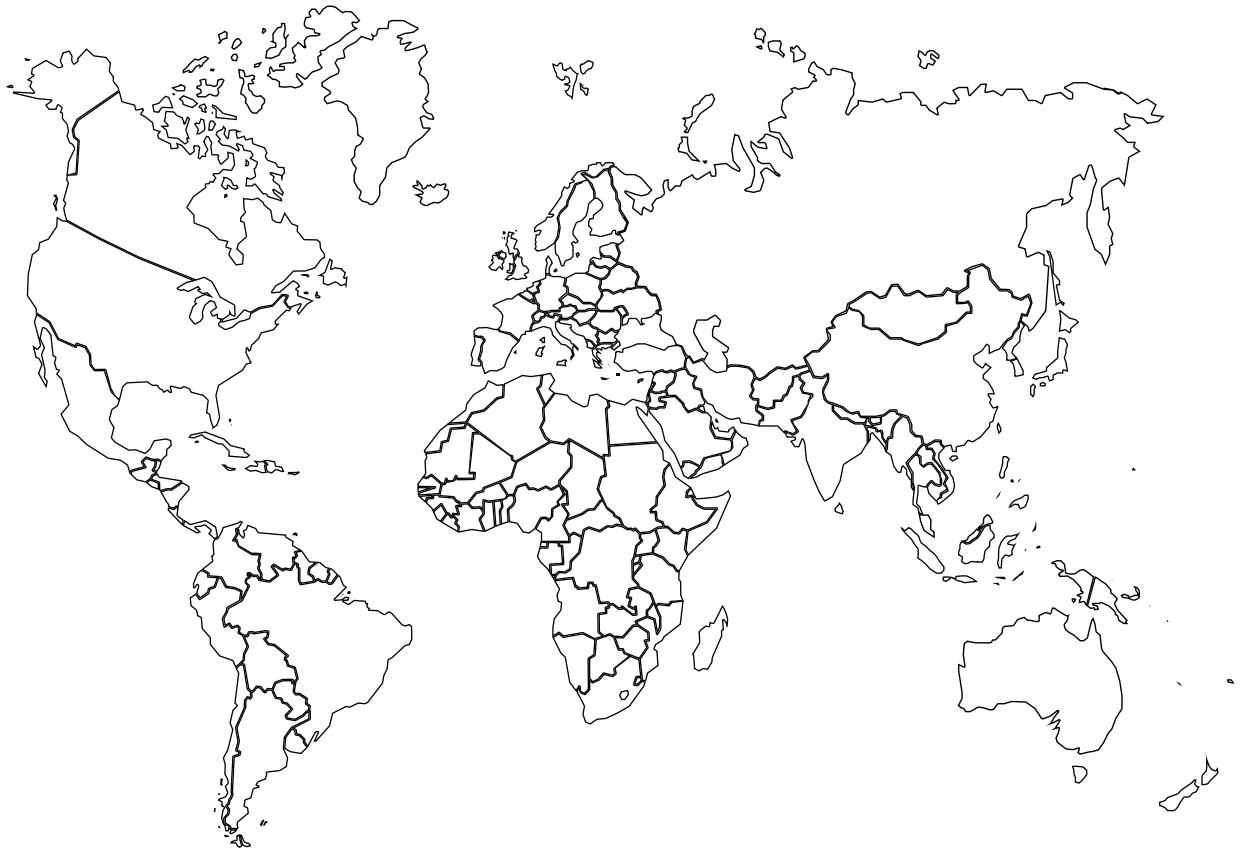
INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS CONCERNING

LIVING MARINE RESOURCES OF

INTEREST TO NOAA FISHERIES



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

2014

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS CONCERNING LIVING MARINE RESOURCES OF INTEREST TO NOAA FISHERIES

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PART I: INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

ATLANTIC OCEAN

International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (Basic Instrument for the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT))

Basic Instrument

International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (TIAS 6767), 20 U.S.T. 2887, 1969, which was signed on May 14, 1966.

Implementing Legislation

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

Members

There are currently 49 Contracting Parties: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Cape Verde, China (People's Republic), Côte d'Ivoire, Curaçao, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, European Union (EU), France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon), Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea (Republic of), Honduras, Iceland, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Liberia, Libya, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sao Tome and Principe, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa (Republic of), Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom (in respect of its overseas territories), United States, Uruguay, Vanuatu, and Venezuela.

Commission Headquarters

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
c/ Corazon de Maria, 8
6th Floor
28002, Madrid
Spain

Executive Secretary: Mr. Driss Meski
Telephone (from U.S.): (011) 34-91-416-5600
Fax: (011) 34-91-415-2612
Web address: http://www.iccat.int
General Email requests: info@iccat.int

Budget

The Commission's Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD) approves a biennial budget during each regular meeting of the Commission. ICCAT's financial situation has been strong in recent years. At its 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.. Monies to support for this fund have been provided from voluntary contributions and from ICCAT's Working Capital Fund. At the 2013 Annual Meeting it was agreed that € 100,000 from the Working Capital fund should be transferred to the Meeting Participation Fund for 2014. In addition, in 2013, ICCAT adopted an EU proposal to establish a Scientific Capacity Building Fund for Developing Coastal States [Rec. 13-19].

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 and 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, 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). Finally, 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 and the consequent impacts on yields has remained a concern for many years.

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 last assessed in 2008. While the results were uncertain, the SCRS found that skipjack stocks in both the East Atlantic and West Atlantic are most likely not overfished and not subject to overfishing. An assessment of eastern and western Atlantic skipjack stocks is scheduled for 2014.

In 2011, ICCAT adopted Recommendation 11-01 that:

-- maintained the annual total allowable catch (TAC) for bigeye tuna at 85,000 mt, consistent with scientific advice as well as catch and capacity limits for major harvesters;

-- provided additional protection for juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tunas by substantially increasing the size and duration of the Gulf of Guinea time and area closure with respect to fishing vessels using fish aggregating devices (FADs);

-- strengthened monitoring and control measures for the Gulf of Guinea fishery, including by developing and requiring implementation of an enhanced port sampling program and establishing an ICCAT-run regional observer program to enhance data quality and compliance. Due to operational issues, however, ICCAT delayed implementation of the regional observer program until the 2015 season. In the meantime, fishery participants are to deploy national observers;

-- established new reporting obligations, including submission of FAD management plans and lists of authorized and active vessels, and, in 2013, ICCAT expanded reporting requirements for those tropical tuna fisheries using FADs [Rec 13-01] to improve data collection and allow the SCRS to better characterize the fishing effort associated with FAD fishing;

--established an annual TAC for yellowfin tuna of 110,000 mt beginning in 2012, which will be revisited if total catches exceed the TAC.

In addition, SCRS is beginning to implement a large-scale tagging program for tropical tunas to improve knowledge about tropical tuna species, including with regard to basic biological parameters.

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).

Since 2008 the TAC for western bluefin tuna has been steadily reduced in keeping with scientific advice. In 2010, based on scientific advice, ICCAT adopted a measure that reduced the TAC from 1,800 mt to 1,750 mt for 2011 and 2012, incorporated the three minor harvesters (UK-Bermuda, France-St. Pierre and Miquelon, and Mexico) into the allocation table at their current quota levels, 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 (i.e., 86.5 mt in both 2011 and 2012) first agreed upon in 2008. In 2012, ICCAT adopted a one-year measure (Rec 12-02) that maintained the TAC (1,750 mt) and the allocation key and most other aspects of the previous recommendation. It also established an absolute minimum size consistent with current U.S. regulations and a requirement that transfer of quota underharvest be used to support cooperative research under the Atlantic-Wide Bluefin Tuna Research Program. In 2013, ICCAT adopted Recommendation 13-09 that once again rolled over the main provisions of the previous measure, retaining the 1750 mt TAC for 2014. This recommendation also called for the development of research plans aimed at improving existing stock abundance indices and/or developing new indices for bluefin tuna of western origin. Each Contracting Party, where practical,

will develop a research plan by April 30, 2014. Scientists will exchange views on the plans prior to the 2nd meeting of the Working Group of Fishery Managers and Scientists in Support of the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Stock Assessment, to be held in July 2014.

Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna: ICCAT began adopting measures to limit harvests of eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna, including TACs and country specific quotas, in the mid to late 1990s due to concerns about the status of the stock. 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. For many years, eastern harvesters failed to follow scientific advice on TAC levels and other actions and largely failed to effectively implement measures that were agreed. This situation began to change 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 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 and reduced the TAC again (to 12,900 mt). Recommendation 10-04 also established a new allocation arrangement and tightened monitoring and control measures for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean fishery, including requiring the placement of observers on towing vessels that deliver bluefin tuna to farms. Available information has indicated that 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 2012, following a new assessment, ICCAT adopted Recommendation 12-02. The established TAC for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna was 13,400 mt. Algeria was granted an extra, temporary allocation of 100 mt for 2013 and 2014 to address the reduction of its historical quota, bringing the effective TAC to 13,500 mt, which was in line with scientific advice. Recommendation 12-03 also shifted the purse seine fishing season later by one week and included improvements to MCS provisions, including mandatory use of stereoscopic cameras in transfers during caging and farming operations and improvements to the high seas boarding and inspection scheme. A new measure (Recommendation 13-07) adopted in 2013 maintains the annual TAC for the eastern fishery at 13,400 mt and continues other provisions governing the fishery. The Commission also adopted a proposal in 2013 to establish a standardized protocol and common procedures for implementation of stereoscopic cameras in the eastern Atlantic/Mediterranean bluefin caging operations by 2014 [Rec 13-08]. An assessment update will be conducted in 2014 for both stocks of bluefin tuna, with the next full assessment scheduled for 2015. The 2015 assessment, however, is expected to be delayed until 2016 given the heavy workload of SCRS.

Research: In 2008, the Commission, 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, adopted a resolution encouraging parties to consider making a portion of BFT 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. In further support of bluefin tuna research, ICCAT adopted a recommendation in 2011 that establishes a research quota of 20 mt to be utilized in support of ICCAT's Atlantic-Wide Bluefin Tuna Research Program multi-year program of research on bluefin tuna stock structure, abundance, and other important scientific questions.

Northern Albacore: At its 1998 meeting, ICCAT adopted a measure to limit fishing capacity in the northern albacore fishery. This action was intended to prevent further increases in fishing mortality given scientific advice at the time, which considered that the stock was close to full exploitation. A TAC and other management measures were first adopted for the stock in 2000. Based on the 2009 stock assessment that indicated the stock was overfished with overfishing occurring, the Commission adopted a rebuilding program that included a 28,000 mt TAC aimed at recovering the stock by 2020. In 2013, the Commission agreed to maintain the 28,000 mt TAC for 2014 through 2016 [Rec 13-05]. The U.S. quota of 527 mt was retained, and CPCs may continue to carryover 25% of their initial quota (to be used within two years from the year of catch).

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 (i.e., 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. In 2011, a new management measure reduced the TAC to 24,000 mt, in line with scientific advice, and, for the first time, established a sharing arrangement amongst the major harvesters. The stock was most recently assessed in 2013, and the scientific advice called for lowering the TAC. ICCAT, however, maintained the 24,000 mt TAC for 2014-2016—in part to accommodate growth in the fishery by some participants, such as Japan. Significantly, the new recommendation 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 [Rec 13-06].

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 around 1990. Initial management actions were not successful in stemming the decline of the resource and a rebuilding program was developed and adopted by ICCAT in 1999. Specifically, ICCAT parties committed 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. 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 increasing the TAC in line with scientific advice and providing 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. As a consequence, the TAC was reduced to 13,700 mt. At its 2010 meeting, ICCAT adopted a one-year extension (Rec 10-02) and provided several developing states with an allocation from the TAC (rather than fishery access based on allocations from available underharvest); Rec. 10-02 also included 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. Information from these plans were to help inform future North Atlantic swordfish management discussions.

In 2011, ICCAT adopted a two-year management measure that extended the 13,700 mt TAC and preserved the current catch limit for U.S. fishermen. It also included, among other things, a strengthened provision to ensure the TAC would not be exceeded and allowed implementation of an alternative approach for calculating the minimum size (cleithrum-keel, rather than lower jaw-fork length), which better reflects how the U.S. fishery operates and thus reduce discard levels. At the 2013 ICCAT meeting, the 13,700 mt TAC was extended for another 2 years (2014-2016) in Recommendation 13-02. In both the recommendations adopted in 2011 and 2013, various temporary quota transfers were authorized. In addition, the SCRS will consider the interim limit reference point of 0.4Bmsy or any more robust limit reference point established through further analysis when assessing the status of North Atlantic swordfish and providing advice to the Commission in 2016. SCRS and the Commission will also begin a dialogue in 2014 to allow for the development of harvest control rules for the stock for consideration in future management decisions.

