202) 482-6000; 482-4307
Web address: http://www.international.noaa.gov/index.htm

MPA Project

Lauren Wenzel
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3281
(301) 713-3165
Fax: (301) 713-3110
Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov

Blue Carbon Project:

Ariana Sutton-Grier
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3281
(301) 713-3074
Ariana.Sutton-Grier@noaa.gov

Coral Disease and Health Consortium (CDHC)

The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Department of Interior (DOI) developed the framework for the CDHC for the United States Coral Reef Task Force through an interagency effort in March 2000. The Coral Reef Task Force was established by Executive Order in June 1998 (Executive Order 13089 on the Protection of Coral Reefs) to help preserve and protect the biodiversity, health, heritage, and social and economic value of U.S. coral reef ecosystems. The purpose of the CDHC is to organize and coordinate the scientific resources of the United States and its territories to document the condition of coral reef ecosystems, determine causes of declines in coral reef health, and provide technical information and assistance to managers and scientists regarding coral reef health. The CDHC is a network of over 150 national and international partners, including U.S. federal (EPA, DOI, NOAA) and state agencies, academia, non-profit groups and industry representing field and laboratory scientists, health professionals, coral reef managers, and agency representatives devoted to understanding coral health and disease. It is extensive, highly collaborative, and completely voluntary. Members share information and ideas and contribute their time and expertise for a common set of goals *to understand and address the effects of natural and anthropogenic stressors on corals in order to contribute to the preservation and protection of coral reef ecosystems.*

The CDHC has been working closely with our partners to assist in addressing the key goals and objectives related to coral health and disease issues. Five 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
- Coral Disease Outbreak Investigations - Leading outbreak investigation training efforts and providing assistance in outbreak responses

Through these objectives, the CDHC aims to significantly enhance current assessments of coral health, reproduction and fitness; improve the effectiveness of management decisions by providing early warning of disease and disease outbreaks; identify putative causative factors and possible prevention and mitigation strategies; and offer managers viable risk management options.

For information: CDHC.Coral@noaa.gov
Website: www.cdhc.noaa.gov

NOAA Contact:

Cheryl Woodley
Protected Areas & Resources Branch
Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research
National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science
Phone: 843-762-8862
Email: Cheryl.woodley@noaa.gov

Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF)

CECAF is the FAO regional fishery body for the Eastern Central Atlantic. The purpose of the Committee is to promote the sustainable utilization of the living marine resources within its area of competence by the proper management and development of the fisheries and 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, Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, European Community, France, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Italy, Japan, Korea, Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Togo, and the United States.

CECAF last met in April 20-22, 2016 in Dakar, Senegal. This 21st session covered outcomes from the 7th session of the Scientific Sub-Committee, fishery management plans and uptake of management recommendations by members, IUU fishing in the CECAF area, vulnerable marine ecosystem closures, and report of a study on the development of small pelagic fisheries in West Africa and possible impacts on nutrition and food security in West Africa, among other matters.

Secretariat:

FAO Regional Office for Africa
P.O. Box 1628
Accra, Ghana
Telephone: +233 21 675 000/675051-060/701 0930
Fax: +233 21 668 427/701 0943
Web address: http://www.fao.org/fi/

NOAA Fisheries Contact:

Christopher Rogers
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: 301-427-8375Christopher.Rogers@noaa.gov

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI)

FAO

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was founded in October 1945 with a mandate to raise levels of nutrition and standards of living, to improve agricultural productivity, and to better the condition of rural populations. It was the first specialized agency of the United Nations that was established.

Today, FAO is the largest autonomous agency within the United Nations system with 194 member countries plus the European Community (Member Organization) and two Associate Members (Faroe Islands and Tokelau). As of November 2013 FAO employed 1795 professional staff and 1654 support staff. Approximately 58 percent are based at headquarters in Rome, while the remainder work in offices worldwide.

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.

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 2014-15 is USD 2.4 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 1.4 billion in 2014-15.

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. These subsidiary bodies meet in the intersessional period of the parent Committee. COFI has a Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and a Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and is advised by the FAO Advisory Committee on Fishery Research.

The 31st Session of COFI met in Rome on June 6-13, 2014. Its report can be found at http://www.fao.org/3/a-ML770e.pdf.

The Committee reviewed issues of an international character, as well as the FAO program in fisheries and aquaculture and their implementation. The Committee expressed its praise and support for the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2014 publication, and emphasized the need for further measures to rebuild fish stocks. The Committee, while commending the new web-based questionnaire on the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code), called upon FAO to further develop and review the questionnaire. While noting the progress made by the Members in implementing the Code and related instruments, the Committee underscored the need to continue supporting developing countries. The Committee acknowledged efforts being made by Members in combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and emphasized the importance of the coming into force of the 2009 Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (PSMA) as soon as possible. The Committee requested FAO to expand its efforts to effectively implement the International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards. The Committee endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance. The Committee reiterated its support for the Global Record's continued development. The Committee endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) and agreed to dedicate them to Ms. Chandrika Sharma, the Executive Secretary of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF). The Committee welcomed FAO's proposal for a Global Assistance Program (GAP) for implementation of the SSF Guidelines and recommended to further develop the GAP in a participatory manner. The Committee acknowledged FAO's Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) and suggested the establishment of a BGI working group to further develop its application. The Committee acknowledged the importance of inland fisheries and recommended that inland fishery issues be better included in national, subregional, regional and global instruments addressing water use and food security. The Committee urged FAO to provide guidance and increase capacity development in the areas of data collection and analysis, stock assessment, management, postharvesting, and policy development. The Committee welcomed FAO's new Strategic Objectives as a basis for focusing FAO's work in fisheries and aquaculture.

The 32nd Session of COFI will meet in Rome July 11-15, 2016.

Website: http://www.fao.org

NOAA Fisheries Contact:

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

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)

The US has negotiated multiple bilateral and regional Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). NOAA has the opportunity to participate in negotiation and implementation of these agreements, 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 US, 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.
- The United States is currently in negotiations with the European Union to progress the bilateral Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) agreement.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Greg Schneider
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 713-9090
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: greg.schneider@noaa.gov

Department of State:

Robert Wing
Chief for Environment and Trade
Office of Environmental Quality and Transboundary Issues
Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520
Tel (202) 647-6780
WingRD@state.gov

Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS)

GOOS is an internationally coordinated system for systematic operational data collection, data analysis, exchange of data and data products, and technology development and transfer. The objective of GOOS is to ensure the establishment of a permanent system of global and systematic observations adequate for forecasting climate variability and change; for assessing the health or the state of the marine environment and its resources, including the coastal zone; and for supporting an improved decision-making and management process, which takes into account potential natural and man-made changes in the environment and their effects on human health and marine resources. GOOS is coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) headquartered in Paris, France. GOOS planning and operations are guided by the Framework for Ocean Observing (http://www.oceanobs09.net/foo/index.php)

GOOS is 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 Meteorlogy (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 6th Session of the GOOS Regional Alliance Forum was hosted by the United States and held in Waikiki, Hawaii May 14 - 16, 2013. Each GOOS Regional Alliance (GRA) completed an assessment of their capabilities and an overall summary was completed. The assessments and summary can be found at: GOOS Assessments and Summary.

A new GOOS Regional Policy was drafted and subsequently approved by the GOOS Regional Alliance Forum the IOOS in June 2013: GOOS Regional Policy

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 IOCCP, project director: Maciei Telszewski, Sopot, Poland)
- Biology and Ecosystems Panel (international project officer: Patricia Miloslavich, AIMS Townsville, Australia and Ward Appeltans (50%), IOC IODE and additional in kind support through the US Consortium for Ocean Leadership, NOAA and NASA
- 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 begin 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 GOOS Steering Committee has begun planning for the Ocean Obs'19 meeting which will build on the decadal OceanObs series.

GOOS Steering Committee Co-Chair
Eric Lindstrom
NASA Physical Oceanography Program Scientist
Chair, GCOS/GOOS/WCRP Ocean Observations Panel for Climate (OOPC)

NASA Headquarters
Science Mission Directorate
Earth Science Division
Mail Suite 3B74
300 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20546
Phone: 202-358-4540
Fax: 202-358-2770
Email: eric.j.lindstrom@nasa.gov

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 quadrilennial Ocean in a High CO2 World expert meetings. 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 an 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.

NOTE: Palestinian membership as a state in UNESCO (voted on Oct 31, 2011) triggered longstanding legislative restrictions which will compel the United States to refrain from making further contributions to UNESCO. The United States will maintain its membership in and commitment to UNESCO and we will consult with Congress to ensure that U.S. interests and influence are preserved."

Secretariat:

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
7 Place du Fontenoy
75352 Paris Cedex 07 SP
France
Telephone: (33) 1 45 68 39 84
Fax: (33) 1 45 68 58 12/10
Email: ioc.secretariat@unesco.org

Web address: http://ioc.unesco.org/iocweb

Staff Contact

NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research:

Arthur Paterson
International Affairs Office
1315 East-West Highway, Rm 11326
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 734-1291
Fax : 301-713-1459
Email: Arthur.E.Paterson@noaa.gov

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

IOCARIBE is a subcommission of the IOC of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It is the first of its kind and was established on the basis of very promising experiences gained from previous cooperative programs in the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions. 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.

Web address: http://ioc.unesco.org

Examples of current or past projects include:

Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Project

The countries of the Caribbean have repeatedly indicated the need for attention to shared living marine resource (LMR) management at the regional and international levels through participation in regional arrangements, and through signing various international treaties and agreements. All coastal states of the Wider Caribbean, particularly Small Island Developing States have active national programs that focus on coastal and marine management.

The specific objectives of the project are:
1. To identify, analyze and agree upon major transboundary issues, root causes and actions required to achieve sustainable management of the shared living marine resources in the Caribbean Sea LME;
2. To improve the shared knowledge base so that sustainable use and management of transboundary living marine resources will be possible;
3. To implement legal, policy and institutional (SAP) reforms regionally and nationally to achieve sustainable transboundary living marine resource management;
4. To develop an institutional and procedural approach to LME level monitoring, evaluation and reporting for management decision-making.

The project will have a technical focus on both exploited and non-extractable transboundary LMR management that addresses the following LME-scale resource issues:

- Migratory resources (mainly large pelagics, but also some coastal pelagics)
- Resources with transboundary distribution as adults (various demersal fishes)
- Resources with transboundary larval dispersal (lobster, conch, reef organisms)
- Dispersal of pathogens, pollutants and invasive species
- Resources with transboundary trophic linkages

Integrated Watershed and Coastal Area Management Project
The overall objective of the project is to assist participating countries in improving their watershed and coastal zone management practices in support of sustainable development. The project includes the following components addressing areas of priority concern: coastal area management and biodiversity; tourism development; protection of water supplies; land based sources of pollution; climate change. Activities undertaken during the full project include, amongst others, demonstrations in the fields of marine pollution reduction and waste management, land use, soil degradation and watershed management.

