

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON COMPLIANCE WITH
STATISTICAL REPORTING OBLIGATIONS**

WHEREAS the reporting of basic catch and effort statistics is a fundamental obligation of Contracting Parties under Article IX, Rule 2 of the Convention and for Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities under the terms of the 2003 Recommendation by ICCAT on Criteria for Attaining the Status of Cooperating Non-Contracting Party, Entity, or Fishing Entity in ICCAT (Rec. 03-20);

NOTING that, despite the adoption of numerous measures intended to address the matter, lack of compliance with reporting obligations has been a persistent problem for the Commission over the entire history of its work;

FURTHER NOTING that SCRS has frequently identified incomplete, missing, or late data as a contributor to uncertainty in assessments for several stocks, a factor that limits its ability to formulate specific and science-based management advice;

RECOGNIZING the need to establish a clear process and procedures to identify data gaps, particularly those that limit the ability of SCRS to conduct robust stock assessments, and to find appropriate means to address those gaps;

RECALLING that the *ICCAT Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities* (Reference Document 01-25) clearly links fishing access with the obligation to provide accurate data on fishing effort and catch;

COGNIZANT of the differing levels of development of ICCAT's membership and recalling the 2003 Resolution by ICCAT on Improvements in Data Collection and Quality Assurance (Res. 03-21);

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. The Secretariat shall prepare, as part of its annual report on statistics and research, a list of specific data elements that are lacking for each stock. Such listing shall indicate the missing data elements pertaining to catch, by-catch, effort, and/or size composition, by fleet, gear, and fishing area to the extent such fishing operations are presumed to have occurred based on secondary sources.
2. In view of the report of the Secretariat, SCRS shall provide:
 - a. an evaluation of the extent to which missing data have adversely affected the most recent assessment or update,
 - b. an appraisal of the effect on new stock assessments if the data remain unavailable or incomplete, and
 - c. the consequences of the data deficiencies with respect to the formulation of management advice.
3. Each Contracting Party and Cooperating non-Contracting Party, Entity, or Fishing Entity (CPC) shall provide an explanation regarding its reporting deficiencies including the reasons underlying the identified data gaps, capacity challenges and plans for corrective action. The Commission, through the Compliance Committee or Permanent Working Group for the Improvement of ICCAT Statistics and Conservation Measures (PWG), as appropriate, shall evaluate the information provided by the Secretariat, SCRS and CPCs under this Recommendation.
4. Based on the information provided under Paragraphs 1-3, the Compliance Committee or PWG shall identify problematic data deficiencies and recommend appropriate actions by the respective CPC to address the problem. In making this determination, the Compliance Committee or PWG shall take into account:
 - a. any explanations and/or plans for corrective action,
 - b. the responsible CPC's record of late, incomplete, and/or missing data submissions,

- c. the extent to which the responsible CPC has requested and/or received data collection assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization, other CPCs, the Secretariat, including through the data fund established by the 2003 Resolution by ICCAT on Improvements in Data Collection and Quality Assurance (Res. 03-21), or others, and
- d. the effect of the data deficiency(ies) on the Commission's ability to determine the status of the stock(s) and on the effectiveness of the ICCAT conservation and management measures.