South Atlantic Swordfish: The Commission established management measures for South Atlantic swordfish for the first time in 1994. Measures adopted over the years limited countries to catch levels consistent with certain reference years; later, an annual TAC and country specific allocations were established. The recommendation adopted in 2006 set the TAC at the scientifically recommended 17,000 mt, but authorized removals of 17,475 mt in 2007 and 2008 and 17,440 mt in 2009. 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 (51,000 mt) would not be exceeded. As some parties were not catching their full quotas, this provision was not needed.

In 2009, a scientifically based TAC of 15,000 mt was established for 2010-2013 with a cap of 45,000 mt over the three-year plan. The United States retained its 100 mt quota as well as its ability to carry forward up to 100 mt of underharvest, but agreed, together with other parties, to transfer some underharvest to developing ICCAT members. In 2012, this measure was extended for one year. In 2013, the Commission agreed to extend the TAC of 15,000 t for 2014-2016 [Rec 13-03]. The measure maintained the provision that allows the United States to carry over the entire amount of its base quota allocation of 100 t. Quota transfers from the United States of 50 t to Namibia, 25 t to Cote D'Ivoire and 25 t to Belize were maintained.

Mediterranean Swordfish: Following a stock assessment in 2003, the Commission adopted a recommendation that required Contracting Parties to take the necessary measures to reduce the mortality of juvenile swordfish in the Mediterranean. The recommendation also prohibited the use of driftnets in fisheries for large pelagics in the Mediterranean. In 2007, SCRS found that the stock was still overfished with overfishing occurring and high juvenile mortality. An EU proposal for a seasonal closure from October 15 – November 15 was adopted by the Commission in 2007 and extended by 1 month (October 1 – November 30) in 2008. In 2009, ICCAT adopted additional reporting and monitoring requirements, including a fishing vessel register for the Mediterranean swordfish fleet, and requested that SCRS evaluate the effectiveness of the time/area closure. In 2010, although a new stock assessment confirmed that the stock was still overfished and that overfishing was occurring, no new measures were adopted. In 2011, ICCAT adopted an additional one month time/area closure, a minimum size for retained fish, and gear limitations, but the measure still fell short of the scientific advice. Following another assessment in 2013, a new recommendation was adopted that retained all the provisions of the previous recommendation and made one technical correction (Rec. 13-04).

Billfishes: At its 1995 meeting, the Commission adopted a resolution focusing on the enhancement of research programs for billfish and calling for voluntary release or tag and release by commercial as well as recreational fishermen. In 1996, the Commission passed a resolution to encourage actions to facilitate the recovery of billfishes, including the use of monofilament leaders and improvement in catch and post-release mortality statistics.

Blue and White Marlins: At its 1997 meeting, the Commission adopted the first mandatory conservation measures for Atlantic blue marlin and white marlins in the form of a landings cap. At its 2000 meeting, the Commission determined that additional action was necessary and adopted a two-phase plan to rebuild depleted populations of Atlantic blue marlin and white marlin. This plan was amended several times over the years, including improving information on and control of artisanal fisheries. In 2011, additional reductions in allowable catch were adopted for both blue and white marlins 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. While the results of this work was to be presented in 2013, it was not complete and additional effort is being undertaken in 2014. In 2012, ICCAT adopted a recommendation that established an overall landings limit for each stock with country-specific quotas, which are expected to result in mortality reductions consistent with scientific advice. The measure also set an Atlantic-wide recreational minimum size for marlins and banned the sale of recreationally caught marlins.

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 current catches of the western stock not be exceeded. ICCAT considered conservation and management measures for sailfish in 2009, 2010, and 2012, but no consensus could be reached. SCRS will prepare data in 2014 to conduct a new stock assessment for sailfish in 2015.

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. The 2004 agreement 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, ICCAT considered a joint Belize/U.S./Brazil proposal to require sharks to be landed with their fins naturally attached in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. Consensus on this measure could not be reached, but a growing consensus for this approach was reflected in an increased number of co-sponsors. The proposal is expected to be considered again in 2014.

In 2007, ICCAT adopted a measure that requires data collection on bycatch of and targeted fisheries for sharks, measures to reduce fishing mortality on porbeagle and shortfin mako sharks until assessments determine sustainable harvest levels, research on pelagic sharks and consideration of time-area closures, and an assessment of porbeagle sharks. Additional management measures were considered by ICCAT regarding porbeagle sharks in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013, but consensus could not be reached. In 2011, the Commission adopted a measure on shortfin mako that reinforced the existing requirements to reduce mortality on the North Atlantic stock of this species and required reporting on actions taken in this regard for review by the Compliance Committee. The adopted measure also underscored obligations to report data on shortfin mako stocks to SCRS and further prohibits parties that do not report catch and effort data from being allowed to retain this species. Citing the uncertainties associated with the 2012 assessment for shortfin mako, as well as the high level of vulnerability of this species as reflected in the Ecological Risk Assessment conducted in 2012, a measure to establish country-specific landings limits was proposed in 2011, 2012, and 2013, but consensus could not be reached.

In 2008, the Commission adopted a measure requiring bigeye thresher caught alive in ICCAT fisheries to be released. At the 2009 meeting, ICCAT adopted a proposal that prohibits the retention of bigeye thresher sharks in all fisheries, with an exception for Mexico's small-scale coastal catch of less than 110 fish. At the 2010 meeting, Mexico noted it would not avail itself of this exception.

In 2010, ICCAT adopted a measure that prohibits retention of oceanic whitetip sharks caught in association with ICCAT fisheries and requires parties to collect and report the number of discards and releases of this species. Also in 2010, ICCAT adopted a recommendation that prohibits retention of all species of hammerhead sharks (with the exception of bonnethead sharks) that are caught in association with ICCAT fisheries with limited exceptions for developing countries that retain hammerhead sharks for local consumption. Parties taking advantage of this exception must ensure that these sharks and their parts do not enter international trade.

In 2011, the SCRS recognized silky sharks as the most vulnerable shark to ICCAT fisheries. A measure was adopted that required the release of silky sharks caught in association with ICCAT fisheries and the prohibition of retention on board, transshipment, and landing of the species. Limited exceptions were provided for developing coastal states that retain silky sharks for food as well as for parties that prohibit silky shark fisheries, whose domestic law requires all dead fish be landed, and whose law prohibits fishermen from realizing any commercial profit from such fish. Parties not reporting species-specific data for sharks were required to submit a data collection improvement plan.

To facilitate species identification, the SCRS completed a shark identification guide in 2011 as requested by the Commission, which has been made widely available. The Commission adopted a recommendation in 2012 that requires reporting on implementation of and compliance with existing shark conservation and management measures to assist the Compliance Committee in its review. In 2013, the Commission adopted a proposal to provide for the biological sampling of shark species that are currently prohibited from retention in ICCAT fisheries, including oceanic whitetip, bigeye thresher, silky and scalloped, smooth and great hammerhead sharks and that are dead at haulback. ICCAT members wanting to retain these prohibited shark species for scientific sampling must notify SCRS and report annually on the progress and/or results achieved through the research.

Bycatch and Discards:

Sea Turtles: In 2003, the Commission adopted a non-binding resolution that encouraged all parties to provide information on interactions with sea turtles in the ICCAT Convention area—in particular, the bycatch of sea turtles in ICCAT fisheries. At the 2010 meeting, ICCAT adopted a binding measure 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. In addition, SCRS is to advise the Commission on approaches for mitigating sea turtle bycatch in ICCAT fisheries for appropriate action by the Commission based on data and information to be compiled by the ICCAT Secretariat, including that provided by ICCAT members, no later than 2012.

In 2013. the Commission adopted a proposal that 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). The measures contained in Rec 13-11are already required by the United States in its commercial Atlantic HMS fisheries. This proposal was adopted with the understanding that complete results from the SCRS ecological risk assessment for sea turtles are expectedin 2014.

Seabirds: At the 2002 Commission meeting, ICCAT adopted a resolution that, among other things, urged parties to inform SCRS and the Commission of the status of their National Plans of Action for Reducing Incidental Catches of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (NPOA-Seabirds) and to implement such plans, where appropriate. In 2007, ICCAT adopted a binding measure regarding seabird bycatch mitigation measures. The measure required use of tori lines on vessels fishing south of 20 degrees South or line weighting, and specified that the Commission shall consider adoption of additional measures to mitigate seabird bycatch based on the 2008 SCRS assessment of the impact of ICCAT fisheries on seabirds. In 2009 an effort was made to adopt a revised seabird proposal but consensus could not be reached. In 2011, however, ICCAT did adopt a revised seabird recommendation calling for new protections for seabirds in waters south of 25°S. The measure requires use of at least two mitigation measures (night setting, bird scaring lines, or line weighting). The previous ICCAT rules that mandated the use of bird scaring lines (tori poles) or night setting with swivel weights to ensure optimal sink rates still apply between 20 and 25°S.

Sargasso Sea: In 2012, ICCAT adopted a resolution jointly proposed by the EU, South Africa, UK (Overseas Territories), and the United States that calls on 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.

Permanent Working Group (PWG):

Terms of reference for the PWG were revised in 2011. 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, on developing new measures.

Trade Measures. Each year the Commission undertakes a review of fishery related activities in the Convention Area. This annual review has resulted in the identification of a number of countries and, in some cases, the implementation of sanctions, including trade restrictive measures. When the problem has been rectified, ICCAT has lifted these sanctions. ICCAT was the first regional fishery management organization to adopt such instruments and to use trade measures to support conservation goals.

Through 2003, much of the work of the PWG was guided by the Bluefin Tuna and Swordfish Action Plan Resolutions (Action Plans) and the Unregulated and Unreported Catches Resolution (UU Catches Resolution), which were adopted to promote cooperation with ICCAT conservation measures. The Resolutions established mechanisms by which multilateral trade measures could be imposed against parties deemed to be diminishing the effectiveness of the ICCAT conservation measures for ICCAT species under certain circumstances.

In 2003, ICCAT took a decisive step and broadened its regime of trade restrictive measures by adopting a comprehensive trade resolution—thereby replacing the Action Plans and the UU Catches Resolution. This resolution applied to all fisheries and all parties (both ICCAT members and non-members), established a more transparent process for the application of trade restrictive measures, and used comparable standards for evaluating fishery related activities. In addition, the resolution allowed for swift re-imposition of trade sanctions in cases where parties recently released from sanctions acted in bad faith and again engaged in problem fishing activities. This comprehensive approach was intended to bolster ICCAT's already significant efforts to eliminate IUU fishing in the ICCAT Convention Area. In 2006, ICCAT adopted a revised trade instrument. Most significantly, the new measure converted the instrument from a non-binding resolution to a binding recommendation. It was also expanded to explicitly cover farming activities.

Catch and Trade Document Programs

Bluefin Tuna Trade/Catch Tracking: In 1992, the Commission 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 from a statistical document program to a catch documentation scheme (CDS) for bluefin tuna. This program allows tracking of bluefin tuna product from the point of capture through to its final market with the aim of improving control and compliance in the eastern bluefin fishery. This was a major change designed to improve the monitoring of harvests from and data reporting for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery. The United States participates in the 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 next 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. IT issues required a delay in the development and implementation schedule, and ICCAT adopted a new timeline for implementation of the eBCD system at its 2013 meeting. By May 16, 2014, countries are to notify ICCAT if they will use the electronic system or continue to use paper during the transition period leading up to the March 1, 2015, deadline for full implementation. An electronic BCD technical manual is under development.

Swordfish and Bigeye Tuna Trade Tracking. ICCAT first 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. These statistical document programs have contributed to ICCAT's review of fishery activities under the trade recommendation. In recognition of the changing needs of the Commission, ICCAT agreed to begin a process in 2013 to consider the development of catch certification programs for other ICCAT species.