The biennial plenary was held in Panama in Spring 2015.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

*Dr. Bonnie Ponwith
NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center
75 Virginia Beach Dr.
Miami, FL 33149-1003
Telephone: (305) 361-4270

*Dr. Ponwith is Chairperson of IOCARIBE

IOCARIBE Regional Secretariat:

IOCARIBE
A.A. 1108
Cartagena de Indias
Colombia
Telephone: (575) 664 6399
Fax: (575) 660 0407
Email: iocaribe@col3.telecom.com.co
Email: iocaribe@cartagena.cetcol.net.co

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 AR5 reports I, II, and III by April 2014 (full AR5 summary report due in October 2014). NOAA (including NMFS) scientists are involved in preparing these IPCC reports.

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 forcings, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use.

Member Nations

It is open to all member countries of WMO and UNEP.

Secretariat

IPCC Secretariat
C/O World Meteorological Organization
7bis Avenue de la Paix
C.P. 2300
CH- 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
Telephone: +41-22-730-8208
Fax: +41-22-730-8025
Web address: http://www.ipcc.ch

Description

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change. It was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 to provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of knowledge in climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic impacts. In the same year, the UN General Assembly endorsed the action by WMO and UNEP in jointly establishing the IPCC.

The IPCC is a scientific body under the auspices of the United Nations (UN). It reviews and assesses the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change. It does not conduct any research nor does it monitor climate related data or parameters.

Thousands of scientists from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC on a voluntary basis. Review is an essential part of the IPCC process, to ensure an objective and complete assessment of current information. IPCC aims to reflect a range of views and expertise. The Secretariat coordinates all the IPCC work and liaises with Governments. It is supported by WMO and UNEP and hosted at WMO headquarters in Geneva.

The IPCC is an intergovernmental body. It is open to all member countries of the United Nations (UN) and WMO. Currently 195 countries are members of the IPCC. Governments participate in the review process and the plenary Sessions, where main decisions about the IPCC work programme are taken and reports are accepted, adopted and

approved. The IPCC Bureau Members, including the Chair, are also elected during the plenary Sessions.

Because of its scientific and intergovernmental nature, the IPCC embodies a unique opportunity to provide rigorous and balanced scientific information to decision makers. By endorsing the IPCC reports, governments acknowledge the authority of their scientific content. The work of the organization is therefore policy-relevant and yet policy-neutral, never policy-prescriptive.

The scientific evidence brought up by the first IPCC Assessment Report of 1990 underlined the importance of climate change as a challenge requiring international cooperation to tackle its consequences. It therefore played a decisive role in leading to the creation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the key international treaty to reduce global warming and cope with the consequences of climate change.

Since then, the IPCC has delivered on a regular basis the most comprehensive scientific reports about climate change produced worldwide, the Assessment Reports. It has also responded to the need for information on scientific and technical matters from the UNFCCC, through Methodology Reports and Special Reports, and from governments and international organizations through Special Reports and Technical Papers. Methodology Reports serve as methodologies and guidelines to help Parties to the UNFCCC prepare their national greenhouse gas inventories.

The IPCC Second Assessment Report of 1995 provided important material drawn on by negotiators in the run-up to adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. The Third Assessment Report came out in 2001 and the Fourth in 2007.

The Fourth Assessment Report paid greater attention to the integration of climate change with sustainable development policies and relationships between mitigation and adaptation.

At the end of 2007 the IPCC was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The participation of the scientific community in the work of the IPCC has grown greatly, in terms of the number of authors and contributors involved in writing and reviewing the reports, geographical distribution of authors, and the topics covered by the reports.

The IPCC completed the Fifth Assessment Report in 2014 (http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/index.shtml).

The IPCC reports are of high scientific and technical standards, based on scientific evidence, and reflect a range and diversity of views, expertise, and geographical coverage within the scientific community. The comprehensiveness of the scientific content is achieved through contributions from experts in all regions of the world and all relevant disciplines including, where appropriately documented, industry literature and traditional practices. The IPCC multi-stage review by experts and governments ensures an objective, unbiased, transparent, and comprehensive assessment of current scientific and technical information. Because of its intergovernmental nature, the IPCC is able to provide scientific technical and socio-economic information to decision makers in a policy-relevant but policy-neutral way.

Recent Activities

The IPCC finalized the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) in 2014 (http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/index.shtml) . Reports from AR5 Working Groups I (*Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis)*, II (*Climate Change 2014: Impacts Adaptation and Vulnerability)*, and III (*ClimateChange 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change)*, were completed by April 2014. The AR5 *Synthesis Report* is due in October 2014.

The IPCC recently finalized two Methodology Reports: the *2013 Supplement to 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands* (Wetlands Supplement) and the *2013 Revised Supplementary Methods and Good Practice Guidelines Arising from the Kyoto Protocol* (KP Supplement).

The AR5 provided an update of the scientific, technical, and socio-economic knowledge of climate change. Compared with previous reports, the AR5 placed greater emphasis on assessing the socio-economic aspects of climate change and implications for sustainable development, risk management, and the framing of a response through both adaptation and mitigation. It provided more detailed regional information, including on climate phenomena such as monsoons and El Nino. For the first time, ocean ecosystems was addressed in a separate chapter in the AR. The key AR5 cross-cutting themes are: Water and the Earth System; Changes, Impacts and Responses; Carbon Cycle including Ocean Acidification; Ice Sheets and Sea-Level Rise; Mitigation, Adaptation and Sustainable Development; and Article 2 of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change. The outline and content can be found on the IPCC web site (www.ipcc.ch).

Lead authors for many sections included NOAA scientists, including at least one NMFS scientist. The AR5 is comprised of four reports: the three IPCC WGs' contributions dealing respectively with "The Physical Science Basis", "Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability", and "Mitigation of Climate Change", and the Synthesis Report (SYR). Each report contains its own Summary for Policymakers (SPM) that is approved in detail by all member countries of the IPCC and represents a formally agreed statement on key findings and uncertainties.

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.

In addition to climate assessment reports, the IPCC publishes Special Reports on specific topics (see http://ipcc.ch/activities/activities.shtml). The preparation and approval process for all IPCC Special Reports follows the same procedures as for IPCC Assessment Reports.

The IPCC has produced Special Reports on various topics such as aviation; regional impacts of climate change; technology transfer; emissions scenarios; land use, land-use change and forestry; carbon dioxide capture and storage; and the relationship between safeguarding the ozone layer and the global climate system. For more information on these see the Special Reports section of the Publications page.

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.

It decided to accept the invitation from the UNFCCC to provide a Special Report in 2018 on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 ºC above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, and to prepare it in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. For more information including, timeline, documentation and other relevant links click here.

The Panel also decided to prepare two other Special Reports requested by government: on climate change and oceans and the cryosphere; and on 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).

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Roger B. Griffis
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (831) 427-8134
Email: roger.b.griffis@noaa.gov

International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC)

The ISC was established in 1995 through an intergovernmental agreement between the governments of Japan and the United States. Since then, it has undergone a number of changes including a name change in 2005 from "Interim Scientific Committee" to the current "International Scientific Committee" and to membership qualifications. Membership is open to coastal states and fishing entities that border the region or that have vessels fishing for tuna and tuna-like species in the region, and to relevant intergovernmental fishery or marine science organizations. Current members of the ISC are Canada, China, Chinese-Taipei, Japan, Korea, Mexico, and the United States. Non-voting members are the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the North Pacific Science Organization (PICES) and Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

The purpose of the ISC is to enhance scientific research and cooperation for conservation and rational utilization of the species of tuna and tuna-like fisheries which inhabit the North Pacific Ocean and to establish the scientific groundwork for the conservation and rational utilization of these species in the region. The Committee is organized into five Working Groups – Statistics, Pacific Bluefin Tuna, Albacore, Billfish, and Sharks -- that report to a Plenary body. Results of the ISC are made available to participating members and Highly Migratory Species Regional Fishery Management Organizations of the Pacific Ocean. Through a Memorandum of Understanding, the ISC provides scientific support for the work of the Northern Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

Highlights of the ISC15 Plenary Meeting

The 15th ISC Plenary, held in Kona, Hawaii, U.S.A from 15-20 July 2014 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 the Western and Central North Pacific striped marlin is experiencing overfishing and is overfished. It reviewed indicator analyses of North Pacific shortfin mako shark and concluded that better data are needed to determine the status of this stock. It re-iterated that the North Pacific albacore tuna, North Pacific blue shark, and Western Central North Pacific Ocean swordfish stocks are not overfished nor experiencing overfishing, the Pacific bluefin tuna stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing, the Pacific blue marlin stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing and that the Eastern Pacific Ocean swordfish stock is not overfished but likely experiencing overfishing.

A special seminar on using close-kin mark recapture methods to estimate spawning stock biomass of Pacific Bluefin tuna was held and Plenary agreed to develop a sampling protocol for the method. Plenary endorsed the science objectives for ISC and PICES collaborations and discussed formalizing the ISC structure and administration and agreed to continue researching means of doing both. Over the past year, ISC further conducted a workshop on Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE), developed an MSE framework for NPALB. Plenary also noted the strides WGs had made in incorporating best available scientific information (BASI) into stock assessment work, enhanced stock assessment reports and the increased transparency in Working Group efforts. Observers from Pew Charitable Trusts, International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, World Wildlife Fund for Nature - Japan and Duke University attended. The ISC workplan for 2015-16 includes completing Pacific Bluefin tuna and blue marlin assessments, improving catch and CPUE time series and advancing biological information for shark species, conducing a workship for managers on fishery objectives and harvest control rules for MSE, and enhancing database and website management. The Plenary revised its operating procedures and endorsed an additional one-year term for the standing Albacore Working Group Chair, John Holmes. The next Plenary will likely be held in the Japan in July 2016.

NOAA Fisheries Contact:

Sarah M. Shoffler
Fishery Biologist
NOAA/NMFS/Southwest Fisheries Science Center
8601 La Jolla Shores Dr.
La Jolla, CA 92037
Phone: 858-546-5678
Fax: 858-546-5655
Email: Sarah.Shoffler@noaa.gov
Website: http://swfsc.noaa.gov

Joint Project Agreement between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Korean Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) For Scientific and Technical Cooperation in Integrated Coastal and Ocean Resources Management

Basic Instrument

The main instrument is a Joint Project Agreement (JPA) between NOAA and the Korean Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF). The JPA is a scientific and technical cooperation agreement in integrated coastal and ocean resources management.

Member Nations

Republic of Korea and United States

Meetings

The parties meet annually, generally alternating annually between the United States or Korea to review accomplishments and plan cooperative projects for the following year. In addition, the subject Working Groups of the JPA meet separately on an annual or biennial basis to progress cooperative research projects.

