INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS CONCERNING

LIVING MARINE RESOURCES OF

INTEREST TO NOAA FISHERIES

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND SEAFOOD INSPECTION

2015

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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 (ATCA) 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
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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 2013 Annual Meeting, the Commission adopted a budget of 3,122,635 Euros for 2014 and 3,199,888 Euros for 2015. The U.S. contribution is 161,614 Euros for 2014 and 165,565 Euros for 2015. 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 have been provided from voluntary contributions and from ICCAT's Working Capital Fund. In 2014, ICCAT created a new fund to assist developing states in implementing port inspection responsibilities [Rec. 14-08].

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

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

B. U.S. Commissioners:

Government
Mr. Russell F. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
International Fisheries, NOAA
HCHB, 14th & Constitution Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20230-0001

Recreational
Ms. Ellen Peel

Commercial
Mr. Eugenio Piñeiro-Soler

C. Advisory Structure:

The U.S. Commissioners are required, under ATCA, to constitute an Advisory Committee to the U.S. National Section to ICCAT. This body shall, to the maximum extent practicable, consist of an equitable balance among the various groups concerned with the fisheries covered by the Convention and is exempt from the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Committee consists of (1) "not less than five nor more than twenty individuals appointed by the United States Commissioners who shall select such individuals from the various groups concerned with the fisheries covered by the Convention" and (2) the Chairs (or their designees) of the New England, Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils (FMCs). Public Committee members serve 2-year terms and are eligible for reappointment. The Committee generally consists of the maximum 20 public members and the five FMC representatives.

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

ATCA also provides that the Commissioners may establish species working groups for the purpose of providing advice and recommendations to the Commissioners and to the Advisory Committee on matters relating to the conservation and management of any highly migratory species covered by the Convention. Any species working group shall consist of no more than seven members of the Advisory Committee and no more than four scientific or technical personnel. The Commissioners have established the following five working groups: 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, sharks, and other species.

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 [see 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). 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 (2010) estimated that relative biomass and the relative fishing mortality rate are very close to the levels associated with maximum sustainable yield (MSY), although there is considerable uncertainty in the assessment of stock status and productivity for bigeye. Yellowfin tuna was assessed in 2011, and the SCRS estimated that the stock was overfished but overfishing was not occurring. Skipjack tuna was assessed in 2014, and SCRS recommended that catch and effort levels in the eastern Atlantic do 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 in line with scientific advice. 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 (January and February). The tropical tunas regional observer program required 100% observer coverage for surface fishing vessels during the closure period. However, the regional observer program has not been implemented to date; instead, vessels have used national observers. In 2014, the comprehensive measure for tropical tunas was revised to incorporate skipjack and to abolish the regional observer program in favor of national observers in the time/area closure (Rec. 14-01). A new Working Group of scientists, managers and stakeholders will meet for the first time in May 2015 to review existing knowledge on FADs and develop comprehensive recommendations for consideration by the Commission.

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, shared by the United States, Japan, Canada, 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 adopted a measure that incorporated the three minor harvesters (UK-Bermuda, France-St. Pierre and Miquelon, and Mexico) into the allocation table, 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. Recommendation 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. A third meeting of the Working Group of Fishery Managers and Scientists in Support of the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Stock Assessment will take place in June 2015, and a stock assessment is planned for 2016.

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, which was below the 15,000 mt TAC recommended by the SCRS and agreed to establish new management measures at the 2010 annual meeting aimed at rebuilding the stock by the end of 2022 with at least a 60% probability. The measure also 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.

At the 2010 annual meeting, ICCAT confirmed its 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. Compliance with ICCAT rules in the eastern bluefin tuna fishery has improved substantially over the last five years and total catches in this fishery 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". Recommendation 14-04 set the TAC at 16,142 mt for 2015, 19,296 mt for 2016 and 23,155 mt for 2017. The next stock assessment is scheduled for 2016, in conjunction with an assessment of the western Atlantic stock.

Research: Recognizing the usefulness of biological samples in the understanding of bluefin tuna movement patterns and resolving issues associated with stock origin, spawning site fidelity, and mixing, ICCAT adopted a Resolution 08-06, which encourages parties to consider making a portion of bluefin tuna quota available, consistent with domestic obligations, conservation considerations, and a bona fide research plan, to collect otoliths for microconstituent analyses and samples for genetic studies. Recommendation 11-06 established a research quota of 20 mt to be utilized in support of ICCAT's multi-year Atlantic-Wide Bluefin Tuna Research Program of research on bluefin tuna stock structure, abundance, and other important scientific questions. The Atlantic-Wide Bluefin Tuna Research Program has suffered from funding shortfalls in recent years, and ICCAT has considered alternative mechanisms for funding the program although none have been agreed to date.

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 Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (hereafter referred to as CPCs) may continue to carryover 25% of their initial quota (to be used within two years from the year of catch). In addition, SCRS is to continue to develop a limit reference point and harvest control rules for this stock with input from the Commission to inform and guide future management decisions.

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 will, as appropriate, collaborate in scientific work of CCSBT regarding this species and monitor 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, for the first time, a sharing arrangement was established for the major harvesters. Scientific advice following the 2013 stock assessment called for lowering the TAC. ICCAT, however, maintained the TAC for 2014-2016—in part to accommodate growth in the fishery by some participants, such as Japan. Recommendation 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 quota limits.

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 Recommendation 13-02 extended the TAC again for 2014-16, while continuing to preserve the U.S. share.

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. This measure was extended, most recently for 2014-2016 [Rec 13-03].

Mediterranean Swordfish: Following a stock assessment in 2003, ICCAT adopted Recommendation 03-04 requiring CPCs to take the necessary measures to reduce the mortality of juvenile swordfish in the Mediterranean. Recommendation 03-04 also 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. Recommendation 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 latest stock assessment in 2014 again showed that the stock is below the level that can support MSY and that current fishing mortality exceeds Fmsy; however, ICCAT did not adopt any new management measures for Mediterranean swordfish.

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. Recommendation 12-04 also set Atlantic-wide recreational minimum sizes for blue and white marlin, and banned the sale of recreationally-caught marlin.

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 plans to conduct the next stock assessment for sailfish in 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. Recommendation 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 2013 and 2014. The proposal is expected to be considered again in 2015.

ICCAT has adopted prohibitions in recent years 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]. In 2015, the SCRS will conduct a stock assessment for blue shark.

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. Recommendation 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). For several years, the SCRS Subcommittee on Ecosystems has been engaged in efforts to develop an ecological risk assessment (ERA) for sea turtles. 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 Subcommittee decided that there was insufficient information to proceed with the ERA. Instead, the Subcommittee developed a plan to continue to assess the impact of ICCAT fisheries on sea turtles.

Seabirds: In 2007, ICCAT adopted a recommendation requiring line weighting or use of tori lines on vessels fishing south of 20° S, for purposes of seabird bycatch mitigation. Recommendation 11-09, applicable in waters south of 25°S, requires use of at least two mitigation measures (night setting, bird scaring lines, or line weighting). The SCRS plans to review the effectiveness of seabird mitigation measures in 2015.

Sargasso Sea: ICCAT Resolution 12-12, jointly proposed by the EU, South Africa, UK (Overseas Territories), and the United States, calls on the SCRS to consider the importance of the Sargasso Sea to tuna and tuna-like species and ecologically associated species, and present its findings to the Commission in 2015.

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 (BSD) 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.

Notably, in 2011, ICCAT parties agreed on steps to implement an electronic BCD (eBCD), which is expected to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the program and further assist in the fight against IUU fishing. In 2012, a recommendation specified that the electronic BCD program would be technically operational by May 2013, but provided that paper BCDs would be accepted until the end of February 2014. Information technology issues have resulted in delays in the system development and implementation schedule. While some countries are using the eBCD system for at least some aspects of their catch and trade, paper BCDs are also accepted [Re. 13-17]. At its 2015 meeting, ICCAT is expected to consider once again a mandatory implementation date for the eBCD system.

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.

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. Recommendation 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 a condition of listing and a prerequisite to being able to fish for ICCAT species, and Recommendation 14-10 harmonized the requirements 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 Recommendation 14-11. The current authorized and IUU vessels lists can be viewed 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]. Recommendation 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 Recommendation 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 Recommendation 14-07). ICCAT has also established new minimum standards for inspections in port to be more consistent with the 2009 FAO Port State Measures Agreement [Rec. 12-07], as well as model forms for use in port inspections.

Compliance Committee:

The Compliance Committee 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 Recommendation 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. 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 applied trade action under this instrument to several non-members and one ICCAT member. In cases of lesser infractions, or, in some cases, infractions that have just come to light (and where complete information may not yet be available), ICCAT may issue a letter of concern. Although letters of concern are not part of the formal process established in Rec. 06-13, they serve an important role in ICCAT's compliance process.

Under the leadership of the U.S. Chair, ICCAT's Compliance Committee reviewed extensive documentation of compliance with dozens of management measures and reporting requirements in 2014, for each of ICCAT's (then) 49 parties and five parties with cooperating status. The Committee concluded that 22 Contracting Parties and three cooperating non-Contracting Parties would receive letters of concern. No CPCs were identified at the 2014 annual meeting, and CPCs previously identified demonstrated significant improvements in reporting and engagement.

No data-no fish: Recommendation 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. Guidelines on the application of Rec. 11-15 were appended to the 2012 meeting report. At the 2013 annual meeting, authorization to fish for all ICCAT species during 2014 was suspended for six CPCs. In 2014, the United States and EU co-sponsored a draft resolution to formalize guidelines for the implementation of Rec. 11-15, but it was not adopted. The Compliance Committee agreed that, on the basis of information received during and following the 2014 Commission meeting, the Chairman would notify any CPC that had not fulfilled its 2013 Task 1 data reporting obligations for a particular species that the CPC is prohibited from retaining such species in 2015 until the missing data, including zero catches if applicable, are reported in accordance with SCRS data reporting requirements.

Cooperating Parties: ICCAT continues to encourage non-members interested in ICCAT species and fisheries to become cooperating parties. 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 [see Rec. 03-20]. 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. El Salvador, a former cooperator, joined ICCAT in December 2014.

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, with these terms of reference to be agreed at the 2015 annual meeting [Rec. 14-12]. This Working Group will also explore the possibilities for comparing ICCAT's performance with the performance of other tuna-RFMOs and make recommendations on how such a comparative performance review could be accomplished.

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 outline a three-year process to develop Convention amendments, which will 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 is 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 of the United States, has developed draft Convention text on many of the issues identified by the terms of reference, and is scheduled to complete its work in 2015.

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].

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 2013, ICCAT elected a new slate of Commission officers. Stefaan Depypere (EU) was elected as Commission Chair; Raul Delgado (Panama) was elected First Vice-Chair; and Andrey Krainiy (Russia) was elected Second Vice-Chair. Taoufik El Ktiri (Morocco) chairs PWG; Derek Campbell (USA) chairs the Compliance Committee; and Sylvie LaPointe (Canada) chairs STACFAD. Regarding the Panels, Cote d'Ivoire chairs Panel 1, Japan chairs Panel 2, South Africa chairs Panel 3, and Brazil chairs Panel 4. The next elections will be in 2015. In addition, Martin Tsamenyi (Ghana) was elected in 2013 as Chair of the new Working Group to promote a dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers.

2015 Annual and Intersessional Meetings:

The 24th Regular Meeting of the Commission will be held November 10-17, 2015, in Malta**.** The Commission also agreed to hold numerous intersessional meetings during 2015. An intersessional meeting of the eBCD Technical Working Group was held at the Secretariat offices in January 2015, to be followed by additional meetings of the eBCD Technical Working Group as needed. An intersessional meeting of the Panel 2, primarily for the review of eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna fishing plans, and the 10th Meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures were held back-to-back during February 2015. The Ad Hoc Working Group on FADs will meet in conjunction with the bigeye data preparatory meeting in May 2015. The United States will host the 3rd Meeting of the Working Group on Convention Amendment in Coral Gables, Florida, May 18-22, 2015. The 2nd Meeting of the Standing Working Group to Enhance Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers and 3rd Meeting of the Working Group of Fisheries Managers and Scientists in Support of the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Stock Assessment will be held consecutively in Bilbao, Spain, June 22-26, 2015. In addition, two virtual working groups will work intersessionally: The Ad Hoc Working Group for Preparing the Next Performance Review and the Working Group on Communications Policy.

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Members

Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Commission or EC, Norway, the United States, and the Russian Federation

(Note: Iceland left the organization effective December 31, 2009, due to financial considerations but may re-accede in the future.)

Commission Headquarters

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

Secretary: Dr. Peter Huchinson (Interim appointment through December 2013)
Tel: 44 131 228 2551
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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 2015 budget totaled 603,500 British Pounds Sterling--of which the U.S. contribution was 27,475 Pounds. Overall, the 2015 budget places the organization in strong financial position and includes a small increase from the 2014 budget –- in large measure due to projected increases associated with hiring a 4th staff member for the Secretariat. NASCO also adopted new forecast budgets for the 2016-2019 period to take account of short-term uncertainties, such as projected income from the headquarters property due to a change in tenant. NASCO has moved to a 5-year budget forecast process primarily to allow Parties sufficient time to prepare for the potential need to increase contributions in the future.

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 (Alternate)
Deputy Regional Administrator
Northeast Regional Office
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
Gloucester, MA 01930

Non-Federal Commissioners:

Patrick Keliher (Alternate)
Commissioner
Department of Marine Resources
Maine

Stephen Gephard (Alternate)
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 Greenland), are members of the WGC. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands), 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).

The Council considered but did not pursue a proposal to conduct a pilot project to assess the utility of radar satellite data for the detection of salmon fishing by non-Contracting Parties in international waters; however, NASCO agreed to continue to consider the usefulness of satellite surveillance systems in this regard. Toward that end, NASCO has discussed holding a

follow-up meeting to its 1993 meeting in the future, which would include coast guard/fishery protection agencies. Among other things, this meeting would review the results of a study of Norwegian satellite surveillance systems. NASCO will also continue to liaise with the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) with a view to obtain relevant information on sightings.

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. A time series of reporting for estimates of unreported catch (1999 – 2006) was developed and made available to the Parties (CNL(07)10). The data identify estimates that range from a low of 534 tons (2006) to a high of 1,445 tons (2000), and represent estimates of unreported catch between 27-38% of the reported confirmed catch. The reason for review and greater scrutiny of information relative to unreported catch is founded on a number of factors. Foremost, the lack of reporting and under-reporting of catch, as well as illegal fishing, threaten salmon conservation. In addition, management measures to restrict legal fisheries in response to declines in salmon stocks can be offset by non-documented fishing mortality, all of which can have adverse resource and socio-economic impacts.

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. Unreported catches within the jurisdiction of many Parties may occur in localized fisheries that take place over broad geographic ranges with multiple rivers. All parties agreed that it is difficult to quantify unreported catches given that they result primarily from illegal fishing. 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, 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 near 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 focus area reports (FARs) 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 Standing Scientific Committee 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 United States provided US$150,000 as start up funding. 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 have been undertaken. Much of the work related to this ambitious project was completed in 2011 and preliminary findings, including implications for management, were presented at an international salmon summit held in La Rochelle, France, in October 2011. Additional information can be found at www.salmonatsea.com.

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, when completed, it will be posted on the IASRB website. In addition, the Board adopted a resolution on research at sea and terms of reference for a telemetry workshop. The latter is a large-scale international collaborative project with the ultimate objective to provide information on migration paths and quantitative estimates of mortality during phases of the marine life cycle of salmon. It 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.

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 socioeconomics through the adoption of guidelines for incorporating social and economic factors in decisions under the precautionary approach and additional work is being undertaken in this regard.

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. This group has met several times since its inception and shared 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. Given the proposed timeline for the preparation and review of the focus area reports (FARs) on Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics, the Task Force agreed that it would be useful if its recommendations on best practice could be finalized in the autumn so that they could be taken into account by the jurisdictions in developing their FARs and be available to the Review that will review the FARs. The Task Force agreed that it would be useful to develop an explanation of some of the terminology used in the Guidance document and that it might also be helpful to develop a Decision tree to assist jurisdictions in applying the guidance. Finally, the Task Force urged NASCO and its jurisdictions to explore, in collaboration with industry, opportunities for cooperative scientific work in support of the goals.

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. The Liaison Group met again in Boston in March 2011 and reviewed the final report from the Aquaculture FAR group, considered reporting arrangements on the BMP guidance, and discussed potential future courses of action for the Liaison Group. There is an ongoing debate concerning the extent of NASCO's role with respect to aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics issues. Further, ISFA expressed interest in finding a way to participate in the work of NASCO during its annual meeting each year. Currently, this is only possible when ISFA held the Chair of the Liaison Group.

In considering the issues raised during the Liaison Group meeting, the Council agreed that the Liaison Group would not need to meet before the 2012 NASCO Annual Meeting and also agreed that the Constitution of the Liaison Group should be changed to allow for election of both a Chairman and a Vice Chairman as this would allow ISFA to engage NASCO through its role as either Chair or Vice Chair of the Liaison Group. The Council also decided that the question concerning the NASCO's involvement in aquaculture and related activities should be reviewed in light of the results of the Next Steps review process and the findings of the expert panel conducting NASCO's independent performance review.

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 FARs 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 FARs for review and assessment in key Atlantic salmon management areas. The first FAR was on the fisheries management aspect of the IP. An *Ad Hoc* Review Group reviewed the FARs and questions based on the review were developed for each Party. Its interim report was presented at the 2008 Annual Meeting of NASCO. The Council agreed that in addition to its remaining task of identifying the additional actions required to achieve NASCO's objectives, the Group should be asked to identify common challenges in managing salmon fisheries, approaches to address them, and to compile information on best practice. The final report of the Fisheries Management Focus Area Review Group was presented 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. Some raised a specific concern that a best practice document could contain provisions for allowing fishing on stocks below their conservation limit. The continued threat of mixed stock fisheries was also raised, including those occurring in home waters. In light of the significant concerns raised by the Parties on the proposed Fisheries Best Management Practices, the document was revised and characterized as guidelines (NASCO Guidelines for the management of salmon fisheries). Despite the name change, the substance of the document remains similar to the original document and most felt it still achieved the goal of providing guidance for how Parties should be managing their fisheries. Others, however, felt that guidelines are less rigorous than a document of best management practice.

The second FAR, which was publicly considered in a 2009 special session, was on habitat protection and restoration. The Habitat Focus Area Review Group presented their draft report at the special session and summarized the process and results of their review. 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 FARs were consistent with the NASCO Habitat Plan of Action. The Habitat Review Group concluded their presentation by identifying next steps for their review including: compilation of best practice; development of an overview of challenges and approaches to address restoration, protection, and enhancement of salmon habitat; and completion of a final report by the end of the year. 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 FARs in this subject area.

At the 2009 NASCO meeting, the Parties finalized the terms of reference for the third FAR on aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics. The Council also agreed to establish a Task Force to develop best practice with regard to minimizing impacts of aquaculture on wild stocks. During the period between the 2009 and 2010 NASCO meeting, completed aquaculture FARs were evaluated by a review group. The report of that group was considered by the Liaison Group and then presented and discussed at a special session held during the 2010 annual meeting. During the 2010-11 intersessional period, the review group finalized its consideration of the FARs taking into consideration input from the special session, from industry and NGOs, and from the Parties. The 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.

To date, good progress has been made in revamping the websites. A primary focus over the last year was to include information from NASCO's rivers database on the website, including maps. In support of that effort, members have provided relevant updates to the information in the database such that information on about 2500 rivers will be included. 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. A discussion of the future role of NASCO with respect to the matter is also anticipated. NASCO agreed to convene a Special Session on the topic in 2014. The Sub-Group was asked to further develop the program for the session, including determining the presentations to be made.

Review of the "Next Steps" process: At the 2010 annual NASCO Meeting, the Council agreed to hold an intersessional meeting prior to the 2011 annual meeting in order to review the status of implementation of the "Next Steps" process. The review group met in Boston in March 2011 and reviewed the status of implementation for each of the identified seven challenges. It was acknowledged that progress has been made in some challenge areas, other areas have only begun initial steps, and still others have not yet been addressed. Further, the group recognized that the progress made to-date has largely focused on process. Overall, however, the Group recognized that the process represented a significant step forward for NASCO in improving implementation of its goals and objectives and is intended to be an iterative process that would be refined on the basis of experience and information gained over time. In that regard, the Group considered the need to update the Strategic Plan and recommended that, to this end, additional feedback be sought during a Special Session of the 2011 Annual Meeting. The Group also suggested streamlining 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. In addition, the Group stated that there should be a greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of activities and should clearly describe identifiable, measureable outcomes, and timescales. The Group also recommended that future FARs be structured around specific themes and that progress on Implementation Plans be addressed through the Annual Reports. Finally, the Group proposed convening a Working Group to develop a framework for future reporting and evaluation and that would report to the 2012 Annual Meeting. At the 2011 NASCO meeting, the Council endorsed these recommendations. The proposed working group met during the 2011-12 intersessional period to conduct its work. Its recommendations for a more improved reporting process that focused on outcomes were considered and adopted during the 2012 NASCO annual meeting. 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 and included as part of an overall action plan for strengthening the organization. (See below for more information on the intersessional meeting of the Parties.)

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 could inform the expert panel.

As agreed, three independent experts were empanelled in 2011 to conduct an external performance review of the organization taking into account the results of the Next Steps process, the provisions of the Convention, and advancements in international fisheries management, including recent international instruments. 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 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 suggest that NASCO amend 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 and less time consuming 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 NASCO annual meeting in June 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 reviewed progress on implementation of the recommendation in the action plan at its 2014 meeting and will continue to monitor progress on these issues each year.

Actions Taken by NASCO's Three Regional Commissions:

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. ICES has advised that it considers the West Greenland stock complex to be below conservation limits and, thus, suffering reduced reproductive capacity. In European and North American areas, the status of many of the stocks contributing to the West Greenland fishery is among the lowest recorded; the abundance of salmon within the West Greenland area is thought to be extremely low compared with historical levels. In North America, 2SW spawner estimates for the six geographic areas indicated that five of the six areas were below their CL in 2013 and are suffering reduced reproductive capacity. Three of the four Northeast Atlantic stock complexes, prior to the commencement of distant-water fisheries, were considered to be at full reproductive capacity. However, at a country level, stocks from several jurisdictions were below CLs. ICES advised that there are no mixed-stock fisheries catch options at West Greenland in 2012, 2013, and 2014. In the absence of fishing mortality there is only a 6% to 8% chance of simultaneously meeting or exceeding the management objectives of the seven management units in 2012 to 2014.

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 NASCO Framework of Indicators for the West Greenland fishery did not indicate the need for a revised analysis of catch options, and, therefore, no new management advice for 2014 was provided. The 2014 assessment of the contributing stock complexes confirmed that advice.

Management: In 2012, the Commission adopted a multi-annual regulatory measure for the period 2012-2014 that was based on previous measures. The measure again provided for an internal use fishery at West Greenland with no export. The fishery had been estimated to be about 20 t (excluding the 10 t estimate of unreported catch) to supply personal consumption needs

of fishermen and to allow limited sales of fresh fish to local, open air markets, restaurants, and hospitals and other institutions. In 2012, Greenland altered its management approach and began to authorize factory landings quotas. Quotas were set at 25 t for 2012, 35 t for 2013, and 30 t for 2014. These quotas were in addition to the personal consumption and other components of the fishery, which remained unconstrained. Strong concern was raised at the 2013 NASCO meeting that the change in Greenland's management would potentially result in increased effort and harvests. In 2013, total harvests were on the order of 47 t—excluding unreported catch. In 2014, preliminary reported catch neared 58 t—excluding unreported catch. Prior to the 2014 NASCO meeting, an intersessional meeting of the WGC to discuss the change in Greenland's fisheries management for salmon and explore possible amendments to the 2012 regulatory measure that would clearly constrain the fishery and bring it more in line with the original intent of the measure – that is, that the internal use fishery would continue to be around 20 t plus unreported catch. No consensus could be reached on such an amendment and the terms of the 2012 regulatory applied unchanged in 2014.

Prior to the 2015 NASCO meeting, the WGC met again intersessionally to consider if there was a basis for a new regulatory measure at West Greenland covering the 2015 season and possibly into the future. Key to that discussion was the willingness and ability of Greenland to improve monitoring and control of its fishery and to demonstrate in much clearer terms its dependence on Atlantic salmon fisheries. Regarding the former matter, an ad hoc working group on monitoring and control was convened to assist Greenland in identifying options for improving its fishery management. Based on that meeting, Greenland developed a plan to improve its fishery monitoring and control, and the plan was considered and further improved by the WGC at its February 2015 intersessional. At that meeting, Greenland also agreed to develop a document further explaining its dependence on salmon fishing, which is to be circulated before the NASCO annual meeting in June 2015. Finally, to facilitate discussions in advance of the June NASCO meeting, the Chair of the WGC presented a strawman proposal for a new regulatory measure at the intersessional that, among other things, suggested placing a quota on all components of Greenland's salmon fishery. The proposal engendered significant debate and Greenland noted that it was unlikely to be able to accept limits on the entirety of its fishery. NASCO will take up this matter again at its 2015 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. Of particular note, the 2014 sampling agreement included a new commitment from Greenland to assist in obtaining samples from salmon landed at the factories.

NAC Discussions/Actions: Management advice on catch options from the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (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. Previous scientific advice indicated that there is a very low probability that the numbers of 2SW salmon returning to the six North American regions (USA, Scotia-Fundy, Quebec, Labrador, Newfoundland, and Gulf of St. Lawrence) will be above the management objectives (conservation limits for the four northern areas, rebuilding objectives for the two southern areas of the USA and Scotia-Fundy) simultaneously. ICES has advised, therefore, that there were no mixed-stock fishery catch options on 1SW non-maturing and 2SW salmon in North America through 2015. A review of the NASCO Framework of indicators in 2014 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; thus, no new management advice was provided for 2014. Returns of adult salmon to both the United States and Scotia-Fundy regions ranked last or second-to-last since 1971 and achieved an estimated 2% and 12%, respectively, of those regions' conservation limits. However, ICES advised that where spawning requirements are being achieved, such as Labrador in 2013, there are no biological reasons to restrict the harvest.

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, little fishing is 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 intercepts small numbers of U.S. origin salmon. Given this, NASCO asked for feedback

from ICES in 2015 concerning the origin fish taken in the Labrador fishery with a view to considering ways to reduce or eliminate those interceptions.