Monitoring and Control: ICCAT has a number of measures in effect relating to monitoring and control. Moreover, ICCAT has held several meetings of its Working Group on Integrated Monitoring and Control Measures (IMM), a group established to review ICCAT's monitoring and control measures with a view to strengthen them and fill gaps where necessary. Three recommendations developed by the working group were adopted at the 2003 annual meeting on the following topics: flag state duties, vessel monitoring systems (VMS), and basic data collection for fishing vessels authorized to fish for species managed by ICCAT. In 2005 ICCAT adopted a measure establishing a centralized at sea transshipment observer program, which was revised in 2012. This program requires that at sea transshipment can only be undertaken by large scale longline vessels and only if an ICCAT observer is onboard the carrier vessel. For the eastern bluefin tuna fishery, ICCAT has adopted a centralized VMS program with financing by participating nations. At the 2008 Commission meeting, ICCAT included a centralized regional observer program in the adopted revisions to the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna rebuilding plan. The observer program includes elements of compliance as well as scientific data collection. A similar program was adopted for the bigeye and yellowfin fishery in 2012, although implementation has been delayed until 2015.

At the 2010 annual meeting, ICCAT adopted a U.S. proposal establishing minimum standards for national observer programs, which will help to ensure that important scientific information is collected in ICCAT fisheries. In particular, 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 2012, ICCAT adopted new minimum standards for inspections in port to be more consistent with the 2009 FAO Port State Measures Agreement.

In 2013, ICCAT adopted a number of MCS measures that were important U.S. priorities, including three proposals that were initiated or co-sponsored by the United States. These included (1) amendments to ICCAT's authorized list of large scale vessels [Rec. 11-20] to require eligible vessels to obtain an IMO/LR numbers as a condition of listing and a prerequisite to being able to fish for ICCAT species; (2) amendments to ICCAT's chartering recommendation [Rec. 02-21] to strengthen

observer requirements; and (3) model forms for use in port inspections pursuant to ICCAT's port inspection recommendation [Rec. 12-07]. Other MCS proposals were considered by ICCAT in 2013 but did not achieve consensus. They are expected to be discussed at the 2014 intersessional meeting of ICCAT's Integrated Monitoring Measures Working Group in July 2014. These include amendments to ICCAT's minimum standards for vessel monitoring systems, provisions to strengthen access agreement reporting requirements, further development of a comprehensive high seas boarding and inspection scheme to replace ICCAT's out of date at sea inspection regime, evaluation of the need for new or expanded catch/trade tracking programs, and consideration of remaining issues impacting the development and implementation of the eBCD system.

Vessel Lists. ICCAT 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. Also in 2002, ICCAT adopted a recommendation to establish a list of vessels presumed to have engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated (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 Commission also strengthened provisions on port inspection of IUU vessels. The current authorized and IUU vessels lists can be viewed on the ICCAT website.

Compliance Committee:

The terms of reference for the Compliance Committee were revised in 2011. The Compliance Committee is focused on reviewing compliance and cooperation with ICCAT measures by members and non-members, including implementing the trade measures recommendation as appropriate. It also implements a number of recommendations designed to encourage compliance, 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.

For the past several years, ICCAT has focused intensively on improving the operations of the Compliance Committee. The Compliance Committee conducts an annual review of incidents of non-compliance with ICCAT statistical data requirements and management measures. The Committee also reviews allegations of non-compliance available from third party sources. Each Contracting Party is reviewed for compliance with opportunities for Parties to ask questions, provide information and clarification of the record, and submit missing information or reports. Compilation of a report card supports substantial discussion of compliance failures and promises of improvements in the future.

At its 2011 meeting, ICCAT adopted a revised recommendation developed by the Compliance Committee Chair to clarify the application of quota carry forward and payback rules. The usual systematic review was supported by the establishment of an *ad hoc* review group to assist the Compliance Committee Chair in compiling and assessing relevant information and by the pilot use of a schedule of compliance actions. This system of review continues to be implemented and has resulted in various actions, including the identification of some ICCAT members under the trade measures recommendation (Rec. 06-13). In 2012, ICCAT adopted revised guidelines for Annual Reports to the Commission designed to standardize and improve reporting by parties on how they have implemented ICCAT requirements and further facilitate the compliance review process at the ICCAT annual meeting.

No data-no fish: ICCAT adopted a measure in 2011 requiring parties to submit information on how they are meeting data reporting obligations. Recommendation 11-15 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 this recommendation were developed and are appended to the 2012 meeting report.

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 2013, for each of ICCAT's (then) 48 parties and five parties with cooperating status. Per action taken under Rec. 11-15 ("No data, no fish"), the following parties' authorizations to fish for all ICCAT species have been suspended for 2014 until acceptable Task I data are provided: Albania, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Guinea, Honduras, and Sao Tome e Principe. Three parties were identified under the trade measures recommendation in 2013 (i.e., Angola, Honduras, Albania). They could face stronger action, including the implementation of non-discriminatory trade restrictive measures if they do not rectify the problem activities. "Letters of

Concern" will be sent to 18 other parties, including four parties whose identifications were lifted this year (i.e., Nicaragua, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Syria), for lesser infractions. Responses to ICCAT's letters are due one month before the annual meeting.

Cooperating Parties: ICCAT continues to encourage non-members interested in ICCAT species and fisheries to become cooperating parties. Granting such status helps ICCAT expand and improve its control over the fisheries under its purview. Non-members with this status agree to abide voluntarily by ICCAT's rules and in return receive certain benefits, such as qualifying for quota allocations and placing their vessels on the authorized vessel list. In 2003, ICCAT adopted a recommendation on criteria for attaining the status of cooperating party. This measure also outlines the type of information countries need to submit for consideration and allows for the yearly review of those in cooperating status. In 2008, the Commission 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. Beginning in 2011, the Compliance Committee considered cooperating parties compliance and status, rather than PWG.

Currently, ICCAT has three cooperating non-members: Chinese Taipei (first granted in 1998), El Salvador (first granted in 2012), and Suriname (first granted in 2011). The cooperating status of Guayana (granted in 2003) was revoked in 2012 due to total lack of reporting. Guyana requested reinstatement of cooperating status but as the request was received after the deadline, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the case of Guyana until the 2014 meeting. Colombia's cooperating status was revoked for 2014 because of a lack of data submission. Curaçao, a former cooperator, joined the Commission in 2014.

Performance Review and Future of ICCAT:

The Commission agreed to conduct a performance review of the organization in 2008 using as a minimum guide the criteria endorsed through the UNGA. Dr. Glenn Hurry, the Coordinator of the ICCAT Independent Performance Review Committee, presented the report prepared by the Committee and 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, he also indicated 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 considered that the SCRS carried out good work, but recognized the difficulties they faced in relation to data availability and quality.

The Chair of ICCAT suggested that the recommendations of the report be considered by relevant Panels and Committees during the meeting when adopting new management measures. The Future of ICCAT Working Group was held in 2009 and considered the results of the ICCAT performance review report. The Working Group referred the species-specific recommendations to the Panels and considered both short- and longer term solutions to various issues confronting ICCAT, including the issue of the scope of the Convention. A second working group meeting was held in 2011. While attendance was improved, many issues remained unresolved—in particular, whether or not ICCAT was to engage in a process to amend its Convention. The third meeting of the Future of ICCAT Working Group was held in 2012. It is unclear at this time whether ICCAT will continue to need this working group.

Convention Amendment:

At its 2012 annual meeting, 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 [Rec. 12-10]. The terms of reference outline a three-year process to develop Convention amendments, which will eventually 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 the Annex 2," which include the Precautionary Approach, ecosystem considerations, capacity building and assistance, allocation of fishing possibilities, and transparency.

The first meeting of the CWG took place July 10-12, 2013, in Sapporo, Japan, and was chaired by Deirdre Warner-Kramer of the United States. Twenty parties attended the meeting. Before and during the meeting, a number of proposals were made by the United States, Japan, EU, Norway, Brazil, Turkey, and Korea. The U.S. presented a concept paper covering most of the issues to be considered at the meeting and offered proposals on general principles and dispute resolution, but no consensus was reached on Convention approaches for any issue. The Convention Working Group will meet again in 2014 and 2015 to develop Convention amendments to forward to the Commission for consideration.

Enhancing Support for Scientific Work and Processes:

In 2011, several measures were adopted that strengthen ICCAT's scientific work and processes, including the link between scientific advice and management. These include:

- *Decision Making Principles*: Taking into account 2011 intersessional work by the Future of ICCAT Working Group as well as discussions from Kobe III, ICCAT adopted a recommendation that provides guidance on conservation and management actions to be taken based on the status of the stock as reflected in the Kobe plot.
- *Best Available Science*: ICCAT adopted a resolution aimed at enhancing ICCAT's scientific process, including greater incorporation of peer review.
- *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. In 2013, the Commission approved a resolution further clarifying issues associated with standardizing the presentation of scientific information in the SCRS annual report.

Other Issues:

Fishing Capacity: Overcapacity is a problem in many ICCAT managed fisheries as it contributes to poor stock productivity, unsatisfactory economic performance, and excessively contentious management discussions. Overcapacity may be directly responsible for overharvest in some fisheries. At the 2004 ICCAT meeting, problems associated with fish laundering and overcapacity of the Chinese Taipei fleet was of particular concern. In 2006, ICCAT adopted a proposal to establish a working group to consider the capacity issue. It met in 2007 but progress was slow. The working group met again in 2008 and forwarded a recommendation to the Commission to freeze the number and gross registered tonnage of vessels that fished for, transshipped, transported, or landed bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean between January 1, 2007 and July 1, 2008. It also called for the rapid implementation of a capacity reduction program for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fleet and a limit on the number of bluefin traps to the number authorized by each CPC as of July 1, 2008. Aspects of these recommendations were adopted in a revised rebuilding plan for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna at the 2008 Commission meeting. In 2009 and 2010, progress was reviewed and further capacity reduction requirements were adopted.

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 as Chair of the new Working Group to promote a dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers. As the term of the current Executive Secretary will end in early 2016, the Commission is expected to

2014 Annual and Intersessional Meeting:

The 19th Special Meeting of the Commission will be held November 10-17, 2014, at a location to be determined.

The Commission agreed to hold several intersessional meetings in 2014 as follows: In early March, a joint meeting of Panel 2 and the Compliance Committee to consider eastern bluefin tuna fishery plans to be held back-to-back with a special

intersessional meeting of the Permanent Working Group to consider eBCD issues; in May, back-to-back meetings of the IMM Working Group, the Convention Amendment Working Group, and the Standing Working Group of Scientists and Managers (to consider issues related to harvest control rules, target and limit reference points, and research needs and priorities); and, in July, a meeting of the western Atlantic bluefin tuna science-managers working group to consider research plans for improving/developing indicates of abundance. In addition, a meeting of the recreational working group could be held back-to-back with the western bluefin tuna meeting if sufficient data becomes available but this is unlikely. Information concerning these meetings is available at: http://www.iccat.int/en/meetingscurrent.htm.

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Members

Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faeroe 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
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United Kingdom

Secretary: Dr. Peter Huchinson (Interim appointment through December 2013)
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Budget

The Convention provides that 30 percent of the Organization's budget will be borne equally by the Parties; 70 percent will be based on recent catches of salmon in intercepting fisheries. NASCO's 2013 budget totaled 675,320 British Pounds Sterling--of which the U.S. contribution was 30,816 Pounds. The 2013 budget represents almost a 200,000 Pound decrease over the 2012 budget, which included various new budget outlays, including to cover the cost of the organization's external performance review and the costs associated with the retirement of the Secretary. To meet budget needs for 2012 without accepting a significant increase in contributions, NASCO decided to borrow against its Working Capital, Contractual Obligation, and International Atlantic Salmon Research Board funds with a view to reimbursing those funds as quickly as possible, and no later than 2016. NASCO has adopted forecast budgets through 2016 which project relatively modest budget increases to ensure reimbursement of those funds. In 2013, NASCO will select a new Secretary for the organization. The actual impact on the budget will depend on the individual selected.

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: (1) provides a forum for the study, analysis, and exchange of information on salmon stocks subject to the Convention; (2) provides for consultation and cooperation concerning salmon stocks beyond Commission areas; (3) coordinates the activities of the Commissions; (4) establishes working arrangements with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and other fisheries and scientific organizations; (5) makes recommendations concerning scientific research; (6) supervises and coordinates the administrative, financial, and other internal affairs of the Organization; and (7) coordinates the Organization's external relations.

The three Commissions each have the following functions: (1) to provide for consultation and cooperation among their members; (2) to propose regulatory measures for intercepting salmon fisheries; and (3) to make recommendations to the Council concerning scientific research.