U.S. Representation

The NOAA lead of the JPA is the Director of the NOS Office of International Programs (currently Clement Lewsey). 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, NMFS, has the lead for the Fisheries Panel. The Panel's research projects for 2016 are 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.

New Project (continued from 2015)

In an effort to address NMFS' interest in having a more structured and consistent dialogue with the Korean Ministry of Oceans & Fisheries (MOF), a new project to focus on fisheries management collaborations was developed and approved [trial effort] for 2015. This project aims to serve as an annual forum in which the US & Korea can discuss and develop collaboration on fisheries management issues. As there have been greater bilateral interactions on fisheries management, both sides have recognized a need for a more structured mechanism to discuss fisheries topics that are not strictly science (and therefore fall under the Fisheries Panel co-chaired by Low Lee LOH on the NOAA side).

The forum will generally discuss the following themes: (1) RFMO data sharing/quality, compliance and management, (2) Capacity Building/overseas development work (planning & coordination) in 3rd world countries of shared interest, (3) Non-specific RFMO management issues discussion (e.g. mitigation of IUU, control of nationals), (4) sharing fisheries management challenges & successes, and (5) other topics that are of interest to the US & Korea. The points of contacts will, based on respective agency input, put forth ~2 topics to discuss. The meeting will reflect pressing issues as identified by each country and/or activities that require face-to-face planning. Based on those topics, participants should be chosen. Michael Abbey & SHIN Cheol Yong (MOF International Cooperation Division) will lead the project.

Next Meeting

The two countries have scheduled the annual Joint Project Agreement meeting for July 2016 in Korea to review accomplishments and plan cooperative projects for the following year.

Staff Contacts:

Dr. Loh-Lee Low (fisheries panel)
International Coordinator
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
7600 Sand Point Way, N.E., Building 4
Seattle, WA 98115
Telephone: (206) 526-4190
Fax: (206) 526-6723
Email: Loh-Lee.Low@noaa.gov

Dr. Ronald Johnson (aquaculture panel)
Ronald.Johnson@noaa.gov

Michael Abbey (capacity building & IUU project)
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway, Room 10644
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8355
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: michael.abbey@noaa.gov

Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs)

Description

NOAA's Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) Program provides scientific and technical support to developing countries in ecosystem-based management (EBM). NOAA Fisheries is engaged with countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Pacific, and Europe in implementing the EBM approach for the assessment and management of marine goods and services. At present, LME projects apply five modules for assessing changing states of LMEs: (i) productivity, (ii) fish and fisheries, (iii) pollution and ecosystem health, (iv) socioeconomics, and (v) governance. The modules are adapted to the priority needs of each project based on the outcome of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) conducted by the participating national governments.

Two international financial institutions provide support to LME projects—the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Bank. The GEF provides up to $1 million over 12 to 18 months to countries for prioritizing transboundary issues. Typical issues include the recovery of depleted fish and fisheries, control of pollution and nutrient over-enrichment, restoration of degraded habitats, conservation of biodiversity, and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The TDA prioritization process leads to the preparation of a Strategic Action Program (SAP). Based on the prioritized issues in the TDA, the countries prepare a four to five year plan for recovery and sustainability of the marine goods and services under stress. These processes involve the national ministries for fisheries, environment, energy, development, tourism, and others. Two or more of the engaged ministries are required to approve the SAP for the LME project as a prelude to further financial support from the GEF. The successful projects are eligible for a second phase of financial support. Following the eight to ten years of SAP support, the goal is for the LME projects to become self-financed and managed by an LME commission or another ecosystem-wide governance mechanism.

Projects

The Global Environment Facility, the World Bank, and other donors have catalyzed $3.1 billion in financial support to LME projects. NOAA partners with five UN agencies (e.g. UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO, FAO, and IOC-UNESCO), ICES, and two NGOs (IUCN, WWF) to provide scientific and technical support to the LME projects.

The GEF and the World Bank 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. INDONESIAN SEA LME PROJECT
12. MEDITERRANEAN SEA LME PROJECT
13. PATAGONIAN SHELF LME PROJECT
14. SULU-CELEBES SEA LME PROJECT
15. YELLOW SEA LME PROJECT
16. WEST BERING SEA LME Project in development stage

Recent Activities

During 2015, a coalition of ocean leaders from NOAA, the Global Environment Facility, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, the United Nations Development Program, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, along with scientists from Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America, Europe, and the

Russian Federation, produced a series of peer reviewed manuscripts on studies of LME (i) productivity, (ii) fish & fisheries, (iii) pollution & ecosystem health, (iv) socioeconomics, and (v) governance. The manuscripts will be published during early 2016 in a special issue of the Elsevier journal *Environmental Development*.

Staff Contact

NOAA Fisheries:

Dr. Kenneth Sherman
Narragansett Laboratory
NOAA Large Marine Ecosystems Program
28 Tarzwell Drive
Narragansett, RI 02882-1199
Telephone: (401) 782-3210
Fax: (401) 782-3201

Dr. Rebecca Shuford
Fishery Biologist
Marine Ecosystems Division
NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8175
Rebecca.Shuford@noaa.gov

Emma Kelley
Marine Ecosystems Division
NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8108
emma.kelley@noaa.gov

Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region

Basic Instrument

Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region

Member Nations

Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France for its Pacific Territories (New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna), New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States, Vanuatu

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

To provide an international framework for coordinated conservation efforts for the conservation of cetaceans and their habitats in the Pacific Islands Region, a Memorandum of Understanding (Pacific Cetaceans MoU) was launched on 15 September 2006. The Pacific Cetaceans MoU was negotiated under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), in collaboration with the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The Pacific Cetaceans MoU includes plans to protect and conserve Pacific cetaceans and their habitats, including their migratory corridors.

The Pacific Islands Region encompasses the following states and territories: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Island, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America (American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands), Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna. In many communities, there are significant cultural connections between cetaceans and humans. In much of the Pacific Islands Region, whale and dolphin watching is a growing tourist industry of importance to the region.

B. Organizational Structure:

The Secretariat to the Pacific Cetaceans MoU is articulated in the MoU text. The CMS Secretariat will act as the secretariat to this Memorandum of Understanding. It may use the services of any reliable organization to support the coordination of this Memorandum of Understanding. An organization to coordinate the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding 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 Memorandum of Understanding. At this stage the Secretariat contact point for the Pacific Cetaceans MoU remains with the CMS Secretariat.

UNEP / CMS Pacific Cetaceans MoU Secretariat
United Nations Premises
Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10
53113 Bonn, Germany
Telephone (+49 228) 815 2401 / 02
Facsimile (+49 228) 815 2449
Email secretariat@cms.int
Web www.cms.int

Pacific Cetaceans MoU Technical Advisory Group Coordinator
Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society International (WDCS)
P.O. Box 228, Suva, Fiji

Tel: +679 323 2940
Email: cara.miller@wdcs.org

Status

There have been three meetings of the Pacific Cetacean MoU, at the second meeting the Parties adopted the "Convention on Migratory Species Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region Whale and Dolphin Action Plan 2009-2012" (Action Plan). The Action Plan recognizes that the survival of many cetacean populations that frequent the waters of the Pacific Islands Region, particularly those that have been severely depleted, can be affected by interactions with fisheries, hunting, pollution, collisions with boats, noise, habitat degradation, climate change, disruption of food chains and irresponsible tourism. The Pacific Cetaceans MoU's Action Plan addresses these and other threats to cetaceans in the Pacific Islands Region.

In March 2012, NOAA Fisheries participated in discussions to revise the Whale and Dolphin Action Plan; and submitted minor comments on the draft revised Action Plan to SPREP. At the third meeting of the Pacific Cetacean MoU, held in September 2012, the body adopted the revised Whale and Dolphin Action Plan 2013-2017, which sets priorities for addressing the threats faced by this species, as well as increasing capacity and public awareness in the region and guides the conservation actions of the Pacific Cetacean MoU in the Pacific Island region over the next five years. Through a correspondence process, the Signatories will identify ways to facilitate implementation of the actions with highest priority, including by linking this regional initiative to processes at the global level for the conservation of migratory species under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

The Pacific islands launched a "Pacific Year of the Whale" campaign in 2016. Science, conservation and education will form major parts of the campaign which will look to further enhance whale conservation throughout the region. Many threats still exist such as entanglement in fishing nets, pollution and the possible consequences of climate change. The campaign is being run by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme with the goal to produce an action plan by 2018 for future whale conservation action.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Nina Young
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East- West Highway, Room 10631
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8383

Department of State:

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

Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and Their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA) (concluded under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species)

The Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA) was completed on June 23, 2001, in Manila, Philippines. IOSEA is the second memorandum of understanding of its kind to be concluded under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species. It is a non-binding agreement and provides a framework through which States of the region--as well as other concerned States--can work together to conserve and replenish depleted marine turtle populations for which they share responsibility. It acknowledges a wide range of threats to marine turtles, including habitat destruction, direct harvesting and trade, fisheries bycatch, pollution and other human induced sources of mortality. The IOSEA recognizes the need to address these problems in the context of the socio-economic development of the States concerned, and to take account of other relevant instruments and organizations.

The IOSEA has a potential membership of at least 40 countries, covering the entire Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia. Activities may also be coordinated through subregional mechanisms in South-East Asia, as well as in the northern, western, and southwestern Indian Ocean. Thirty-five States have signed the IOSEA: Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Comoros, Egypt, Eritrea, France, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam, and Yemen. The fourth meeting of the Signatory States was held in Oman in March 2006. The fifth signatory state meeting was held in Bali, Indonesia in August 2008. The signatory states discussed and passed a fisheries bycatch resolution. The signatory states also discussed the impacts of coastal development on sea turtles, as well as funding for the agreement. The Sixth Signatory States meeting was in Bangkok, Thailand in January 2012. The major discussion topics included regional updates, illegal traffic of sea turtles, adoption of a site network and adoption of the work plan and budget. Intersessional work is focused on developing candidate sites for the Site Network of Important Marine Turtle Habitats. At the September 2014 meeting in Bonn, Germany, the Signatory States agreed to add ten sites to the Site Network. These sites were identified because of their critical importance for sea turtle conservation.

The 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 Bangkok, Thailand, 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, United Kingdom, United States, Convention on Migratory Species Trust Fund, and United Nations Environment Programme.

Web address: http://www.ioseaturtles.org/

NOAA Fisheries:

Alexis Gutiérrez
Office of Protected Resources (F/PR)
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 7427-8441
Fax: (301) 713-4060

Department of State:

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

National Marine Fisheries Service/Institute of Marine Research, Norway, Scientific Cooperation

Basic Instrument

The basic instrument establishing scientific cooperation between the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Norway's Institute of Marine Research (IMR) is the *First Addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding* [MOU] *Between NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, USA, and the Institute of Marine Research, Norway, on Cooperation in Marine Ecosystems Research and Assessment* [the "Addendum"]. The Addendum became effective on February 16, 2012. It is an addendum to the *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation on Fisheries Issues Between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States of America and the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs of Norway* (discussed earlier in this publication).