Salmonid Introductions and Transfers: The United States and Canada have been working bilaterally 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 both countries have been undergoing with regard to the management of introductions and transfers, in 2008 it was determined that it would be timely and appropriate to revisit the status of the NAC protocols, the SWG, and the inventory databases. Ultimately, the NAC agreed sharing information is important, however, the level of detail included in the current NAC databases is unnecessary, although both parties have an 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. It was agreed that the changes to reporting should be reflected in the Williamsburg Resolution and that the U.S. and Canada would 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.

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) which have been increasing at a time when there are serious worries about the abundance of North American stocks and when strict harvest restrictions have been introduced throughout the North Atlantic. 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. In 2007, the Council agreed to try a new approach in this regard; namely, to invite France (in respect of SPM) to become a Party to the NASCO Convention. The NASCO President wrote to the Director for Fishing and Agriculture on 18 January 2008 and again on 9 April 2008. France (in respect of the SPM) was also invited to attend the 25th Annual Meeting as an observer. France (in respect of the SPM) attended the meeting and provided a report on the management of the fishery, the catches, and information from the sampling program. The representative from France (in respect of the SPM) stated that discussions were ongoing regarding the invitation to join NASCO. In 2009, France (in respect of SPM) again attended NASCO as an observer and reported that France has decided against joining the organization. NASCO decided to send a strong letter to France expressing disappointment that France (in respect of SPM) does not intend to accede to the NASCO Convention and stressing the reasons why it is important for France (in respect of SPM) to be at the NASCO table; highlighting concern about increased catch levels in 2008; welcoming biometric sampling by that country; underscoring the urgent need for additional sampling, including genetics work, particularly in light of the ongoing SALSEA research program; and requesting that information related to the fishery at SPM be provided to ICES in time for incorporation into the ICES ACOM report. The Commission also welcomed any help NGO's could offer in encouraging France (in respect of SPM) to improve cooperation with NASCO. The NGO Representative underscored their interest in assisting in this matter. France has continued to attend the NASCO annual meetings and provided some fishery data. Still, 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. France (in respect of SPM) explained that this increase was due to additional resource availability.

Sampling of the catch in SPM to conduct genetic studies has been extremely limited with some concerns about the methods being used. Efforts are underway to improve cooperation in this area. At the 2014 NASCO meeting, both the United States and Canada offered to provide resources and guidance to help improve the sampling effort in SPM. France (in respect of SPM) indicated it would continue to collaborate with Canada on sampling, including considering expanding the program. France (in respect of SPM) indicated that it would continue to attend NASCO meetings although as an observer for the time being. Given concerns about the status of U.S. and Canadian origin salmon, NASCO asked ICES for input in 2015 concerning the origin fish taken in the SPM fishery to enhance understanding of the fishery, its potential effect on endangered populations, and potential management actions that could reduce those interceptions.

NEAC Discussions/Actions:

Scientific Information and Advice: The NEAC stock complex is made up of four individual components. ICES considers the Northern European 1SW and MSW and the Southern European MSW stock complexes to be at full reproductive capacity

prior to the commencement of distant water fisheries with respect to their spawner escapement reserves. The Southern European 1SW is at risk of suffering reduced reproductive capacity prior to the commencement of distant water fisheries with respect to its spawner escapement reserve. In the absence of any fisheries in 2012 to 2015, there is less than 95% probability of meeting the CL (full reproductive capacity) in the two age groups of the southern NEAC stock complex. Therefore, in the absence of specific management objectives, ICES advises that there are no mixed-stock fisheries options on the NEAC complexes at the Faroes in 2012 to 2015. In all years, there is 71% to 73% probability of meeting the CLs for the NEAC complexes simultaneously, in the absence of any mixed-stock fisheries. ICES advised that fishing should only take place on salmon from rivers where stocks have been shown to be at full reproductive capacity. Furthermore, because of the different status of individual stocks within stock complexes, mixed-stock fisheries present particular threats. The management of a fishery should ideally be based upon the individual status of all stocks exploited in the fishery. ICES further 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 homewaters 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 attributed this to pressures in freshwater and low marine survival.

In 2012, ICES also presented the finalized Framework of Indicators (FWI), which was intended to be used to support adoption of multi-annual regulatory measure by the NEAC. The FWI is to be used by NASCO to identify if any significant change may have occurred in the status of the stock 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. The FWI will be applied at the beginning of 2013 for the first time and indicated there was no need for a revised analysis of catch options. It was applied again in January 2014 and it indicated a significant change in the indicators for one of the stock complexes. For the Southern NEAC MSW stock complex, the FWI signaled that the forecast PFA was an over-estimate. The Commission agreed that the same procedure used in applying the FWI for West Greenland would be applied to the NEAC; that is, reassessment of the stocks would only be triggered if the FWI showed a positive change that might provide the possibility of a fishery. Because it was an over-estimate and thus, did not show a positive change that might provide the possibility of a fishery, they determined that a full re-assessment of the ICES management advice was not required. The Commission noted that the Decision adopted in 2012 will continue to apply to the 2015 fishery.

Management of Faroese fishery: There has been no commercial fishery at the Faroe Islands since 2000. A compensation payment was made during the years 1991-1999 and 2001-2008. In 2012, the Commission adopted, for the first time, a multi-year decision for the Faroe Islands fishery. This was made possible by the acceptance of the FWI provided by ICES. Similar to regulatory measures adopted in previous years (i.e., since 2001), the measure states that the Commission will not set a quota but that the Faroe Islands will manage any fishery on the basis of ICES advice. In adopting the measure, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands) emphasized that no agreement had been reached on a sharing arrangement for allocating any available surplus between the Faroe Islands and the homewater countries. Such an arrangement would be needed to support the development of a regulatory measure when there is a harvestable surplus. In its most recent advice, ICES used the allocations proposed in 2011.

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, most recently in 2014. 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. The parties agreed to continue to discuss the issue with a view to finding a solution.

Genetics and research fishing: ICES commented on the results of recent genetic analyses of historical samples from salmon taken in the Faroese fishery. The results of this research indicated that 16% of fish harvested in the Faroe Islands fishery historically were of North American origin. Additional work will be undertaken to confirm this surprising finding. In addition, the contribution made by North American origin salmon to the NEAC area is not currently incorporated in advice from ICES, but may have important implications. The Commission requested an additional question to ICES regarding options for taking into account this new information when providing catch advice. As no fishery has been prosecuted by the Faroe Islands since 2000, the current composition of the stock complexes that would contribute to that fishery is unclear. In light of this, Denmark (in respect to the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated 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.

*Bycatch Study***:** Given that estimates of the bycatch of salmon in the total pelagic fisheries are highly uncertain, ICES considers it would be informative to increase efforts to obtain reliable estimates of the bycatch of salmon and made a number of recommendations as to how this might be achieved. The NEAC considered possible actions for carrying this work forward, including the possibility of asking more of ICES. The heavy workload of ICES during 2015 was noted, however, and no specific action was taken. The matter is expected to be reconsidered at the 2015 NASCO annual meeting.

Other Matters:

Additional information on the work of NASCO can be found on its website (http://www.nasco.int). The Council agreed to hold its 32nd Annual Meeting in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Canada, from June 2-5, 2015.

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

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

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Budget

NAFO adopted a 2015 budget of $1,981,000 CDN (approximately US$1,587,710). The preliminary US assessment for 2015 will be $256,949 CND (approximately US$205,936).

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:

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Representative to the Scientific Council:

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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:

2014 Annual Meeting: The 36th Annual Meeting was held from 22 to 26 September 2014, in Vigo, Spain. Although some progress was made during this meeting on a number of key issues, the United States departed the meeting with considerable concerns regarding the transparency of the NAFO decision-making process as it relates allocations and the consistency of such decisions with the advice of the NAFO Scientific Council. Most notable in this regard were the decisions taken by the Organization with regard to reopening and allocating of NAFO Division 3NO witch flounder. While the Scientific Council

advice for this stock noted the possibility of a limited fishery at or around current levels, the adopted TAC of 1000mt is approximately three times the levels harvested (through bycatch) in 2014. The United States considers this to be wholly inconsistent with the SC advice for this stock for 2015, and contrary to the precautionary approach and accepted principles of international fisheries management. Furthermore, subsequent negotiations concerning the allocation of this TAC excluded most NAFO Contracting Parties (including the United States -- a NAFO coastal State with a rich fishing history in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean). Although the United States had/has no intention of prosecuting a Div. 3NO witch flounder fishery in 2015, the lack of transparency and inclusiveness of these decisions led the United States to subsequently exercise its treaty right to submit a formal Objection to NAFO regarding the 2015 measures adopted for Div. 3NO witch flounder. This is the first time the United States has submitted a formal objection in any RFMO.

On the positive side, NAFO continues to make progress in implementing the 2011 recommendations of the NAFO Performance Review Panel and is preparing for another performance review to begin in 2015. The United States strongly supports the performance review process as a way to ensure that Regional Fisheries Management Organizations continue to progress and improve. NAFO also continues to make great strides in streamlining and improving the efficiency of its Secretariat, which is resulting in significant budgetary savings. While such savings are laudable, they must be balanced with the need to ensure that the Secretariat is capable of responding to the ever-increasing demands of the Contracting Parties and adequately supporting the scientific and management objectives of the Organization.

Forward progress (albeit increasingly challenging) also continues with regard to protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems, with NAFO agreeing to maintain all previously delineated seamount and existing sponge and coral closures (with a small adjustment to further protect sponges), and to closure of a new area to protect large gorgonian sponges as recommended by the Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management (WG-EAFFM). The United States supports further work to ensure protection for all VME areas identified by the Scientific Council. Two other key U.S. priorities within the WG-EAFFM are:1) to ensure that adequate preparations are in place (both within NAFO bodies and among its Contracting Parties) for the NAFO assessment of bottom fisheries for 2016, as well as the 2015 UNGA review of Resolution 61/105; and 2) to ensure that the WG begins to actively address implementation of the NAFO EAFM Roadmap, as called for within the WG-EAFFM terms of reference. The United States was also generally pleased with the outcomes of the meeting with regard to other Standing Committee and Working Group recommendations.

U.S. Allocations for 2015: At the 2014 NAFO Annual Meeting, the United States received fish quota allocations for two NAFO stocks to be fished during 2015. 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 2015, "Others" category allocations available to U.S. fishermen include: Division 3NO white hake (59 mt); Division 3LNO skates (258 mt); Division 3M cod (55 mt), 3LN redfish (63 mt), Division 3NO witch flounder, 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 was able to successfully harvest yellowtail flounder under the arrangement during the 2012, 2013, and 2014 fishing seasons. This represents the first U.S. fishing activity for NAFO species in the NAFO Regulatory Area since the United States joined the Organization in 1995. It also represents a positive step toward establishing the case for a permanent U.S. allocation for this species from NAFO. In 2015, the United States once again received expressions of interest relative to yellowtail flounder and other NAFO species. Thus, it is likely that U.S. fishing activity in NAFO will continue.

Future Meetings

The 36th NAFO Annual Meeting will be held September21-25, 2015, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

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

The Southeast Atlantic Fisheries Organization (SEAFO) 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 Commission, taking account of the scientific advice provided by the Scientific Committee and pursuant to Article 6 of the Convention, has adopted the following measures for 2014:

1. Total allowable catches
a) Patagonian Toothfish Subarea D: 276 tonnes
b) Orange Roughy: 50 tonnes in Sub-Division B1 and 50 tonnes in the remainder of the Convention Area
c) Alfonsinos: 200 tonnes

d) Deep-Sea Red Crab: 200 tonnes in Sub-Division B1 and 200 tonnes in the remainder of the Convention Area
e) Southern boarfish: TBD

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Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC)

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

None

Member Nations

Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, France, European Community, 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

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U.S. Representation

NOAA Fisheries Service leads delegations to WECAFC. The delegation usually consists of representatives of the Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, Southeast Region, the Caribbean Fishery Management Council and the Department of State.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

WECAFC's purpose is to facilitate the coordination of research; to encourage education and training; to assist Member Governments in establishing rational policies; and to promote the rational management of resources of interest to two or more countries. The Commission has an advisory management function but no regulatory powers.

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.

Recent Developments

The 15th biennial meeting of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) was convened in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 26-28 March 2014. Although the status of many fisheries in the region warrants concern, there is clearly reason for optimism as evidenced by increased national and regional efforts for the management and conservation of some species, many coordinated by WECAFC. The meeting made significant progress in adopting recommendations for countries to adopt seasonal closures for fishing for Nassau grouper, a species that is in serious decline. 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 two organizations collaborate on management of this species, one of the few instances in which environment and fisheries authorities have undertaken such cooperation. The recommendation will be forwarded to the CITES Secretariat for consideration. The meeting also adopted other proposals calling for member countries to collaborate to strengthen fisheries management in the region.

A workshop on implementing the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing was convened concurrent with the WECAFC meeting. The Agreement allows party States to refuse port entry or access to port services, including landing and transshipment of fish, to foreign-flagged vessels known to have engaged in IUU fishing. The WECAFC meeting adopted a resolution calling on member countries to become party to the FAO Agreement to collaborate in its implementation.

In the midst of these accomplishments ran a deep undercurrent of unease and even anger about illegal, unregulated unreported fishing in the Wider Caribbean. In answer to these concerns, WECAFC created a new working group to consider the problem.

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 United States funded a series of workshops and meetings in 2008 to consider this question with the same decision. See Plans for future work, below, for more information.

Recent accomplishments of WECAFC Working Groups:

Lobster WG: The WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Spiny Lobster met in Panama City, Panama, 21-23 October 2014 to begin a Caribbean-wide stock assessment for this species.

Spawning Aggregations: The First Meeting of THE CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations was convened in Miami, Florida, 29–31 October 2013, to make recommendations for cooperative actions of Parties in the Wider Caribbean Region.

Queen Conch: The 2nd meeting of the CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Queen Conch was convened in Panama City, Panama, 18-20 November 2014 with funding from CITES, FAO and the Caribbean Fishery Management Council to develop recommendations, including guidelines for making CITES No-Detriment Findings and conversion factors, to lead to a region-wide management plan for the species.

Plans for future WECAFC work:

WECAFC reform/reorientation process: In addition to the on-going work of WECAFC, the organization will again consider how WECAFC might improve its work in the region and what form might be best in order to do this. The European Union offered to fund an independent cost/benefit assessment of the issue. A small working group will meet to review the document, followed by a larger meeting of all member governments meeting in November in Trinidad and Tobago to make recommendations to the full Commission meeting. Changes to the structure and responsibilities of WECAFC will be considered at the next meeting of the Commission in early 2016.

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PACIFIC OCEAN

Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP)

Basic Instruments

The Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program, a legally-binding multilateral agreement 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, Vanuatu and Venezuela.

States Which Are Applying the Agreement Provisionally

Bolivia

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Budget

The expenses of the International Dolphin Conservation Program are shared by the Parties. 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 2015 is $2,843,579. 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 $367,335.

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 provisionally approved IATTC budget for FY 2014 is $ 6,527,781, 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 government's report back to the Secretariat on actions taken regarding 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. At its meeting in El Salvador 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 1950's, fishermen discovered that yellowfin tuna in the ETP aggregated beneath schools of dolphin stocks. Since that discovery, the predominant tuna fishing method in the ETP has been to encircle schools of dolphins with a fishing net to capture the tuna concentrated below. Hundreds of thousands of dolphins died in the early years of this fishery. U.S. participation in the ETP tuna fishery has greatly decreased since the inception of the fishery, coming to a virtual standstill by the early 1980's. However, foreign participation in the ETP fishery has continued to increase. Annual dolphin mortality is down from over 133,000 in 1986 to less than 2,150 dolphins per year since 1998. The incidental dolphin mortality in the fishery for 2012 was estimated to be 870 dolphins, representing an 11.8% decrease from the observed mortality of 986 animals in 2011. The observed mortalities in 2012 and 2013 both represent a total reduction in dolphin mortality of greater than 99% compared to 1986 levels.

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

In response to the Panama Declaration, in 1997, Congress amended the MMPA with the IDCPA to authorize the AIDCP and to: (1) allow for lifting the embargoes for countries fishing in compliance with the AIDCP and (2) lift the ban on the sale of tuna that is not dolphin-safe.

In February 1998, the nations participating in the tuna purse seine fishery in the ETP negotiated the AIDCP, a legally-binding instrument for dolphin conservation and ecosystem management in the ETP. The IDCPA is intended to give force domestically to the AIDCP, which was designed to strengthen dolphin protection measures already in place and afford nations harvesting tuna in the ETP in compliance with those measures access to the lucrative U.S. market for their tuna.

Despite successes in reducing observed dolphin mortality in the ETP purse seine fishery, the three stocks of dolphin that interact to the greatest degree with the fishery, the eastern spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris orientalis*), northeastern offshore spotted dolphin (*Stenella attenuata*) and coastal spotted dolphin (*Stenella attenuata graffmani*), are currently categorized as depleted under the MMPA. These stocks of dolphin are not 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 tuna were caught on the trip in which such tuna were harvested using a purse seine net intentionally deployed on or to encircle dolphins, and no dolphins were killed or seriously injured during the sets in which the tuna were caught."

Other Conservation and Administration Issues: The Parties have taken a proactive position in fishery management and dolphin conservation in recent years. There are or have been two 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 2012 were $1,97,108, while the AIDCP revenues for FY 2012 were $1,946,932, leaving a deficit of $24,176.

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. In addition, the Parties are engaged in ongoing discussions to develop indicators (e.g., gear, catch composition analysis) for identifying Class 1-5 vessels that may be harvesting tuna by intentionally setting purse seine nets on dolphins.

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

Basic Instrument and the Transition to the Antigua Convention

The Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica for the establishment of an Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, 1949; and Convention for the Strengthening of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Established by the 1949 Convention between the United States of America and Costa Rica (Antigua Convention) (TIAS 2044).

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

The United States, and some other parties to the 1949 Convention, have signed the Antigua Convention, but have not deposited an instrument of ratification. 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. 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. However, ratification by the United States has been delayed pending enactment of implementing legislation for the Antigua Convention by Congress.

Implementing Legislation

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

Tuna Conventions Act of 1950 (64 Stat. 777), as amended (16 U.S.C. 951–961)

Member Nations

The fourteen 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, and Panama. 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.

The United States, along with 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, and Indonesia in 2014. Liberia was granted cooperating non-Member status in July 2014.

Commission Headquarters

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Budget

As with most other decisions under the Antigua Convention, the budget of the Commission is adopted by a consensus decision of the Members of the Commission present at a given meeting. In formulating and approving a budget, the Antigua Convention directs the Commission to give due consideration to the principle of cost effectiveness. The Commission maintains separate accounts for the activities carried out by IATTC and the AIDCP. The Antigua Convention provides that the amount of the contribution of each Member of the Commission to the budget shall be determined in accordance with a scheme 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 FY2015 is $6,554,232. The United States assessed contribution is $1,746,553 for FY2015.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

The Tuna Conventions Act of 1950 provides that the United States shall be represented by a total of not more than four Commissioners, of which at least one must be an officer of NOAA, one must be chosen from a non-governmental conservation organization, and not more than one can reside elsewhere than in a state whose vessels maintain a substantial fishery in the area of the Convention. The Commissioners are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the President. These Commissioners, along with the U.S. Department of State representative, comprise the U.S. Section to the IATTC.

B. U.S. Commissioners:

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C. Advisory Structure:

The Tuna Conventions Act provides that the Department of State charter 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. All interested sectors - commercial and recreational fishing and environmental organizations - are represented on the Committee. The Scientific 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. The terms of the advisory committees are fixed at three years by the charters. Each member 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 froze purse seine vessel capacity available to Members at levels at the time of adoption. The IATTC is the first, and currently the only, tuna regional fishery management organization to establish a fleet capacity limit. The measure also 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 capacity of 158,000 m^3 based on recommendations of the IATTC scientific staff. In 2014, the Commission convened a Technical Experts Workshop to discuss various strategies for managing or reducing purse seine well capacity in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

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 maintains: time-area closures for the purse seine fishery; a requirement to retain all bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin tuna caught, except fish considered unfit for human consumption for reasons other than size; and 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 those applied 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), and sharks (C-05-03; C-11-10). In addition, the Commission adopted a measure in 2013 to collect data on fish aggregating devices (C-13-04).

Other measures adopted include initiatives that regulate transshipment, proscribe a vessel monitoring system, and identify a list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

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), and list and sanction vessels engaged in IUU fishing (C-05-07). The IATTC also implemented a compliance and monitoring scheme and results are reviewed annually at the meeting of the IATTC.

Additional Resources

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

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

The United States and Canada

Commission Headquarters

International Pacific Halibut Commission
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U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

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

B. U.S. Commissioners:

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.

C. Conservation and Management Measures:

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) completed its 91st Annual Meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, on January 30, 2015, with Mr. Paul Ryall presiding as Chair. More than 250 halibut industry stakeholders attended the meeting, with over 75 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 2015 totaling 29,223,000 pounds. The Commission is responding to stock challenges with a risk-based precautionary approach and a review of the current harvest policy to ensure the best possible advice. The Commission also addressed other regulatory issues and took actions regarding assessment survey expansion and bycatch management.

A news release issued January 30, 2015, announced the catch limits and fishing seasons for 2015, 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 Rates

As in 2012 and 2013, this year's stock assessment is based on an ensemble of models incorporating the uncertainty within each model as well as the uncertainty among models. This approach reduces the potential for abrupt changes in management quantities and provides a stronger basis for risk assessment. There were two new additions to this year's ensemble of models: long and short time-series models treating Areas As Fleets (AAF). The AAF approach models the population as a coastwide stock, while allowing for region-specific selectivity and catchability. It is a commonly applied method for dealing with populations showing evidence of spatial structure, but without explicitly modeling recruitment distribution and migration rates among areas. For 2014, the stock assessment ensemble included short and long time-series models based on both the coastwide and the AAF approaches. This combination of models included uncertainty in natural mortality rates, environmental effects on recruitment, and other model parameters.

The assessment indicates that the Pacific halibut stock declined continuously from the late 1990s to around 2010. That trend is estimated to have been a result of decreasing size at age as well as smaller recruitments than those observed through the 1980s and 1990s. In recent years, the estimated female spawning biomass appears to have stabilized near 200 million pounds, with flatter trajectories estimated in coastwide models and slightly increasing trends estimated in AAF models.

An executive summary of the 2014 stock assessment is posted on the IPHC website at <http://iphc.int/meetings/2014im/02_2014_Assessment_Executive_summary.pdf>. The complete report of the 2014 stock assessment is available at <http://www.iphc.int/publications/rara/2014/rara2014_11stockassessment.pdf>.

As it has been since 2013, the 2015 IPHC staff harvest advice was presented in the form of a decision table that estimates the risks to stock and fishery status and trend metrics from different levels of harvest. The final version of the decision table for 2015, incorporating the adopted catch limits, is posted on the IPHC website at http://www.iphc.int/meetings-and-events/annual-meeting.htm

Catch Limits and Seasons

Catch Limits

The Commission received harvest advice for 2014 from the scientific staff, Canadian and United States harvesters and processors, and other fishery agencies, and recommends to the two governments the following catch limits for 2014:

Regulatory Area	**Catch Limit (lb)**
Area 2A (California, Oregon, and Washington)	**970,000**
Non-treaty directed commercial (south of Pt. Chehalis)	164,529
Non-treaty incidental catch in salmon troll fishery	29,035
Non-treaty incidental catch in sablefish fishery (north of Pt. Chehalis)	10,347
Treaty Indian commercial	307,700
Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (year-round)	31,800

Sport – North of Columbia River	214,110
Sport – South of Columbia River	187,259
Sport-California	25,220
Area 2B (British Columbia) (includes sport catch allocation)	**7,038,000**
Area 2C (southeastern Alaska) (combined commercial/guided sport)[1]	**4,650,000**
Commercial fishery	3,799,000
Guided sport fishery	851,000
Area 3A (central Gulf of Alaska) (combined commercial/guided sport)[1]	**10,100,000**
Commercial fishery	8,210,000
Guided sport fishery	1,890,000
Area 3B (western Gulf of Alaska)	**2,650,000**
Area 4A (eastern Aleutians)	**1,390,000**
Area 4B (central/western Aleutians)	**1,140,000**
Areas 4CDE	**1,285,000**
Area 4C (Pribilof Islands)	596,600
Area 4D (northwestern Bering Sea)	596,600
Area 4E (Bering Sea flats)	91,800
Total	**29,223,000**

[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 2015 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 above in the table footnote. The Area 2C commercial fishery allocation is 3,679,000 pounds for the commercial fishery catch and 120,000 pounds estimated for incidental mortality within the fishery. The Area 3A commercial fishery allocation is 7,790,000 pounds for the commercial fishery catch and 420,000 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 14 – November 7, 2015, for the U.S. and Canadian Individual Quota fisheries. Seasons will commence at noon local time on March 14 and terminate at noon local time on November 7, 2015 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 14 and November 7, 2015. The Saturday opening date was chosen to facilitate marketing.

In Area 2A, seven 10-hour fishing periods for the non-treaty directed commercial fishery south of Point Chehalis, Washington are recommended: June 24, July 8, July 22, August 5, August 19, September 2, and September 16, 2015. 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 an incidental commercial halibut fishery 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 and Issues

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. This 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 ($\leq$ 42 inches or $\geq$ 80 inches).
- In Area 3A, 1) a two-fish daily bag limit, 2) a maximum size limit for the second fish of 29 inches, 3) a five-fish annual limit, 4) a vessel limit of one trip per calendar day, and 5) a one-day-per-week closure of halibut charter fishing on Thursdays from June 15 through August 31, 2015.

Authorized Officer Definition

The Commission approved adding California Department of Fish and Wildlife officers to the list of officers authorized to enforce IPHC regulations.

Other Actions

Minimum Size Limit

The Commission received a staff report on the potential implications of changing the current minimum size limit for the commercial fishery from 32 in to 30 in. The Commission's Conference Board and Processor Advisory Board recommended not changing the size limit at this time. With that advice and the significant uncertainty concerning the behavior of the fishery in response to such a change, the Commission assigned further investigation of the issue to its Management Strategy Advisory Board.

Expanded Survey

The Commission approved the next in a series of expansions to the Commission's standardized stock assessment survey. In 2014, the surveys in Regulatory Areas 2A and 4A were expanded into deeper and shallower waters, as well as filling in some previously un-surveyed areas within the survey's normal depths. For 2015, the Commission's survey in Areas 4CDE will be expanded, including a calibration survey with the NMFS Eastern Bering Sea trawl survey. The purpose of the expansion series across the regulatory areas 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 review survey expansion at the next Annual Meeting.