Canada and the United States are members of the NAC. Canada, the EU, the United States, and Denmark (in respect of 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 of 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 obtaining 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 represents 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 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) 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.

Now that the survey work of SALSEA has been completed, the Parties are considering whether or not the IASRB is still needed. At the 2012 NASCO meeting, the Board agreed that it continued to have a role to play at least until it was reimbursed by the Council for the loan made in 2011. The Board also stated that it could have a more informed discussion on its future relevance after receiving the report from the SAG subgroup discussed above.

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 to reviewed the final report from the Aquaculture FAR group, consider reporting arrangements on the BMP guidance, and discuss 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 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 focus area reports under the IPs. The Council refined this work at the 2006 annual meeting. At the 2007 NASCO meeting, the Council held an open "Special Session" on the Report of the *Ad Hoc* Review Group appointed in 2006 to evaluate the IPs. At this stage, the review focused on the structure of the plans and how well they conformed with the guidelines for development of the plans not the adequacy of their substantive content. The plans were submitted or resubmitted for final review by November 1, 2007.

The second phase of review of the Next Steps Process was to develop "focus area reports" or FARs for review and assessment in key Atlantic salmon management areas. The first focus area report was on the fisheries management aspect of the IP. An *Ad Hoc* Review Group reviewed the focus area reports 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 and approaches to addressing 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.

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 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 was suggested. During 2009 Council meeting, most of the recommendations of the Public Relations Work Group were agreed 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, and 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 facilitating 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 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 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 there were 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. The outcome of this meeting will be considered by the Council at its 2013 annual meeting in June.

Actions Taken by NASCO's Three Regional Commissions:

NAC Discussions/Actions: In 2011, four of the six geographic areas (U.S.A., Scotia-Fundy, Quebec, and Labrador) were below their CL and were therefore suffering reduced reproductive capacity. Two of the six geographic areas (Newfoundland and Gulf of St. Lawrence) were above their CL and were therefore at full reproductive capacity. Management advice in the form of catch options is only provided for the non-maturing 1SW and maturing 2SW components, as the maturing 1SW component is not fished outside of home waters. As there is less than 75% probability that the numbers of 2SW salmon returning to the six regions of North America will be above the management objectives (conservation limits for the four northern areas, rebuilding objectives for the two southern areas) simultaneously, there are no mixed-stock fisheries catch options on 1SW non-maturing and 2SW salmon in North America in 2012 to 2015. Where spawning requirements are being achieved, however, there are no biological reasons to restrict the harvest.

ICES noted that wild salmon populations are now critically low in extensive portions of North America and remnant populations require alternative conservation actions in addition to very restrictive fisheries regulation to maintain their genetic integrity and persistence and where necessary 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 U.S. 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 Labrador, and recreational fishers.

Labrador Sampling: Sampling by Canada provided an update in the Labrador fishery has continued through 2011 and information on this activity was reported to ICES. Sampling activities were expected to continue in 2012-13.

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.

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 meeting in recent years and to provide some fishery data. Still, reported harvests in recent years have been generally between 3 and 4 t with 2011 being just below 4 t. Sampling of the catch in SPM to conduct genetic studies has occurred only once, and there are concerns about the methods being used. Efforts are underway to improve cooperation in this area.

WGC Discussions/Actions: NASCO has adopted the following objectives for management advice for the West Greenland fishery, which require at least a 75% probability of success:

- Meeting the CLs simultaneous in the four northern regions of North America: Labrador, Newfoundland, Quebec and Gulf of St. Lawrence;
- Achieve an increase (>10% or >25%) in returns relative to previous years for the two southern regions of North America: Scotia-Fundy and US;
- Meeting the CL for the Southern NEAC MSW complex.

If these objectives are not met, no fishery should be allowed. (Note that the management objectives for the U.S. and Scotia-Fundy regions are to be reviewed by the NAC and WGC in 2013.) As in previous years, ICES indicated in its 2012 report that it considered the West Greenland stock complex to be below conservation limits (CLs) and, thus, suffering reduced reproductive capacity. In European and North American areas, the overall status of 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 four areas were below their CL in 2011 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, stock status from several jurisdictions is below CL and further, within the countries there are many river stocks which are not meeting 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.

In 2012, the Commission adopted a multi-annual regulatory measure for the period 2012-2014 that was based on previous measures. The measure again provides for an internal use fishery at West Greenland. The fishery is estimated to be about 20 t, but there is concern about significant levels of unreported catch. The addition of new language in the measure concerning the need for improved monitoring and reporting could not be agreed. Continued application of the FWI was agreed, and it will be applied with respect to the current agreement in 2013. In addition, a collaborative "sampling agreement" was adopted

for the fishery similar to those of previous years to continue to monitor the stocks, including the percentage of U.S., Canadian, and EU stocks contributing to the fishery at West Greenland.

NEAC Discussions/Actions: 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 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.

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.

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.

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 agreed to have an agenda item at the 2013 annual meeting to allow for a focus on the management of all mixed-stock fisheries.

Other Matters:

Additional information on the work of NASCO can be found on its website (www.nasco.int). The Council agreed to hold its 30th Annual Meeting in Droheda, Ireland, from June 4-7, 2013.

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

Commission Headquarters

Executive Secretary: Dr. Vladimir Shibanov (new Executive Secretary appointment in progress)

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Budget

NAFO adopted a 2014 budget of $1,890,000 CDN (approximately US$1,695,980). The preliminary US assessment for 2014 will be $289,756 CND (approximately US$260,010).

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 (expiration date in parentheses):

Dr. Dean Swanson (current appointment ends 3/2014 -- reappointment in process)
Chief, International Fisheries Affairs Division
Office of International Affairs
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Ms. Maggie Raymond (2/2016)
PO Box 287
South Berwick, ME 03908

Mr. David Preble (08/2016)
64 Courtland Drive
Narragansett, RI 02882

Representative to the Scientific Council:

Ms. Katherine Sosebee (04/2014)
Resource Evaluation and Assessment Division
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543

C. Advisory Structure:

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Convention Act of 1995 further requires that the Secretaries of Commerce and State establish jointly a Consultative Committee of not more than 15 members to advise the Secretaries on issues related to the Convention. Each member of the Consultative Committee shall serve for a term of 2 years and shall be eligible for reappointment. The membership of the Committee shall consist of representatives from the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, the States represented on those Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the fishing industry, the seafood processing industry, and others knowledgeable and experienced in the conservation and management of fisheries in the Northwest Atlantic.

Organizational Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

NAFO is the successor organization to the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF). Its mission is: (1) to provide for continued multilateral consultation and cooperation with respect to the study, appraisal, and exchange of scientific information and views relating to fisheries of the Convention Area and (2) to conserve and manage fishery resources of the NAFO Regulatory Area (NRA), i.e., that part of the Convention Area that lies beyond the areas in which coastal states exercise fisheries jurisdiction. The Convention Area is located within the waters of the Northwest Atlantic Ocean roughly north of 35º north latitude and west of 42º west 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. 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.

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 2014. Details on current U.S. allocations from NAFO as well as fishing opportunities for 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), member nation quotas by species, and one fishing effort allocation, 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:

2013 Annual Meeting: The 35th Annual Meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia during 23-27 September 2013. The United States was generally satisfied with the outcomes of this meeting and was pleased by the high level of coordination and collaboration that took place with other delegations. During this meeting, NAFO adopted Terms of Reference for new Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Working Groups on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management and on Risk-Based Management Strategies. These WGs will expand and improve on work already undertaken in NAFO on vulnerable marine ecosystems and on conservation and rebuilding strategies (respectively). Ad Hoc technical working groups were also created to address issues associated with catch data accuracy and with bycatch and discards. Other key outcomes included: adoption of expanded closures to improve protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (sea pens); agreement to implement the use of a standardized observer reporting template to improve the usefulness of observer data; and hiring of a new NAFO Executive Secretary. Notable stock management outcomes included a closed session vote resulting in adoption of a 50% reduction to the NAFO Division 3L shrimp TAC. The NAFO Scientific Council advised that this fishery be closed and the United States and others voted (unsuccessfully) for closure. Additionally, a joint US/EU proposal to ban shark finning in NAFO waters failed to get consensus.

U.S. priorities for 2014 in NAFO currently include: 1) continued support for implementation of the 2011 recommendations of the NAFO Performance Review Panel; and 2) active support and participation in the two new Joint Fisheries Commission-Scientific Council Working Groups (on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management and on the Working group on Risk-Based Management Strategies) and the two new *Ad hoc* Technical Working Groups.

U.S. Allocations for 2014: At the 2013 NAFO Annual Meeting, the United States received fish quota allocations for three NAFO stocks to be fished during 2014, including: Division 3M redfish (69 mt); Subareas 3 & 4 *Illex* squid (453 mt); and Division 3L shrimp (48 mt). As noted above, the United States supported closure of the Division 3L shrimp fishery based on the Scientific Council advice for this stock. Thus, the United States will not make its 2014 allocation of Division 3L shrimp available for harvest, charter or trade during 2014. 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 2014, "Others" category allocations available to U.S. fishermen include: Division 3NO white hake (59 mt); Division 3LNO skates (258 mt); Division 3M cod (58 mt), 3LN redfish (42 mt) and Division 3O redfish (100 mt). Fishing is halted by NAFO when the "Others" allocation for a particular stock has been fully harvested.

Yellowtail Flounder: In 2008, the United States and Canada entered into a 10-year arrangement through which Canada will transfer (upon request) 1000 mt of NAFO Div. 3LNO yellowtail flounder for use by U.S. vessels. In addition, the United States may optionally transfer its annual NAFO allocation of Div. 3L shrimp in exchange for an additional transfer from Canada of up to 500 mt of Div. 3LNO yellowtail flounder (for a total of up to 1500 mt). 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 and 2013 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 2014, 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 35th NAFO Annual Meeting will be held September 22-26, 2014, in Spain (exact location to be determined).

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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 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 on 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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Web address: http://www.fao.org/fi/body/rfb/WECAFC/wecafc_home.htm

U.S. Representation

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

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

WECAF'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 thirteenth session of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) and the ninth session of the Committee for the Development and Management of Fisheries in the Lesser Antilles were convened in Cartagena, Colombia, 21 to 24 October 2008. The meeting was preceded by a one and a half day regional workshop on the Nassau grouper conservation and management. An effort by the United States during 2004-2006 to strengthen

WECAFC as a regional fishery management organization in accordance with FAO Charter guidelines resulted in the retention of the status of the organization's advisory status. However, the effort did produce more clear rules of procedure which were adopted at the 13th meeting.

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 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 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.

A resolution on transformation of WECAFC into a binding regional fisheries management organization was not adopted, with a number of countries indicating that the decision was premature. The European Union called for an independent cost/benefit assessment of the issue and will explore whether support of this initiative could be made available as well as for

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.

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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 agreed AIDCP budget for FY 2013 was $1,968,887. The United States currently has five purse seine vessels (size classes 2 and 3) listed on the Active Purse Seine Vessel Capacity Register for 2014, and the total U.S. vessel assessments paid for 2014 is $1276.20.

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 governments 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. The United States and nine other nations fishing in the ETP negotiated the Panama Declaration in 1995. 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 comparability 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 updated 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, has signed the Antigua Convention, but has not deposited an instrument of ratification. As such, the IATTC will continue to function under a dual-convention scenario until the entry into force of the Antigua Convention for all Parties to the 1949 Convention, 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 entities that have ratified/acceded to Antigua 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 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 and Cooperating Fishing Entities

Bolivia, Honduras, Indonesia and Cook Islands were granted cooperating non-Member status in June 2013.

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 FY2014 is $6,527,781. The United States assessed contribution is $1,746,553 for FY2014.

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 nongovernmental 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 a State Dept. 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 was comprised 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 with a view to determining 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:

> 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 with a view to maintaining or restoring 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 from 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

In recent years, IATTC efforts to conserve and manage tuna stocks in the Convention Area have been composed of a number of different strategies, including limits on both inputs and outputs. In 2002, the IATTC adopted an overall purse seine fleet capacity agreement, which froze the fishing capacity available to Parties to then current levels and established a requirement that purse seine vessels authorized to fish in the Convention Area be included on an IATTC Regional Vessel Register. This effectively established upper limits on capacity in this sector. This is the first known instance of a regional fishery management organization establishing a fleet capacity limit. The IATTC also has a long-term capacity management plan intended to ultimately reduce purse seine capacity to about 158,000 cubic meters carrying capacity, which is thought to be consistent with the long-term maximum yield of tuna stocks. At the 2013 Annual Meeting of the IATTC, the Commission agreed to convene a workshop in 2014 for technical experts to discuss comprehensively and objectively the various matters and issues linked to fleet capacity, to its impact on the resources, and how to reduce overcapacity.