Members

The United States and Norway.

Meetings

The Parties agreed that their designated representatives will meet as needed.

U.S. Representation

United States

Dr. Richard Merrick
Director of Scientific Programs and
Chief Science Advisor
National Marine Fisheries Service

Norway

Dr. Sissel Rogne
Director
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 Bergen, Norway May 25-26, 2015 to continue dialog on collaborative research activities. The meeting offered the opportunity to have in-depth discussions on the Arctic,

climate and fisheries, aquaculture, stock assessments, integrated ecosystem assessments (IEAs), advanced technologies, assessments of oil spill impacts on living marine resources (LMRs), and scientific exchanges. The following issues were discussed in detail:

- The Arctic
- The Antarctic
- Climate and Stewardship
- Stock assessment methods and ecosystem modeling
- New stock assessment software
- Cooperation in development cooperation projects for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture
- Cooperation with Canada
- Global assessments
- Horizon 2020
- Deep sea mining
- Exchange of scientists between NOAA and IMR
- The Rolling Deck to Repository Program
- NOAA Fisheries program Reviews

Next meeting

The next science meeting is scheduled for May 2017, in Woods Hole, MA.

Contacts

Headquarters

Ned Cyr, Director
Office of Science and Technology
National Marine Fisheries Service
Tel: 301-427-8115
Email: keith.chanon@noaa.gov

Northeast Region

Bill Karp, Acting Director
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

OECD is a Paris-based international organization that provides a forum for consultations on a wide range of economic issues among developed countries. The OECD Committee for Fisheries (the Fisheries Committee) meets twice annually (in the spring and fall) and occasionally holds ad hoc technical meetings.

The Fisheries Committee has agreed on certain basic guidelines in developing its program of work:

- the Committee's role should mainly be to constitute a policy forum for an open and frank exchange of views and experiences on various fisheries matters;
- the Committee should carry out in-depth studies and objective analysis which should lead to potential solutions to problems common to Member countries;
- the Committee should address fishery economic and policy questions at the international level, while avoiding duplicating work done in other international organizations; and
- the Committee should in its work take an interdisciplinary approach, thus exploiting the OECD's comparative advantage.

The Fisheries Committees is in the process of developing its 2017-2018 program of work. The work program aligns itself with the OECD Ministers' commitments to Green Growth and focuses on development dimension, including policy coherence, aquaculture and fisheries governance.

These areas of work are 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 Government Financial Transfers (GFT) table 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/

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Greg Schneider; Senior International Trade Specialist
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427.8378
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: greg.schneider@noaa.gov

OECD Headquarters:

Roger MartiniOECD
2, rue André Pascal
F-75775 Paris Cedex 16
France
Telephone: (33-1) 45 24 17 40
Fax: (33-1) 44 30 61 21
Roger.Martini@oecd.org

The Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

SPREP is the Pacific region's major intergovernmental organization charged with the protection and sustainable development of the region's environment. 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 Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme is based in Apia, Samoa, with over 90 staff, and is also referred to by the acronym SPREP.

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 "The Pacific environment, sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures."

Members

SPREP has 26 members, including 21 Pacific island nations 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 resources. NOAA's representative to SPREP is in the NOAA Office of International Affairs, with responsibility to coordinate NOAA interests.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Serves as a U.S. Focal Point for SPREP.

SPREP Secretariat:

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment
Programme (SPREP)
PO Box 240, Apia, Samoa
Telephone: +685 21929
Fax: +685 20231

Protocol for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention)

SPAW 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 SPAW 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 SPAW 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 SPAW 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 SPAW 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 7th Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the SPAW Protocol is expected to be held in Miami, Florida, 31 October-4 November 2016. The SPAW STAC meeting will run back-to-back with the LBS Protocol STAC meeting.
Website address: http://www.cep.unep.org/cartagena-convention

Recent Developments:

The 6th Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the SPAW Protocol and the 8th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the SPAW Protocol were convened 11-12 December 2014, in Cartagena, Colombia. The meetings reported on accomplishments in areas of interest of the United States, such as marine mammal and sea turtle conservation, marine protected area management, developing guidance for presenting exemptions to listed species and response to the invasion of lionfish in the Wider Caribbean Region.

By far the most contentious issue of the meetings was the addition of 10 new species to the SPAW Protocol's annexes of protected species over U.S. objections, leading to the first ever vote in Cartagena Convention history. The SPAW Protocol contains three annexes of flora and fauna that Parties commit to protecting. Those annexes had not been altered since the adoption of the Protocol in 1990. The Protocol calls for Parties to nominate species and for the nominations to be accompanied by supporting scientific and technical information. A working group was

established to review species that might be appropriate for listing. After some discussion, Parties voted to amend Annexes II and III of the Protocol by listing ten additional species of birds, plants and corals for protection under the terms of the Protocol. The United States objected, citing the lack of supporting documentation and the fact that no Party had formally submitted a proposal for any of the species. In compliance with the Treaty, the United States entered a reservation to the listing of all 10 species, delivered to the government of Colombia, the depository government on 3 March 2015.

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

Heather Coll
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8455
Email: heather.coll@noaa.gov

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

Historically, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) was not traditionally a forum for the discussion of fisheries issues, but this changed in the 1990s when it took up the problem of large-scale, pelagic driftnet fishing on the high seas. UNGA Resolution 44/225, adopted in 1990, called for a moratorium on the use of this fishing gear on the high seas by June 30, 1992. This Resolution was supplanted by UNGA Resolution 46/215, which delayed the effective date of the moratorium until December 31, 1992.

Since that time, the United Nations General Assembly has annually provided guidance for the sustainable management of global living marine resources in an annual Sustainable Fisheries Resolution. UNGA fisheries resolutions address: achieving sustainable fisheries; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; monitoring, control and surveillance and 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 and 2011, 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. The next review will take place in 2016.

Additionally, the UN General Assembly negotiates a resolution that focuses on broader oceans issues, which can affect fisheries management, such as initiatives to address marine debris, marine protected areas and coastal zone management. The United States is represented at each of these negotiations by the Department of State and supported by NOAA and NOAA Fisheries technical expertise.

Web address: www.un.org/Depts/los/index.htm

Staff Contacts

NOAA Fisheries:

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

U.S.-Canada International Joint Commission (IJC)

The IJC is an independent binational organization established by the U.S.-Canada Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. Canada and the United States created the IJC because they recognized that each country is affected by the other's actions in lake and river systems along their border. The IJC's purpose is to help prevent and resolve disputes relating to the use and quality of boundary waters and to advise Canada and the United States on related questions.

The IJC has six members--three are appointed by the President of the United States, with the advice and approval of the Senate, and three 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
- Dereth Glance, 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.

Contact

U.S. Section, International Joint Commission
2000 L Street, NW
Suite 615
Washington, D.C. 20440
Telephone.: (202) 736-9024
Fax : (202) 632-2007
Contact: Frank Bevacqua

Web address: http://www.ijc.org/en/home/main_accueil.htm

NOAA Fisheries Contact:

Patrick Moran
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Telephone: 301-427-8370
pat.moran@noaa.gov

U.S.-China Marine and Fishery Science and Technology Protocol

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 for another five-year period. 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,
- 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) will be held during 2016. The JWG, to be chaired by NOAA OAR AA Craig McLean, will take place in the Washington D.C. area.

Since the last meeting in 2011, substantive dialogue with China's State Oceanic Administration has continued in various fora such as the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, Pacific Arctic Group, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), etc.

During the 2015 U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, the following issues associated with the JWG were discussed:

- Global Oceans Cooperation:
    - The United States and China reaffirmed their commitments toward the protection and conservation of the world's oceans, including the Pacific Ocean. The two sides expressed their support for the agendas of the 2014 Our Ocean and APEC Ocean-Related Ministerial conferences that addressed global challenges of sustaining fisheries, ocean acidification, and marine pollution, and pledged to practically implement these goals nationally, bilaterally, and with the international community.

- Enhanced Cooperation on Climate-Related Ocean Issues:
    - The State Oceanic Administration (SOA) of China and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the United States decided to hold a scoping workshop to further discuss the Draft Proposal for the Indian-Southern Oceans Climatic Observation, Reanalysis and Prediction (ISOCORE) to develop a Science Plan. The proposed program is to include ocean and climate observations, model development, data management and services, and focused studies on scientific issues in the Indian and Southern Oceans. Ocean acidification, carbon cycle, decadal and multi-decadal oscillations, and the role of ocean in climate prediction

- Marine Protected Areas:
    - The two sides decided to work together to improve the effectiveness of marine protected areas (MPA). They celebrated China's announcement to increase its protected area coverage in the marine environment to 5 percent and the recent U.S. six-fold expansion of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. In support of this goal, the two sides are to strengthen understanding and information exchange about Chinese and U.S. MPA programs, initiatives, science, and management topics. The United States hosted a dialogue in June 2015 to share information on such matters, and to review existing cooperation and identify potential future opportunities for technical and other types of cooperation toward improved effectiveness of our respective MPAs.

Many other marine issues, unrelated to the JWG were also discussed: bilateral dialogue on fisheries, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, marine litter prevention and reduction, maritime law enforcement, Antarctica/Ross Sea MPA, South China Sea Tsunami Warning

Outcomes of the 18th Joint Working Group Meeting

The 18th Joint Working Group meeting was held in Beijing, China on March 7-8, 2011. The State Oceanic Administration (SOA) proposed a *2011-2015 Framework Plan for Ocean Science and Technology Cooperation* that would promote a large-scale, multidisciplinary, and long-term joint program in the Indian Ocean and Southern Ocean using an innovative and practical approach, and strengthen communication and exchange of the personnel such as agency officials and scientists. Both NOAA and SOA agreed to use the Framework Plan as the basis to formulate a 5-year work plan for NOAA-SOA collaboration. A joint program entitled *The Role of the Oceans in Climate: Observations, Prediction, and Uncertainty Estimation of Interannual and Multi-decadal Variability* was proposed by SOA as part of the Framework Plan and is being explored. The 19th Joint Working Group meeting will be held in the U.S. in Spring/Summer 2014.

NOAA Chair: Dr. Robert Detrick, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Research

Outcomes of the 2nd Marine Science Forum

The 2nd Marine Science Forum between NOAA and the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) of China occurred on November 21-22, 2011 in Silver Spring, MD. NOAA and SOA reached agreement on the contents of the *2011-2015 Framework Plan for Ocean Science and Technology Cooperation* during the Forum. Progress was made on the joint project initially proposed by SOA during the Joint Working Group meeting in March 2011. The joint program was renamed *Indian-Southern Ocean Climate Observation, Reanalysis and PrEdiction (ISOCORE)*. Following the meeting, SOA sent a revised version of the proposal for this joint program for a more in-depth and thorough review by NOAA. One or two meetings are planned to help further the development of the joint program. The 3rd Marine Science Forum is planned to be held in China in Fall/Winter 2014.