Halibut Bycatch

The Commission's Halibut Bycatch Working Group completed its report to the Commission. The group was tasked with the following specific objectives at the 2012 IPHC Annual Meeting:

- To gain a better understanding of the amount of halibut bycatch occurring in each regulatory area;
- To gain a better understanding of the impact of bycatch on the conservation and allocation of the halibut resource and on the available harvest;
- To explore options for reducing the overall level of halibut bycatch; and
- To explore options for mitigating the impact of bycatch in one regulatory area on the available harvest in other regulatory areas.

The report is available on the IPHC website at http://www.iphc.int/research/245-bycatch.html.

The Commission will be using the results in its continuing process to gain reductions in bycatch mortality. The Commission received presentations from five Alaska groundfish harvesting organizations. Two organizations provided testimony identifying specific reductions that they believe could be achieved from their fleets, although recognizing that achieving them would be difficult. Part of these reductions would be achieved through an Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP), currently being reviewed by NMFS, permitting deck sorting. The Commission also received a letter from the NMFS Assistant Administrator which urged approval of catch limits above the Blue Line in Area 4CDE and indicated a commitment to reduce BSAI bycatch mortality.

The Commission received the following advice from both the Conference Board and the Processor Advisory Group regarding bycatch reduction:

- Support industry efforts to secure halibut bycatch reduction in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) through voluntary measures in 2015;
- Urge the NPFMC to address BSAI halibut Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) cap reductions on a sector-specific basis and to reduce BSAI halibut PSC caps to levels that provide benefits to the directed halibut fishery; and
- Utilize all regulatory authority of the Council and NMFS to implement reductions in 2016.

In addition, the Conference Board recommended that management bodies continue to pursue bycatch reduction targets for Areas 3 and 4 that reflect the Magnuson-Stevens Act principle of reducing bycatch "to the extent practicable," including focusing on approaches that provide incentives for individual harvesters to reduce bycatch,

implementation of robust monitoring programs, and reviewing the discard mortality rates assigned to bycaught halibut.

The Commission directed the IPHC staff to take this advice into consideration in its continuing work on bycatch issues during the coming year. The Commission met with the NPFMC on February 5, 2015 to explore ways that the authorities of the two bodies can be used to reduce halibut bycatch mortality in Alaskan fisheries.

Conference Board Rules of Procedure

The Commission approved the draft rules of procedure submitted by the Conference Board. Rules of procedure for the Processor Advisory Group were approved by the Commission in September, 2014.

IPHC Merit Scholarship

The Commission honored Ms. Katie Koolman of Sooke, British Columbia, as the thirteenth recipient of the IPHC Merit Scholarship. Due to class commitments, Ms. Koolman was unable to be present to accept the scholarship, which was announced at the opening public session of the Annual Meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

The 2015 Interim Meeting of the Commission will be held December 1-2, 2015, in Seattle, Washington. As in 2014, this year's Interim Meeting will be held in a larger venue in order to make it more accessible to the public. The next Annual Meeting of the Commission is planned for January 25-29, 2016 in Juneau, Alaska. The 2017 Annual Meeting is tentatively slated for January 23-27 in Victoria, British Columbia.

Commission Membership

United States Government Commissioner Dr. James W. Balsiger of Juneau, Alaska, was elected Chair for the coming year. Canadian Government Commissioner Paul Ryall of Vancouver, British Columbia, 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 United States Commissioners are Robert Alverson of Seattle, Washington, and Donald Lane of Homer, Alaska.

Executive Director

Dr. Bruce M. Leaman has served as the Commission's Executive Director since October, 1997 and his current contract with the Commission expires in early 2016. During 2015 the Commission will be searching for a new Executive Director to succeed Dr. Leaman.

Staff Contacts

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

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

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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

Earl E. Krygier (Alternate Commissioner from Alaska)
12840 Johns Road
Anchorage, AK 99515-3707

Gary T. Smith
Partner
Smith and Stark, LLC
3219 Point Place SW
Seattle, WA 98116

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 Parties to the NPAFC met in Portland, Oregon, on May 12-16, 2014, for the 22nd Annual Meeting of the NPAFC. Observers representing the North Pacific Fish Commission, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization and the North Pacific Science Organization (PICES) also attended. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Vladimir Belyaev of Russia, President of the NPAFC.

The 22nd NPAFC Annual Meeting was the first face-to-face Annual Meeting since 2012 and the first spring meeting. The NPAFC traditionally held annual meetings in the fall, however, in an effort to economize and eliminate intersessional meetings, it transitioned annual meetings to the spring in 2014.

Outcomes of the 22nd Annual Meeting: The majority of the work of the Commission took place in the three standing committees: ENFO, F&A and the CSRS. The recommendations of each Committee on its agenda items were presented in the form of a report to the Commission for its consideration. These reports were then formally adopted by the Commission at its final plenary session.

ENFO: Fisheries enforcement agencies of the NPAFC member countries reviewed collaborative monitoring and surveillance programs. As a result of the continued strong commitment by NPAFC member countries to such enforcement efforts, no vessels were observed or apprehended for illegal salmon fishing in the NPAFC Convention Area in 2013. The overall reduction in sightings of vessels engaged in illegal fishing activity in the North Pacific testifies to the effectiveness of the Commission's cooperative enforcement model.

The combined monitoring activities in 2013 by NPAFC-related enforcement agencies included over 120 ship patrol days, more than 498 aerial patrol hours, and satellite support. Members collaborated through joint ship patrols, exchanges of personnel in the air and ship patrols of member countries, and regular conference calls.

This year, for the first time in its 21-year history, ENFO convened a joint session with the Commission's scientific committee, CSRS. Together, they explored ways to incorporate scientific data into the enforcement planning process to further increase enforcement effectiveness.

CSRS: The vast majority of Pacific salmon originate in the NPAFC member countries. The member countries reported that the total catch of Pacific salmon in 2013 was 1.11 million metric tons (586 million fish)--the second highest on record. It is exceeded only by the catch of 1.14 million metric tons in 2009. The United States took 46% of the total catch, followed by Russia (37%), Japan (15%), Canada (2%), and Korea (less than 1%). The 2013 species catch composition (by weight) was 53% pink, 31% chum, 12% sockeye, 3% coho and less than 1% each for Chinook, cherry salmon, and steelhead trout.

The total quantity of hatchery fish released from NPAFC member countries in 2013 was 5.0 billion fish, a number that has remained stable since 1993. Of the total, the United States released 1,881 million fish (38%), Japan 1,729 million (35%), Russia 1,039 million (21%) Canada 293 million (6%), and Korea 10 million (< 1%). Hatchery releases comprised mostly chum (63%) and pink salmon (25%), followed by Chinook (5%), sockeye (5%), coho (2%), steelhead trout (less than 1%), and cherry salmon (less than 1%).

In the CSRS meeting, leading salmon researchers from the member countries reviewed new scientific studies of Pacific salmon and steelhead in international waters and adjacent areas. The member countries presented and coordinated salmon research survey plans for the Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, Northwest Pacific and Sea of Okhotsk. In addition, Parties presented salmon catch and hatchery statistics, coordinated salmon marking and tagging plans, and reviewed and updated personnel, sample, and data exchanges.

Several studies were presented characterizing salmon oceanic habitat in relation to salmon distribution and abundance. A pilot study of high seas pink and sockeye salmon distributions suggested salmon oceanic habitat cannot be ascertained solely based on sea surface temperature data. Another study indicated pink salmon spatial distribution is affected by oceanographic characteristics, intensity of currents, and fluctuations of pink salmon abundance. A novel approach using coded-wire tag data estimated the numbers of hatchery-origin coho and Chinook salmon in commercial salmon catches and escapements.

Based on genetic analyses, juvenile sockeye salmon caught in the international waters of the central Bering Sea during summer were found to be primarily from Bristol Bay, with smaller contributions from Russian and Canadian rivers. Juvenile chum salmon caught in the eastern Bering Sea in late-summer/fall originated from coastal western Alaska, and most juvenile chum salmon caught in the Chukchi Sea originated in Kotzebue Sound. Juvenile Chinook salmon caught in the eastern Bering Sea originated in coastal western Alaska and the Yukon River.

The NPAFC is planning two upcoming events that will be of interest to researchers and others concerned with the effects of climate change on distribution and production of Pacific salmon: 1) A 1-day workshop on linkages between the winter distribution of Pacific salmon and their marine ecosystems and how this might be altered by climate change will be jointly convened by NPAFC and the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES). This workshop will be held on October 17, 2014, at the PICES 2014 Annual Meeting in Yeosu, Korea. 2) The NPAFC will also host a 3-day international symposium on "Pacific Salmon and Steelhead Production in a Changing Climate: the Past, Present and Future," on May 17-19, 2015, in Kobe, Japan. The goal of this symposium is to utilize the best available information on marine ecology of salmon and steelhead populations to explain and forecast annual variation in their production. Researchers will review recent research on ecological mechanisms regulating marine distribution and production, climate change impacts on populations and their ecosystems, retrospective analysis of key populations as indicators of conditions in North Pacific marine ecosystems, and implications of ecosystem models for management of salmon and steelhead. Both of these events are open to the public with a registration fee.

F&A Committee: The financial status of the Commission continues to be strong. Currently, each Contracting Party contributes an equal portion--$180,000--to the annual budget of the Commission. The budget approved at the 23rd Annual Meeting will result in a $26,000 surplus for the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year which will be transferred to the Commission's working capital fund. Regarding other matters, the Committee recommended selection of a Russian candidate for the 2014 NPAFC internship program.

Salmon Tag Returns: To encourage the return of high-seas salmon and steelhead tags to the NPAFC, the Commission held a prize drawing for those members of the public who returned tags. A total of seven entries were submitted from Japan, Russia, and the United States. The first prize of CAD$500 went to Chris Bourgeois, Alaska. Second prize of CAD$300 went to Alexey Taibulatov of Sakhalin, Russia, and third prize of CAD$200 was awarded to Kazuo Hasegawa of Hokkaido, Japan.

New Executive Director: The Commission selected Dr. Vladimir Radchenko of Russia as the new Executive Director of the NPAFC. His term of office will begin on July 1, 2013.

Enforcement Video: In an effort to increase access to information on the effectiveness of its at-sea monitoring and surveillance of suspected IUU vessels, the NPAFC created a 5-minute video highlighting NPAFC enforcement activities. The video is available in English, Korean, Japanese, and Russian and is accessible on the NPAFC website. (Available at: http://youtu.be/C3JVBjh6gVI)

The 2014 NPAFC Award. Established in 2011, Established in 2011, the NPAFC Award is presented to groups or individuals whose sustained, significant contributions have helped improve the conservation of anadromous salmon and steelhead stocks in the North Pacific Ocean. At the 22th Annual Meeting, the Commission presented the NPAFC Award to Dr. Katherine Myers, a retired salmon scientist from the University of Washington. Dr. Myers is internationally recognized for her long-term leadership in scientific research and conservation through her extensive body of published work on Pacific salmon and steelhead.

New Officers: The Commission thanked outgoing officers for their dedicated service and welcomed new officers who will serve for the next two years: The new President and Vice President of the NPAFC are Junichiro Okamoto (Japan) and Robin Brown (Canada), respectively. The new Chairman of ENFO is CAPT Alexey Monakhov (Russia); the new Chairman of CSRS is Dr. Loh-Lee Low (United States), and the new Chairman of F&A is Mr. Jeongseok Park (Korea).

23rd NPAFC Annual Meeting: The 23rd NPAFC Annual Meeting will be held in Kobe, Japan, on May 11-15, 2015. Korea will host the 24th Annual Meeting in May 2016

Staff Contacts

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Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada Concerning Pacific Salmon

Basic Instrument for the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC)

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member States

The United States and Canada.

Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) Headquarters

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Budget

Each Party will contribute CAD $1,879,636 to the approved Commission budget of CAD $4,278,407 for Fiscal Year 2015-2016 (April 1, 2015 - March 31, 2016).

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

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

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

Bob Turner (Federal Commissioner)
National Marine Fisheries Service
510 Desmond Drive, S.E.
Lacey, WA 98503

C. Alternate Commissioners:

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Washington, DC 20520

McCoy Oatman (Tribal Alt. Com)
Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee
PO Box 305
Lapwai, ID 83540

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

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.

2015 Update: The PSC held its Annual Meeting on February 11-14, 2014, 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 26-30, 2015, in Washington, U.S. The PSC Post Season Meeting will be held January 11-15, 2016, in Portland, OR and the 31st Annual Meeting will be held February 8-12, 2016, in Vancouver, B.C.

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

Implementing Legislation

There is no implementing legislation for the Convention.

Parties

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

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The objectives of the Convention are:

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

B. Organizational Structure:

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

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

C. Advisory Body:

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

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

D. Background:

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

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

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

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

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.

19th Annual Conference: Dr. Alexander Glubokov, head of the Department of International Fisheries Cooperation of the Russian Federal Research Institute for Fisheries and Oceanography, opened the 19th Annual Conference of the Parties on 16 October 2014. It was the fifth Annual Conference to be conducted via electronic mail (e-mail). Dr. Glubokov was elected Chair of the Annual Conference and also served as the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting. Dr. Mikhail Stepanenko (Russian Federation) served as Rapporteur for both meetings. The following persons served during Conference as the "voice" from each Party during e-mail exchanges: Japan (Koji Oda), Republic of Korea (Jeongseok Park), Poland/the EU (Ms. Louise Head/Mr. Herbert Schuller), Russia (Alexander Glubokov), and the United States (Mr. Doug Mecum/Mr. Paul Niemeier).

The United States and Russian Federation provided pollock fisheries catch statistics and research cruise results. These were included in the S&T Committee Report. The trend in estimated pollock spawning stock biomass in the Bogoslof Island area of the Aleutian Basin has been steadily down. The lowest pollock biomass on record was detected in 2012--an estimated 67,100 t in the Specific Area of the Convention. The pollock biomass for the Convention Area was estimated at 111,833 t, based on the premise that the Bogoslof Island pollock spawning stock biomass is equal to 60 percent of the biomass in the Convention Area. The latest survey by the NOAA R/V *OSCAR DYSON* estimated the 2014 Bogoslof pollock spawning stock biomass to be 112,000 t, up from 2012. Consequently, the 2014 estimated pollock biomass for the Convention Area was 186,600 t. The Parties agreed that there was insufficient scientific and technical information to determine the pollock biomass of the whole Aleutian Basin and that the estimated biomass for the Convention Area is nowhere near the biomass target (1.67 million t) stated in the Convention necessary to trigger a commercial fishery.

Japan reiterated its position that the Parties should set an AHL, even if it is small. Korea also expressed its concern that there has been no progress in terms of setting an AHL and allocating pollock among Parties since the decision on the 1993 moratorium. In this respect, Korea concurred with the Japanese suggestion that all Parties should consider allocating the pollock resources among Parties within the Convention Area even though it would be a small amount of fish as a symbolic meaning for fishermen. Otherwise, Korea said it would be very difficult to expect the Convention to continue to function in the near future.

However, there was no consensus among the Parties on how to set AHL and therefore they followed the process established in Article VII and Part 1 of the Annex to the Convention. Consequently, the 2015 AHL and INQ were set at zero during the Conference and the moratorium on pollock fishing in the Central Bering Sea was continued. As of 2015, the moratorium on commercial pollock fishing in the central Bering Sea has been in place for 22 years.

Trial Fishing: There was no trial fishing conducted in the Convention Area in 2014. The Parties agreed to roll over the terms and conditions for trial fishing adopted in 2010 for 2015. Korea expressed its interest in trial fishing in 2015 and will announce its plans to the Parties at least one month prior to beginning any fishing operations.

Work Plan for the S&T Committee: There were no recommendations for a Plan of Work for the S&T Committee for 2015.

Enforcement: No violations of the Convention were reported.

Future Meetings: The United States agreed to host the 20th Annual Conference and the S&T Committee Meeting in the virtual meeting format in 2015. The United States will continue to support the Annual Conference on the Alaska Fisheries Science Center's web site and to provide rapporteur services for the S&T Committee Meetings and Plenary Meetings of the Annual Conference, as needed. The reports of the Annual Conference and the S&T Committee are available on the internet at http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/cbs.

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

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

Parties
The United States and Canada

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

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

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

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

1. The Parties were to exchange a list of vessels for the upcoming fishing season; Canada submits a fixed list of vessels to the United States by June 1 and the United States provided their provisional list to Canada by July 1. Information on vessel lengths was also required.
2. The fishing season extended from June 15 through October 31.
3. The number of Canadian vessels fishing in U.S. waters was limited to 110 and the number of U.S. vessels fishing in Canada was to be reflective of "historical levels." The use of vessel months to limit access was no longer in use.
4. Canadian vessels fishing in U. S. waters could only use troll gear while U.S. vessels were allowed to use both troll and pole-and-bait methods.
5. The implementation of management resolutions at the international level or management requirements at the domestic level were to be considered as sufficient triggers for terminating the Treaty.
6. If national allocations by the appropriate regional fishery management organization had been established during the tenure of the regime, allocations received by Canada and the United States attributable to catch taken in the waters of the host country will be reassigned to the host country.

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

In 2014, the Parties negotiated and reached agreement on a three-year fishing regime under the Treaty for the years 2014-2016 that mirrored the regime adopted for 2013. 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.

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

Implementing legislation was signed on January 12, 2007, as Title VI of Public Law 109-479.

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 17-19, 2015 in Lynwood, Washington, to review and comment on the 2014 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 2015.

For 2014, the coastwise adjusted TAC was 428,000 metric tons. Preliminary indications show that the population size can support a 2015 TAC at the same level, and possibly higher. However, the parties are discussing various management strategies for whiting and have embarked on a "management strategy evaluation" to better inform these discussions. Following the March 2015 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 2015.

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

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

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Parties

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

Description

The SPTT entered into force in 1988. After an initial 5-year agreement, the SPTT was extended in 1993 and again in March 2003. 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 adopts 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 October 2014 to allow negotiators additional time to finalize the text of a renewed treaty.

Budget

Under the interim arrangement for 2015, the industry financial terms amount to $69 million for 8,301 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 $90 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 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

When the revised treaty is adopted, regulations will be developed to implement appropriate measures.

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 2015.

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Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention (WCPFC)

Basic Instrument

Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

Implementing Legislation

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act, 2007. Pub. L. 109-479, 120 Stat.3575

Membership

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

Participating Territories

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

Cooperating Non-members

Belize, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Senegal, Liberia, Thailand, and Vietnam have been granted Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) status for 2015.

Commission Headquarters

WCPFC Secretariat
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Budget

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

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

The 8th Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) met during the Eleventh Annual Commission meeting in Apia, Samoa, from December 1-5, 2014, under the chairmanship of Paul Callaghan (U.S.). The total budget approved by the Commission for 2015 was $7,556,298, with the United States paying $985,046, or approximately 13% of the total budget.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

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

B. U.S. Commissioners:

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

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C. Advisory Body:

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

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

The Permanent Advisory Committee was initially established in 2008, with 20 members appointed by the Secretary of Commerce, in accordance with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act of 2007. The two-year terms of the 18 individuals appointed in 2013 will expire on August 15. 2015. Nominations are currently being accepted for 2015-2016 members. New appointees 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 2014 with CMM 2014-01.

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 2014-01 went into effect on February 3, 2015, and 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 Eleventh Regular Session of the WCPFC is available at: http://www.wcpfc.int/meetings/11th-regular-session-commission.

2014 meetings

The WCPFC will hold its Eleventh Regular Session in December 2014. The Scientific Committee is provisionally scheduled to meet August 6-14, 2014. The Northern Committee is provisionally scheduled to meet September 1-4, 2014. The Technical and Compliance Committee will meet in September 2014.

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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 Senate subsequently introduced a bill to implement the Convention, which did not receive Congressional approval. Thus, the U.S. domestic process to ratify the Convention and enact implementing legislation remains ongoing.

Member Nations/Entities

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

Cooperating Non-Contracting Non Parties

Colombia, Ecuador, France (on behalf of its overseas territories), Liberia, Panama, Peru and the United States

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Budget

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

U.S. Representation

If the United States ratifies the Convention, the U.S. representation will be determined in the implementing legislation. It is expected that the Pacific Islands Regional Administrator will be designated as Commissioner for the United States.

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

At its first meeting, the Commission adopted a number of binding conservation measures, including limits in the fishery for jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) in the Convention Area to vessels flagged to Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CNCPs), prohibition on the use of large-scale pelagic driftnets and all deepwater gillnets in the Convention Area and advance notification of Members and CNCPs whose flagged vessels seek to transit the Convention Area with gillnets onboard, standards for the collection, reporting, verification and exchange of data that requires reporting on fishing activities, and procedures for establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing activities in the SPRFMO Convention Area.

The second Commission meeting was held in Manta, Ecuador from 27 to 31 January, 2014. SPRFMO adopted six conservation and management measures including a follow-on measure for the management of jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*). In connection with the jack mackerel measure adopted, SPRFMO also adopted a jack mackerel rebuilding plan and developed specific requests to the Scientific Committee for advice on jack mackerel stock status. The other measures adopted include: a measure for bottom fishing; a measure on seabird bycatch; a measure on port state inspections; a measure on the development of a vessel monitoring scheme (VMS); and a measure for the establishment of a SPRFMO record of fishing vessels.

Recent Developments

The third Commission meeting was held in Auckland, New Zealand from 2 to 6 February 2015. SPRFMO adopted a new conservation and management measure for jack mackerel, a conservation and management measure for transshipment and other transfer operations, and a measure for a Commission compliance and monitoring scheme. The United States, after signing the Convention, continues to prepare the necessary documents for ratification and implementation of the Treaty.

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

Basic Instrument

The Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean. The Convention text was agreed to by the negotiating Participants on February 24, 2012. The Convention received its fourth instrument of ratification on January 21, 2015. The Convention will enter 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

N/A, the Convention has not yet entered into force. The participants include Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the United States, Canada and China.

Cooperating Fishing Entities

N/A, the Convention has not yet entered into force. The participants include Chinese Taipei.

Interim Secretariat Headquarters

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

Budget

The budget formula is still being discussed as part of the Preparatory Conference process and cannot formally be adopted until the Convention enters into force.

U.S. Representation

The United States Delegation has 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 will address fisheries resources not covered under pre-existing international fisheries management instruments and will help 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 have already agreed to interim measures aimed at protecting VMEs and the sustainable management of high seas bottom fisheries in the Convention Area. 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 new Convention will establish two committees, a Scientific Committee and a Technical and Compliance Committee, to carry out its functions. Even as the NPFC is being structured, the Parties are working on developing the following: (a) A 5-year science research plan, (b) standards, rules and procedures for the compilation and management of data for effective stock assessments, (c) standards, rules, and procedures for vessel monitoring, transshipment, and observer coverage, and (d) an encounter protocol for bottom fishing.

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

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SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

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

Basic Instrument

Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, 1982

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations/Acceding States

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

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

Commission Headquarters

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Budget

The Commission adopted a budget for 2014 of AU$4,711,500 (approximately US$3,660,718). The U.S. contribution for its dues in 2015 is AU$125,022 (US$97,139). Aggregate Member contributions for 2015 were maintained at the 2014 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:

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U.S. Representative to the Scientific Committee:

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C. Advisory Structure:

The U.S. Commissioner receives advice from the members of the U.S. delegation. The delegation includes representatives from the Department of State, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Science Foundation, Marine Mammal Commission, fishing industry, and the NGO community.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The objective of the Convention is the conservation, which includes rational use, of Antarctic marine living resources. The Convention is based upon an ecosystem approach to the conservation of marine living resources and incorporates standards 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 Working Group on Incidental Mortality Associated with Fishing (WG-IMAF); the Subgroup on Acoustics, Survey and Analysis Methods (SG-ASAM); the Working Group on Statistics, Assessments and Modeling (WG-SAM); and the ad hoc Technical Group for At-Sea Operations (TASO).

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 inspection obligations, port inspections of fishing vessels carrying Antarctic marine living resources, VMS requirements, toothfish catch documentation scheme, procedures related to IUU vessels, scheme promote compliance by Contracting Party nationals, notifications of transshipments, and a compliance evaluation procedure for Contracting Parties.

The Commission adopted a procedure in 2012 to give the Secretariat a formal mechanism to capture and record information on the implementation of conservation measures by Members. During the 2014 meeting, CCAMLR implemented for the second time a compliance evaluation procedure (CCEP) to assess Member compliance with conservation measures. Examples of non-compliance included failure to conduct port inspections of fishing vessels carrying toothfish, late submittal of VMS position reports and transshipment notifications, improperly sealed VMS units, improperly marked vessels, and failure to implement seabird bycatch mitigation measures. The discussions resulted in amendments to a conservation measure for marking of fishing vessels and fishing gear to reflect the text of the FAO Standard Specifications and Guidelines for the Marking and Identification of Fishing Vessels and amendments to conservation measures to provide for the inclusion of documentary or photographic evidence in port inspection reports to facilitate review of each issue of non-compliance.

During the 2014 meeting, the conservation measure for the catch documentation scheme (CDS) was significantly revised to improve clarity and reflect the operation of the current electronic CDS. The CDS is CCAMLR's system for tracking toothfish from the harvesting vessel and throughout the trade cycle. The CDS for toothfish (*Dissostichus* spp.) has been in effect since 2000 and has been operating as an electronic scheme since 2004. In May 2014, a Review Panel conducted an independent review of, and considered improvements to, the CDS. The recommendations fall into three categories: implementation and operation, changes to the CDS Conservation Measure itself, and suggestions on how to promote cooperation with Non-Contracting Parties. Most of the recommendations from the Review Panel were endorsed by the Commission at the 2014 annual meeting.

CCAMLR maintains a Non-Contracting Party IUU Vessel List. While it has procedures for a Contracting Party IUU Vessel List, there are no vessels on this list. In 2014, no new vessels were proposed for inclusion on the Contracting Party IUU Vessel List or the Non-Contracting Party IUU (NCP-IUU) Vessel List. The *Tiantai*, on the NCP IUU Vessel List, is assumed to have sunk in the Convention Area based on its distress beacon having been activated and a debris field in the vicinity of the beacon. Consequently, this vessel has been removed from the NCP IUU Vessel List.

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 2014, the United States, Brazil, Chile, and the European Union tabled a proposal to amend the conservation measure to require landing of sharks with fins naturally attached to discourage the finning of incidentally-caught sharks that are retained and to improve the data collected on sharks. The proposal is similar to that proposed by the United States during the 2011 and 2013 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.

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.

Protected areas:

The Scientific Committees established a system of sites contributing data to the CCAMLR Ecosystem Monitoring Program (CEMP). These sites could be protected if the Commission decides it desirable.