Tuna conservation and management measures are typically adopted on an annual or multi-annual basis. Measures have included such elements as time-area closure periods for the purse seine fishery (C-11-01; C-12-01), a requirement to retain all bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin tuna caught, except fish considered unfit for human consumption for reasons other than size (C-12-01), catch limits for harvest of bigeye tuna by the longline fishery (C-11-01; C-12-01), as well as catch limits for Pacific bluefin tuna (C-12-09).

In 2013, the Commission extended the tuna conservation measures set to expire in 2013 under C-12-01, by adopting C-13-01 and extending measures for three additional years. The Commission adopted a measure to extend catch limits for Pacific bluefin tuna for an additional year C-13-02. The Commission also adopted a measure to collect data on fish aggregating devices (C-13-04) as well as data collection for catch and effort for North Pacific albacore (C-13-03).

The IATTC has also adopted conservation and management measures to address the bycatch and incidental capture of other living marine resources such as seabirds, sea turtles, and sharks.

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).

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

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

The United States and Canada

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U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

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

B. U.S. Commissioners:

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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 the amending 1979 Protocol.

The halibut resource and fishery have been managed by the IPHC since 1923. The IPHC was established by a Convention between the United States and Canada, which has been revised several times to extend the Commission's authority and meet new conditions in the fishery. The most recent change, a protocol, was concluded in 1979, and involved an amendment to the 1953 Halibut Convention.

"Convention waters" are defined as the waters off the west coasts of Canada and the United States, including the southern as well as the western coasts of Alaska, within the respective maritime areas in which either Party exercises exclusive fisheries jurisdiction. For purposes of the Convention, the "maritime area" in which a Party exercises exclusive fisheries jurisdiction includes without distinction areas within and seaward of the territorial sea or internal waters of that Party.

B. Organizational Structure:

The IPHC consists of a Commission and staff. The Commission consists of six members; three representatives appointed by each Contracting Party. All decisions of the Commission are made by a concurring vote of at least two of the Commissioners of each Contracting Party. The research programs and regulatory actions of the Commission are coordinated by the IPHC staff, in consultation with the Commissioners. The IPHC staff currently consists of 27 permanent employees, including fishery biologists, administrative personnel and support staff.

In addition, the Commission is advised by a Conference Board, a Processor Advisory Group (PAG), and a Research Advisory Board. The Conference Board is a panel representing U.S. and Canadian commercial, native and sport halibut fishers. Created in 1931 by the Commission, the Board provides the industry/sport/native harvesters' perspectives on Commission proposals presented at Annual Meetings. Members of the Board are designated by union, vessel owner, recreational harvester, Native American, and Canadian First Nations organizations from both nations. Created in 1996, the Processor Advisory Group (PAG) represents halibut processors. Like the Conference Board, the PAG lends its opinion regarding Commission proposals and offers recommendations at IPHC Annual Meeting. The Research Advisory Board (RAB) was created in 1999 with representation from harvesters and processors to advise the Director and staff on Commission research programs.

C. Programs:

Under the Protocol to the Convention, the Commission retains a research staff and recommends, for the approval of the Parties, regulations designed to achieve the purpose of the Convention. The Protocol provides for: (1) the setting of quotas in the Convention Area, and (2) joint regulation of the halibut fishery in the entire Convention Area under Commission regulations. Neither U.S. nor Canadian halibut fishing vessels are presently allowed to fish in the waters of the other country. In 1991, Canada implemented an individual vessel quota (IVQ) system; a similar, individual fishing quota (IFQ) system for Alaska was implemented by the United States in 1995.

D. Conservation and Management Measures:

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) completed its 90th Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA on January 17, with Dr. James Balsiger of Juneau, Alaska, presiding as Chair. More than 250 halibut industry stakeholders attended the meeting, with over 60 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 2014 totaling 27,515,000 pounds. The Commission is responding to stock challenges with a risk-based precautionary

approach and review of the current harvest policy to ensure the best possible advice. Accordingly, it has set catch limits that should achieve a lower coastwide harvest rate than the 2013 catch limits of 31,028,000 pounds. The Commission also addressed other regulatory issues and took actions regarding assessment survey expansion, bycatch management, and follow-up from the 2012 IPHC performance review.

A news release issued January 17, 2014, announced the catch limits and fishing seasons for 2014, 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

During 2013, a thorough exploration of all available data sources was completed. This analysis provided several new avenues for stock assessment modeling. The IPHC's scientific peer review process also continued with a Scientific Review Board (SRB, http://www.iphc.info/srb) evaluation of the stock assessment data and modeling conducted since the 2012 assessment. This evaluation improved the 2013 assessment, and SRB recommendations will be used to help structure the 2014 assessment.

For the 2013 stock assessment, an ensemble of three alternative models was developed to produce the stock biomass estimates and harvest decision table results. This resulted in estimates of stock size and management reference points that are substantially more robust to current or future technical changes to the underlying models. The 2013 stock assessment indicates that the Pacific halibut stock has been declining continuously over the last decade, with recruitment strengths that are much smaller than those observed through the 1980s and 1990s, and more typical of those seen during the last century, as well as decreasing size at age, being contributing factors. In recent years, the estimated female spawning biomass appears to have stabilized near 200 million pounds. An executive summary of the 2013 stock assessment is posted on the IPHC website at http://iphc.int/meetings-and-events/interim-meeting.html, and the complete report of the 2013 stock assessment is available at http://iphc.int/publications/rara/2013/rara2013_12_2013assessment.pdf.

As in 2013, the IPHC staff harvest advice was presented in the form of a decision table that estimates the consequences to stock and fishery status and trends from different levels of harvest. The final version of the decision table for 2014, incorporating the adopted catch limits, is posted on the IPHC website at http://www.iphc.int/meetings-and-events/annual-meeting.html.

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)	**960,000**
Non-treaty directed commercial (south of Pt. Chehalis)	168,137
Non-treaty incidental catch in salmon troll fishery	29,671
Non-treaty incidental catch in sablefish fishery (north of Pt. Chehalis)	14,274
Treaty Indian commercial	307,500
Treaty Indian ceremonial and subsistence (year-round)	28,500
Sport – North of Columbia River	214,110
Sport – South of Columbia River	197,808
Area 2B (British Columbia) (includes sport catch allocation)	**6,850,000**

Area 2C (southeastern Alaska) (combined commercial/guided sport)[1]	**4,160,000**
Commercial fishery	3,318,720
Guided sport fishery	761,280
Area 3A (central Gulf of Alaska) (combined commercial/guided sport)[1]	**9,430,000**
Commercial fishery	7,317,730
Guided sport fishery	1,782,270
Area 3B (western Gulf of Alaska)	**2,840,000**
Area 4A (eastern Aleutians)	**850,000**
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	**27,515,000**

[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 2014 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 unlike previous years, the IPHC catch limits for Areas 2C and 3A now include both sectors (commercial and recreational charter) , plus discard and lost gear mortality estimates, as noted above in the table footnote.

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 8 – November 7, 2014, for the U.S. and Canadian Individual Quota fisheries. Seasons will commence at noon local time on March 8 and terminate at noon local time on November 7, 2014 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 8 and November 7, 2014. 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 25, July 9, July 23, August 6, August 20, September 3, and September 17, 2014. 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).

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 CSP implemented by NMFS for 2014. 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 ($\leq$ 44 inches or $\geq$ 76 inches)
- In Area 3A, 1) a two-fish daily bag limit, 2) a maximum size limit for the second fish of 29 inches, and 3) a vessel limit of one trip per calendar day.
- In both Areas 2C and 3A charter fisheries, if a halibut is filleted, the entire carcass, with head and tail connected as a single piece, must be retained on board the vessel until all fillets are offloaded.

Area 2A Licenses

To support the possibility of an earlier season opening for the incidental commercial fisheries the Commission approved Staff-proposed regulatory changes to the Area 2A licensing procedures. The Commission will issue individual licenses for each of the three Area 2A commercial fisheries: the directed commercial fishery; the incidental halibut fishery during the primary limited-entry sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington; and the incidental halibut fishery during the salmon troll fishery. Previously, one vessel license was issued for the direct fishery and the incidental halibut fishery during the sablefish season. The Commission also approved an earlier deadline date of March 15, or the first weekday if it falls on a weekend, for license applications for the two incidental halibut commercial fisheries. In 2014, the deadline date will be March 17. The deadline for license applications for the directed halibut fishery remains April 30. There are no changes to the IPHC sport charter licenses.

Halibut Retention in Sablefish Pots in Area 4A

The Commission reviewed documentation from the NPFMC to allow retention of Area 4A halibut caught incidentally in the sablefish pot fishery in the areas of overlap with the NMFS Bering Sea and Aleutian Island regulatory areas. The initial proposal for a legal gear change for the area had been directed to IPHC and the

Commission referred the matter to the NPFMC. The Commission supported the proposal and agreed that the NPFMC should continue to explore the issue and begin to develop the appropriate regulations. The Commission noted that this may be a good way to address bycatch, but also stressed its desire that removals be limited to incidental catch and not lead to a directed halibut pot fishery. The Commission asked the NPFMC to include in its analysis methods to limit the directed fishing for halibut using pot gear, and to consider appropriate methods for the timing of pot removal and the marking of buoys (such as with radar reflectors).

Abundance-Based Management of all Halibut Removals

The Commission noted that a management proposal for managing all halibut removals – under the 32-inch commercial fishery size limit (U32) as well as above the limit (O32) – had been submitted but subsequently withdrawn during the meeting. Noting the questions raised by the original recommendation, the Commission directed the Staff to prepare a discussion paper on the biological and management issues surrounding such a concept, in order to inform future discussions of the feasibility of managing U32 removals.

Other Actions

Survey Expansion

The Commission approved the expansion of the IPHC's annual setline survey to include previously unsurveyed areas between 10 and 400 fathoms' depth. The setline survey currently samples at depths from 20 to 275 fathoms in most areas, and there are some gaps within that range. The expansion is designed to provide better data for the stock assessment through more complete coverage of all halibut habitat. The expansion is proposed to occur over a period of five years, until the whole range has been surveyed, and will be initiated with Areas 2A and 4A in 2014. Further analysis of the proposed expansion will occur this year, and will be used to guide implementation in future years. Additional details of the survey expansion plan are available in this year's Bluebook: (http://www.iphc.int/publications/bluebooks/IPHC_bluebook_2014.pdf).

Management Strategy Advisory Board

At the 2013 Annual Meeting, the Commission approved the formation of a Management Strategy Advisory Board (MSAB) to advise it on the development and evaluation of candidate objectives and strategies for managing the halibut resource. The Commission received two reports from the MSAB on progress made in 2013, which are available here: http://www.iphc.info/msab

Halibut Bycatch

The Commission received a presentation from its Bycatch Project Team (HBWG II), which outlined progress made during the past year on its four objectives: quantifying bycatch, documenting impacts to the fishery and resource, exploring options to mitigate impacts, and identifying options to reduce bycatch. The Project Team's draft report and comments are posted on the IPHC website at http://www.iphc.int/research/245-bycatch.html.

The Project Team identified next steps for the immediate term and for the coming year. Actions for the coming months included 1) completing revisions to the bycatch report in response to Project Team and public feedback; and 2) organizing an initial meeting between IPHC Commissioners and the NPFMC to facilitate discussion and collaboration on potential bycatch reduction targets, management measures, and monitoring programs that fall under the Council's authority.

Actions proposed for the coming year include 1) discussing the development of a broader strategy or set of principles for addressing bycatch, including exploration of a number of alternative concepts for dealing with bycatch; and 2) discussing a plan for examining the magnitude and impacts of other sources of halibut mortality. The Project Team presentation is posted at http://www.iphc.int/meetings/2014am/bycatchpresentation2014amv4.pdf.

The Commission approved the Project Team's proposed next steps and appointed Commissioners Boyce and Alverson to guide the effort on behalf of the Commission.