NOAA Chair: Dr. Robert Detrick, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Research

Oceanographic Data and Information:

The 9th Oceanographic Data and Information Panel was held in Silver Spring, MD in September 2009. This panel has not met since 2011.

The Role of the Oceans in Climate Change:

At the 18th Joint Working Group meeting, both sides discussed potential joint activities in the Indian and Southern Oceans with an emphasis on ocean climate observations and modeling. A joint program entitled *The Role of the Oceans in Climate: Observations, Prediction, and Uncertainty Estimation of Interannual and Multi-decadal*

Variability was proposed by SOA in support of the *2011-2015 Framework Plan for Ocean Science and Technology Cooperation* (also proposed by SOA). Further discussion will be necessary to develop a detailed plan of action. An agreement was made to share any data need for and/or produced from joint activities engaged in under the Panel. During the 2nd Marine Science Forum held in Silver Spring, MD on November 21-22, 2011.

NOAA Chair (Acting): Mr. Rene Eppi, Director, OAR International Activities Office

Living Marine Resources (LMR):

Discussions on new collaboration between NOAA Fisheries and the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences (CAFS) occurred during the 18th Joint Working Group meeting. Expansion of the focus of the Panel was discussed as well as the alignment of the joint Panel priorities with the *2011-2015 Framework Plan for Ocean Science and Technology Cooperation.* This resulted in NOAA hosting the 8th Living Marine Resources (LMR) Panel meeting in Silver Spring, MD on June 13-15, 2011. These discussions initiated research collaborations, joint workshops, and scientist exchanges on aquaculture, protected species, and habitat monitoring, assessment and restoration of reef systems throughout 2011 and 2012.

The 9th LMR Panel meeting was held in Shanghai, PRC on October 19-23, 2012. Following this meeting, NMFS staff visited CAFS' institutes in Shanghai and Qingdao, aquaculture and seafood processing facilities at Weihai, Shandong Province, and attended the CAFS Forum on Fishery Science and Technology. In 2012 and 2013, additional workshops and scientist exchanges focused on aquaculture, fisheries survey and assessment techniques, and oil spill impacts on living marine resources.

The tenth LMR Panel meeting was held in Seattle, Washington on February 13-14, 2014. The panel reviewed the status of joint activities and planned future collaborations to advance research in the following areas:

1. Aquaculture (including genetics, stock enhancement, alternative feeds, and environmental monitoring and modeling)
2. Assessment of reef systems (including the development of stock assessment models and survey techniques)
3. Marine mammals and sea turtles (including research on western gray whales, spotted seals, and sea turtles)
4. Remote sensing of coastal habitats and ecosystem changes
5. Climate impacts on krill
6. Oyster reef ecology
7. Assessment methods for oil spill impacts on living marine resources
8. Fisheries stock assessments for tropical marine ecosystems

The eleventh LMR Panel meeting will be held in Guangzhou in June 2016. Discussions will focus on updates of ongoing projects and new areas of interest. Aquaculture, stock enhancement, fisheries stock assessment, and climate change impacts on fisheries are expected to be discussed in detail.

NOAA Chair: Dr. Ned Cyr, Director, NMFS Office of Science and Technology

Marine Policy, Management, and International Marine Affairs:

NOAA and SOA have collaborated on regional MPA and marine spatial planning training, which have been conducted through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Marine Sustainable Development Center (hosted by SOA in the city of Xiamen). Based on availability of resources, we are expecting to continue this collaboration in 2016 and beyond within the protocol.

NOAA Chair: Dr. Gonzalo Cid, NOS National Marine Sanctuary Program

Polar Sciences:

At the 18th Joint Working Group meeting, both NOAA and SOA agreed that the Polar Science Panel has been an useful mechanism for promoting collaboration between China and the US and wish for the Panel to continue its work. In addition, both NOAA and SOA presented specific science topics that were of mutual interest. Much of the cooperation in polar sciences between NOAA and SOA is accomplished through collaborative activities facilitated through the Pacific Arctic Group (PAG). Discussions have continued on ocean acidification through the PAG.

NOAA Chair: Dr. Jeremy Mathis, Director, NOAA (OAR) Arctic Research Program Office

NOAA Contact:

Arthur Paterson
Program Manager, International Activities Office
Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East West Hwy.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 734-1291
arthur.e.paterson@noaa.gov

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.

NOAA Fisheries Contact

Northeast Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026
Telephone: (508) 495-2233
Fax: (508) 495-2232

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 Institute 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.

NOAA Fisheries Contact

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

U.S.-Vietnam Fisheries Cooperation Program

The bilateral fisheries relationship with Vietnam was initiated in 1998 with an exchange of fishery scientists. Additionally, in October 1998, NMFS Assistant Administrator Rolland Schmitten 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.

During 2001, Vietnam expressed interest in continuing the bilateral exchanges of scientific personnel and to further our dialogue on trade issues of mutual interest and requested that the United States send a delegation to Hanoi. In March 2003, Dr. Rebecca Lent, NMFS Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, led a delegation of NMFS and Department of State representatives to Hanoi. The agenda for this meeting covered possible future work with Vietnam in areas relating to fisheries science, conservation and management policy, enforcement, and trade. This meeting resulted in a commitment by the United States and Vietnam to examine areas where future cooperation might take place. Although no formal agreement or monetary commitment was made, the stage was set for enhanced cooperation between the two governments.

During November 2003, a delegation from the Vietnamese Ministries of Fisheries, Science and Technology, and Finance visited the United States for meetings with representatives of U.S. federal agencies and research institutions on issues of fisheries management, aquaculture and science and technology. The itinerary for this trip included meetings in the Washington, D.C. area with NOAA, NMFS and other agency representatives. The Vietnamese delegation also visited the University of Maryland's Center of Marine Biotechnology (COMB) and the National Aquarium in Baltimore. The U.S. visit concluded in the Seattle/Puget sound area with visits to the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center Manchester Field Station aquaculture facility, the Washington State Salmon Hatchery, and the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (located in Seattle).

In June 2004, a Workshop on Methodology for Fisheries Resources Assessments was held in Haiphong, Vietnam. The workshop was organized by: the Research Institute for Marine Fisheries (RIMF), Ministry of Fisheries, Vietnam; the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC), NMFS, USA; and the project on Assessment of the Living Marine Resources in Vietnam (ALMRV), DANIDA, Denmark. This workshop was held as a first technical exchange of methodologies and ideas following communications between the Government of Vietnam and the United States to further bilateral cooperation on fisheries issues. It was agreed that another workshop should be held in the future on methodologies for assessing pelagic resources.

During May 2005, Dr. Lent led a delegation of NMFS representatives to Hanoi. The agenda for this meeting included scientific, management, and trade issues of mutual concern, as well as regional and international items. There was agreement that future scientific cooperation should focus on: fisheries oceanography; satellite remotely sensed oceanographic data; coral reef research; and sea turtle satellite tracking. Vietnam noted that its top priority is developing the country’s aquaculture industry. The United States requested Vietnam’s support and commitment in joining and implementing international and regional agreements, instruments and organizations, such as: the World Trade Organization, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, the FAO International Plans of Action and Sea Turtle Guidelines, and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

In February 2006, U.S. Government personnel assisted the Vietnamese in hosting an APEC Fisheries Working Group workshop entitled, "Towards Sustainable Fisheries in the Region." This workshop, held in Hanoi, Vietnam during 15-17 February 2006, was the first official meeting of the Vietnam year of APEC leadership (theme: Towards a Dynamic Community for Sustainable Development and Prosperity). Additionally, in follow-up to bilateral commitments made during 2005, U.S. scientists held a workshop designed to assess Vietnamese research priorities during March 20-21, 2006, in Hanoi, and U.S. Government and non-government representatives assisted (and participated) in the March 22-24, 2006 Pacific Rim Conference, also held in Hanoi.

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. NMFS personnel also worked with the NOAA National Ocean Service to provide capacity building training on a number of topics associated with Marine Protected Areas in Vietnam. During 2012 – 2015, a NMFS team provided training workshops on implementing coastal marine special planning and ecosystem-based fisheries management. More fisheries-related workshops may be planned in the future.

NOAA Fisheries Contact

Christopher Rogers
Office of International Affairs
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 427-8375
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: christopher.rogers@noaa.gov

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.

The Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference was held in Doha, Qatar, from November 9-14, 2001. In launching the Doha Round, the Ministers agreed to negotiations on the relationship between existing WTO rules and trade obligations set out in multilateral environmental agreements. The negotiations address how WTO rules are to apply to WTO members that are parties to environmental agreements. Ministers also agreed to clarify and improve WTO rules that apply to fisheries subsidies. The U.S. position has been that WTO Members should eliminate subsidies that lead to overcapacity, overfishing and distort trade. Market access for the fisheries sector is covered in the Non-Agriculture Market Access (NAMA) negotiations. Negotiations stalled in 2011. As of the end 2013 no clear work plan had been agreed by Ministers on how and whether to move the Doha agenda forward. The routine work of the WTO including adjudicating trade disputes continues unabated.

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

NOAA Fisheries Contact

Greg Schneider
Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone: (301) 713-9090
Fax: (301) 713-2313
Email: greg.schneider@noaa.gov

PART V: APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Governing International Fishery Agreements (GIFAs) Between the United States and Foreign Entities

Pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), Title II, Section 201, foreign fishing within the U.S. 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone may only be conducted under a GIFA.

All GIFAs, except the Agreement with Russia, have been concluded since the enactment of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Pending Congressional approval, the GIFA with Russia was renewed in December 2013 for another five years, to expire on December 31, 2018.

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**

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UNFSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
Egypt		**P**							**P**	
El Salvador		**P**	**P**		**CNP**					
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**				

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UN FSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
Mali									**P**	
Malta						**P**			**P**	
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**				

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UN FSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
Somalia									**P**	
South Africa	**CNP**	**P**		**CNP**		**P**	**P**	**A**	**P**	**P**
Spain						**P**	**P**	**P**	**P**	**P**
Sri Lanka				**P**		**P**			**P**	
St. Vincent, the Grenadines		**P**								
Sudan				**P**						
Suriname		**CNP**								
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.