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) remained a high priority in 2014. For the fourth time, the United States and New Zealand's proposed an MPA in the Ross Sea region. The proposal would protect key areas that support essential ecosystem processes and safeguard critical areas for whales, seals, penguins, commercially valuable and other fish stocks, and the species they feed upon. The Ross Sea Region's unique scientific, biodiversity, and ecosystem characteristics, make it an area of tremendous conservation and scientific value to be protected for current and future generations. Australia, France, and EU proposed, also for the fourth time, a representative system of MPAs in East Antarctica. Consensus was not be reached on either proposal.

Proposals for establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) were given high priority. However, for the third time, Members could not reach agreement on the United States and New Zealand's joint proposal to establish a MPA in the Ross Sea Region and the proposal from Australia, France, and EU to establish a representative system of MPAs in East Antarctica.

D. Activities and Meetings

The following meetings will take place in 2015:

Subgroup on Acoustic Survey and Analysis Methods (SG-ASAM) March 9 to 13 in Busan, Korea;
Working Group on Statistics, Assessments and Modeling (WG-SAM) June 29 to July 3 in Warsaw, Poland;
Working Group on Ecosystem Monitoring and Management (WG-EMM) July 6 to 17 in Warsaw, Poland;
Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment (WG-FSA) October 5 to 16 in Hobart, Australia;
Scientific Committee (SC-CAMLR) October 19 to 23, 2014 in Hobart, Australia; and
Commission (CCAMLR) October 19 to 30, 2014 in Hobart, Australia

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Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals (CCAS)

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

None

Member Nations

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

Commission Headquarters

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

Budget

None.

U.S. Representation

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

Description

A. Mission/Purpose

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

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

B. Organizational Structure

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

C. Programs

Because there had been no commercial sealing in the Antarctic after the Convention entered into force in 1978, an offer by the United Kingdom, as Depositary Government, to host a 1983 meeting of Parties, was declined. The first and, to date, only meeting of Parties, held in 1988, was occasioned by a 1986/87 Soviet commercial sealing expedition and research cruise.

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

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

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Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)

Basic Instrument

Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, 1994

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations/Entities

Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Chinese Taipei

Cooperating Non Parties

Philippines, South Africa, and the European Community

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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.

U.S. Representation

The United States has not historically participated in meetings of the CCSBT.

Description

A. 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 also 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.

B. Organizational Structure:

The CCSBT consists of a Commission composed of national sections of member nations and a Secretariat headed by an Executive Director.

Decisions of the Commission are taken by a unanimous vote of the Parties present at the Commission meeting. There are currently three subsidiary bodies: 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, the outlook for the stock is positive. 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.

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 CCSBT has set the TAC for 2015-2017 at 14,647 tons, with the TAC for 2016-17 to be confirmed at the 21st meeting of the CCSBT in October 2014. The Management Procedure includes the following associated management parameters:

- 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). In 2004, the CCSBT established a list of fishing vessels over 24 meters in length which were approved to fish for SBT. The list was extended to include all vessels, regardless of size in 2005. The list 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 immediately after the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Commission, on 17 October 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.

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INDIAN OCEAN

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

The Agreement for the Establishment of the IOTC was approved at the 27th Session of the FAO Conference and adopted by the Council at its 105th Session in November 1993. The Agreement entered into force with receipt of the 10th instrument of acceptance on March 27, 1996. 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, with a main focus on albacore, bigeye and yellowfin tunas.

The members are Australia, Belize, China, Comoros, Eritrea, European Community, 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, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vanuatu, and Yemen. Senegal and South Africa are cooperating non-contracting Parties.

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.

The Commission is the main decision-making body and is composed of all Members. There is also a Scientific Committee which 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, Billfishes, Temperate Tunas, Tagging, Methods 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.

The United States has attended the annual meetings of IOTC as an observer since 2007.

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WESTERN HEMISPHERE

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

Basic Instrument

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

Member Nations

Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, 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.

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 and then again in June 2013 at the 6th Conference of Parties. This arrangement is up for consideration at the June 2013 Conference of Parties meeting. 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 working to implement this plan intersessionally.

Future Meetings

The next Conference of Parties will be held in the late spring/early summer of 2015. The major agenda topics include determining the legal status of the Secretariat, selecting the location of the permanent Secretariat, reviewing implementation of the Convention's resolutions and determining the budget for the next two years.

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Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Colombia Concerning the Status of Quitasueño, Roncador and Serrana

Basic Instrument

Vásquez-Saccio Treaty of 1981

Member Nations

United States and Colombia

Geographical Scope

Colombian exclusive economic zone waters around Quitasueño, Roncador and Serrana (Department of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina).

Description

In 1869, James Jennett claimed the islands for the US under the Guano Islands Act of 1856. In 1972 a treaty was signed (ratified in 1981) between the United States and Colombia which abandoned the US claims. Rather than being ceded to any particular nation, the claim was simply abandoned with American fishing rights retained. Nicaragua also lays claim to the islands. The Colombians refer to the treaty as the Vásquez-Saccio Treaty, after the negotiators from Colombia and the United States.

U.S. fishers must apply annually for permits under the Treaty (issued by the Government of Colombia) and must report their catch to the Colombian authorities.

Partners involved

Permitted fishers, Government of Colombia, Department of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina, CORALINA

Recent Developments

In recent years SERO staff has called attention to delays in the receipt of fishing permits in time for use during the fishing season. A number of consultations with the Colombian government have not provided any changes to processes on the Colombian side for more timely review of the permits.

In the midst of these bilateral discussions, on November 19, 2012, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled on a 2001 case filed by Nicaragua concerning a group of small, uninhabited islands whose Colombian sovereignty was confirmed in a treaty with Nicaragua in 1928 and contested in the filing. Although the Court confirmed Colombia's sovereignty over seven islets near the islands of San Andrés and Providencia, it granted Nicaragua an exclusive economic zone extending 200 nautical miles from its coast. It drew a new maritime boundary parceling out the waters claimed by both countries and granted Colombia 12 mile radius around the two islets now cut off from the rest of Colombia's jurisdiction. By Colombia's calculations, the decision transfers to Nicaragua about 30,000 square miles (75,000 square km) of ocean, along with fishing and mineral rights.

Staff at Embassy Bogotá met with the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the ruling and its effect on the Vásquez-Saccio agreement. The majority of the fishing area covered under the treaty was determined not to be affected by the ICJ ruling. The total area that Colombia lost which was included under the treaty is 830 square miles surrounding Quitasueño Cay. However, possible because of resulting concerns by residents of the Archipelago about results of the decision, the government of Colombia has not issued permits for the area in a timely way since 2009.
The fishing permit process will be unchanged, and the permits issued will be valid for the ocean area not affected by the ruling of the ICJ, although because of sensitivities between the Central government and the San Andrés Administration, the permitting process may experience additional delays in the coming years.

Budget

None

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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

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Description

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

Budget

ACAP's annual budget for 2014 is AU $690,600 based upon ACAP's membership fee schedule, which assigns dues (up to a maximum of 22%), proportionally based upon countries GDPs. 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. $140,000 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 member nations, 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.

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. Since ACAP's inception, its Parties have sought to expand its membership and efforts. They have actively recruited new members from the Northern Hemisphere and South America, where many imperiled seabird species breed, forage, and interact with fisheries. For example, an ACAP meeting was held in Brazil to encourage representatives of Brazil and other South American nations to attend. 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, Peru (23 to 27 April 2012), the Balearic shearwater, a species that breeds in the Balearic Islands of Spain, was added to Annex 1 of the Agreement.

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.

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. New Zealand and the United States presented best practice guidelines for translocating Procellariiforms. The guidelines will be amended to better cover precautions and protocols that would prevent disease transmission during translocations.

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

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

The Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/MEETING/003/X3130m/X3130E00.HTM) was approved by the FAO Conference on 24 November 1993. In April 2003, upon the date of deposit of the 25th instrument of acceptance, the Agreement entered into force. As of 19 February 2014, 39 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.

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

UNFSA was adopted in 1995 and sets out principles for the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. It, *inter alia*, prescribes that a precautionary approach and the best available scientific information be used in fishery management, 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: Resumed Review Conference. The next Resumed Review Conference will be held in 2016.

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Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

As of 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.

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U.S. Representation

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

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

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

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

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

B. Organizational Structure:

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is governed by a Conference of the Parties (COP) made up of all the Parties to the Convention. At the COP, countries report on steps taken, and consider further measures for implementing the provisions of the Convention. In addition to the COP, a Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) has been established to provide advice to the COP. The SBSTTA is also composed of representatives of governments that are Parties and has its own Bureau. SBSTTA generally meets annually, and can request assistance for its work inter-sessionally of *ad hoc* technical expert groups or liaison groups on specific issues. A Secretariat, located in Montreal, Canada, provides administrative support to the Convention under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program. The Secretariat also manages an electronic clearing-house mechanism to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation (http://www.biodiv.org/).

The Conference of the Parties to the CBD adopted a supplementary agreement to the Convention known as the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety on January 29, 2000, which later came into force on September 11, 2003. The 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 Los Cabos, Mexico, in December 2016.

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

Basic Instrument
The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as CMS or the Bonn Convention)

Member Nations
As of November 2014, 120 nations are party to the CMS. The United States has not signed.

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 2017.

Web address:
http://www.cms.int/

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

Basis Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531-43)

Member Nations

There are 180 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 Darussalem, 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, 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, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Lybian Arab Jamahiriya, 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, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

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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 shaks, 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:

Provides for international cooperation for the protection of certain species of wild fauna and flora against over-exploitation through international trade.

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:

Under CITES, species are listed in Appendices according to their conservation status. In addition, listed species must meet the test that trade is at least in part contributing to their decline. Appendix I species, for which there is no international trade permitted, are "threatened with extinction." Appendix II species are "not necessarily threatened with extinction," but may become so unless trade is strictly regulated. This regulation usually takes the form of a requirement for documentation from the country of export, monitoring of imports and, in some cases, export quotas. Imports from countries which are not CITES members still require what is called "CITES-equivalent documentation." Appendix III includes all species which any Party identifies as being subject to regulation within its jurisdiction for the purpose of preventing or restricting exploitation, and as needing the cooperation of other Parties in the control of trade.

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 in order that they might avoid being listed in Appendix I.

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.”

Recent Activities

The Sixteenth Meeting of the CoP (CoP16) met in Bangkok, Thailand, 3-14 March 2013. Delegations from over 170 Party countries came together to deliberate actions to address the international trade of polar bears, several shark species, manta rays, freshwater sawfish, freshwater stingrays, freshwater turtles, and many other species. The meeting was historic since CITES Parties agreed to list several commercially harvested shark species in Appendix II of CITES for the first time: oceanic whitetip shark, three species of hammerhead sharks (scalloped, great, and smooth), and porbeagle shark. Manta rays were also included in Appendix II at CoP16. Freshwater sawfish and the West African manatee were transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I.

Other U.S. priorities related to marine issues considered at the meeting included a resolution regarding implementation of the permitting requirements for species that are taken on the high seas, proposals to improve transparency during meetings of the CoP through amendment to the use of secret ballots, and the criteria for listing commercially exploited aquatic species in CITES. Another issue of importance was the potential conflict of interest in the Animals and Plants Committees of CITES. More details on these issues can be found below.

Sharks: Several proposals to list shark species in Appendix II of CITES were considered at CoP16. These species were proposed for listing since they had experienced significant declines and international trade was considered to be driving their decline. The oceanic whitetip shark and the scalloped hammerhead shark were proposed for listing at CoP15 and were determined by the 2012 FAO Expert Advisory Panel to meet the biological criteria for listing commercially exploited marine species in Appendix II. Porbeagle shark was proposed for listing at CoP14 and CoP15, and a majority of the FAO Expert Advisory Panel agreed that the species meets the biological criteria for listing in Appendix II.

Oceanic whitetip shark: The United States joined Brazil in co-sponsoring a proposal by Colombia to list oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) in Appendix II of CITES with an annotation to delay the entry into effect by 18 months to resolve technical and administrative issues. The committee voted on the proposal by secret ballot, as requested by Japan and at least 10 other CITES Parties. The proposal passed with 92 votes in favor of the proposal, 42 against, and 8 abstentions. In Plenary, Japan (joined by Gambia and India) proposed to re-open discussion of the proposal (which would have required another vote to adopt the proposal by 2/3 of the CITES Parties) and requested a vote by secret ballot. Colombia, supported by Senegal, opposed re-opening the discussion since the proposal had been thoroughly addressed in committee and the decision to support the proposal reflected the will of the majority of CITES Parties. After several procedural issues were raised, the motion to re-open the debate on this proposal was rejected, with 44 CITES Parties voting yes, 93 voting no, and 4 abstaining. Subsequently, the proposal was adopted, and a large number of CITES Parties publicly announced their votes, with several citing transparency as their motivation for disclosing their positions.

Hammerhead sharks: Brazil, Costa Rica, and Honduras introduced a proposal (co-sponsored by Croatia, the EU, Mexico, and Ecuador) to list scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) on Appendix II, with great hammerhead shark (*S. mokarran*) and smooth hammerhead shark (*S. zygaena*) included as look-alike species. The proposal included an annotation to delay the entry into effect by 18 months. The committee voted on the proposal by secret ballot at China's request. The proposal passed with 91 CITES Parties voting in favor of the proposal, 39 against, and 8 abstaining. In Plenary, Grenada (joined by China) proposed a motion to re-open discussion of the proposal and requested a secret ballot. Mexico and Honduras spoke against re-opening the discussion. The motion to re-open the debate on this proposal was rejected, with 40 CITES Parties voting yes, 96 voting no, and 6 abstaining. The proposal was adopted, and a large number of CITES Parties publicly announced their votes.

Porbeagle shark: The EU, joined by Egypt, Comoros, and Brazil as co-proponents, proposed to list porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*) in Appendix II of CITES with an annotation to delay the entry into effect by 18 months. The committee voted on the proposal by secret ballot, as requested by Guinea. The proposal passed with 93 CITES Parties voting in favor of the proposal, 39 against, and 8 abstaining. In Plenary, the proposal was adopted. Afterward, China requested the CITES Secretariat include a statement on the record that it had great concerns on the enforceability and implementation of the proposal. China stated that it would be extremely difficult to implement the proposal and requested that the proponents prepare and make available identification material to assist the CITES Parties.

Many CITES Parties who publicly supported one or more of the proposals to list sharks in Appendix II of CITES (including Australia, Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland on behalf the EU and its Member States and Croatia, Liberia, Maldives, Mali, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Switzerland, the United States, Yemen, and several Latin American countries) stated that the proposals were justified by scientific criteria; inclusion of these species in Appendix II of CITES would complement measures taken domestically and by Regional Fishery Management Organizations; and the findings required for a CITES listing would allow international trade in sharks to continue in a sustainable manner and help combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing of sharks. CITES Parties who publicly opposed one or more of these proposals (including Iceland, Japan, China, Ghana, Guinea, India, Mozambique on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Thailand) stated that shark measures have already been adopted by Regional Fishery Management Organizations; the proposals would be challenging to implement, particularly based on problems identifying

shark products in trade and perceived difficulty making the necessary findings for export; and there would be negative consequences for the livelihoods of coastal communities.

Other Species Proposals of Interest:

Manta rays: Ecuador proposed to list manta rays (including *Manta birostris*, *Manta alfredi* and any other possible species of *Manta*) in Appendix II of CITES with an annotation to delay its entry into effect by 18 months. The proposal was brought forward due to concerns regarding the low rates of reproduction of manta rays and high vulnerability due to growing demand in international trade for the gill plates of these species. Countries that publicly supported the proposal included Ireland on behalf of the EU and its Member States and Croatia, Mozambique on behalf of the SADC, Uruguay, Liberia, and Thailand. Other CITES Parties (including Cambodia, China, and Japan) spoke out against the proposal, pointing to a lack of scientific data and failure of proponent countries to request conservation measures for the species by the relevant Regional Fishery Management Organizations. The committee voted by secret ballot, as requested by Cambodia. The proposal passed with 96 CITES Parties voting in favor, 23 votes against, and 7 abstaining. The proposal was subsequently adopted in Plenary.

Freshwater sawfish: Australia brought forward a proposal to transfer freshwater sawfish (*Pristis microdon*) from Appendix II to Appendix I. The proposal was brought forward to provide the same protection to freshwater sawfish provided to other species of the Pristidae family (which are already listed in Appendix I) and help facilitate enforcement due to look-alike issues. A study conducted by the Australian government in 2011 demonstrated that the species warrants greater protection under CITES. Many CITES Parties spoke in favor of the proposal, including India, Indonesia, Kenya, the United States, Samoa, and Sierra Leone. Japan explained that it doubts the benefits of the uplisting, but it did not want to block consensus. The proposal was accepted by the committee and adopted in Plenary.

Freshwater Stingrays: Colombia introduced a proposal to list the Ceja river stingray (*Paratrygon aiereba*) in Appendix II of CITES with an annotation to delay entry into effect by 18 months. Ecuador, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Madagascar supported the proposal. Ireland on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States and Croatia, opposed the proposal, based on a lack of information and recommended an Appendix III listing of the species. The committee did not accept the proposal with 51 CITES Parties voting in favor, 51 voting against, and 19 abstentions.

Colombia also introduced a proposal, which was co-sponsored by Ecuador, to list the Ocellate river stingray (*P. motoro*) and the Rosette river stingray (*P. schroederi*) in Appendix II of CITES. This proposal also had an annotation to delay the entry into effect by 18 months. Argentina, Brazil, Senegal, Uruguay, the United States, and Venezuela spoke publicly in support of the proposal. However, Guayana, Ireland on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States and Croatia, and Paraguay opposed the proposal and recommended an Appendix III listing instead. The committee did not accept the proposal with 55 CITES Parties voting in favor, 52 voting against, and 25 abstaining.

The freshwater stingray proposals had been brought forward to help ensure that the growing international trade in these species for ornamental purposes and other commercial purposes was sustainable. Although there was recognition that a lack of data existed, the proponents cited the need for precautionary action and international controls on trade. In Plenary, Colombia noted that they did not wish to contest the committee's decisions. Colombia requested, however, that the CITES Parties adopt a decision that would help with data collection and advance progress in addressing the international trade of these species. A proposed decision, brought forward by Colombia, was presented directing the CITES Secretariat to establish a working group with the range States to gather information on the management status and trade of these freshwater stingrays, and encourage States to participate in research and monitoring programs. Several CITES Parties supported the proposed decision, including Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Ireland on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States and Croatia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Senegal, the United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The decision was adopted by the CITES Parties.

Introduction from the Sea: The United States has been working with other CITES Parties for years to resolve the permitting requirements for CITES-listed species that are taken on the high seas, referred to as "introduction from the sea." A resolution, adopted at CoP14 and revised at CoP15, addressed some aspects of introduction from the sea. Since CoP15, a CITES Working Group on Introduction from the Sea developed an innovative framework for implementation. This overall framework, which was agreed by the Working Group and endorsed by the CITES Standing Committee in 2011, was proposed as a revised resolution for consideration by the CITES Parties at CoP16.

Within the framework of the resolution considered at CoP16, if a vessel harvests CITES-listed specimens on the high seas and delivers them to the same country in which it is flagged, Parties will treat the transaction as an introduction from the sea and issue an introduction-from-the-sea certificate**.** Under this scenario, there is only one country involved in the trade. If there is more than one country involved in the trade (the vessel that harvests the specimens delivers them to a country other than the country to which it is flagged), CITES Parties will treat the transaction as an export and require the issuance of an export permit by the country to which the harvesting vessel is flagged.

Under an exception to accommodate some chartering arrangements, when one country charters a vessel flagged to another country and that vessel harvests CITES-listed specimens on the high seas, the two countries involved could reach an agreement to allow the country that chartered the vessel to issue an introduction-from-the-sea certificate (instead of having the country to which the vessel is flagged issue an export permit). This narrow exception would only be allowed for chartering arrangements under specific conditions, including being consistent with the framework for chartering of a relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organization/Arrangement.

In addition to the revised resolution on introduction from the sea, the CITES Working Group on Introduction from the Sea proposed amendments to the resolution on permits and certificates that would create a source code for CITES listed specimens taken in the marine environment beyond the jurisdiction of any State and a draft decision that would require a report at the next two meetings of the CITES Standing Committee on implementation of the resolution as it relates to chartering arrangements. During CoP16, the EU proposed changes to the draft decision and developed alternative text in cooperation with the working group membership.

Despite substantial support for the resolution, China and India opposed adoption of the documents prepared by the working group, and Argentina objected to some of the text related to Regional Fisheries Management Organizations. When a vote was called in committee, the revised resolutions and draft decision were adopted with 56 CITES Parties voting in favor, 15 opposed, and 14 abstaining. These documents, which were adopted by the CITES Parties in Plenary, will help provide greater certainty and consistency in the permitting of several shark species that were listed in Appendix II at the meeting.

Listing Criteria for Commercially Exploited Aquatic Species: The United States worked with membership of the Animals Committee Working Group on Criteria to help provide guidance on the application of the CITES listing criteria. The Working Group's efforts were specially aimed at providing guidance on the application of Annex 2a criterion B and the introductory text to Annex 2a of the resolution on the criteria for the inclusion of species in Appendices I and II to commercially exploited aquatic species. The Animals Committee found that it was not possible to provide guidance on a single approach, and the Standing Committee concurred with this finding. The CITES Parties agreed with these outcomes and did not require that further actions be taken on the issue of the listing criteria as they apply to commercially exploited aquatic species.

Transparency in Voting: Ireland, on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States and Croatia, introduced a proposal to improve transparency of voting during meetings of the CoP and help curb the increased use of secret ballots in non-administrative matters. The use of secret ballots has increased since CoP9 in 1994 when the pertinent rule over use of the secret ballot was amended from requiring a simple majority to requiring the support of only 10 countries. Votes on proposals to list commercially exploited aquatic species in CITES are frequently conducted by secret ballot. The EU proposal would have amended the rule on methods of voting (Rule 25) to require: (1) a simple majority of CITES Parties to support a vote by secret ballot, and (2) that a motion for a secret ballot not be decided by secret ballot. After substantial discussion, Colombia proposed an amendment to the EU proposal to increase the threshold of CITES Parties requesting a secret ballot from 10 to 40. Mexico and Chile also introduced a proposal to amend the rule on methods of voting and increase transparency. Their proposal would have increased the quorum requesting a secret ballot to one-third of CITES Parties and require that a motion for a secret ballot not be decided by secret ballot. The United States proposed an amendment to the Mexico-Chile proposal, which would have required 25 votes for use of a secret ballot. None of the proposals to amend the use of secret ballots was adopted at the meeting.

Potential Conflicts of Interest in CITES Animals and Plants Committees: Ireland, on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States and Croatia, introduced a proposal stating that candidates to the CITES Animals and Plants Committees should disclose any current or past professional, financial, or other interest that could call into question their impartiality, objectivity, or independence in carrying out their duties. This information would be made publicly available, and when a committee member or the Secretariat considers the candidate has an interest that could call into question their impartiality, the committee should be informed in advance, as the concerned member may participate in the discussion but

not in decision making on that subject. The issue of conflict of interest arose after an investigative report was released in March 2012 and the CITES Secretariat was petitioned to remove an alternate Asian regional representative to the CITES Animals Committee who represents the shark fin trade industry and was viewed as having a conflict of interest.

A decision was adopted at CoP16 which, among other things, defines a conflict of interest as a current financial interest that could significantly impair the individual's impartiality, objectivity, or independence in carrying out his or her duties as a member of the CITES Animals or Plants Committee; request candidates proposed as members or alternate members provide their curriculum vitae and a declaration of interest that discloses any current financial interest for circulation to the CITES Parties of the region prior to their election; if a member declares any interests that he or she thinks would call into question his or her impartiality, objectivity, or independence regarding any subject on the agenda for that meeting, he or she may take part in discussions but not in decision-making regarding the agenda item in question and may not chair the meeting for the agenda item. A decision was also adopted that calls on the CITES Standing Committee to assess the functioning of the conflict of interest policy and make recommendations for CoP17; and the CITES Secretariat to compile examples of conflict of interest procedures under other relevant agreements and organizations and to prepare a report for the next meeting of the CITES Standing Committee.

Other Actions on Marine Issues of Interest: Decisions were also adopted by the CITES Parties that will help advance regional cooperation in the management and trade of queen conch; direct the CITES Secretariat to collaborate with the Secretariat of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles; help ensure that the international trade of sharks and rays is legal and sustainable; and call on CITES Parties to investigate reported violations in relation to the trade of humphead wrasse and take appropriate enforcement actions. A revised resolution was adopted by CITES Parties that calls on range States of sturgeon and paddlefish species to, among other actions, collaborate in the development and implementation of strategies for the conservation and management of shared stocks and help ensure sustainable fishing. A report of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources on toothfish was noted by the CITES Parties, and a decision was repealed that required the Animals Committee to evaluate an FAO report on the sustainable use and management of sea cucumber fisheries and recommend appropriate follow-up actions since this decision was deemed fulfilled.

ICCAT-CITES Cooperation: The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) adopted guidelines to encourage information sharing between ICCAT and CITES and to foster better understanding of their respective work. These guidelines were endorsed and accepted by the CITES Standing Committee (SC62) at their meeting in July 2012.

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International Whaling Commission (IWC)

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

There are currently 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.

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Budget

The Commission approved a budget of approximately £1,906,600 (British Pounds) for 2015. The United States contribution for September 2014-December 2015 amounts to approximately £111,500 (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:

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Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries
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Deputy U.S. Commissioner:

Mr. Ryan Wulff
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National Marine Fisheries Service
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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 65th meeting of the IWC was held in Slovenia in September 2014. The 66th meeting of the IWC will be in September/October of 2016 in a location yet to be determined.

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PART II: BILATERAL CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

NORTH AMERICA

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

Basic Instrument

None

Authorities

Magnuson-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

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 Gatineau, Quebec, Canada during 2-3 July 2014, 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 Washington, DC, during summer 2015.

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

Basic Instrument

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

Authorities

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

Member Nations

United States and Canada

Meetings

Bilateral meetings are held, often on the margins of multilateral events, to review past practices and discuss new standards, policies, and strategies for cooperation.

Description

The United States enjoys a very 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 USCG, 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 our relationship a model of bilateral cooperation.

The United States desires to continue the excellent work at regional levels to develop increased opportunities for at-sea fisheries enforcement cooperation with our Canadian counterparts. Specifically, the USCG and NOAA are interested in maintaining continued close collaboration on regionally specific at-sea enforcement issues, particularly along international boundaries, as well as increasing 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 North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), and the newly negotiated North Pacific Fisheries Commission when it enters into force.

Recent Activities

New England

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) is the RFMO responsible for managing most of the fishery resources in the high seas area of the Northwest Atlantic bordering the EEZs of the United States, Canada and Greenland.