Performance Review

The Commission reviewed the implementation of recommendations from the 2012 Performance Review. Action taken since the review has produced increased openness and transparency in Commission meetings and operations, and the recommendations have been incorporated into ongoing work to improve the Commission's procedures and processes, including the development of scientific advice, planning and review of research, and operation of the advisory bodies.

The Commission reviewed draft revisions to its rules of procedure and financial regulations, which were developed in response to the performance review, and expects to approve them within the next two months. The Commission also reviewed a draft progress report on the performance review and its follow-up actions, and directed the report to be posted for the public. Performance review information, including the progress report, can be found on the Commission website at http://iphc.int/meetings-and-events/review.html.

IPHC Merit Scholarship

The Commission honored Mr. Spencer Lunda of Juneau, Alaska, as the twelfth recipient of the IPHC Merit Scholarship. Mr. Lunda was present to accept the scholarship at the opening public session of the Annual Meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

The 2014 Interim Meeting of the Commission will be held December 2-3, 2014, in Seattle, Washington. This 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 26-30, 2015, in Vancouver, British Columbia. The 2016 Annual Meeting is tentatively slated for January 25-29 in Juneau, Alaska.

Commission Membership

Canadian Government Commissioner Paul Ryall of Vancouver, British Columbia, was elected Chair for the coming year. United States Government Commissioner Dr. James W. Balsiger of Juneau, Alaska, was elected Vice-Chair. The other Canadian Commissioners are David Boyes of Courtenay, British Columbia, and Ted Assu of Campbell River, British Columbia. Commissioner Assu replaced Commissioner Michael Pearson at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting. The other United States Commissioners are Robert Alverson of Seattle, Washington, and Donald Lane of Homer, Alaska, both appointed in early January this year.

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

Basic Instrument

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

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

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

Commission Headquarters

North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission
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Budget

The approved NPAFC budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013/2014 (July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014) is CAD$815,000, with each Party contributing CAD$180,000. The budget estimate for FY 2014/2015 is CAD$893,700 with each Party contributing CAD$180,000.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

The United States is represented on the Commission by not more than three U.S. Commissioners who are appointed by the President and serve at his pleasure. Each U.S. Commissioner is appointed for a term not to exceed 4 years, but is eligible for reappointment. Of the three Commissioners, one must be an official of the U.S. Government, one a resident of the State of Alaska, and the third a resident of the State of Washington. Candidates for the non-Federal Commissioner positions must be knowledgeable or experienced concerning anadromous stocks and ecologically-related species of the North Pacific Ocean.

In addition, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, may designate from time to time Alternate U.S. Commissioners to the NPAFC. The number of Alternate Commissioners that may be designated to a Commission meeting is limited to the number of authorized U.S. Commissioners that will not be present.

B. U.S. Commissioners (the Alaska position is currently vacant)

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

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

C. Advisory Structure:

The North Pacific Anadromous Stocks Act of 1992 established an Advisory Panel to the United States Section of the NPAFC. The Advisory Panel shall be composed of: (1) the Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game; (2) the Director of the Washington Department of Fisheries and Wildlife; (3) one representative of the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission; and (4) 11 members (6 residents of the State of Alaska and 5 residents of the State of Washington) appointed by the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, from among a slate of 12 persons nominated by the Governor of Alaska and a slate of 10 persons nominated by the Governor of Washington. There must be at least one representative of commercial salmon fishing interests and one representative of environmental interests on each of the Governors' slates. As is the case with NPAFC Commissioners, Advisors must be knowledgeable of North Pacific anadromous stocks and ecologically related species. Advisors serve for a term not to exceed 4 years, and may not serve more than two consecutive terms. The terms of the most recent Advisory Panel members have expired. The Secretary of State is in the process of appointing a new roster of Advisors.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The NPAFC serves as a forum for promoting the conservation of anadromous stocks and ecologically-related species, including marine mammals, sea birds, and non-anadromous fish, in the high seas area of the North Pacific Ocean. This area, as defined in the Convention, is "the waters of the North Pacific Ocean and its adjacent seas, north of 33E North Latitude beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured." In addition, the NPAFC serves as the venue for coordinating the collection, exchange, and analysis of scientific data regarding the above species within Convention waters. It also coordinates high seas fishery enforcement activities by member countries (the Convention prohibits directed fishing for salmonids and includes provisions to minimize the incidental take of salmonids in other fisheries in the Convention area).

B. Organizational Structure:

The NPAFC has three standing committees: the Committee on Enforcement (ENFO), the Committee on Finance and Administration (F&A), and the Committee on Scientific Research and Statistics (CSRS). The committees are responsible for providing accurate and timely advice to the Commission in the areas relating to the finances of the Secretariat and the scope of the enforcement activities and scientific research conducted under the auspices of the Commission.

C. Programs:

The NPAFC has traditionally held annual meetings in the fall, however, in an effort to eliminate intersessional meetings and economize, it is transitioning annual meetings to the spring, beginning in 2014. The last fall Annual Meeting (20th Annual Meeting) of the NPAFC was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, on October 7-12, 2012. All of the Parties were represented. Mr. Doug Mecum, NMFS Deputy Alaska Regional Administrator, led the U.S. delegation. The plenary meeting was chaired by Dr. Vladimir Belyaev (Russia), President of the Commission.

At NPAFC Annual Meetings, the majority of the work of the Commission takes place in its three standing committees--ENFO, F&A, and CSRS. The recommendations of each Committee on its agenda items are presented in the form of a report to the Commission for its consideration. These reports are then formally adopted by the Commission at its final plenary session.

ENFO: In 2012, the Parties continued their successful enforcement collaboration on the high seas to deter and eliminate illegal salmon fishing. Patrol efforts included a combined 153 ship patrol days, over 370 aerial patrol hours, and the use of radar satellite surveillance. This year, collaborative enforcement led to the apprehension of a stateless vessel with a Chinese crew engaged in illegal driftnet fishing in the Convention Area. The vessel was caught with over 30 metric tons (t) of illegal product onboard, and was transferred to the custody of China for follow-up action. Overall sightings of illegal fishing activity in the North Pacific have decreased in recent years, demonstrating the effectiveness of the Commission's model enforcement cooperation.

ENFO's 2013 Enforcement Evaluation and Coordination Meeting was held in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, on March 26-27.

CSRS: The total commercial catch by the Parties in 2011 was over 1 million t. Sixty-two percent of the total 2011 salmon catch was from countries in Asia (Russia, Japan, and Korea) and 38 percent was caught by countries in North America (United States and Canada). Pink and chum salmon made up the majority (83 percent) of the total catch.

The total number of hatchery fish released from NPAFC member countries in 2011 was 4.5 billion fish, while the number of annual releases has been relatively stable at around 5 billion fish since 1993. Decline in numbers of salmon released in 2011 is due to incomplete estimates for Japan, a consequence of the March 2011 Tohoku Earthquake and resulting tsunami.

Although the northern North Pacific Ocean continues to produce large quantities of Pacific salmon, abundance patterns vary among species, often from year-to-year. Currently, pink and chum salmon are very abundant. Coho and Chinook salmon are less abundant than they were previously, while sockeye salmon abundance is highly variable among regions from year-to-year.

During the Annual Meeting, leading salmon scientists from member countries shared the results of their research and discussed factors that may be contributing to variability in abundance patterns among species and potential changes in abundance that may occur in the next several years. These factors include potential impacts of ocean conditions on stocks, particularly migration and survival of juvenile salmon in ocean ecosystems.

F&A Committee: Historically, the NPAFC has held its annual meetings in the fall. As F&A has considered ways to operate more efficiently, it has looked at whether any Commission or committee meetings could be conducted "virtually" and whether any meetings now held separately could be combined to save money. As a result of a three-year discussion, the F&A will implement a new system, in which all of the meeting activities of the Commission will take place in the spring of the year. The enforcement meetings will be held independently of the others in late winter/early spring because that is the timeframe necessary to coordinate the year's enforcement plan. The two scientific meetings will be combined and held in conjunction with the new time of the Annual Meeting in spring.

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.

The 2012 NPAFC Award. Established in 2011, the NPAFC Award is presented to groups or individuals whose sustained, significant contributions have helped improve the conservation of salmon and steelhead stocks in the North Pacific Ocean. These contributions can be from dedicated efforts in the fields of scientific research, enforcement, international cooperation, or management. At the Annual Meeting, the Commission announced the recipients of the 2012 NPAFC Award:

Dr. Richard J. Beamish, Emeritus Scientist, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Nanaimo, Canada, and Professor Vyacheslav P. Shuntov, Principal Research Scientist, Pacific Research Fisheries Center (TINRO-Center), Vladivostok, Russia, for their sustained commitment to understanding the mechanisms controlling abundance and

factors affecting the biology of anadromous stocks in marine ecosystems. The Commission is pleased to recognize the leadership and sustained dedication of these renowned scientists for their contribution to the knowledge and conservation of anadromous stocks in the North Pacific.

Symposium: In recognition of the importance of understanding juvenile salmonid production in ocean environments, the NPAFC hosted the 3rd International Workshop titled, "Migration and Survival Mechanisms of Juvenile Salmon and Steelhead in Ocean Ecosystems," on April 25-26, 2013, in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. This workshop was open to the public and gave researchers the opportunity to share and review current information on juvenile salmon and steelhead in marine environments.

21st Virtual NPAFC Annual Meeting

The 21st NPAFC Annual Meeting took place on November 12-15, 2013, in an email format for the first time in the Commission's history. There were 71 participants from the five NPAFC member countries. The meeting served as a transition to spring annual meetings. The CSRS and ENFO Committees did not meet.

Initial North Pacific-wide 2013 commercial catch data indicate high catches of pink salmon in Alaska (313,800 t), Russia (241,292 t) and Canada (13,171 t), and high chum salmon catches in Russia (101,395 t) and Alaska (65,120 t). Catches of chinook salmon remain at low levels (Alaska 1,640 t, Russia 512 t, Canada 214 t). The 2013 commercial catches are preliminary estimates and are incomplete because some regions had not finished their fishery seasons at the time of compilation.

Hatchery release data for 2013 are not yet available. Salmon hatchery releases in 2012 from NPAFC member countries was 5.0 billion fish, a quantity that has been quite stable since 1993. In 2012, United States hatcheries released 1,999 million fish (39.7%), Japan released 1,793 million (35.6%), Russia released 916 million (18.2%), Canada released 313 million (6.2%), and 10 million (0.2%) were released in Korea. Hatchery releases were primarily chum (3,092 million, 61.5%) and pink salmon (1,349 million, 26.8%), followed by Chinook (252 million, 5.0%), sockeye (223 million, 4.4%), and coho salmon (79 million, 1.6%), steelhead trout (22 million, 0.4%), and cherry salmon (14 million, 0.3%).

In 2013, leading salmon researchers discussed factors that may be contributing to variability in abundance patterns among species and they discussed potential changes in abundance that may occur in the next several years. They also highlighted the possible consequences of higher sea temperatures, which could adversely affect stocks at the southern limit of their distribution, and reported that salmon size-selective mortality during winter months may be more pronounced in northern latitudes. Scientists observed a recent decline in body weight ofJapanese chum salmon and declining productivity of Chinook salmon stocks in Alaska. They agreed that climate affects salmon survival and adequate monitoring must be maintained in case of possible future declines in salmon abundance.

In 2013, NPAFC member countries continued their successful enforcement collaboration to deter and eliminate illegal high seas fishing. Patrols in the Convention Area included the use of approximately 10 aircraft and 21 surface vessels. Radar satellite surveillance was also used to support long-range aircraft and surface patrols. Regularly scheduled enforcement conference calls maintained real-time coordination among the member countries at the operational level throughout the high-threat season. Past international collaborative high seas enforcement activities led to seizure of an IUU (illegal, unreported, and unregulated) fishing vessel in both 2011 and 2012. Each vessel was transferred to the appropriate authorities, and in 2013 both vessels were destroyed.

There were no vessels of interest engaged in driftnet or other types of illegal fishing activities detected in the 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 model of enforcement. Nevertheless, continued vigilance is crucial to the ongoing curtailment of the large-scale high seas driftnet threat and is a requirement for sustainable salmon fisheries management and conservation in the North Pacific.

22nd NPAFC Annual Meeting: The next NPAFC Annual Meeting will be hosted by the United States in Portland, Oregon, on May 12-16, 2014.

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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 $3,909,586 for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 (April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015).