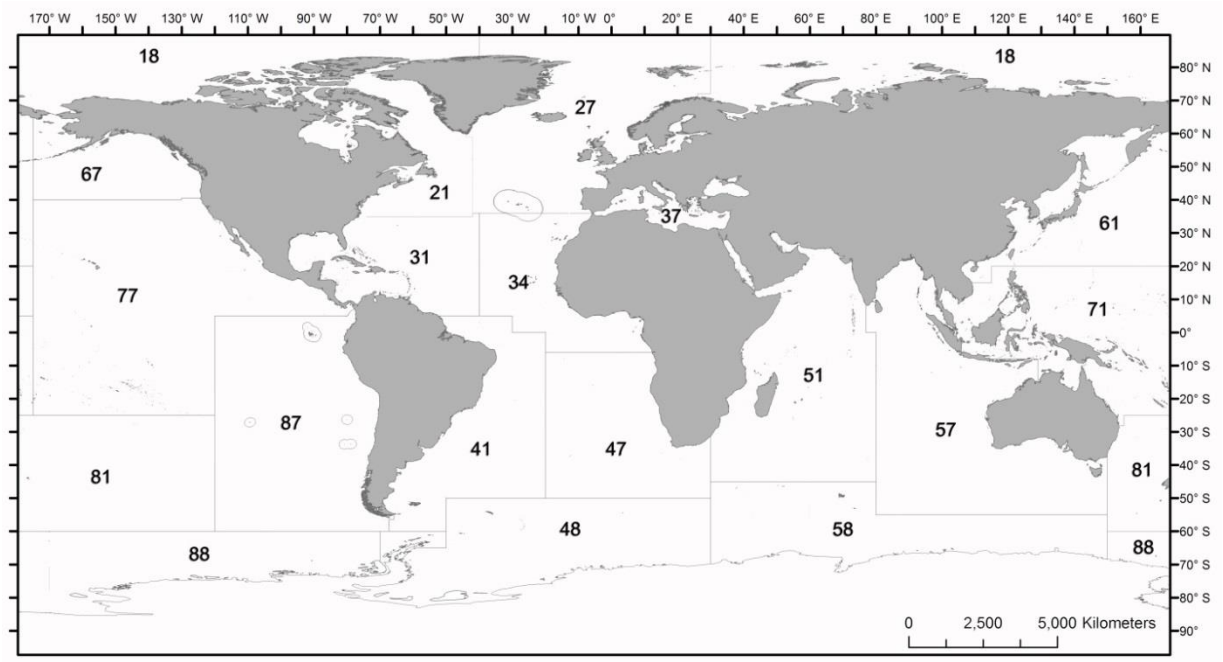


Figure 1 Global Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) statistical fishing areas. From upper left to lower right: Area 18 (Arctic Sea); Area 67 (Pacific, Northeast); Area 77 (Pacific, Eastern Central); Area 81 (Pacific, Southwest); Area 87 (Pacific, Southeast); Area 88 (Pacific, Antarctic); Area 27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

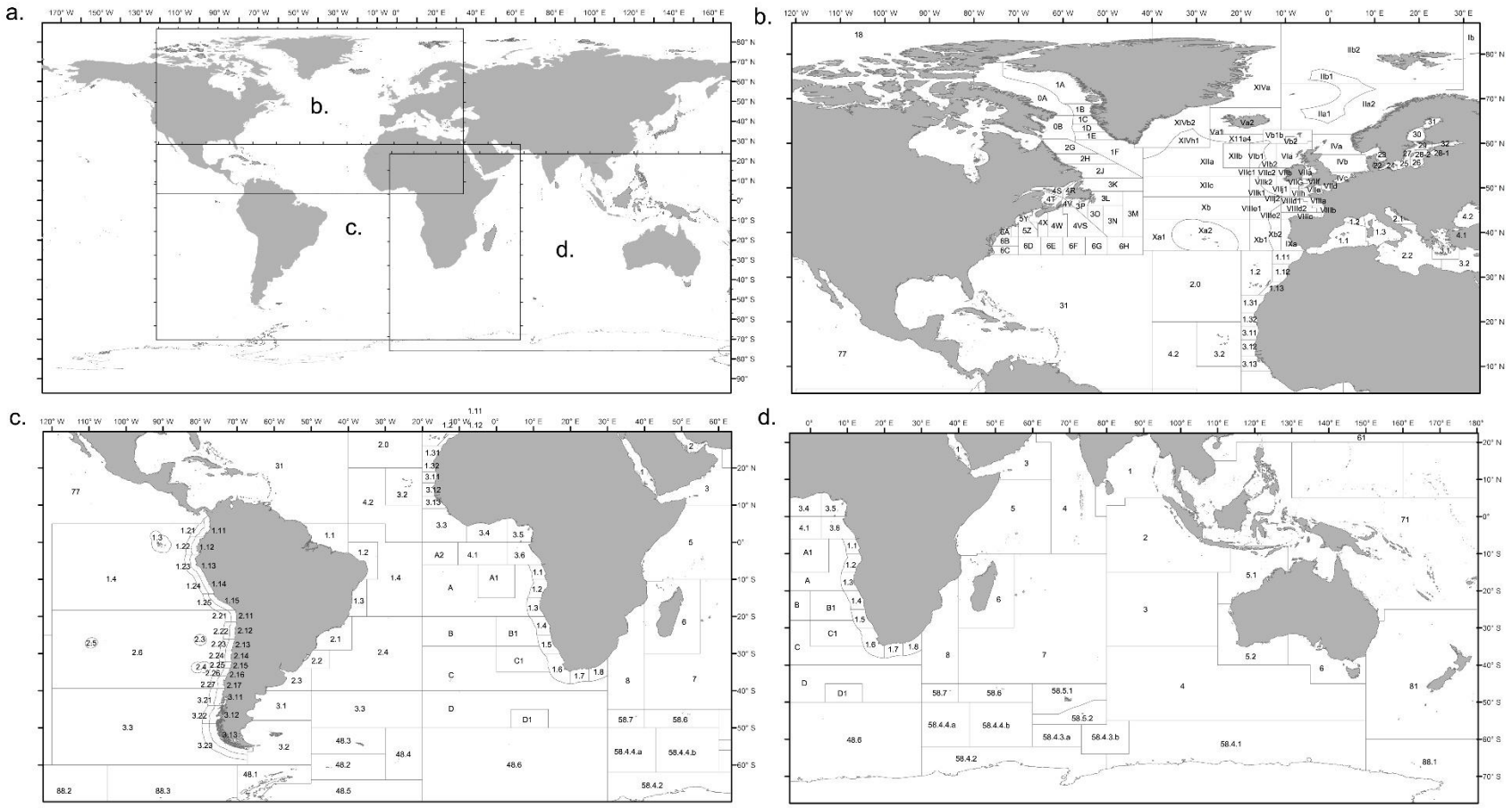


Figure 2 Global Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) sub-regional statistical fishing areas organized (a) by the north Atlantic (b), south Atlantic (c), and Indian Ocean (d). In the North Atlantic (b), the sub-regions for the North Atlantic Fishery Organization (NAFO), Northeast Atlantic Fishery Management Organization (NEAFC), and Fishery Commission for the East Central Atlantic (CECAF) are detailed. The spatial extent of CECAF extends to the south Atlantic (c) where the Southeast Atlantic Fishery Management Organization (SEAFO), Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Living Marine Resources (CCAMLR), and sub-regions corresponding to FAO statistical regions (87 and 41) are distributed. Lastly (d), SEAFO and CCAMLR sub-regions combine with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and the remaining FAO statistical regions which exist unfragmented (81; 71; 61). Due to constraints with sizing, statistical region 67 (north Pacific) and sub-regions Vb1a and Ia from NEAFC, and 4.3 (Black Sea; statistical region 37) are not provided. Modified from: http://www.fao.org/fishery/area/search/en

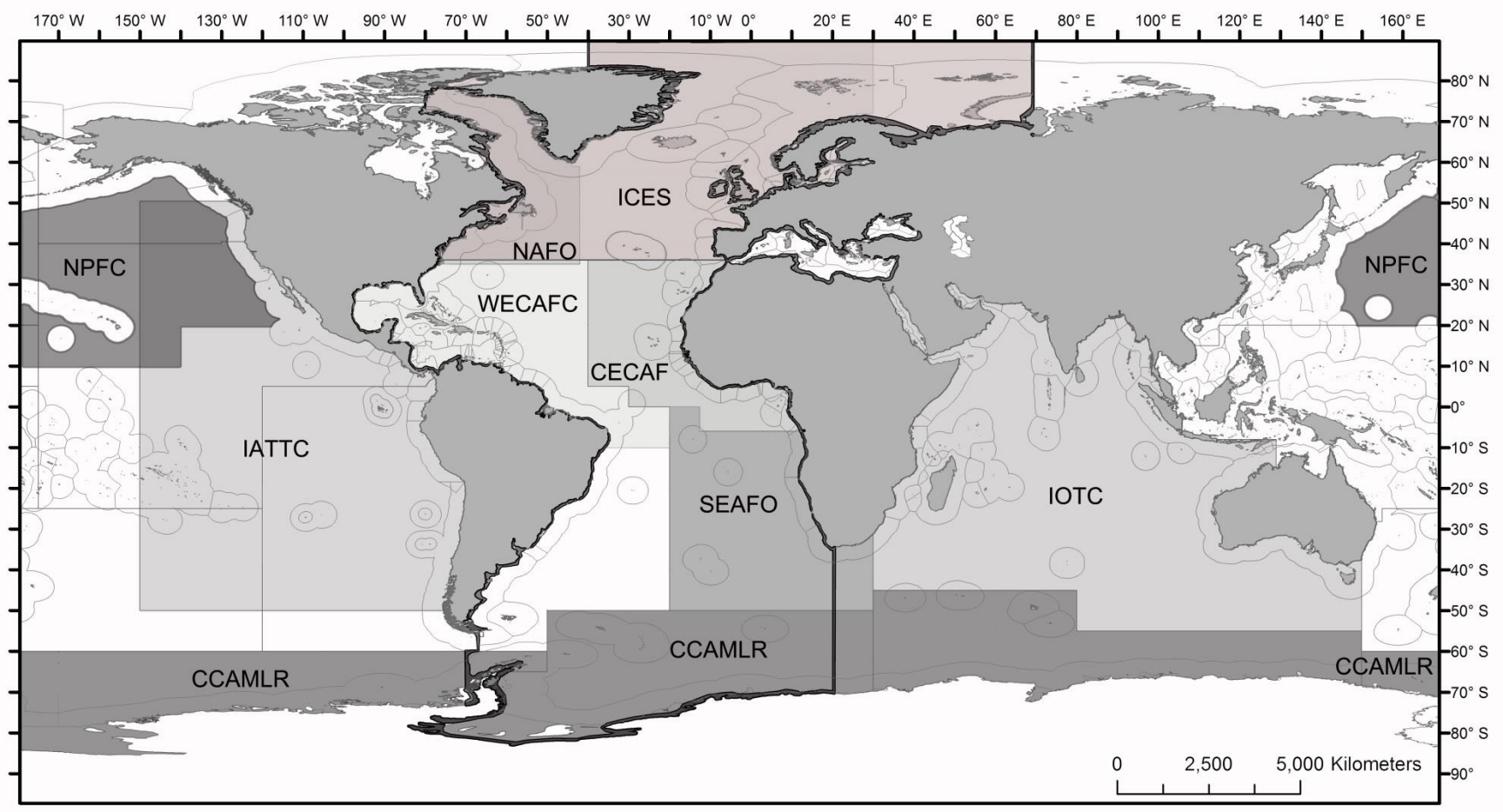


Figure 3 Spatial extent of select Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Scientific Councils including the boundaries of country-specific exclusive economic zones (EEZs). The thick black outline around the Atlantic Ocean represents the spatial extent of the International Commission for the Conservation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