NOAA Special Agents in conjunction with officers from Customs and Border Patrol, the US Coast Guard and US Fish and Wildlife, conducted an operation at the Calias, Maine Port of Entry, which is located on the US/Canadian Border. This operation resulted in the inspection of 12 trucks and 15 shipments. A total of ten violations resulted from that enforcement operation.

The Northeast Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Team, within the Office of Law Enforcement, monitored the activities and maintained communications with the two U.S.-registered vessels participating in the NAFO fishery for 2013 and 2014. 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 OLE's monitoring application for direct access by the NAFO Secretariat. The catch data was also made available to the NMFS Greater Atlantic Region in order to track landings and discards. From October 1, 2013 through November 20, 2014, a total of 235 NAFO catch reports were submitted. This was the third consecutive year for U.S. vessel and OLE participation in this international program.

DFO and Office of Law Enforcement (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 US Fish and Wildlife, US Customs and Border Protection, and the Canadian Seafood Inspection Agency.

Oregon/Washington

The primary threat for illegal incursions in the Pacific Northwest occurs in the vicinity of the San Juan Islands during the crab season. Through successful collaboration between DFO and NOAA state partner agencies, numerous illegal crabbing operations were discovered and managed. The majority of US/CA coordination in this region occurs through bilateral treaties. The US/CA Albacore Treaty reciprocal fishing Agreement annexes were renegotiated in 2013 for one year with the annexes expiring in 2014. The enforcement coordination between USCG, NOAA, and DFO is vital to maintaining the treaty and will be key for subsequent agreements. LE collaborators have worked towards ensuring proper seafood labeling at the Port of Entry (POE). Beyond fisheries, the USCG, NOAA, and DFO partnered to develop complimentary cross-border regulations to support the recovery of the endangered population of Southern Resident Orca whales. In 2011, NOAA implemented new approach regulations for the Orca population.

North Pacific Ocean (high seas)

NOAA OLE meets annually with DFO representatives at the Dixon Entrance meeting to share information and discuss cooperative efforts along the maritime border between Alaska and Canada. In 2011, NOAA also coordinated 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. In 2014, USCG District 17 and the DFO worked collaboratively in investigating EEZ incursions along the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary Line. This collaboration is necessary to ensure amicable and equitable enforcement of sovereignty and fisheries regulations.

NOAA Special Agents in conjunction with officers from Customs and Border Patrol and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducted an operation at the Dalton Cache, Alaska Port of Entry, which is located on the U.S./Canadian border. This operation resulted in the inspection of 72 conveyances. Several warnings were issued by USFWS for possession of wildlife parts for personal use and COPPS outreach was conducted with the public concerning import / export requirements of fish and wildlife parts.

As in past years, Canada (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 Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing enforcement efforts targeting HSDN fishing and to meet obligations under the NPAFC. These flights are closely coordinated with the high seas enforcement operations of North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (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 US 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, it is a general understanding by enforcement officials on each side that the flag state is responsible for controlling the activity of and taking appropriate law enforcement actions upon their vessels.

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United States-Mexico Fisheries Cooperation Program

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

United States and Mexico

Budget

There are no funds specifically budgeted for the program; costs are assumed in the operating budgets of the participating NOAA Fisheries offices. Annual costs of the program including staff time, travel, translation services, and miscellaneous expenses which total about $60,000 annually, during years when Fishery Cooperation Talks (FCTs) occur. 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 turtles and 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, WTO and the UNGA are also discussed.

D. Meetings

The most recent FCP meetings were held July 23-24, 2014, in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico, along with meetings of the MEXUS-Golfo and MEXUS- Pacífico scientific working groups. Prior to this, the last FCT meetings were held on August 20-22, 2013, in La Jolla, California. The delegations to the FTC meeting discussed sustainable fisheries management, the protection and conservation of species such as sea turtles, enforcement cooperation, aquaculture, 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 scheduled to convene in mid-2015.

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SOUTH AMERICA

United States-Chile Fisheries Cooperation Program

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

The United States and Chile

Budget

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

Representation

The meetings are coordinated by NOAA Fisheries Service and SERNAPESCA. Both agencies often invite other agencies to participate in the meetings. NOAA Fisheries Service has invited representatives from other NOAA line offices, the Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Coast Guard, and the State Department. SERNAPESCA routinely invites other units of the Ministerio de Economía (the Subsecretaría de Pesca and the Instituto de Fomento Pesquero) as well as industry representatives. SERNAPESCA has also invited representatives of the Chilean Navy and Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (Foreign Ministry) to attend some sessions.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The participants have agreed to periodically review the United States-Chilean fisheries relationship. The resulting Fishery Cooperation Talks (FCT) provide a forum for U.S. and Chilean fishery officials to review fishery issues of mutual concern. Formal and informal sessions provide opportunities to exchange information and discuss major issues, resulting in a frank exchange of views and information.

B. Programs:

NOAA Fisheries and SERNAPESCA agreed to hold annual meetings during the first few years of the cooperative program. The two Parties now intend to meet every 18-24 months. Recent meetings have included discussions on management, enforcement, recreational fisheries, marine mammals and endangered species, research, environment, aquaculture, and information exchange. The meetings help to inform participants of national programs affecting the other country.

C. Conservation and Management Measures:

Conservation and management issues are generally the major topics discussed at the meetings. The protection of marine mammals was initially the primary focus of the meetings and continues to be an important element. NOAA Fisheries Service has additionally raised some concerns about Pacific sea turtles, especially leatherbacks. Other important conservation and management issues discussed include enforcement, management strategies and systems, and recreational

fishing. Discussions on these issues as well as information exchanges and visits have enabled NOAA Fisheries and Chilean fishery agencies to exchange ideas and experiences in formulating domestic policies as well as to work further on species of mutual interest.

D. 2011 Meeting:

The most recent (Tenth) Fishery Cooperation Talks between fishery officials of the United States and Chile were convened in Viña del Mar, Chile, 19-20 April 2011. The Chilean delegation included representatives of units of the Fisheries Under-Secretariat (SUBPESCA), the National Fisheries Service (SERNAPESCA), the Fisheries Development Institute (IFOP), and the Chilean Navy (General Directorate of Maritime Territory and the Merchant Marine). The U.S. Delegation included participants from various NOAA Fisheries Service, aquaculture experts from USDA-APHIS and representatives of Embassy Santiago. The discussions explored cooperative efforts in six major issue areas: (1) research, (2) enforcement, (3) administrative/management, (4) multilateral initiatives, (5) aquaculture, and (6) environment. The two Parties are in the process of updating the MOU that provides a workplan for our cooperation.

Future Meetings

The next United States-Chile Fishery Cooperation Talk will convene 15-18 June, 2015, at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, in La Jolla, California.

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ASIA

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

None.

Member Nations

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

Meetings

Representatives meet periodically in the United States or China.

Description

For over two decades, the U.S. Coast Guard, in conjunction with the National Marine Fisheries Service, has embarked members of China's Fisheries Law Enforcement Command (FLEC) 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 2013 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 FLEC, 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's FLEC 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 MORGENTHAU hosted six shipriders from China CG fisheries law enforcement officers in 2014, including the first female Chinese CG officer to deploy with the USCG. Two Chinese shipriders worked closely with the crew of the MORGENTHAU to successfully interdict, seize, escort, and transfer a suspected high seas drift net vessel to the China Coast Guard.

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

Basic Instrument

The basic instrument establishing U.S.-Taiwan cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in the United States Concerning Cooperation in Fisheries and Aquaculture. The MOU was originally signed by AIT and TECRO on July 30, 2002. Due to its five-year duration, it was renewed for on April 21, 2008. A third renewal of the MOU was signed in June 2013, again for a duration of five years.

Members

The United States and Taiwan

Meetings

The Parties (AIT and TECRO) agreed that their designated representatives will consult periodically, either in the United States or Taiwan.

U.S. Representation

The designated representatives for AIT are the National Marine Fisheries Service (U.S. Department of Commerce), the U.S. Coast Guard (Department of Homeland Security), and the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (U.S. Department of State).

Description

The United States began negotiating the MOU between AIT and TECRO in July 2000 to address problems associated with (1) Taiwan's inability, due to its political status as a non-state, to become party to a number of international fisheries treaties and regional organizations, and (2) 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 and James Sha, Director-General of the Fisheries Agency of Taiwan, continues as Head of Delegation for Taiwan. Other negotiators for the U.S. delegation include Bill Gibbons-Fly, DOS, and DAS Russell F. Smith III, NOAA. For Taiwan, Dr. Grace Lih-Fang Lin, TECRO, 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.

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EUROPE

Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Mutual Fisheries Relations
Basic Instrument for the U.S.-Russia Intergovernmental Consultative Committee (ICC)

Basic Instrument

Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Mutual Fisheries Relations of May 31, 1988, as amended (TIAS 11442, the U.S.-Soviet Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement). Note: The obligations of the former Soviet Union under this agreement have devolved on the Russian Federation.

Implementing Legislation

Public Law 100-629 (An untitled Act that implemented the Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement. Enacted November 7, 1988).

Member Nations

The United States and the Russian Federation.

Meetings

The ICC meets alternately in the United States and Russia on an annual basis, at the discretion of the heads of delegation.

U.S. Representation

Under the Rules of Procedure established for the ICC, the United States and Russia designate a Representative and an Alternate Representative. The current U.S. Representative is Ambassador David Balton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and Fisheries Affairs. The United States has not identified an Alternate Representative.

Pursuant to Section 5 of Public Law 100-629, a 12-member "North Pacific and Bering Sea Fisheries Advisory Body" was established to advise the U.S. Representative to the ICC. This body consists of the following individuals:

(A) The Director of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife of the State of Washington;
(B) The Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game of the State of Alaska;
(C) Five members appointed by the Secretary of State from a list of ten nominees provided by the Governor of Alaska; and,
(D) Five members appointed by the Secretary of State from a list of ten nominees provided by the Governor of Washington.

The current North Pacific and Bering Sea Advisory Body Representatives are:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Representative:

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
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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 24th Session of the ICC on Fisheries in Girdwood, Alaska, on September 11-13, 2013. The Russian delegation was led by Dr. Vasily Sokolov, Deputy Head, Federal Fisheries Agency of the Russian Federation, and 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.

Both sides reported on bilateral cooperation, including research, on the condition of Bering Sea and Sea of Okhotsk pollock stocks, marine mammals, and sea birds.

Status of Bering Sea Pollock Stocks**:** The United States presented the status of major groundfish stocks, with emphasis on pollock, in the U.S. EEZ. These stocks cover the eastern Bering Sea (EBS), the Aleutians and the Bogoslof Island areas. All groundfish stock in the EBS and Aleutians are essentially in the safe "not overfished/not overfishing zone" according to Kobe status of stocks plots. The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for EBS pollock was 1.14 million t in 2014.

Russia gave a presentation on the results of Russian studies of pollock in the Bering Sea conducted during the inter-sessional period from July 2013 to August 2014. It was noted that in the Western Bering Sea pollock stocks from the 2006- 2008 year classes were above average and 2009-2012 year classes had average abundance. Studies of Navarin pollock showed that this stock has stabilized. According to the modeling data, and by using a precautionary approach, the TAC for 2014 will be 430,000 t. Due to the absence of abundant year classes of Karagin pollock in recent years, the TAC for 2014 will be 11,500 tons.

Marine Mammals:

Status of Walruses**:** The United States reported on the status of the multi-year, genetics-based, capture-mark-recapture project for estimation of abundance and demographic rates (i.e., survival and -fecundity) of Pacific walruses. The study was initiated in 2013 and the 2nd joint walrus research cruise was recently completed. In 2014, two Russian scientists joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on this research cruise. This study requires the annual collection of a large number of skin

biopsy samples from a representative sample of the walrus population and therefore sample collection must occur in both the United States and Russia. The United States proposed to conduct a joint U.S.-Russian research cruise in 2015 to collect skin biopsy samples from Pacific walruses hauled out on sea ice in the Bering and Chukchi Seas in both the United States and Russia. Russia reported on the research on Pacific walruses conducted in the Chukotka rookeries.

Status of Steller Sea Lions and Northern Fur Seals**:** The United States presented research on the status of domestic and trans-boundary pinniped stocks. Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) comprise three main stocks: Asian, western, and eastern north Pacific. The largest rookeries and major haulouts in the western population occur in the eastern Aleutians and western Gulf of Alaska. Between 1990 and 2013, the eastern stock increased 3 percent per year, and this stock was delisted from the U.S. endangered species list in 2014. The population trends of northern fur seals in U.S. waters have been different for different geographic areas. The United States presented preliminary results of the very successful joint U.S.-Russia Bering-Okhotsk Seal Survey (BOSS) project. In the spring of 2012 and 2013, NOAA's National Marine Mammal Laboratory conducted abundance and distribution surveys for ice-associated seals in the Bering Sea (ribbon, spotted, bearded, and ringed seals). The joint U.S.-Russian team is currently discussing plans to undertake synoptic aerial surveys of ice seals in the Chukchi Sea in the spring of 2016.

Status of Crab Species**:** The United States provided an update on the stock status of the major Bering Sea crab stocks, including snow crab, red, golden and blue king crab, and Tanner crab. The biomass of Bering Sea snow crab has decreased in recent years but remains close to its estimated target stock size. The Bering Sea Tanner crab stock biomass is above the target level but has declined in recent years. The Bristol Bay red king crab stock has been in a consistent decline for multiple years. The Norton Sound red king crab stock is a small red king crab stock with a mature biomass of approximately 3.72 million pounds. The Saint Matthew blue king crab stock has declined from a mature biomass estimate in 2012 of 15.8 million pounds to 6.64 million pounds in 2013. The Pribilof Islands blue king crab stock remains overfished. The estimated biomass is at 0.6 million pounds and only 7 percent of its target stock size. The Pribilof Islands red king crab is also closed to directed fishing due to concerns regarding the incidental bycatch of blue king crab in the red king crab fishery. Recent surveys show no indication of recruitment to this stock. There is no stock assessment model for the Aleutian Island golden king crab stock and thus no estimates of stock biomass. A stock assessment model is under development.

Russia reported stock assessment data for crabs in the western Bering Sea. Stocks are currently stable and there is a trend toward an increase in abundance. Total annual catch in the last few years was below TAC.

Status of Seabirds**:** The U.S. delegation reported on seabird bycatch trends in the Alaska groundfish fisheries and efforts undertaken to reduce the bycatch and provided an update on the endangered short-tailed albatross. Bycatch reduction efforts have progressed in the U.S. West Coast groundfish fisheries in response to the 2011 take of an endangered short-tailed albatross. The U.S. side also reported on the status of Kittlitz's murrelet, whose breeding range is limited to Alaska and the Russian Far East. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is working with Russian and American scientists to gain a better understanding of the species status and population size, particularly in the Russian portion of the Bering Sea. Sources of anthropogenic mortality have been identified—e.g. gillnet fisheries and oil spills. The Alaska Marine Mammal Observer Program has documented bycatch of Kittlitz's murrelet in several Alaska gillnet fisheries. The United States and Russia share many seabird resources and collaborations in areas such as bycatch assessment and reduction and at-sea surveys are possible and important.

Russia reported on the results of its sea bird bycatch studies, and the effectiveness of using streamers in the Russian long line fisheries, conducted in the last few years by KamchatNIRO, ChukotTINRO, and the Kamchatka branch of the Far East Academy of Science. The use of streamers helped reduce bycatch of sea birds, including rare species, and increased the efficiency of long-line fisheries. Following studies will include investigations of sea birds bycatch in other types of fisheries, as well as abundance assessment of sea birds on the Russian side of the Bering and Chukchi Seas.

Status of Joint Research Planning, Data Exchanges, and Surveys**:** The United States provided an update on activities of cooperative research planning, data exchanges, and surveys agreed in March 2013 by TINRO and the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC). The research covered four themes: surveys, biology and lab techniques, pollock stock assessment with data exchanges, and other information exchanges. The year 2014 marked the 3rd year of U.S.-Russia survey coordination. The two sides agreed on survey gear and techniques, exchange of survey data, and coordinated the following e surveys: (a) Russian Acoustic-Trawl (AT) surveys (Oct 2012, August 2013, and Sep 2014) that entered the U.S. EEZ, (b) U.S. AT surveys (July 12, Aug 14) that entered the Russian EEZ, and (c) U.S. Bottom Trawl surveys (July 12, 13 and 14). Going forward, TINRO and the AFSC agreed to analyze the data from these surveys jointly.

Exchange of Information on Fisheries Enforcement Cooperation**:** The United States Coast Guard representative provided an overview of joint fisheries law enforcement activities conducted with the Kamchatka Region Border Directorate of the Russian FSB. These joint efforts were focused on combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in the areas adjacent to the Maritime Boundary Line between the Russian Federation and the United States in the Bering Sea, as well as the activities designed to decrease the substantial illegal driftnet fishing in the northern part of the Pacific Ocean. On the whole, the coordination and cooperation between the Coast Guard's 17th District and the Border Directorate of the Russian FSB Kamchatka Region in the 2013-14 period deserved high marks.

The representative of the Russian FSB Border Service described the activities undertaken by the Russian FSB authorities in the areas adjacent to the Maritime Boundary Line between the Russian Federation and the United States in the Bering Sea, including the work conducted jointly with U.S. Coast Guard District 17, as well as its activities aimed at fulfilling the international schedule for use of its forces in protecting the Convention Area designated to protect the anadromous fish resources in the northern part of the Pacific Ocean in 2014.

Arctic Fisheries: The United States, as a coastal Arctic state, expressed support for developing a multilateral cooperative scientific research program to focus on changes and potential for fisheries in the central Arctic Ocean. Russia and the United States expressed the desire to explore new opportunities for cooperation in each country's EEZ in the Arctic Ocean and on transboundary fish and marine mammal populations.

Regarding the U.S. proposed Arctic fisheries agreement, U.S. Ambassador Balton reviewed the efforts being made to prevent unregulated fishing in the high seas portion of the Central Arctic Ocean. He noted his belief that the United States and the Russian Federation should be natural allies on this issue, given their shared experience of the collapse of the central Bering Sea Pollock fishery due to unregulated fishing in that area. He reminded the Russia side that it had not yet provided comments on the draft Ministerial Declaration that was envisioned at the Nuuk, Greenland meeting in February. The Russian side indicated that it would soon provide comments on the text of the draft Declaration.

Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources – Ross Sea MPA: The United States continues to seek the creation of a marine protected area in the Ross Sea off of Antarctica. Despite considerable changes to the proposal based on advice from CCAMLR Members and its Scientific Committee we have not been able to make further progress on this. All other members of CCAMLR are willing to move forward, Ambassador Balton urged the Russian side to show flexibility to agree to some reasonable version of our proposal. The proposed marine protected area is now about 40 percent smaller than the United States and New Zealand originally proposed. The United States also made clear that fishing activity that is displaced from within the area would be redistributed to other areas, including areas that currently have a zero catch limit. The United States also reiterated that fishing for scientific research pursuant to CCAMLR measures would be allowed everywhere within the marine protected area. In a further effort to meet Russia's concerns, the United States is willing to discuss the possibility of allowing a limited amount of additional fishing on the Ross Sea slope in an area currently proposed only to allow research fishing. The U.S. party indicated that Russia had previously expressed a strong interest in this. The United States is looking forward to receiving comments from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the idea for additional fishing on the Ross Sea slope.

The Russian side reported its national position concerning the boundaries, duration and international jurisdictional status of a proposed marine protected area in the Ross Sea and noted the negative consequences for fisheries in case such an area is created. The Russian side confirmed its readiness to participate in the discussion of the U.S./New Zealand proposal concerning the establishment of a marine protected area in the CCAMLR area.

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas: The United States said that it understood that the Russian Federation may be interested in increasing its presence in ICCAT fisheries in the future and it looks forward to working within ICCAT to make sure this is done in a manner that ensures long term sustainability of managed stocks. Furthermore, the ICCAT Parties are in the process of updating the Convention to ensure that it incorporates modern concepts such as the precautionary approach, ecosystem management, and increased transparency are included. The United States looks forward to making additional progress with its colleagues from the Russian Federation at the 2014 Annual Meeting. The Russian side confirmed its interest in discussing problems of mutual interest at the next ICCAT meeting.

North Pacific Fisheries Commission: The United States congratulated the Russian Federation for completing its ratification process and becoming the third party to finalize and deposit their instruments for ratification. The U.S. Senate has provided advice and consent for the Convention and the Congress is currently evaluating implementing legislation for the treaty. The

U.S. was pleased with the outcomes of the Preparatory Conference, Scientific Working Group, and Technical and Compliance Working Group meetings held in Tokyo in March 2014. Upon receipt of the next instrument for ratification, the United States looks forward to working closely with the Secretariat and other parties as the Commission finalizes the Preparatory Conference, selects an Executive Secretary, and begins to start work on monitoring, control, and surveillance measures and science-based management measures to conserve fish stocks and minimize impacts to Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems.

Russia pointed out that it continues to develop cooperation with the United States and other Commission members in the field of fishery control and conservation of fishery resources in the North Pacific.

Potential Opportunities for Cooperative Research and Data Exchange:: The United States gave a presentation on potential opportunities for cooperative research between the two Countries relating to fisheries, habitat, and ecosystem processes in the Chukchi and Northern Bering Sea that may include ice seal surveys, walrus research, a general data sharing plan, and expansion of the BASIS survey into the Chukchi Sea. Both parties agreed that salmon would be the focus of discussion under this agenda item at the 2015 ICC meeting. The United States invited the Russian survey planners to the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle in early 2015 to plan a cooperative program under this ICC arrangement. Further details of this meeting can be arranged by email. Scientists from the Russian Federation accepted the invitation.

Discussion of the IUU and the Associated Shiprider Agreements: The United States and the Russian Federation completed negotiation of the text of the "Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the United States of America on Cooperation for the Purposes of Preventing, Deterring, and Eliminating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Harvesting of Living Marine Resources." The two sides will now seek final approval of the Agreement by their respective governments. The two countries also discussed the status of the associated shiprider agreement but did not engage in negotiation of the text. Both sides acknowledged that the heads of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Russian FSB will discuss the proposed shiprider agreement at a later meeting.

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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 5th U.S.-Norway Joint Committee on Fisheries was hosted by NOAA Fisheries in Silver Spring, Maryland, on September 24-25, 2014. Eileen Sobeck, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, and Russell Smith, NOAA Deputy Assistant Administrator for International Fisheries co-led the U.S. delegation, which consisted of representatives of NMFS, the Department of State, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. Mr. Arne Røksund, Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, led the Norwegian delegation, which included officials from the Ministry and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Washington, D.C. Mr. Paul Niemeier, NMFS Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, and Mr. Richard Pedersen, Royal Embassy of Norway in the United States, were meeting Co-Facilitators.

Both sides presented updates on national fisheries developments since the last meeting in 2012. Topics discussed on the first day of the meeting were fisheries management issues (electronic monitoring and fishery discards), capacity building efforts in West Africa, and a wide variety trade issues (Russian trade sanctions; U.S. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fisheries Task Force; catch documentation schemes; functioning of the FAO Sub-Committee on Fish Trade; seafood traceability; collaboration with the Codex Committee for Fish and Fishery Products; U.S. Food and Drug Administration food safety inspections; EU Regulation on IUU fishing; measures to reduce bycatches of marine mammals in fisheries; Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations; WTO-Doha round; the U.S. Fisheries Finance Program; food

security issues; and the International Trade Data System). A discussion of Polar issues, a review of the status of scientific cooperation, and a U.S. presentation on climate change and fisheries research capped off the second day of a very productive meeting.

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

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United States-European Union High Level Fisheries Consultation

Basic Instrument

There is no formal instrument.

Implementing Legislation

None

Members

The United States and the European Union (EU)

Meetings

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

U.S. Representation

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

Description

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

Recent Activities

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of State (DOS), and U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) representatives met with representatives of the European Commission's Directorate-General (D-G) for Fisheries and Marine Affairs on April 14-15, 2015 in Washington, D.C., for the 14th 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 September 7, 2011.

Next Meeting

The date and venue of the next (15th) session of the U.S.-EU High Level Fisheries Consultations remains to be determined, but it is projected to be early in 2016 in Brussels, Belguim.

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PART III: SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS AND COUNCILS

PACIFIC OCEAN

North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES)

Basic Instrument

Convention for a North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES)

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

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

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U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process

The United States is represented on the PICES Governing Council by two delegates appointed by the Secretary of State in consultation with interested agencies and institutions: one from a major Federal Government research agency and one from a research university or other academic institution. The United States is represented on the Scientific Committees and Working Groups created by the Governing Council by individuals appointed by the U.S. delegates with the authorization of the Secretary of State and in consultation with interested agencies and institutions.

B. U.S. Delegates:

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Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

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

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

B. Organizational Structure:

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

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

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

Committees:

- MEQ - Marine Environmental Quality;
- BIO - Biological Oceanography;
- FIS - Fisheries Science;
- POC - Physical Oceanography and Climate;
- TCODE – Technical Committee on Data Exchange;
- MONITOR – Technical Committee on Monitoring.

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-21: Working Group on "Non-indigenous Aquatic Species" (2006 – 2013); Final report to be delivered in 2014.