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)
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W. Ron Allen (Tribal Commissioner)
Tribal Chairman
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Bob Turner (Federal Commissioner)
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C. Alternate Commissioners:

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Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

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

B. Organizational Structure:

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

The Panels are responsible for providing advice to the Commission on the fishing regimes for the intercepting salmon fisheries in their respective regions, i.e., those in which one or both countries intercept salmon spawned in the other country. The fishing regimes in the Treaty are contained in Annex IV and must be renegotiated from time to time. This is done by reviewing technical data on annual fishing plans, regulations, and the salmon enhancement programs of each country. Based in part on the advice provided by the Panels, the PSC develops catch limits and related provisions to present to the two governments. These recommendations, which become effective upon approval by both governments, are then implemented by each country's domestic management authorities.

C. Programs:

During May 2008, the Pacific Salmon Commission successfully concluded two years of negotiations to update the fishing regimes contained in Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 of Annex IV of the Pacific Salmon Treaty and recommended their adoption to the Governments of the United States and Canada. The Governments adopted the updated regimes through an exchange of diplomatic notes on December 23, 2008. These new Chapters will be in place from 2010 – 2018 and are intended to protect,

rebuild and provide for fair sharing of salmon stocks subject to the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The Fraser River sockeye and pink fishing regime, contained in Chapter 4 of Annex IV, is on a different expiration schedule than the other Chapters and was scheduled to expire at the end of 2012, but has now been extended through 2019.

The 2008 agreement maintains abundance-based fishing regimes, based on run strength, for the major salmon intercepting fisheries in the United States and Canada. Larger catches will be allowed when abundance is higher and catches will be constrained in years when abundance is down. These regimes are designed to implement the conservation and harvest sharing principles of the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

Remaining in place are two bilaterally-managed regional funds that were established in 1999: the Northern Boundary and Transboundary Rivers Restoration and Enhancement Fund (northern fund) and the Southern Boundary Restoration and Enhancement Fund (southern fund). The funds are used to improve fisheries management and aid efforts to recover weakened salmon stocks. The United States contributed US$75 million and US$65 million to the northern and southern funds, respectively, over a 4-year period after the 1999 Agreement. The importance of habitat protection and restoration in achieving the long-term objectives of the Parties relative to salmon also remains a goal of the Treaty, as is a commitment by the two countries to improve how scientific information is obtained, shared, and applied to the management of the resource.

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

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

Northern British Columbia and Southeast Alaska (Chapter 2): This Chapter addresses the management of sockeye, pink and chum salmon fisheries in southeast Alaska and northern British Columbia. It specifies how the fisheries will be managed to achieve conservation and fair sharing of salmon stocks that intermingle in the border area. The fixed catch ceilings contained in the expired agreements were replaced with abundance-based fishing regimes in 1999. These regimes allow harvests to vary from year to year depending on the abundance of salmon. Of particular note, because they resolve long-contentious issues, are agreements governing the harvest of sockeye in Alaska's purse seine fisheries near Noyes Island (District 104) and the gillnet fishery at Tree Point (District 101), and Canada's various marine net fisheries for pink salmon and its troll fishery for pink salmon in specific Canadian fishing areas.

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

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

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

Coho Salmon (Chapter 5): The coho agreement essentially provides a blueprint and specifications (biological criteria) for a conservation-based regime for border area fisheries in southern British Columbia and Washington State. The specifics of the regime were bilaterally developed and were agreed to in February 2002 and remain in effect under the May 2008 agreement. The fishing regime includes rules that establish harvest limits in specified border area fisheries. The rules are designed to limit exploitation rates on natural coho stocks to sustainable levels, taking into account all fisheries affecting the stocks, thereby improving the long term prospects of sustainable, healthy fisheries in both countries.

Southern British Columbia and Washington State Chum Salmon (Chapter 6): This chapter incorporates certain refinements to the provisions that trigger fisheries directed at chum salmon in the Strait of Georgia and Puget Sound. These refinements will have only a minor impact on the allocations of catches, but will improve the effectiveness of the regime. Additionally, at the request of the United States, Canada agreed to require the live release of chum salmon in certain of its net fisheries in its southern boundary areas at those times of the year when "summer chum," a species recently listed as threatened under the ESA, may be present in the areas. Both countries agreed to collect better data relating to these fish.

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

2014 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.

Future Meetings: The next Commission Session of the PSC will be held October 21-23, 2014, in Vancouver, B.C. The PSC Post Season Meeting will be held January 12-16, 2015, in Vancouver, B.C. and the 30th Annual Meeting will be held February 9-13, 2015, in Portland, OR.

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

Implementing Legislation

There is no implementing legislation for the Convention.

Parties

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

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The objectives of the Convention are:

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

B. Organizational Structure:

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

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

C. Advisory Body:

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

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

D. Background:

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

The central Bering Sea pollock fishery was conducted by trawl vessels from China, Japan, Korea, Poland, and the former Soviet Union. Catch data submitted by these countries indicated that annual harvests in the area rose to approximately 1.5 million metric tons (t) in the years leading up to 1989. Largely due to drastic declines in catch and catch-per-unit-effort, leading to a total catch of less than 300,000 t in 1991 and only 10,000 t in 1992, 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.

18th Annual Conference: Poland conducted the 18th S&T Committee Meeting from September 16-30, 2013 and the 18th Annual Conference from November 4-15, 2013.

The latest U.S. pollock research cruise in the Bogoslof Island area was in 2012. The 2012 survey revealed an estimated pollock spawning stock biomass of 67,100 t in the Specific Area of the Convention--the lowest biomass level on record. 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 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. However, there was no consensus among the Parties on how to set AHL and therefore they followed the process established in the Annex to the Convention.

Consequently, the 2014 AHL and INQ were set at zero during the Conference and the moratorium on pollock fishing in the Central Bering Sea was continued. 2014 will mark the 21th year of a moratorium on commercial pollock fishing in the central Bering Sea.

Trial Fishing: There was no trial fishing conducted in the region in 2013. The Parties agreed to roll over the terms and conditions for trial fishing adopted in 2010 for 2014. No Parties presented any plans to conduct trial fishing in 2014 at the meeting.

Work Plan for the S&T Committee: There were no recommendations for a Plan of Work for the S&T Committee for 2014. The United States plans to conduct the next Bogoslof Island pollock spawning stock survey on March 3-14, 2014, and invited scientists from the other Parties to participate in the survey.

Enforcement: No violations of the Convention were reported.

Future Meetings: Russia agreed to host the 19th Annual Conference and the S&T Committee Meeting in the virtual meeting format in 2014. 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 NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center will make the 2013 reports of the Annual Conference and the S&T Committee 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 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. Because the Parties did not agree to terms for a reciprocal fishing and port access in 2012, there was no reciprocal fishing.

Current Status

The Parties met in February and April 2013 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 phase-out component. The 2013 regime agreement contained a number of significant changes from the 2009-2011 regime, including:

1. The fishing season extended 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 States.
2. The number of Canadian vessels fishing in U.S. waters was limited to 45 and the number of U.S. vessels fishing in Canada continued to be reflective of "historical levels."
3. 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.
4. If national allocations by the appropriate regional fishery management organization are established at any point, allocations received by Canada and the United States attributable to catch taken under the Treaty in the waters of the other Party will be reassigned to that Party.

2013 Fishing Season: At the time of this writing, final results of the 2013 season had yet to be tabulated. Provisional results show that 43 of the 45 Canadian vessels fished in U.S. waters while approximately 42 U.S. vessels entered Canadian water for purposes of fishing and/or port services.

Albacore Status Determination: The International Scientific Committee (ISC), which conducts stock assessments on North Pacific albacore, completed a full assessment in 2011. Given there was no new information for 2013, 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. Consequently, the ALBWG offered no new recommendations on conservation above beyond that which it provided the previous year. The ALBWG was expected to complete a full assessment by spring, 2014.

Fishing Pressure on North Pacific Albacore: During the past five 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 few remaining open access fisheries. In June 2011, the Council tasked the Highly Migratory Species (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.

At their September 2013 meeting, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's Northern Committee (NC) received a U.S. concept paper that was developed with Canada's assistance on a precautionary approach management framework for North Pacific albacore containing elements from the Council's report. While agreement could not be reached on suitable limit reference points, participants agreed to discuss the paper at their 2014 meeting in conjunction with the new stock assessment results.

At their 2013 annual meeting, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission adopted resolution (C-13-03) that supplements Resolution C-05-02 on North Pacific albacore requiring 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. Submissions were due December 1, 2013. IATTC scientific staff will review the information provided and report its findings to the Commission for its consideration.

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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 18-20, 2014 in Vancouver, British Columbia, 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 2014.

For 2013, the TAC was 365,112 metric tons. Preliminary indications show that the population size can support a 2014 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 2014 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 2014.

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, Australia, Cook Islands, Federates 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 2002. 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.

On May 9, 2014, 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 arrangement basically extends the treaty under new financial terms but incorporates some new elements from the latest round of negotiations, including the use of a vessel day scheme. The interim extension will allow negotiators additional time to finalize the text of a renewed treaty.

Budget

Under the interim extension, the financial terms amount to $42 million for 12,450 fishing days in the PIP EEZs for up to 40 US 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. Under the interim extension, 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 $63 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 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 the U.S. industry of approximately $1,250,000 annually.

U.S. Administration

U.S. operational, administrative, and enforcement commitments under the SPTT are carried out by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Regional Office located in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Regulatory Actions

In 2010, regulations were developed clarifying how the 45 SPTT licenses are allocated in the event there are more applications than licenses are available. 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 through 2014.

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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

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

Cooperating Non-members

Belize, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Senegal, Thailand, and Vietnam have been granted Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) status for 2014.

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 7th Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) met during the Tenth Annual Commission meeting in Cairns, Australia, from December 2-6, 2013, under the chairmanship of Paul Callaghan (U.S.). The total budget approved by

the Commission for 2014 was $7,345,178, with the United States paying $1,000,862, or approximately 14% of the total budget.

U.S. Representation

A. Appointment Process:

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

B. U.S. Commissioners:

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

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C. Advisory Body:

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

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

The Permanent Advisory Committee was initially established in 2008, with 20 members appointed by the Secretary of Commerce, in accordance with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act of 2007. After the

two-year terms of the 2011 appointees expired, 18 individuals were appointed in 2013 and they are serving with the representatives of the Western 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 supplemented in 2006 (CMM 2006-01) and replaced in 2008 (CMM 2008-01).

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, which will be 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.

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 is implementing a number of measures and programs. Article 28(1) of the WCPF 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 since 2011 has been implementing a compliance and monitoring scheme on a trial basis. 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 Tenth Regular Session of the WCPFC is available at: http://www.wcpfc.int/meetings/10th-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. Preparations, including the drafting of implementing legislation, are being made for submission of this Treaty to Congress for Advice and Consent. The Convention entered into Force 24 August 2012.

Member Nations/Entities

Australia, Belize, Chile, China, Cook Islands, Cuba, Ecuador, the European Union, the Faroe Islands, France (on behalf of its overseas territories), South Korea, New Zealand, Russia, Chinese Taipei (as a fishing entity) and Vanuatu

Cooperating Non-Contracting Non Parties

Colombia, Ecuador, 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.

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

During negotiations of the SPRFMO Convention, in 2007, due to concerns for the fisheries and ecosystems in the Convention Area and in response to specific United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 59/25, 61/105 and 64/72, the participants to the negotiations agreed to non-legally binding interim measures for both bottom fisheries and pelagic fisheries. The measures pertaining to bottom fisheries apply until the entry into force of the Agreement under negotiation to establish the SPRFMO and the adoption of conservation and management measures pursuant to that Agreement.

For bottom fisheries, in the Interim Measures participants are to limit their fishing footprint to the area fished in specific reference years (2002-2006) including limiting bottom fishing effort or catch in the Convention Area to existing levels in terms of the number of fishing vessels and other parameters that reflect the level of catch, fishing effort, and fishing capacity. Participants are also to require that vessels flying their flag cease bottom fishing activities within five (5) nautical miles of any site in the Convention Area where, in the course of fishing operations, evidence of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) is encountered, and report the encounter, including the location, and the type of ecosystem in question, to the interim Secretariat so that appropriate measures can be adopted in respect of the relevant site. In addition, there are provisions requiring participants to assess whether their fishery is having significant adverse impacts on VMEs and if so, to implement conservation and management measures to prevent such impacts on VMEs and the long-term sustainability of deep sea fish stocks, vessel monitoring system (VMS) requirements, observer coverage requirements and a requirement to submit their bottom fishing effort map.