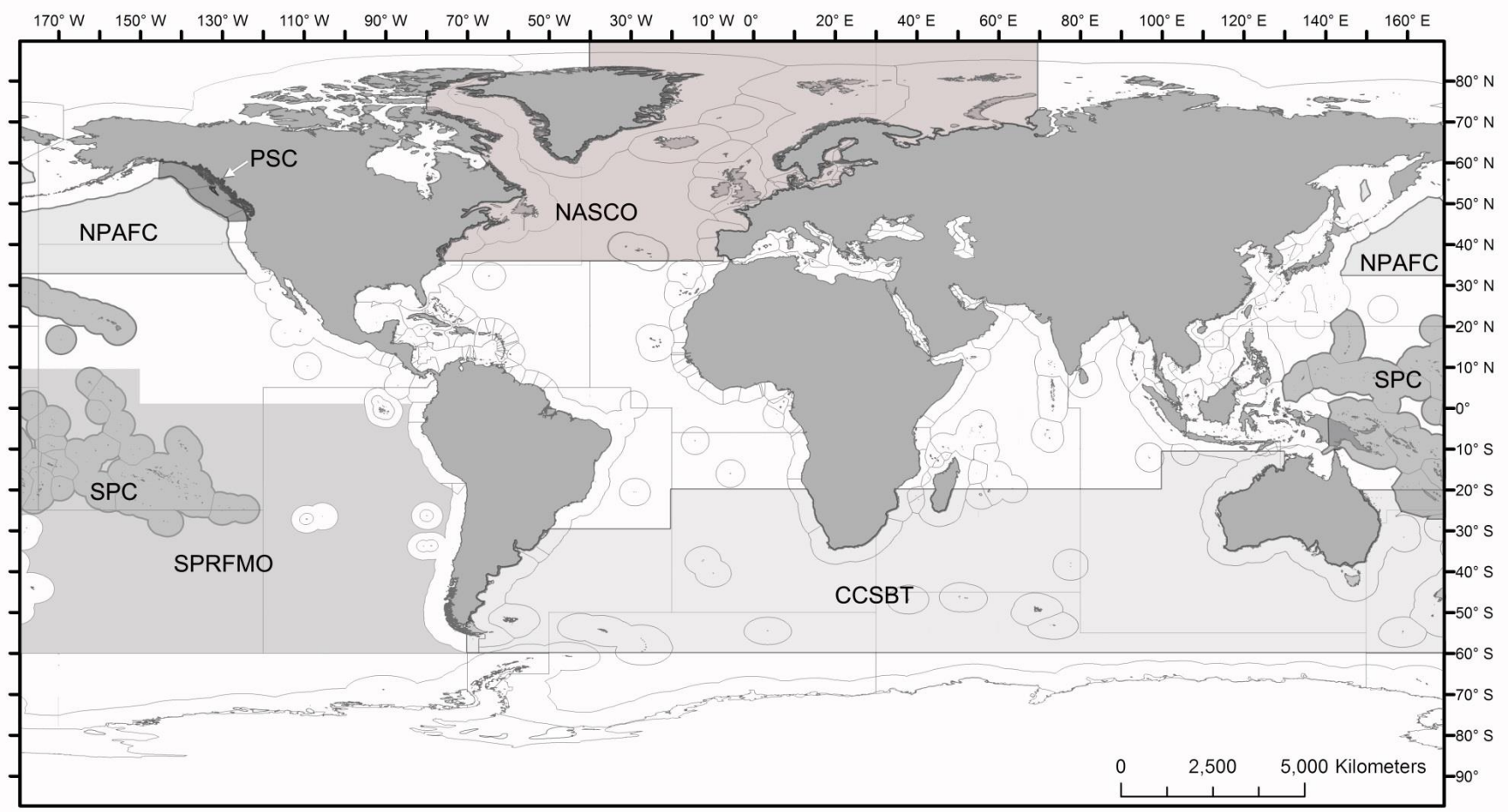


Figure 4 Spatial extent of select Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Scientific Councils including the boundaries of country-specific exclusive economic zones (EEZs). PSC: Pacific Salmon Commission; NPAFC: North Pacific Anadromous Fishery Commission; SPC: Secretariat of the Pacific; SPRFMO: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

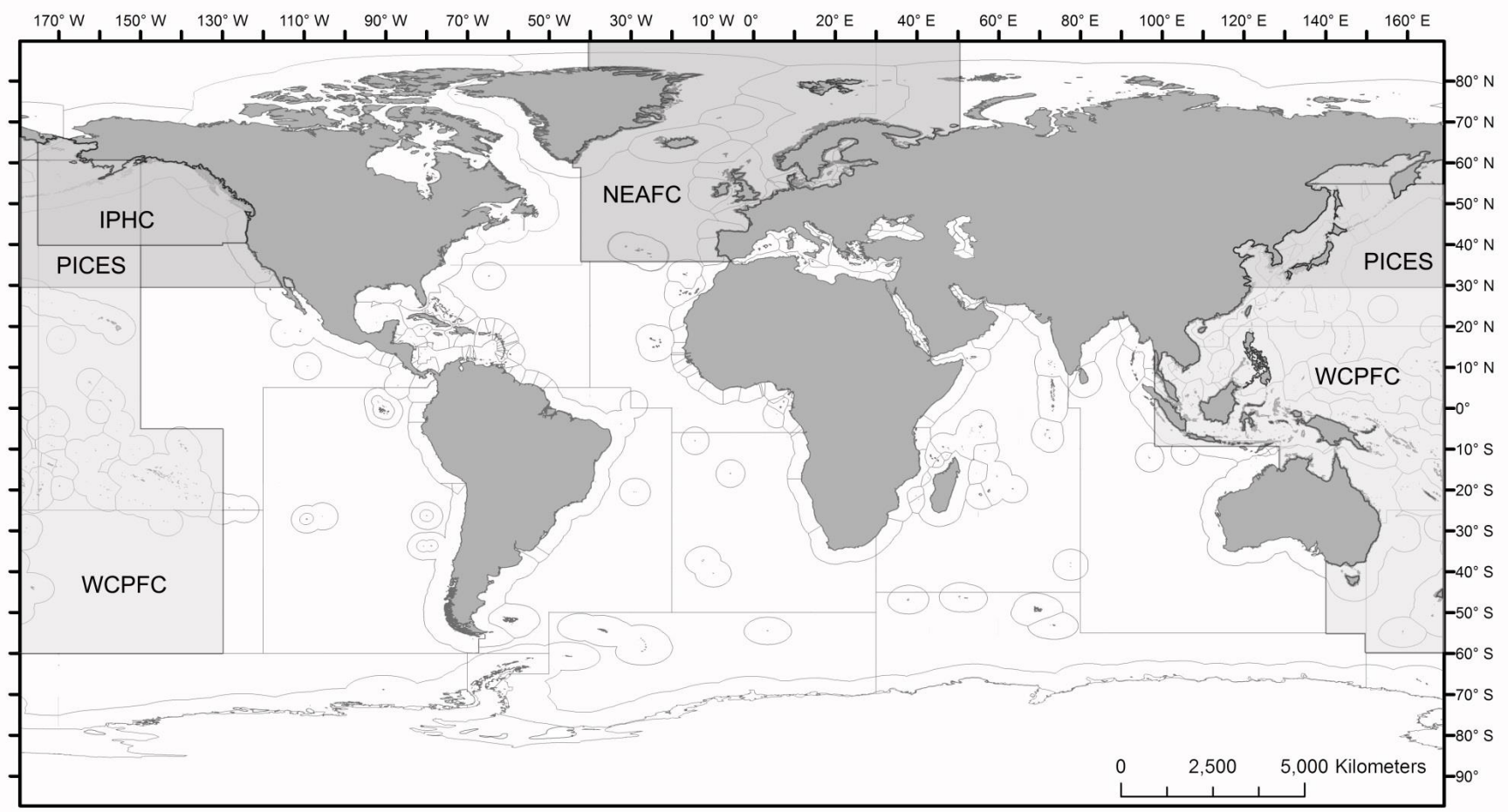


Figure 5 Spatial extent of select Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Scientific Councils including the boundaries of country-specific exclusive economic zones (EEZs). IPHC: International Pacific Halibut Commission; PICES: North Pacific Marine Science Organization; WCPFC: Western Central Pacific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

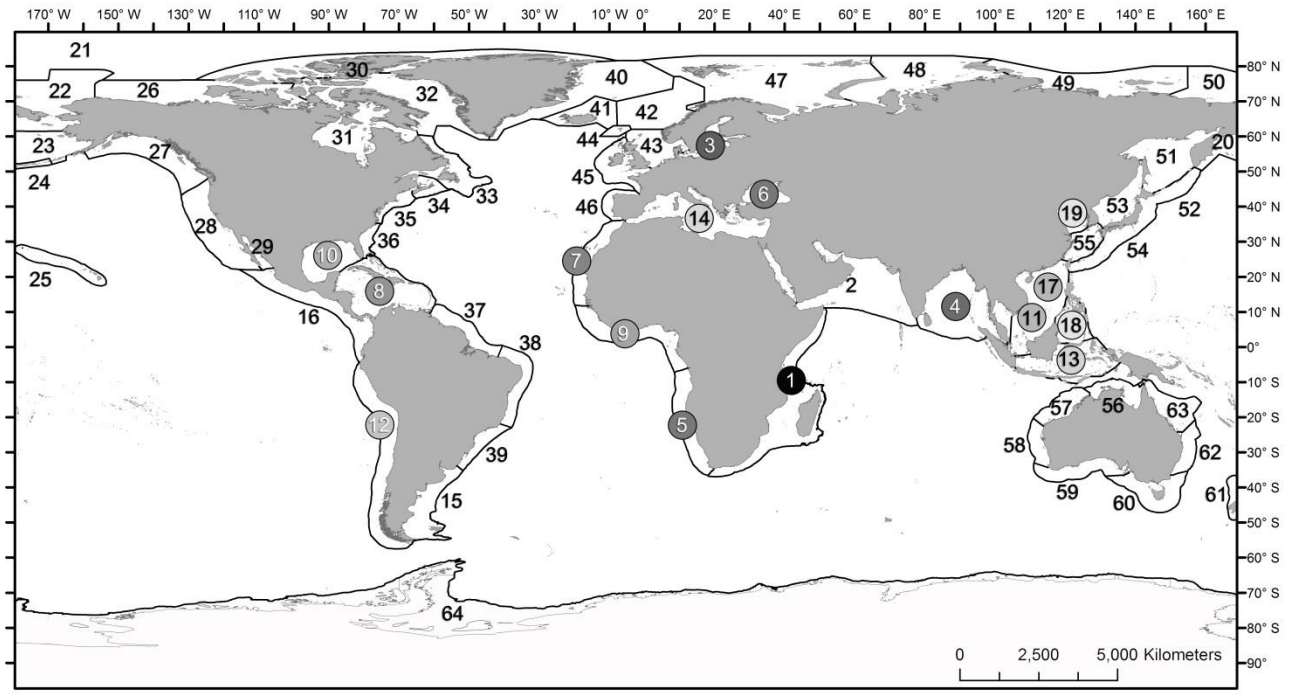


Figure 6 Global distribution of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs). The numbers in the ovals correspond to the LMEs that are currently active as described on page 206 of this compendium. 1. Agulhas and Somali Current Project; 2. Arabian and Red Sea Project; 3. Baltic Sea Project; 4. Bay of Bengal Project; 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 Curent; 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