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

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-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-SEES: Socio-Ecological-Environmental Systems (Jan. 2014-Dec. 2015).
- SG-SCOOP: Joint PICES-NOWPAP Study Group on Scientific Cooperation in the North Pacific Ocean (Jul. 2014-fall 2015).
- SG-NPESR: Study Group on North Pacific Ecosystem Status Report (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)
- MBM-AP: Advisory Panel on *Marine Birds and Mammals* (Oct 1999–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 2014 PICES Annual Meeting was held October 15 – 26 in Yeosu, Korea on the topic of "Toward a better understanding of the North Pacific: Reflecting on the past and steering for the future." Information of other meetings, symposia and workshops held in 2014 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	Feb 25-26	Japan Tsunami Debris Project Co-chairmen meeting	Sidney, BC	Second Project Co-chairmen Meeting	MoE/PICES
2015	Mar 1-3	FUTURE SSC Meeting	San Diego, CA, USA	FUTURE Scientific Steering Committee Meeting	PICES
2015	March	PICES/MAFF Site Visit	Las Lisas, Guatamala	Visit to conduct social survey that addresses "*Sato-umi in developing nations*". Collaborate with Guatemalan experts to expand economic potential (shellfish aquaculture) thereby bringing greater well-being to coastal communities. (under PICES/MAFF project on "*Marine ecosystem health and human well-being*")	PICES/MAFF
2015	Mar 16-18	Japan Tsunami Debris Project Project Science Team Meeting	Honolulu, HI, USA	Second PICES/MoE Project Science Team Meeting	MoE/PICES
2015	Mar 21-27	Symposium	Santos, Brazil	Effects of Climate Change on the World's Oceans	PICES, ICES, IOC, IOUSP, CAPES, FUNDESPA, CNPq, FAPESP, IAEA/OA-ICC, IMBER, ITAU, MEC, NOAA, NPRB, SCOR, SOLAS
2015	May 17-19	Symposium	Kobe, Japan	Pacific Salmon and Steelhead Production in a Changing Climate: Past, Present and Future	NPAFC, FRA/Japan, Gordon and Berry Moore Foundation, Hokkaido Salmon Propagation Association, Pacific Seafood Processors Association, PSF, NPRB, PICES
2015	May 18-20	PICES Inter-sessional	Busan, Korea	Science Board-General oversight of the scientific interest of Council and its scientific	PICES, Korea (MOF/KIOST)

		Science Board Meeting		work and research.	
2015	May 19-22	Symposium	Gothenberg, Sweden	Harmful Algal Blooms and Climate Change	PICES, FORMAS, GEOHAB, SMHI, SCOR, IOC, ICES
2015	July 7-10	Scientific Conference	Paris, France	"Our common future under climate change"; PICES is cosponsoring a session titled, "*Transformative pathways to sustain marine ecosystems and their services under climate change*"	Future Earth, ICSU, UNESCO
2015	July	Joint PICES-ISC Study Group workshop	Honolulu, HI, USA	First meeting of PICES-ISC Study Group to develop a framework of cooperation between the two organizations for shared topics of interest in the North Pacific	ISC: International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean
2015	Aug 10-12	ICES-PICES S-CCME Workshop	Seattle, WA, USA	ICES/PICES S-CCME Workshop on "*Modelling the Effects of Climate Change on Fish and Fisheries*"	PICES, ICES, Norwegian Research Council, NOAA-NMFS, NOAA-CPO
2015	Sep 21-25	Joint Theme Sessions 2015	Copenhagen, Denmark	ICES/PICES Theme Sessions at the 2015 ICES Annual Science Conference: –Session C "*Ecosystem monitoring in practice*" – Session G: "*Managing marine ecosystem services in a changing climate*" –Session H: "*Ocean acidification: understanding chemical, biological and biochemical responses in marine ecosystems*"	ICES, PICES
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,

Budgetary Matters

The contracting parties are assessed approximately $125,800 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

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

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

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ARCTIC OCEAN

Program for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)

Basic Instrument

The Program for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna 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.

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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. Chair'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's Arctic Research Program (K. Crane) is the U.S. Steering Committee's CBMP – Marine Chair and funds the participation of the U.S. 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 programs, particularly the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) and the Program for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME); 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 (CBIM); 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, CAFF is, at the request of the Arctic Council, 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.

The 5th International CFG Workshop was held 1-3 April 2009 in Uppsala, Sweden, with a Leadership Workshop convened in Helsinki, Finland March 2010.

Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP)

The Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) has evolved in response to the mandate 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 species, habitat and site-based networks. 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).

Five Expert Monitoring Groups representing the major Arctic biomes – marine, coastal, freshwater, terrestrial vegetation and terrestrial fauna are being created by the CBMP. The Marine Expert Monitoring Group (MEMG) was originally co-led by the United States and Norway convened two expert workshops, one in Tromso, Norway (January 2009) and one in Coral Gables, Florida USA (November 2009). Based upon input at those workshop and additional expert review, an Integrated Monitoring Plan (IMP) for Pan-Arctic Marine Biodiversity was prepared and reviewed with a Final Draft completed and delivered to the CAFF board in January 2011. The Terrestrial and Freshwater Expert Monitoring Groups were formed in spring 2010.

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, will synthesize and assess the status and trends of biological diversity in the Arctic. It will provide a description of the current state of the Arctic's ecosystems and create a baseline for use in global and regional assessments of Arctic biodiversity. It will also act as a basis to inform and guide future biodiversity work. It will provide up to date scientific and traditional ecological knowledge, identify gaps in the data record, identify key mechanisms driving change, and produce recommendations. The report will be produced in two phases. Phase 1 is a short 2010 Arctic Highlights Report. This will present twenty one indicators of trends and is based on the suite of indicators developed by the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program. It is anticipated that this report will be ready as an Arctic Council contribution to the United Nations 2010 Biodiversity Target and the International Biodiversity Year in 2010. Phase 2 will be a full scientific Arctic Biodiversity Assessment scheduled to be completed in 2013.

An ABA Authors meeting was held in Vancouver, BC Canada in September 2010 and a website has been launched where all the latest information and documentation on the Assessment is available at http://caff.arcticportal.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=156

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 2009-2011 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.

It is presented in sections on: (1) Conserving Arctic Species; (2) Conserving Arctic Ecosystems and Habitats; (3) Assessing and Monitoring Arctic Biodiversity; (4) Global Issues; and (5) Engaging Society.

E. Meetings:

CAFF meets in plenary every two years. CAFF held its twelfth plenary meeting in Greenland in 2008. Iceland is presently serving as the CAFF Chair and will host the Thirteenth Plenary meeting in Iceland in 2010.

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

The Senior Arctic Officials meet approximately every six months.

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

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

Budget

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

U.S. Representation

A. Process:

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

B. U.S. Representation (Delegates):

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Dr. Ed Houde, Professor

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C. Committees and Working Groups:

U.S. representation in ICES has no formal (legislated) advisory structure. During 2007-2008, United States scientists served as members on each of the eight scientific committees (Oceanography, Marine Habitat, Living Resources, Resource Management, Fisheries Technology, Mariculture, Baltic, Diadromous Fish), and on each of the three advisory committees (Fisheries Management, Marine Environment, Ecosystems) and the Consultative Committee with a number of members on more than 100 working/study/planning groups. In 2008, the three advisory committees were combined into one overarching Advisory Committee (ACom) which includes U.S. representation, and the eight scientific committees were combined and governed by one committee, the Scientific Committee (SciCom), which also includes U.S. representation. ICES has more than 100 Expert/Study Groups that cover most aspects of the marine ecosystem.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), with 20 member nations, is the oldest intergovernmental organization in the world concerned with marine and fisheries sciences. (ICES was founded in 1902; the United States has been associated since 1912, and joined formally as a contracting party in 1972). ICES is a leading forum for the promotion, coordination, and dissemination of research on the physical, chemical, and biological systems in the North Atlantic and adjacent seas such as the Baltic Sea and North Sea, and advice on human impacts on its environment, in particular fisheries effects in the Northeast Atlantic. ICES has long recognized the mutual interdependence of the living marine resources and their physical and chemical environment. In support of these activities, ICES facilitates data and information exchange through publications and meetings, in addition to functioning as a marine data center for oceanographic, environmental, and fisheries data. ICES works with experts from its 20 member Countries and collaborates with more than 40 international organizations, some of which hold scientific Observer status.

Uniquely, ICES is also the provider of objective, independent and apolitical scientific advice on fisheries and environmental management, not only to the governments of its member countries but also to six intergovernmental regulatory commissions. The latter includes the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) of which the U.S. is a leading member, particularly through NASCO's North American Commission.

ICES is a complex organization involving about 1600 scientists. It fulfills functions through an Annual Science Conference, about a dozen committees, over 100 working and study groups, several symposia annually, and a wide range of quality science publications which are recognized as such by the world's scientific community. Two delegates represent each member country on the Council.

The fundamental purposes of ICES outlined in the ICES Convention are: to promote and encourage research and investigation for the study of the sea particularly related to the living resources thereof; to draw up programs required for this purpose and to organize, in agreement with the Contracting Parties, such research and investigations as may appear necessary; and to publish or otherwise disseminate the results of research and investigations carried out under its auspices or to encourage the publication thereof.

The ICES mission is to advance the scientific capacity to give advice on human activities affecting, and affected by, marine ecosystems. The mission calls for: effective arrangements to provide scientific advice; informing interested parties and the public objectively and effectively about marine ecosystem issues; coordinating and enhancing physical, chemical, biological, and interdisciplinary research; partnerships with other organizations that share a common interest; developing and maintaining accessible marine databases.

Further information on ICES can be found on the Web at http://www.ices.dk/.

B. Organizational Structure:

The Council (the ultimate governing body) consists of the President who presides at all meetings of the Council and the Bureau, and two Delegates from each member country. The Bureau (the Executive Committee of the Council) meets intersessionally and consists of the President, a First Vice President, and five Vice Presidents elected from the delegates, each for a 3-year term. On completion of their terms of office, Bureau members are not eligible for re-election to the same office for the succeeding term. The Finance Committee meets annually to discuss financial issues, to review the audit report, and to prepare proposed and forecast budgets for Bureau approval and subsequent presentation to the Council for approval at the annual meeting of Delegates in October.

To organize its work, ICES has established a structure of committees supported by a **Secretariat.** This organizational structure ensures an efficient delivery of products and services, and facilitates the participation of experts across a wide range of disciplines. The **Secretariat** is responsible for fostering the science, advisory, and data and information services of ICES by providing strategic inputs, and offering technical and administrative expertise and assistance.

The **Science Committee (SCICOM)** and the **Advisory Committee (ACOM)** are delegated to advance the scientific and advisory work of ICES, respectively, including integration of joint activities where appropriate. Both committees have one member per country (and alternate members) nominated by member countries. Both committees manage supporting structures, which include expert groups. **Data and Information Services** delivers needed data, data services, and products that enable the science and advisory work to be successfully accomplished.

- The **Science Committee (SCICOM)** oversees all aspects of ICES scientific work. SCICOM activities are aimed at attaining two major goals: (1) Develop an integrated, interdisciplinary understanding of the structure, dynamics, and the resilience and response of marine ecosystems to change; and (2) Understand the relationship between human activities and marine ecosystem, estimate pressures and impacts, and develop science-based sustainable pathways.
- The **Advisory Committee (ACOM)** oversees all aspects of the producing and delivering of ICES scientific advice to address the needs of member countries and partner management and regulatory commissions and authorities. ACOM activities are aimed at attaining the following goal: Evaluate and advise on options for the sustainable use and protection of marine ecosystems.
- **Data and Information Services (DIS),** comprising the Data Information Group (DIG) and the ICES Data Center, oversees ICES data stewardship and its data management and delivery. DIS activities are aimed at attaining two major goals: (1) Promote the advancement of data and information services for science and advice needs; and (2) Catalyze best practices in marine data management, and promote the ICES data nodes as a global resource.
- The bulk of the work in ICES is accomplished in Expert/Working/Study Groups and these constitute the foundation of ICES science and advisory programs. ICES Expert/Working/Study Groups cover all aspects of the marine ecosystem from oceanography to fish, seabirds, and marine mammals.

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

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

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GLOBAL

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Basic Instrument

Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility (GEF). Participating countries initially approved the Instrument in March 1994 and most recently amended it at the 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

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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. NOAA has only begun to utilize the many opportunities for collaboration and leverage that the GEF provides.

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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 was held in Seoul, Korea in 2002, and resulted in the Seoul Oceans Declaration. In 2005, APEC Ministers met again in Indonesia 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 took place in Xianmen, China, 27-28 August 2014.

Recent events:

The 3rd meeting of the APEC OFWG was held in Qingdao, China during 9-12 May 2014. Fifteen APEC economies attended: Chile; People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Papua New Guinea; Peru; the Philippines, the Russian Federation; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; the United States; and Viet Nam. Non-member participants included the Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the American Chemistry Council. APEC observers included representatives from the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), the Policy Partnership for Food Security (PPFS), and the APEC China Vice Senior Official. A representative of the APEC Secretariat Communications Unit also attended. The meeting was chaired by the OFWG Lead Shepherd (LS) Mr. Greg Schneider of the United States. The OFWG Deputy Lead Shepherd from Indonesia, Anang Noegroho also participated.

Discussions during the 3rd OFWG meeting were organized around the four pillars of the OFWG Strategic Plan: Sustainable Development and Protection of the Marine Environment, Strengthening Food Security, Promoting Free and Open Trade and Investment, and Enhanced Understanding of the Impacts of Climate Change. Additional discussions included: how to improve internal OFWG operations and elevate the group's work in the broader APEC

context; presentations on preserving healthy oceans and developing sustainable fisheries, ideas on how to further examine and create a common understanding of the concept of "blue economy" within APEC; and China's preparations for the 4th APEC Oceans-related Ministerial Meeting (AOMM4) in Xiamen, China 2014.

OFWG 2014 Meeting Recommendations

The group highlighted the need to engage the private sector, mainstream ocean issues in APEC to better address the cross-cutting nature of these topics, and raise awareness of the key role ocean and fisheries resources play in supporting robust economies. The group encouraged itself to work intersessionally via e-mail and suggested the possibilities of additional meetings each year. To facilitate this, the Secretariat highlighted a new software to allow participation from afar through presentations. In addition, the Secretariat encouraged the group to pursue projects that link with other groups and share its current and potential projects with other groups, especially given that the OFWG is in the Rank 1 Funding Criteria. The group recommended further cooperation with PPFS and to help facilitate future cooperation between the two groups, recommended that host economies work to ensure that the PPFS and OFWG meeting be held at the same SOM, but on different days. The group also recommended that member economies keep in mind the Free & Open Trade Priority Area in the development of future projects, and that this priority area be creatively targeted, looking at new issues and areas such as labeling, market state rules and regulations, etc.

Endorsed/Agreed During Qingdao OFWG Meeting May 9-12, 2014:

1. The OFWG will consider the consultant's comments in "OFWG Strategic Plan 2013-15 – Discussion Points" (2014/OFWG/SOM2/003) when it rewrites the Strategic Plan in 2015.
2. The OFWG endorsed the 2014 Work Plan (/011).
3. The OFWG agreed to the following text regarding Blue Economy: "For the purposes of APEC, the APEC Ocean and Fisheries Working Group views Blue Economy as an approach to advance sustainable management and conservation of ocean and coastal resources and ecosystems and sustainable development, in order to foster economic growth."
4. The OFWG endorsed the changes to the Terms of Reference (/037) and agreed that the Lead Shepherd will send a note to SCE indicating the retention of the current Lead Shepherd and Deputy Lead Shepherd through the end of the 2014 APEC year.
5. The OFWG endorsed Part 1 of the APEC Marine Sustainable Development Report (/027). Part 2 is not subject to endorsement by the working group, and economies will submit Part 2 Economy Reports on a voluntary basis.
6. The OFWG agreed to identify an OFWG Point of Contact to the PPFS.

Proposed Intersessional Actions:

1. The OFWG will consider ways to practice using the remote participation system as presented by the Secretariat.
2. The OFWG will draft and adopt the 2015 Annual Work Plan prior to SOM1.
3. OFWG member economies will provide input and comments to the U.S. on the Coastal Ecosystem Valuation Concept Note.
4. The OFWG will initiate an informal dialogue with the Chemical Dialogue regarding marine debris activities.
5. The OFWG will engage with PPFS and consider endorsement of self-funded PPFS projects.
6. OFWG member economies will provide Japan with advice and assistance in arranging lectures and participants on the Workshop on the Climate Change Impact on the Ocean and Fisheries Resources: Ensuring the Adaptation, Food Security and Sustainability, and Mitigation on Small-Scale and Artisanal Fisheries including Aquaculture.
7. OFWG member economies will consider opportunities to work with non-APEC member organizations, including The Nature Conservancy.
8. The APEC Marine Sustainable Development Report core expert group will continue to manage incoming Part 2 Economy Report submissions, ensure the document continues to be updated, and identify possibilities for the Report to be broadly distributed.
9. Indonesia will provide an update to the OFWG on the status and progress of the Mainstreaming Oceans Initiative and the recommendation made to SCE.
10. The OFWG will select a new Lead Shepherd to assume the position at the next ISOM.

11. OFWG member economies will complete the survey to encourage thoughts about private sector engagement by June 10th. The LS encouraged economies to provide any response or thoughts in the survey, even if you cannot complete the entire survey.
12. OFWG member economies will engage in preparations for, participate in, and make every endeavor for successful outcomes of AOMM4.

Upcoming Meeting: The next meeting of the OFWG will be hosted by the Phillipines in May 2014. The meetings will address on-going subjects from the 2014 meeting, including follow-up from the AOMM4 in August 2014. 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.

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Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC)

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

The subregions 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 third Session from 23 to 25 June 2014, in Hyderabad, India. The Fifth RCFM was attended by a total of 85 participants, 25 participants from 17 members and non-member countries; 33 representatives from NGOs and regional organizations and 10 private sector participants.

The Thirty second Session of the Asia Pacific Fishery Commission strongly highlighted the issues associated with trawl fisheries in the region and agreed to take trawl fisheries model through which to directly address the management of trawling and indirectly to build capacity in fishery and ecosystem management approaches. The Thirty second Session of APFIC recommended the convening of an APFIC Expert Workshop on Trawl Fishery Management.

The Secretariat presented a working document APFIC/14/08 to the Commission. The document summarizes the work undertaken by the Secretariat in relation to Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) and a synthesis of the scientific knowledge about artificial reefs in the Region. A survey has been sent to member countries, to be completed by June of 2015.

The agreed upon focus areas for 2015-2016 biennial are:

1.FAO/APFIC will convene a regional consultative workshop on the identified Commission priority theme covering:
- Management of culture---based inland fisheries
- The responsible enhancement of inland waters and development of regional guidance for this.
- The use of the ecosystem approach to support management of inland fisheries.
- The potential for development of a regional EAFM training course for inland fisheries in the region.

2. FAO/APFIC will convene a second regional consultative workshop on the identified Commission priority theme covering:
- Improving feeds for aquaculture, including low cost feeds
- Improved responsibility and traceability of fish meal (in partnership with IFFO Improvers programme/REBYC II/Thai Fishmeal Dialogue)
- Reduction of fish meal use in aquaculture feeds
- The economic and technical case for use of formulated feed replacing fresh/trash fish
- Feed alternatives supporting emerging aquaculture

Asia and the Pacific are the most important regions of fish production in the world through their capture fisheries and aquaculture. Capture fisheries production in Asia and the Pacific region reached 48.7 million tonnes in 2010, representing over half of the world's capture fishery production, valued at $48.3 billion. At the same time, the Asia and the Pacific region produced 53.1 million tonnes of farmed aquaculture products (excluding aquatic plants), representing 89 percent of global aquaculture production and worth some US$ 95.2 billion.

Of the top ten producers of capture fish in the world, five states are in Asia and the Pacific region. China is still by far the largest producer in the region (15.7 million tonnes) representing 32 percent of the total regional production (a slight reduction over the previous biennium), followed by Indonesia (5.4 million tonnes, 11 percent) and India (4.7 million tonnes, 10 percent).

The APFIC Members are Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, United Kingdom, the United States, and Viet Nam.

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Association of Official Analytical Chemists (AOAC) International

AOAC was founded in 1884 as the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists, under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), to adopt uniform methods of analysis for fertilizers. In the 21st Century AOAC INTERNATIONAL is committed to be a proactive, worldwide provider and facilitator in the development, use, and harmonization of validated analytical methods and laboratory quality assurance programs and services. Also, to serve as the primary resource for timely knowledge exchange, networking, and high-quality laboratory information for its members. To meet these goals, AOAC is focusing very closely on streamlining its methods review process and providing new methods in areas of increasing international interest, such as genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and nutraceuticals. The explosion of international accreditation as a requirement for participation in the global marketplace has given AOAC INTERNATIONAL an opportunity to seize a leadership role in developing criteria for laboratory accreditation.

Web address: www.aoac.org

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 20th meeting of the Trilateral will meet April 13-17th, 2014 in San Diego California, with a plenary focus on conservation of Monarch butterflies in North America.

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Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

The signing of the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) in 1993 created the world's largest trading bloc. At the same time, the NAFTA partners (Canada, Mexico, and the United States) sought to build environmental safeguards into the trade liberalization pact and signed the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, creating the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC). The CEC Council has structured its work around three main themes: (1) Climate Change; (2) Green Growth; and (3) Sustainable Communities and Ecosystems. Crosscutting themes include: (a) Learning from and assisting vulnerable groups and indigenous communities; (b) Enhancing the alignment of environmental regulatory standards, enforcement and compliance; and (c) Enhancing information, transparency, capacity building and communication. Projects focus on the protection of the North American environment, and therefore trilateral environmental problems, issues and cooperation are given priority in funding.

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 is currently developing its 2015-2017 Operational Plan. The Blue Carbon project will be continued and expanded, and a project on marine protected areas has also been approved (Marine Protected Areas: Strengthening Management Effectiveness and Supporting Coastal Community Resilience). The 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 will work 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.

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Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was established by the UN General Assembly in December 1992 to ensure effective follow-up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit. Its functions are set out in General Assembly resolution 47/191 of December 22, 1992. The Commission is composed of 53 members elected for terms of office of 3 years. Each session of the CSD elects a Bureau, comprised of a Chair and four vice-Chairs.

One of the main purposes of the Commission is to review progress at the international, regional, and national levels in the implementation of recommendations and commitments contained in the final documents of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), including Agenda 21; the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; and the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests (also known as the Forest Principles).

The CSD has opened its sessions to broad participation from both governmental and non-governmental actors, and it supports a number of innovative activities, such as the Partnerships Fair, the Learning Centre and a series of panels, roundtables and side events. The High-level segment features dialogue among Ministers, and Ministers also hold a special dialogue session with Major Groups.

The 20th session of the CSD was suspended from its normal rotation, planned in 2012, because the General Assembly had resolved to hold the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil as a 20 year anniversary to the original conference. This conference was held June 20-22, 2012.

Outcomes of the conference regarding oceans and seas include:

- Highlight of the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and of their resources for sustainable development, including through their contributions to poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, food security and creation of sustainable livelihoods and decent work, while at the same time protecting biodiversity and the marine environment.

- A call for support to initiatives that address ocean acidification and the impacts of climate change on marine and coastal ecosystems and resources, and specifically to support international collaboration on marine scientific research, monitoring and observation of ocean acidification and particularly vulnerable ecosystems. The United States Government (USG) used this call to action as a launch pad for announcing USG support of the establishment of an International Coordination Centre for ocean acidification research in Monaco.

- Several paragraphs addressing key actions needed related to sustainable fisheries management including a commitment to intensify efforts to meet a previously agreed 2015 target to maintain or restore fish stocks, as well as addressing such issues as IUU fishing, subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, destructive fishing practices, bycatch and vulnerable marine ecosystems.

- A commitment to take action by 2025, based on collected scientific data, to achieve significant reductions in marine debris to prevent harm to the coastal and marine environment.

- A call to enhance action to address sea level rise and coastal erosion.

- A commitment to take action to reduce the incidence and impacts of pollution on marine ecosystems, including through the effective implementation of relevant conventions adopted in the framework of the International Maritime Organization, and the follow-up of relevant initiatives such as the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.

- Recognition of the importance of coral reefs, and a call for support for international cooperation on conserving coral reef and mangrove ecosystems, as well as a reaffirmation of the importance of marine protected areas.

- A resolution to continue addressing ocean fertilization through appropriate fora.

- A commitment to address the issue of conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction by the end of UNGA-69 (in 2015).

The CSD Member states decided in resolution 67/203 of 21 December 2012 that the CSD would have its last session immediately prior to the convening of the first meeting of the high level political forum on sustainable development in order to ensure a smooth institutional transition. CSD-20, which has been designated as the last session of the Commission, took place on Friday 20 September 2013. Documents from the meeting can be found here: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1211

Web address: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_aboucsd.shtml

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Coral Disease and Health Consortium (CDHC)

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

The CDHC has been working closely with our partners to assist in addressing the key goals and objectives related to coral health and disease issues. 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.

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Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF)

CECAF is the FAO regional fishery body for the Eastern Central Atlantic. The 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.

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

FAO

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

Today, FAO is the largest autonomous agency within the United Nations system with 194 member countries plus the European Community (Member Organization) and two Associate Members (Faroe Islands and Tokelau). As of 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. His term runs from January 2012 to July 2015.

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.

Website: http://www.fao.org

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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.

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Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS)

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

GOOS is sponsored by the Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission (IOC), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), The World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and the International Council for Science (ICSU).

GOOS is implemented by member states via their government agencies, navies and oceanographic research institutions working together in a wide range of thematic panels and regional alliances.

GOOS is an ocean component of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS). Status of GCOS climate components are assessed regularly in the GCOS Implementation Plan and against Joint World Meteorological Organization (WMO)-IOC Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM) targets.

The United States contribution to GOOS is the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS®). Within NOAA, the Oceanic Atmosphere Research (OAR) Climate Program Office's Climate Observation Division is the Program Manager for many in situ components of global US IOOS. The United States contributes resources for ~50% of the global arrays in GOOS. The U.S. coastal component of US IOOS is comprised of, 11 Regional Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (RCCOOS), and a National consortium for sensor verification and validation – the Alliance for Coastal Technologies (ACT). Remote sensing under NASA is also a contribution to GOOS and part of U.S. IOOS. Web address: http://www.ioos.noaa.gov

GOOS comprises many observation platforms:

- Argo floats which collect high-quality temperature and salinity profiles from the upper 2000m of the ice-free global ocean and currents from intermediate depths
- Drifting buoys which record the currents of surface waters, the temperature and the atmospheric pressure
- Embarked systems on commercial or cruising yachts which collect temperature, salinity, the oxygen and carbon dioxide (CO2) in the ocean and the atmosphere, and atmospheric pressure
- Research vessels which measure all the physical, chemical, and biological parameters between the surface of the sea and the ocean floor every 30 nautical miles out of 25 transoceanic lines
- Marigraphs and holographs which transmit information in quasi real time, thus providing the possibility of detecting tsunamis
- Commercial ships which launch probes measuring the temperature and salinity between in the upper ocean on their transoceanic ways
- Moorings in open sea which are used as long-term observatories, recording weather, chemical and biological parameters on a fixed site between the surface and the bottom
- Satellite constellations which measure sea level, temperature, salinity, winds, and ocean color.

The Joint WMO - IOC Commission for Oceanography and Marine 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 observation was collected in January 2013. Argo will test biology sensors in 2014.