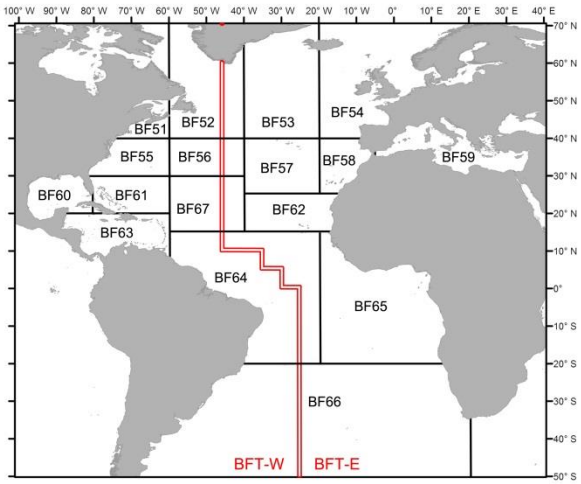
Northern bluefin tuna (BFT)

Thunnus thynnus

Stocks

BFT-E: Eastern stock

BFT-W: Western stock



Albacore

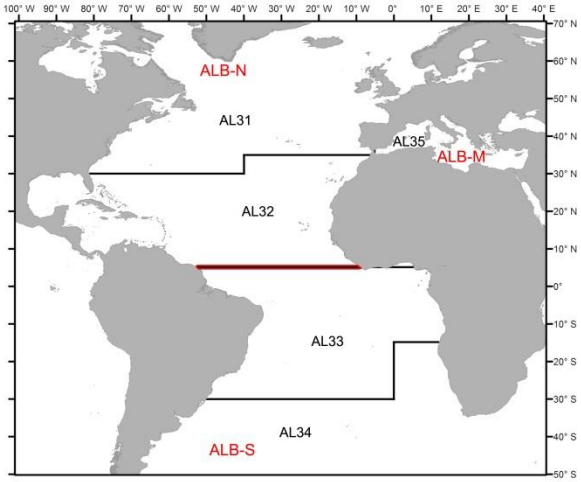
Thunnus alalunga

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

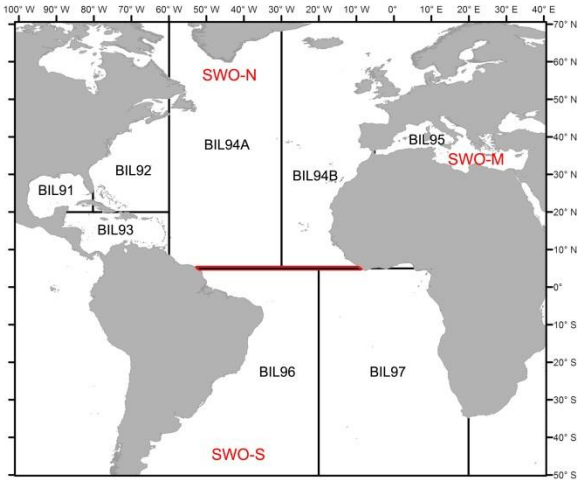


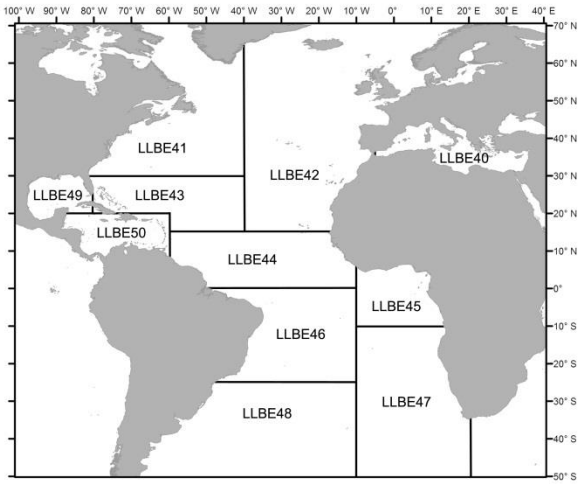
Figure 7 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) geographical delimitations including stock boundaries (red lines and lettering) and sampling areas (black lines and lettering) for Atlantic bluefin tuna, albacore, and swordfish. Modified from: http://www.iccat.int/Data/ICCATMaps2011.pdf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

Bigeye tuna (BET): Longline sampling areas

Thunnus obesus

Stocks

Single Atlantic Stock

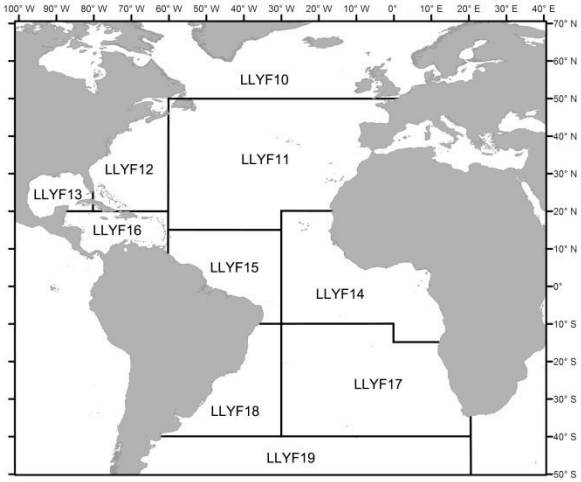


Yellowfin tuna (YFT): Longline sampling areas

Thunnus albacares

Stocks

Single Atlantic Stock



Bigeye and Yellowfin Tuna: Surface gear sampling areas

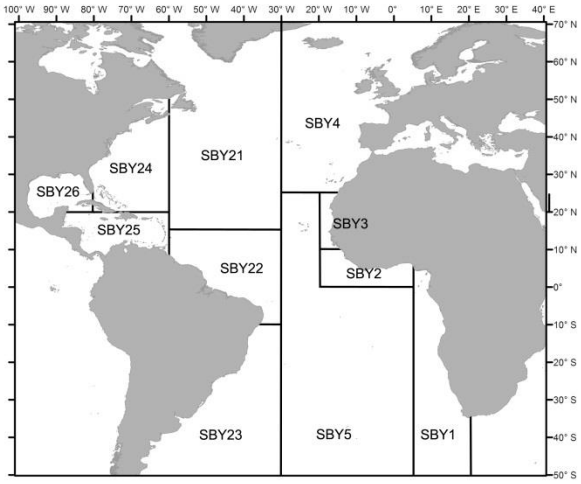


Figure 8 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) geographical delimitations including stock boundaries (red lines and lettering) and sampling areas (black lines and lettering) for bigeye and yellowfin tuna. Modified from: http://www.iccat.int/Data/ICCATMaps2011.pdf .

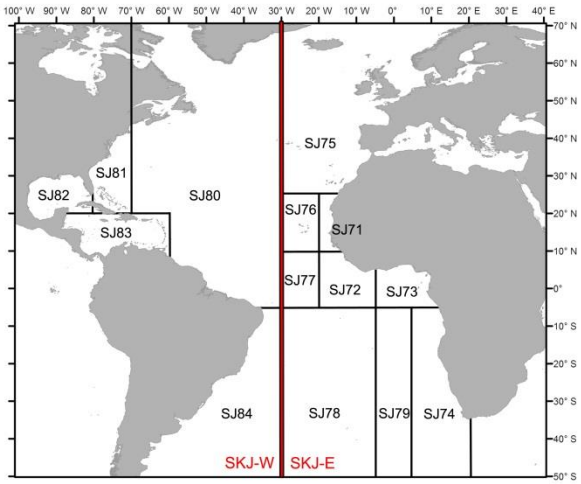
Skipjack tuna (SKJ)

Katsuwonus pelamis

Stocks

SKJ-E: Eastern stock

SKJ-W: Western stock



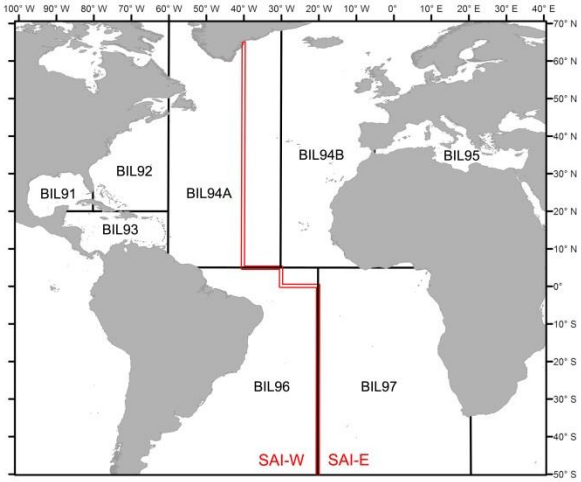
Atlantic sailfish (SAI)

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

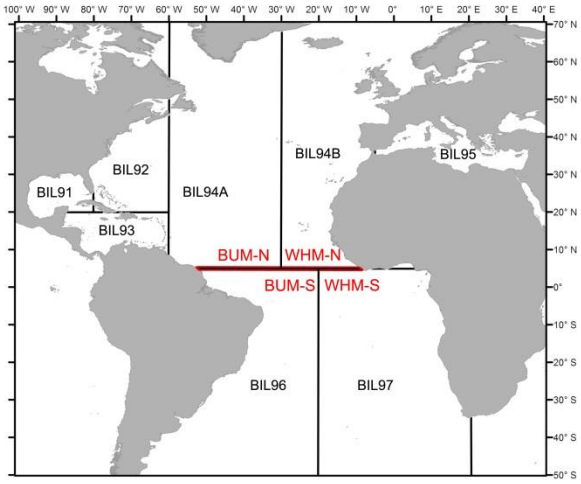


Figure 9 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) geographical delimitations including stock boundaries (red lines and lettering) and sampling areas (black lines and lettering) for skipjack tuna, sailfish, blue and white marlin. Modified from: http://www.iccat.int/Data/ICCATMaps2011.pdf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

Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection

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

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