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 Allicance Forum the IOOS in June 2013: GOOS Regional Policy

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Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

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

- Healthy ocean ecosystems and sustained ecosystem services
- Effective early warning systems and preparedness for tsunamis and other ocean related hazards
- Increased resilience to climate change and variability and enhanced safety, efficiency and effectiveness of all ocean-based activities through science-founded services, adaptation and mitigation strategies.
- Enhanced knowledge of emerging ocean science issues

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

- UNESCO-IOC oversees a Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) to observe, model and analyze marine and ocean variables, supported by U.S. including NOAA for global GOOS instrumentation, financial support, data management and scientific leadership. GOOS implementation is supported by JCOMM, the Joint Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology. JCOMM is an intergovernmental body of technical experts that provides a mechanism for international coordination of oceanographic and marine meteorological observing, data management and services, combining the expertise, technologies and capacity building capabilities of the meteorological and oceanographic communities. The data the system yields are used to provide accurate descriptions of the present state of the oceans, including living resources; continuous forecasts of the future conditions of the sea for as far ahead as possible, and the basis for climate forecasts and marine meteorology and in the future, ecosystem based management. In 2014, IOC completed its coastal GOOS program and much of the coordination is accomplished through the GOOS Regional Alliance.
- U.S. support to the ocean carbon program (through staff support and scientific leadership) 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. It 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 currently developing 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.
- 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 2015. the IOC hopes to publish 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 OceanAssessment (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."

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

IOCARIBE is a subcommission of the IOC of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 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 will be held in Panama in Spring 2015.

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Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Climate change is a very complex issue; policymakers need an objective source of information about the causes of climate change, its potential environmental and socio-economic consequences, and the adaptation and mitigation options to respond to it. The IPCC was established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1988 to provide an authoritative statement of scientific opinion on climate change.

The main activity of the IPCC is to prepare comprehensive assessment reports (AR) about climate change at regular intervals, typically of about five to seven years. IPCC reports are prepared by international experts selected to serve as Lead Authors on three Working Groups (WG). The first assessment report (AR1) was completed in 1990. The IPCC completed 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.

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Description

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

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

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

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

decisions about the IPCC work programme are taken and reports are accepted, adopted and approved. The IPCC Bureau Members, including the Chair, are also elected during the plenary Sessions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recent Activities

The IPCC will finalize 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 will provide an update of the scientific, technical, and socio-economic knowledge of climate change. Compared with previous reports, the AR5 will put 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 will provide more detailed regional information, including on climate phenomena such as monsoons and El

Nino. For the first time, ocean ecosystems will be a separate chapter in the AR. The key AR5 cross-cutting themes will be: 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).

The IPCC is in the final stages of preparation of the AR5, which is scheduled for publication in 2014. Its Lead Authors include many NOAA scientists, including at least one NMFS scientist. The AR5 will be 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 will contain 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.

The IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), including reports from each of the three WGs and a Synthesis Report, was published in 2007. The significant fisheries-related materials are included in the WG II Report – Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Based on the independent IAC review, the IPCC stands firmly behind the rigor and reliability of its AR4. The IAC review also provided additional guidance to AR5 authors on matters such as the use of literature in IPCC reports, the role of Review Editors and consideration of the range of scientific, technical and socio-economic views, as well as consistent treatment of uncertainties.

Scenarios of potential future anthropogenic climate change, the underlying driving forces, and the response options have been an important component of IPCC work. In 2006, the IPCC decided that the process of scenario development should be coordinated by the scientific community, and produce these new scenarios for possible use in its AR5. The ensuing set of "Representative Concentration Pathways" (RCPs) integrate socio-economic, emissions, and climate scenarios, and will result in the publication of new and integrated scenarios by allowing the modeling of climate system responses to human activities to proceed in parallel to emissions scenario development.

In addition to climate assessment reports, the IPCC publishes Special Reports on specific topics. In May 2011, the IPCC Special Report on *Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation (SRREN)* was published. The IPCC Special Report on *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX)* was released in November 2011. The SREX Report assesses the evidence that climate change has led to changes in climate extremes and the extent to which policies to avoid, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the risks of disaster can reduce the impact of such events. These Special Reports also provide essential information for the AR5.

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

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

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

Highlights of the ISC14 Plenary Meeting

The 14th ISC Plenary, held in Taipei, Chinese-Taipei from 16-21 July 2014 was attended by members from Canada, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea, 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 North Pacific albacore tuna, North Pacific blue shark, Western Central North Pacific swordfish stocks are not overfished nor experiencing overfishing, and that the Eastern Pacific Ocean swordfish stock is not overfished but likely experiencing overfishing. It re-iterated that the Pacific bluefin tuna and striped marlin stocks are overfished and experiencing overfishing, and that the Pacific blue marlin stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. It further provided information on biological reference points for North Pacific albacore tuna and the probability of achieving specific biomass levels, the range of historic recruitment as well as catch and effort data tables for Pacific bluefin tuna for managers to consider in crafting management measures.

A special seminar on the impacts of climate change on fish and fisheries was held. Plenary discussed formalizing the ISC structure and administration and will continue researching means of doing both. 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 Trust, International Seafood Sustainability Foundation and World Wildlife Fund attended. The ISC workplan for 2014-2015 includes completing a new North Pacific striped marlin assessment and a first shortfin mako shark assessment, and enhancing database and website management. The Plenary re-elected Chi-Lu Sun for a second term as ISC Vice-Chair, the following working group Chairs: Suzanne Kohin for the Shark Working Group, Ren-Fen Wu for the Statistics Working Group, and Jon Brodziak for the Billfish Working Group. The next Plenary will be held in the United States in July 2015.

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

Basic Instrument

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

Member Nations

Republic of Korea and United States

Meetings

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

U.S. Representation

The NOAA lead of the JPA is 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.

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 MLTM-MIFAFF.

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. For FY2014, the Korean side provided $815k to fund the projects. 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 2015 are on (1) Joint research on climate induced changes in fisheries and ecosystem management, (2) Improvement of survey gear technology – development of an acoustic bottom typing system, (3) Fisheries monitoring through science observers, (4) Applications of JPA research to Korean fisheries management and fisheries resources rebuilding, (5) Stock structure of Pacific cod (*Gadus macrocephalus*) in Korean waters: a microchemical and genetic approach, (6) Fishing impacts on corals and vulnerable marine ecosystems, and (7) a cooperative research panel meeting.

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) Fish Culture and Production: Energy Use and Life Cycle Assessment of Recalculating Aquaculture Systems, (3) Cooperative Research on the Production of Highly Valued Oyster, (4) Technical Approach on Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture, (5) Incorporation of Plant Proteins into Marine Finfish Feeds: Alternative feeds to reduce fish meal and fish oil use in aquaculture feeds, and (6) Eco-friendly shrimp culture technology. The aquaculture panel is currently looking for a US Co-Chair.

New Project under the Administration of the JPA.

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 & Kim Jeehye (MOF International Cooperation Division) will lead the project.

Next Meeting

The two countries have scheduled the annual Joint Project Agreement meeting for July 2015 in Korea to review accomplishments and plan cooperative projects for the following year. The Fisheries Panel and the Aquaculture Panel are also scheduled to meet in June 2014 to report, discuss and plan scientific research and cooperation.

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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 are providing $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 .

Since, The GEF and the World Bank committed financial assistance to the following LME projects. A project with an asterisk is currently active:

1. AGULHAS AND SOMALI CURRENTS LME PROJECT*
2. ARABIAN SEA LME AND RED SEA LME PROJECT
3. BALTIC SEA LME PROJECT
4. BAY OF BENGAL LME PROJECT*
5. BENGUELA CURRENT LME, BENGUELA CURRENT COMMISSION AND CONVENTION*
6. BLACK SEA LME PROJECT
7. CANARY CURRENT LME PROJECT*
8. CARIBBEAN SEA LME PROJECT*
9. GUINEA CURRENT LME PROJECT*
10. THE GULF OF MEXICO LME PROJECT*
11. GULF OF THAILAND LME AND SOUTH CHINA SEA LME PROJECT*
12. HUMBOLDT CURRENT LME PROJECT*
13. INDONESIAN SEA LME PROJECT*
14. MEDITERRANEAN SEA LME PROJECT*
15. PATAGONIAN SHELF LME PROJECT
16. PACIFIC CENTRAL AMERICAN COASTAL LME PROJECT
17. SOUTH CHINA SEA PROJECT*
18. SULU-CELEBES SEA LME PROJECT*
19. YELLOW SEA LME PROJECT*
20. WEST BERING SEA LME

Recent Activities

During 2014, 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, and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, informed a unique cross section of scientists, government experts, educators, the public and the press on the results of the global effort underway for supporting ecosystem-based assessment and management practices in LMEs of the world at the 3rd Global LME Conference convened in Swakopmund, Namibia 8-10 October 2014. The Conference's 160 participants were hosted by the Benguela Current Commission and the governments of Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Germany and Norway. Selected Conference papers are presently under review for publicartion in an LME theme issue of the journal *Environmental Development* published by Elsevier Science. Power point presentations to the Conference can be viewed at www.benguelacc.org.

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

Basic Instrument

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

Member Nations

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

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

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

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

B. Organizational Structure:

The Secretariat to the Pacific Cetaceans MoU is articulated in the MoU text. The CMS Secretariat will act as the secretariat to this 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.

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Status

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

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

Future Meetings

In September 2015, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme will hold a meeting to discuss the "Year of the Whale" project.

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

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

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

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/

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

Basic Instrument

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

Members

The United States and Norway.

Meetings

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

U.S. Representation

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Norway

Dr. Tore Nepstad
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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. The coordinator for NMFS has not yet been identified.

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 Seattle, Washington, June 19-20, 2014 to continue dialog on collaborative research activities. This meeting was held in conjunction with the meeting of the NMFS Science Board. Thegathering offered the opportunity to have in-depth discussions on climate and fisheries, integrated ecosystem assessments (IEAs), advanced technologies, and assessments of oil spill impacts on living marine resources (LMRs).

The following issues were discussed in detail:

- Integrated Ecosystem Assessments:
  - Compare NOAA and IMR framework models for EA and IEA in a joint paper.
  - Follow-up workshop on IEA with focus on the use of indicators, models and data analysis.
  - Possible second workshop for 2016/17 following-up on the use of IEA in relation to management advice.
  - Continue cooperation on the development of the scientific basis for discussions on Arctic fish stocks (Central Arctic Ocean; Monitoring, development of research plan, status reports).

- Climate and Fisheries:
  - Convene a 4-day workshop in response to ICES/PICES Strategic Initiative on Effects of Climate Change on Marine Ecosystems (SICCME) effort to deliver quantitative projections of climate change impacts on major commercially important fish stocks. The workshop would focus on commercially important species and their prey. Specific activities would be:
    - a) resolve which physical global climate or earth system models should be used for the projections;
    - b) comparison of attributes and performance of regional ocean circulation models; and
    - c) identify suites of projection models for key species (e.g., single species climate enhanced projections, individual based projections, full end to end models) and compare their attributes and performance.
  - Convene a small interdisciplinary work group to develop an international proposal for the North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) to research climate change impacts on Arctic marine ecosystems.
  - Possible additional projects:
    - Retrospective analysis – improving our ability to map ecoregions with a specific emphasis on pelagic habitats and their influence on density dependent species interactions.
    - Retrospective analysis of ability to map fluxes with Barents and Bering Sea as variables in vital rate models (recruitment, growth, etc.).
    - Look at tagging and behavioral response to shifting ocean conditions

- Advanced Technologies:
  - Follow-up the discussions on joint technology development for acoustics and digital video sampling through a small work group of scientists within technology and modeling. Work by correspondence to establish areas of cooperation and corresponding priorities. Focus on larger issue of how to start operationalizing technology on ships and other platforms.

  - Utilize the 2016 Antarctic joint efforts by US and Norwegian vessels as a platform for cooperation for testing and further development of technology, methods and operational survey assessment models.

- Oil spill toxicity:
  - Establish joint NOAA-IMR Arctic oil toxicity work team.
  - Seek funding for scientific exchanges, joint projects and joint post-docs and students
  - Continue 1-2 targeted scientific workshops a year

<u>Additional topics of discussion included:</u>

- Scientist Exchange:
  - Facilitate short and long-term exchanges of scientists between IMR and NOAA – Foster information exchange on:
    - Climate – promote exchange of core analysis methods for use in stock assessments (e.g., eco-regions and pelagic habitats)

    - Oiling/contaminants

- Transatlantic Science Week 2015
    - Identify 1-2 themes. Focus will be on oceans/blue futures and will be held in Boston.

- Stock Assessment:
    - IMR to consider participating in NOAA's National Stock Assessment Workshop on developing Terms of Reference for Fish Stock Assessments
    - IMR to consider participating in NOAA's Workshop on applying MSEs to design appropriate sampling regimes for age/growth and food habits studies (Rick Methot and Erik Olsen to lead)

- Horizon 2020 (EU Program)
    - Identify funding opportunities within the Horizon 2020 program.

Next meeting

The next science meeting is scheduled for May 2015, in the U.S.

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Office International des Epizooties (OIE)

The OIE is the World Health Organization's Programme for animal health and is the second of three international health organizations that promulgate standards, which when conformed with, can provide a legal safe harborage in cases of World Trade Organization trade disputes. The OIE was established in 1924 by 28 countries and now has 178 member countries. The mission of the OIE is to inform governments of the occurrence and course of animal diseases globally, and the methods which can be implemented to control such diseases. The organization also coordinates international studies for surveillance and control of animal diseases and harmonizes regulations for trade in animals and animal products among member countries.

The Fish Diseases Commission is one of four OIE Specialist Commissions. The role of Specialist Commissions is to study specific problems relating to the epidemiology and control of certain diseases or groups of diseases. The Fish Diseases Commission was created in 1960. One of the reasons for establishing the Fish Diseases Commission was the increasing awareness of the importance of international trade in fish and other aquatic animals, which in recent years has grown considerably.

Web address: http://www.oie.int/

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 implementing its 2014-2015 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 is the only place in the world where this information is collected in one place. Web address: http://www.oecd.org/

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The 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. NOAA's representative to SPREP is in the NOAA Office of International Affairs, with responsibility to coordinate NOAA interests.

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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 eighth meeting of the SPAW Parties is expected to be convened late in 2014.

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, Colombia proposed that 4 species from the list be listed in Annex II and 4 species be listed in Annex III. 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.

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United Nations (UN) Atlas of the Oceans Agreement

The UN Oceans Atlas is Internet-based, containing information relevant to sustainable development of the oceans and to the advancement of ocean science. It is designed for use by policy makers needing to become familiar with ocean issues and by scientists and resource managers needing access to underlying data bases and approaches to sustainability. The Atlas includes: (1) background on the oceans--from how they were formed, to their physiology, biology, and climatology; (2) uses of the oceans--from food to shipping, mining, energy, etc.; and (3) ocean issues, such as sustainability, food security, global climate change, and pollution. The project was initially funded by the UN Foundation. Six UN agencies having mandates for oceans and coasts (e.g., UNEP, WMO, IOC) have committed fiscal resources to the project. FAO conducts the project on behalf of the UN because of their expertise in building atlases in support of global decision making and research.

Website address: http://www.oceansatlas.org/

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United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

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

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

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

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

The IJC 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.

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

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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 contains 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

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. The U.S. emphasis at this Panel meeting was the improvement of data sharing/exchange (including real-time and near real-time data) from SOA which had diminished over a number of years. As a result of this meeting, archived data sets were provided, but additional Chinese data sets have been provided since the panel meeting (despite agreements made at the Panel meeting to do so). Real time or near-real time data has not been provided despite numerous requests via correspondence and at various meetings such as the U.S.-China Marine Science Forum held in Xiamen, China in November 2008. The issue of sharing SOA real-time or near real-time data (including satellite data) remains unresolved. NOAA may propose to discontinue this Panel at the next Joint Working Group meeting if the data sharing/exchange issue remains unresolved.

NOAA Chair: Dr. Margarita Gregg, Director, National Oceanographic Data Center

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 is planned for fall/winter 2015 in Guangdong Province, PRC.

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

Marine Policy, Management, and International Marine Affairs:

1. NOAA-NOS and the APEC Marine Sustainable Development Center at SOA's Third Institute of Oceanography in Xiamen have conducted two training on "Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning" for (2011, 2013). A third training is under planning to be conducted in the fall of 2014 (subject to a project proposal submitted to APEC sponsored by SOA).
2. NOS-IPO Director attended the first project steering committee (PSC) of the GEF-funded SOA/FAO "Demonstration of Estuarine Biodiversity Restoration and Protected Area Networking in China" project (Guangzhou, June, 2013). NOS-IPO is member of the PSC and will facilitate any potential NOAA staff participation during the project.
3. Coordinate hosting SOA scientist for a one-year research period (starting Summer 2013) at NOS-COOPS, NOS-CSC, and OAR-GLERL.
4. Bilateral dialogue in multilateral venues (e.g., APEC-OFWG, IOC/UNESCO).

NOAA Chair: Dr. Clement Lewsey, Director, NOS International Program Office
Polar Sciences:

At the 18th Joint Working Group meeting, both NOAA and SOA agreed that the Polar Science Panel has been an effective mechanism for promoting collaboration between China and the US and wish for the Panel to continue its work. The *2011-2015 Framework Plan for Ocean Science and Technology Cooperation* presented by SOA contains polar science elements. 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 SAO is accomplished through collaborative activities facilitated through the Pacific Arctic Group.

NOAA Chair: Dr. Kathy Crane, NOAA (OAR) Arctic Research Program Office

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U.S.-France Cooperative Program

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

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U.S.-Morocco Cooperation

The United States established fisheries ties with Morocco in 1975, when a U.S. Regional Fisheries Attaché position was placed in Casablanca. These ties were formalized in 1983 through documents that called for cooperative exchanges between fisheries scientists at the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Miami and the 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.

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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 2014, a NMFS team provided training workshops on

implementing coastal marine special planning and ecosystem-based fisheries management. A third workshop on this topic is scheduled to be held in 2015.

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World Trade Organization (WTO)

The WTO (formerly the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) was established in 1947, and is the international organization that negotiates and enforces trade rules and periodically convenes multilateral trade negotiations. The last completed multilateral trade negotiations, the Uruguay Round, began in 1986 and concluded in 1994. NOAA Fisheries has two broad fishery-related interests in WTO: (1) defending our conservation laws in WTO dispute settlement; and (2) negotiating fisheries tariffs, non-tariff barriers, and subsidies in the trade rounds.

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.

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PART V: APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

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

Pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), Title II, Section 201, foreign fishing within the U.S. 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone 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
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**	**CNP**	**P**				
Benin									**P**	
Bolivia			**CNP**						**P**	
Brazil		**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**	**A**	**P**	**P**
China		**P**	**P**	**P**	**P**		**P**			
Colombia		**CNP**	**P**							
Comoros				**P**						
Congo									**P**	
D.R. Congo									**P**	
Cook Islands			**CNP**		**P**	**P**	**A**		**P**	
Costa Rica			**P**			**P**			**P**	
Cote d'Ivoire		**P**							**P**	
Croatia		**P**							**P**	
Cuba									**P**	
Curaçao		**P**								
Cyprus						**P**			**P**	
Czech Republic						**P**			**P**	
Denmark						**P**		**P**	**P**	
Djibouti									**P**	
Ecuador			**P**		**CNP**				**P**	**P**
Egypt		**P**							**P**	

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UNFSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
El Salvador			**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**							**P**	
Hungary						**P**			**P**	
Iceland		**P**				**P**		**P**		
India				**P**		**P**	**P**		**P**	
Indonesia	**P**			**P**	**CNP**	**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**				**P**			**P**	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		**P**							**P**	
Liechtenstein									**P**	
Lithuania						**P**		**P**	**P**	
Luxembourg						**P**			**P**	
Macedonia (FYR of)									**P**	
Madagascar				**P**					**P**	
Malaysia				**P**						
Maldives (Republic of)						**P**				
Mali									**P**	

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UN FSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
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**	**CNP**	**P**			**P**	
Serbia (Republic of)									**P**	
Seychelles				**P**		**P**			**P**	
Sierra Leone		**P**		**P**						
Slovakia						**P**			**P**	
Slovenia						**P**			**P**	
Solomon Islands					**P**	**P**				
Somalia									**P**	

Country	CCSBT	ICCAT	IATTC	IOTC	WCPFC	UN FSA	CCAMLR	ICES	CMS	ACAP
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 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	IPHC	PSC	SPTT	SEAFO
Angola							**P**
Australia						**P**	
Canada	**P**	**P**	**P**	**P**	**P**		
Cook Islands						**P**	
Cuba	**P**						
Denmark	**P**	**P**					
European Union	**P**	**P**					**P**
Fiji						**P**	
France	**P**						
Iceland	**P**	**P**					
Japan	**P**		**P**				**P**
Kiribati (Republic of)						**P**	
Korea (Republic of)	**P**		**P**				**P**
Marshall Islands (Republic of)						**P**	
Namibia							**P**
Nauru						**P**	
New Zealand						**P**	
Niue						**P**	
Norway	**P**	**P**					**P**
Palau (Republic of)						**P**	
Papua New Guinea						**P**	
Russia	**P**	**P**	**P**				
Samoa						**P**	
Solomon Islands						**P**	
South Africa							**P**
Tonga						**P**	
Tuvalu						**P**	
Ukraine	**P**						
United Kingdom							**A**
United States of America	**P**	**P**	**P**	**P**	**P**	**P**	**A**
Vanuatu						**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
AOAC	Association of Official Analytical Chemists
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
CSD	Commission for Sustainable Development
Donut Hole Convention	Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea
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
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
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
NSF	National Science Foundation
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIE	Office International des Epizooties
PICES	North Pacific Marine Science Organization
PSC	Pacific Salmon Commission
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
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.

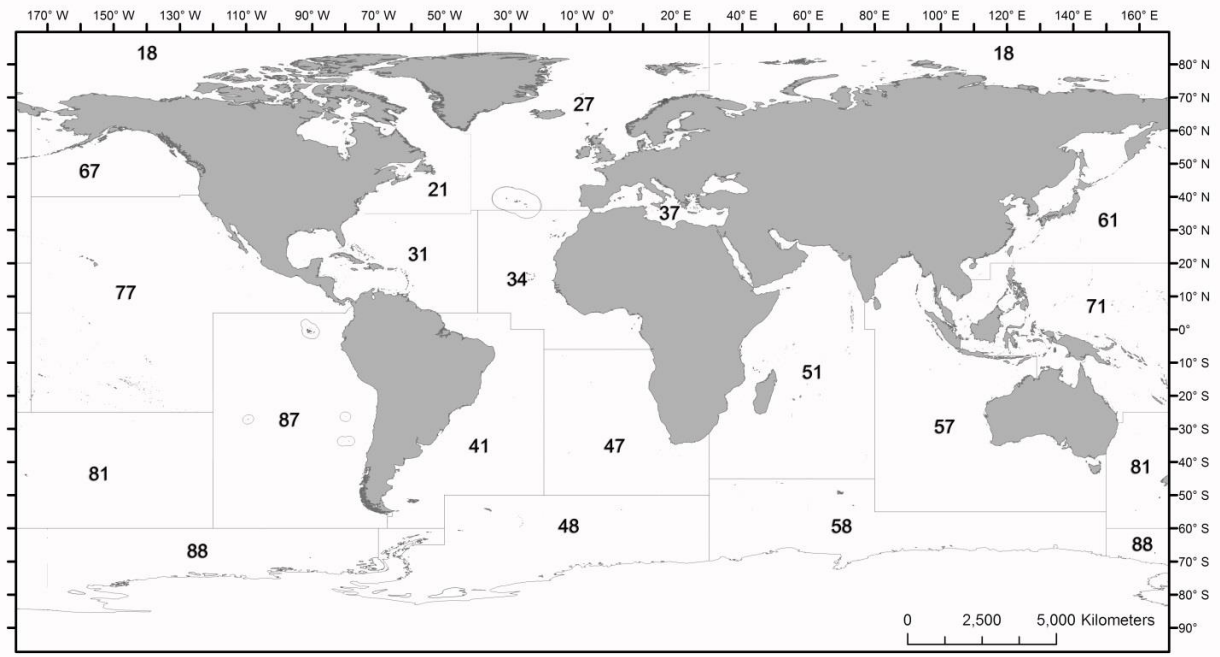


Figure 1 Global Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) statistical fishing areas. From upper left to lower right: Area 18 (Arctic Sea); Area 67 (Pacific, Northeast); Area 77 (Pacific, Eastern Central); Area 81 (Pacific, Southwest); Area 87 (Pacific, Southeast); Area 88 (Pacific, Antarctic); Area 27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

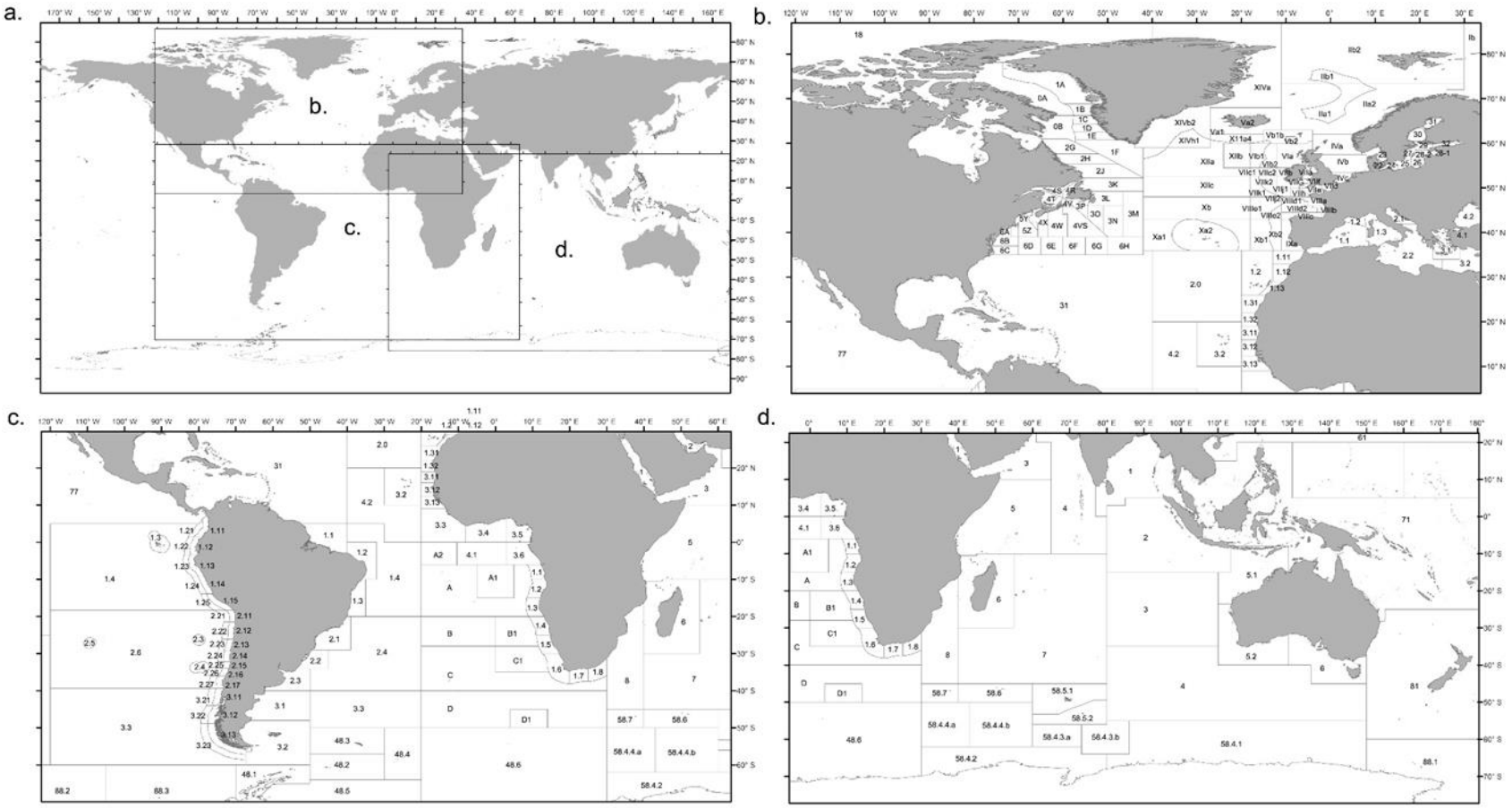


Figure 2 Global Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) sub-regional statistical fishing areas organized (a) by the north Atlantic (b), south Atlantic (c), and Indian Ocean (d). In the North Atlantic (b), the sub-regions for the North Atlantic Fishery Organization (NAFO), Northeast Atlantic Fishery Management 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

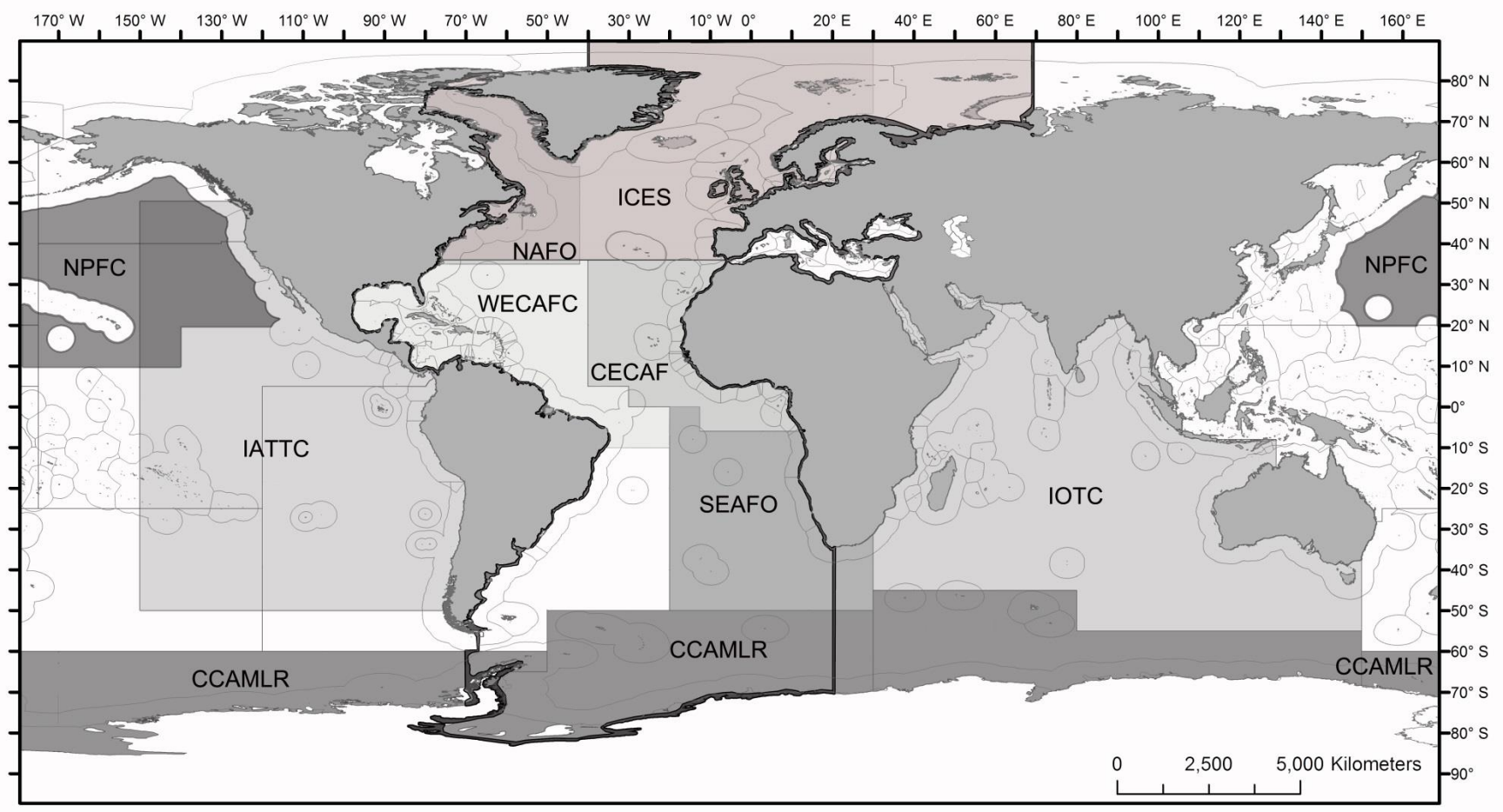


Figure 3 Spatial extent of select Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Scientific Councils including the boundaries of country-specific exclusive economic zones (EEZs). The thick black outline around the Atlantic Ocean represents the spatial extent of the International Commission for the Conservation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

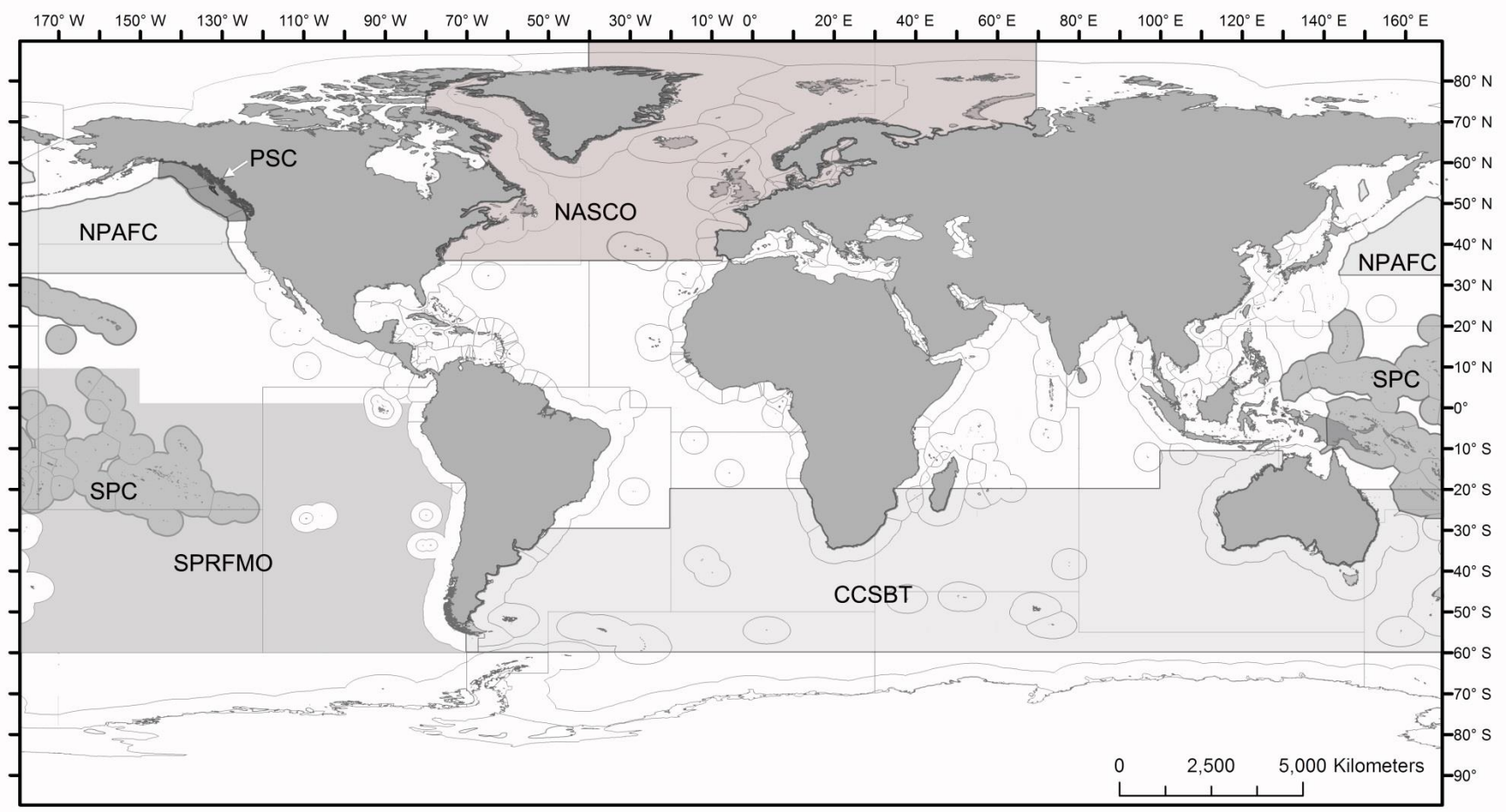


Figure 4 Spatial extent of select Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Scientific Councils including the boundaries of country-specific exclusive economic zones (EEZs). PSC: Pacific Salmon Commission; NPAFC: North Pacific Anadromous Fishery Commission; SPC: Secretariat of the Pacific; SPRFMO: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

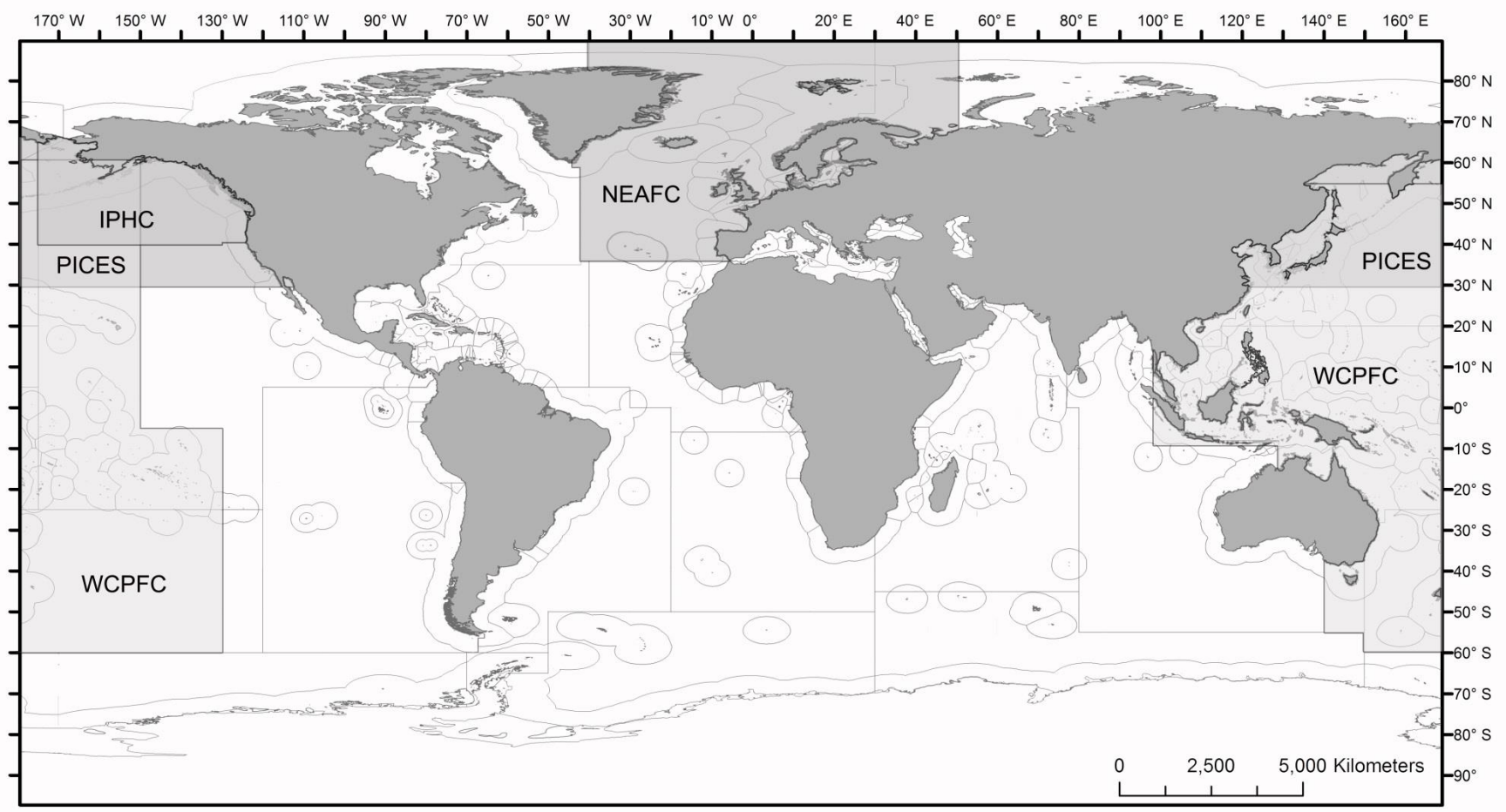


Figure 5 Spatial extent of select Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Scientific Councils including the boundaries of country-specific exclusive economic zones (EEZs). IPHC: International Pacific Halibut Commission; PICES: North Pacific Marine Science Organization; WCPFC: Western Central Pacific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

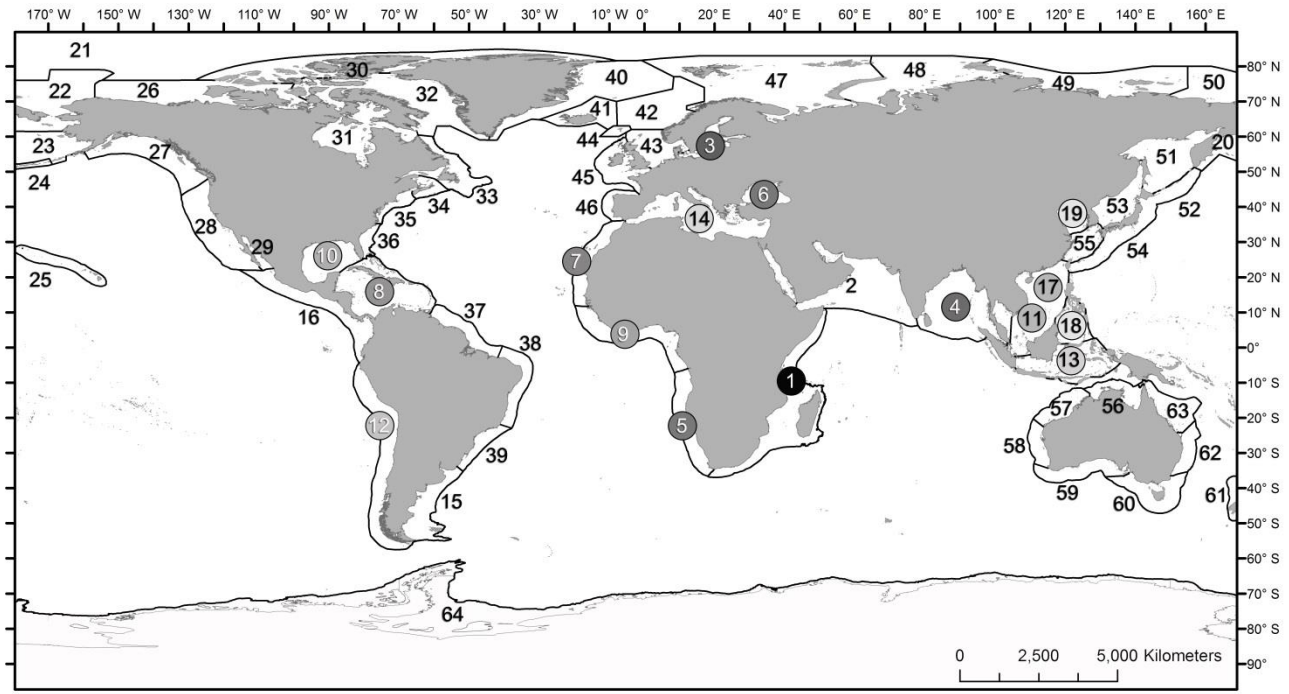


Figure 6 Global distribution of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs). The numbers in the ovals correspond to the LMEs that are currently active as described on page 206 of this compendium. 1. Agulhas and Somali Current Project; 2. Arabian and Red Sea Project; 3. Baltic Sea Project; 4. Bay of Bengal Project;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

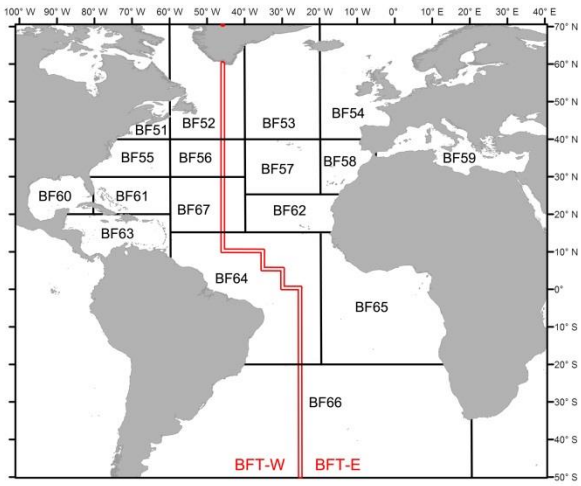
Northern bluefin tuna (BFT)

Thunnus thynnus

Stocks

BFT-E: Eastern stock

BFT-W: Western stock



Albacore

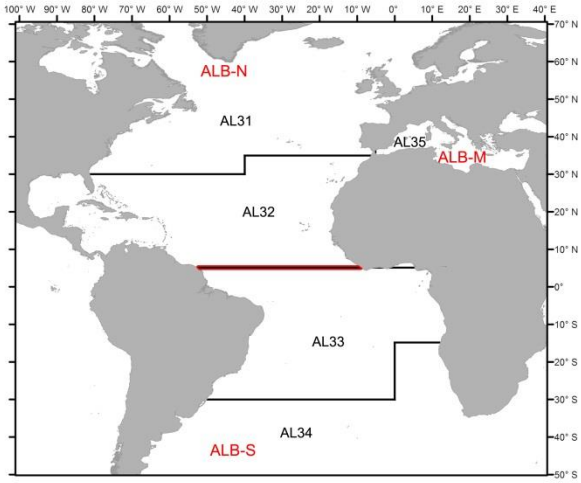
Thunnus alalunga

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

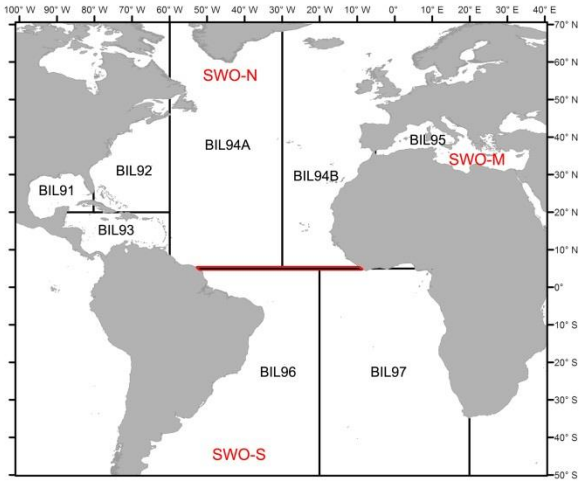


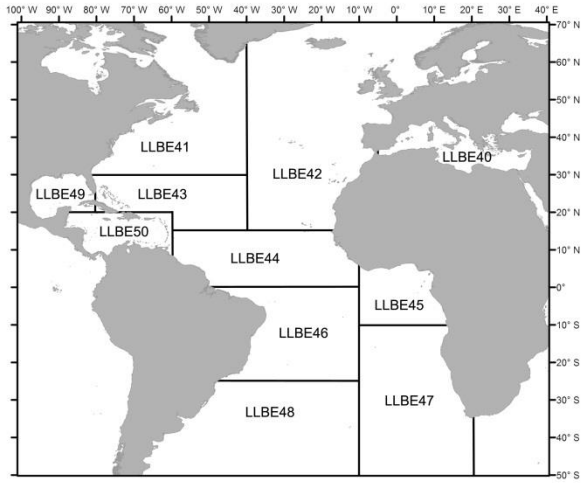
Figure 7 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) geographical delimitations including stock boundaries (red lines and lettering) and sampling areas (black lines and lettering) for Atlantic bluefin tuna, albacore, and swordfish. Modified from: http://www.iccat.int/Data/ICCATMaps2011.pdf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

Bigeye tuna (BET): Longline sampling areas

Thunnus obesus

Stocks

Single Atlantic Stock

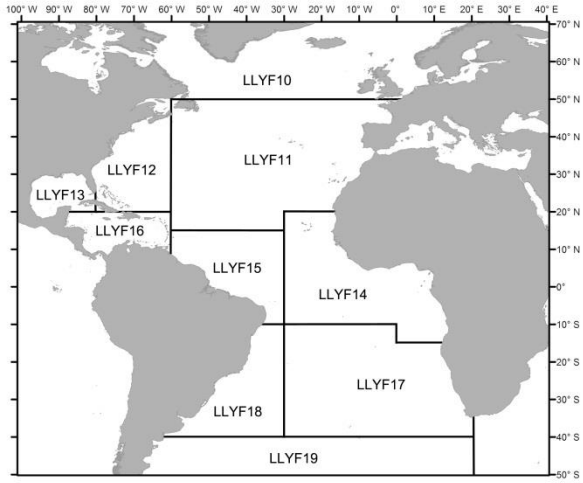


Yellowfin tuna (YFT): Longline sampling areas

Thunnus albacares

Stocks

Single Atlantic Stock



Bigeye and Yellowfin Tuna: Surface gear sampling areas

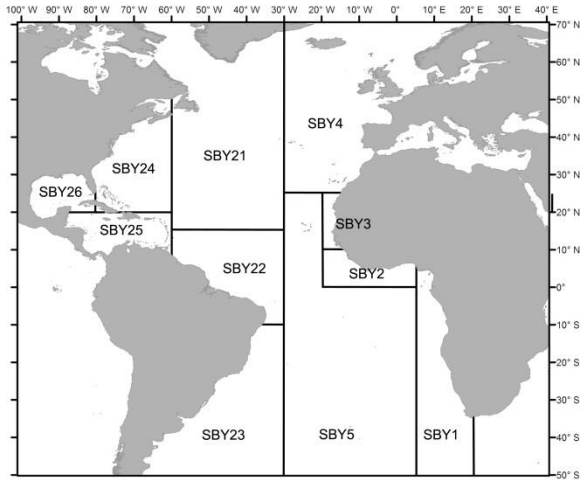


Figure 8 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) geographical delimitations including stock boundaries (red lines and lettering) and sampling areas (black lines and lettering) for bigeye and yellowfin tuna. Modified from: http://www.iccat.int/Data/ICCATMaps2011.pdf .

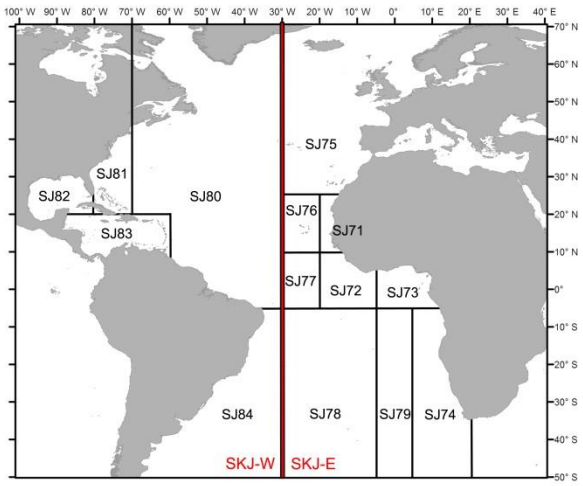
Skipjack tuna (SKJ)

Katsuwonus pelamis

Stocks

SKJ-E: Eastern stock

SKJ-W: Western stock



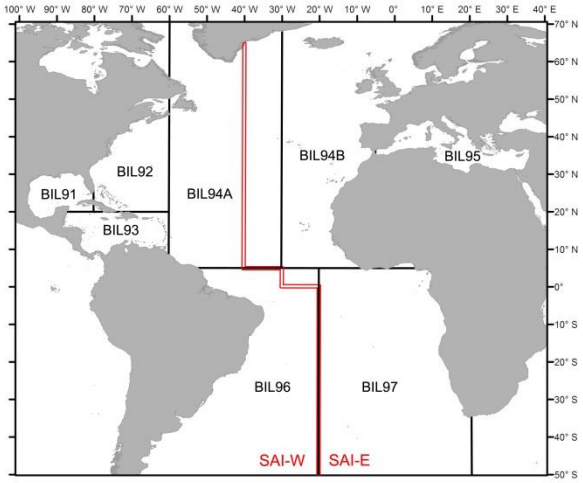
Atlantic sailfish (SAI)

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

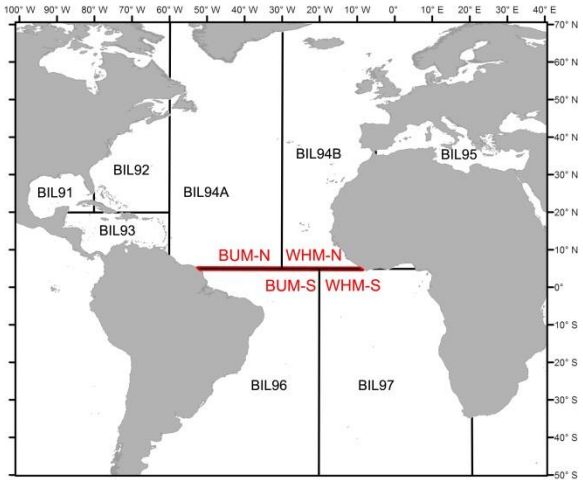


Figure 9 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) geographical delimitations including stock boundaries (red lines and lettering) and sampling areas (black lines and lettering) for skipjack tuna, sailfish, blue and white marlin. Modified from: http://www.iccat.int/Data/ICCATMaps2011.pdf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

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