At its first meeting, the Commission adopted a number of binding conservation measures, including limits in the fishery for *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 the impacts of fishing, vessels, observers, and vessel monitoring systems and establishing an IUU vessel list.

The second commission meeting was held In Manta, Ecuador from January 27 – 31, 2014. SPRFMO adopted six conservation and management measures including a follow-on measure for the management of jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) which required a vote due to numerous members with intractable positions. 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 Convention came into force 24 August 2012. The first Meeting of the Commission was convened in Auckland, New Zealand from 28 January to 1 February 2013. Accomplishments of the Meeting included adoption of Rules of Procedure, Financial Regulations (including a formula for contributions) and budgets for the first full financial year and the time period preceding it. Decisions were adopted for Officers of Subsidiary Bodies of the Convention and for Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties. Conservation and Management Measures were adopted for jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*); for large-scale pelagic driftnets and all deepwater Gillnets, for Standards for the Collection, Reporting, Verification and Exchange of Data; and for the establishment of a list of presumed IUU vessels. Roadmaps for the Compliance and Technical Committee and Scientific Committee were adopted. Dr. James Ianelli of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center was named Chair of the Scientific Committee. 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.

Implementing Legislation

N/A, the United States signed the NPFC Convention on May 2, 2012 and is currently going through the process of getting advice and consent to ratify the Convention.

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$4,713,500 (approximately US$4,222,700 which is an increase of about one percent over the 2013 budget). The U.S. contribution for its dues in 2013 is AU$125,083 (US$112,060).

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, and the NGO community. Industry representatives have also served on the U.S. delegation.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The 1982 Convention established CCAMLR for the purpose of protecting and conserving the marine living resources in the waters surrounding Antarctica. 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 nation. 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 nations. 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 and Management Measures:

The Commission adopted its first conservation and management measures during its 1984 session (CCAMLR III). During the thirty-second (2013) meeting of the Commission, the requirement for vessels licensed to fish in the Convention Area to have International Maritime Organization (IMO) numbers was expanded from toothfish vessels only to all vessels. After nearly 10

years of work on the development of a CCAMLR compliance evaluation procedure (CCEP) to assess Member compliance with conservation measures, 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. 2013 was the first year of implementing the CCEP. On the basis of the information provided by the Secretariat and the relevant Member, the Standing Committee on Implementation and Compliance (SCIC) made determinations on compliance status and recommendations to the Commission with respect to follow-on action that might be needed to address noncompliance. The CCEP was widely considered a success in identifying instances of non-compliance and in having Members acknowledge their vessels' non-compliance and provide explanations of domestic actions they had taken or were going to take to address it. It was also useful in identifying which CCAMLR conservation measures were unclear or needed amendment to improve the ability of the Secretariat to evaluate compliance. Several conservation measures were amended at this meeting in response to issues identified through the CCEP.

Catch limits for toothfish were reviewed and in some areas revised. The Commission agreed to develop a process for conducting independent reviews of CCAMLR stock assessments and, in 2014, will consider a proposal from the United Kingdom to facilitate such reviews. The Commission retained the current catch limits in all krill fisheries. 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.

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.

The United States tabled a proposal to amend the existing conservation measure to require landing of sharks with fins naturally attached to discourage the finning (i.e., removal of the fins and discard of the carcass at sea) of incidentally-caught sharks that are retained and to improve the data collected on sharks that are caught. Many members spoke in support of the proposal but consensus on the change could not be reached.

D. Activities and Meetings

The following meetings will take place in 2014:

Subgroup on Acoustic Survey and Analysis Methods (SG-ASAM) 8 to 11 April in Qingdao, China;
Working Group on Statistics, Assessments and Modeling (WG-SAM) 30 June to 4 July in Punta Arenas, Chile;
Working Group on Ecosystem Monitoring and Management (WG-EMM) 7 to 18 July in Punta Arenas, Chile;
Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment (WG-FSA) 6 to 17 October in Hobart, Australia;
Scientific Committee (SC) 20 to 31 October, 2014 in Hobart, Australia; and
Commission (CCAMLR) 20 to 31 October 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

Commission Headquarters

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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). However, the outlook for the stock is positive**.** Recent recruitments (2005-2011) are estimated to be higher than previously and above the estimated stock-recruit curve, in contrast to the weak cohorts of 1999-2002. These estimates are driven by both the recent increases in CPUE and the scientific aerial survey data. Nevertheless, it will be some time before the recent stronger recruitments enter the spawning stock. Model results indicate that the spawning stock biomass is likely to increase after 2012; however, the 2012 and 2014 indicators had mixed signals. The next full stock assessment for southern bluefin tuna will be conducted during 2014.

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 will be used to 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).

For the first three-year TAC setting period (2012-2014), the TAC will be as follows:

- 2012: 10,449 tons
- 2013: 10,949 tons; and
- 2014: 12,449 tons

The CCSBT has set the TAC for 215-2017 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 continued to be a major focus of the CCSBT at its 2011 annual meeting, where it 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 three year Action Plan finishes in 2014, and the CCSBT is considering recommendations for an Action Plan for 2015 to 2017

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, unregulated and unreported (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.

The CCSBT is holding an intersessional meeting of its Compliance Working Group in 2014 where it will consider revisions to its transshipment monitoring program and scientific observer program standards, as well as options for implementing Port State Measures for the CCSBT.

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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 current IOTC conservation and management measure for tropical tunas was adopted in April 2012 and is applicable through the end of 2014.

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/iacseaturtle/

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 Mazatlan, 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. The first called for the convening of a meeting to discuss the status of the hawksbill in the wider Caribbean and the second called for 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 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 Nations

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

Secretariat Headquarters

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Budget

ACAP's current annual budget for 2013 is AU $696,310, based upon ACAP's membership fee schedule, which assigns dues (up to a maximum of 22%), proportionally based upon nations' 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 as in need of conservation action by ACAP Parties. This list is comprised 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

Nations 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 as an invited expert 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, collecting 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. The 6th Meeting of the Advisory Committee to ACAP was held from 29 August to 2 September 2011, in Guayaquil, Ecuador. 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 now split between vessels less than 35m and those greater than 35m to reflect operational differences. Technical specifications were recommended for each measure. During the 4th Meeting of the Parties in Lima, Peru (23 to 27 April 2012), the Balearic Shearwater was added to Annex 1 of the Agreement.

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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; and
- collect data on their vessels authorized to fish on the high seas and their catches and submit to the FAO a list of vessels authorized to fish on the high seas, maintaining 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 the Agreement again not earlier than 2015. The final report of the Resumed Review Conference can be found at:
http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/review_conf_fish_stocks.htm

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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 National 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 effects (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 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: implementation of integrated marine and coastal area management, marine and coastal living resources, marine and coastal protected areas, mariculture and alien species and 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 twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be held in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, 6 - 17 October 2014.

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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 1 April 2013, 119 nations are party to the CMS. The United States has not signed.

Commission Headquarters
Bonn, Germany

Budget
The approved budget for 2013 is € 2,386 250.

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 119 Parties (as of 1 April 2013) 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 tenth Meeting of the COP was held November 20-25, 2011, in Bergen, Norway. The documents from the meeting can be found at: http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop10/documents_overview.htm

Future Meetings
The eleventh Meeting of the COP will take place in Quito, Ecuador on November 4-9, 2014.

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, China, People's Republic of, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Congo, Democratic Republic of, 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, Korea, Kuwait, Republic of, 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

* The Convention will enter into force for Iraq on 6 May 2014.

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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 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, whale sharks, seahorses, queen conch and all hard coral species listed either on Appendix I or II. NMFS also has management jurisdiction over several marine species that were included in the CITES Appendices at the most recent meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (see "Recent Activities" below for more details).

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, Comores, 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 of 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 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 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; requests 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.

Commission Headquarters

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Budget

The Commission approved a budget of approximately £1,799,000 (British Pounds) for 2013-2014. The United States contribution for 2013-2014 amounts to approximately £85,972 (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:

Vacant

Deputy U.S. Commissioner:

Mr. Ryan Wulff
West Coast Regional Office
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100
Sacramento, WA 95814

C. Advisory Structure:

U.S. representation in the IWC has no formal (legislated) advisory structure. The IWC Commissioner does consult, however, with the "IWC Interagency Committee," which includes representatives of the Department of State, the Marine Mammal Commission, Department of Interior, other Federal agencies, conservation organizations, Native organizations, and other interested parties.

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

The 1946 Convention has as its objective the proper conservation of world whale stocks, thus making possible the orderly development of the whaling industry. The Convention established the IWC to provide for a continuing review of the condition of whale stocks and for such additions to or modifications of the agreed conservation measures as might appear desirable.

B. Organizational Structure:

The IWC consists of the Commission, Secretariat, and subject area committees. The Commission is composed of one member from each Contracting Government, may be accompanied by one or more experts and advisors. Each member government has one vote. Decisions of the Commission are by simple majority of those members voting, except that a three-fourths majority of those members is required for actions to amend the provisions of the Schedule (which contains the binding decisions of the Commission). The Commission can determine its own rules of procedure and may appoint its own Secretary and staff. The Committees may be set up by the Commission from its own members and experts or advisors to perform such functions as it may authorize.

C. Programs:

The IWC normally meets once every other year to review the condition of whale stocks and to modify conservation measures, as appropriate. The Commission has used various means of regulating commercial whaling including the fixing of open and closed seasons, open and closed areas, protected species, size limits for each species, and limits on the catch of whales in any one season. The IWC generally recognizes three types of whaling: commercial whaling, special permit (scientific research) whaling, and aboriginal subsistence whaling.

Past actions by the IWC include establishment of a whale sanctuary in the Indian Ocean area and in the Southern Ocean (in most of the waters south of 40° S. latitude), prohibition on the use of cold grenade (non-exploding) harpoons to kill whales for commercial purposes, a moratorium on all commercial whaling from the beginning of the 1985-86 pelagic and 1986 coastal seasons, and separate and distinct management for aboriginal subsistence whaling. Criteria for evaluating research involving the killing of whales under special permits were established because of concerns that some countries would use special permits for scientific research as a means of circumventing the zero catch limits for commercial whaling. The 1946 Convention allows countries to issue special permits authorizing the taking of whales for scientific research.

The Chair's summary of each Commission meeting can be found on the IWC Secretariat's website (www.iwc.int).

The 65th meeting of the IWC will be held in Slovenia in September 2014.

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PART II: BILATERAL CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

NORTH AMERICA

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

Basic Instrument

None

Authorities

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

Member Nations

United States and Canada

Meetings

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

Description

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

One day of the meeting is generally dedicated to bilateral and multilateral fisheries management issues of mutual interest. Discussions on bilateral fisheries issues tend to focus on conservation and management of shared stocks (such as Pacific albacore, Pacific hake, and species of mutual concern in the Gulf of Maine). In many cases, separate negotiations are underway on these species, and this meeting allows officials on both sides to discuss avenues for future progress. Discussions on multilateral issues typically focus on issues of mutual interest within the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), and broader issues associated with tuna RFMOs.

The second meeting day is generally devoted to global fisheries/policy issues. These discussions tend to touch on international fisheries agreements and initiatives (such as on-going FAO work, implementation of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and development of the annual UN General Assembly Fisheries Resolution. The consultations are used to trade information on the status of implementation of these instruments and initiatives, as well as to discuss ways to encourage their implementation by other countries. In addition, Parties discuss fisheries- and oceans-related developments in economic organizations such as APEC, the OECD Committee on Fisheries and the FAO Subcommittee on Fish trade. Finally, these consultations are used for discussion of species of mutual concern at the global level, such as sea turtles, sea birds and sharks.

Recent Activities

Representatives of the United States and Canada met in Silver Spring, Maryland during 17-18 July 2013, 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; Arctic cooperation; United Nations issues and fora; FAO/COFI; bilateral issues; regional issues and regional fisheries management organizations; and other fora.

Upcoming Meeting:

The next informal consultation will take place in Ottawa, Canada during summer 2014.

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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 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 Fisheries and Oceans Canada (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 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 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.

The Coast Guard assigned several law enforcement officers to assist the Canadian DFO with inspections of vessels fishing under the NAFO convention, covering three patrols in FY 2012 and two patrols in 2013 totaling approx 80 days. The inspections checked the combined catch of over 1500 tons of skate, plaice, witch flounder, yellowtail flounder, and halibut. During the patrols, the Coast Guard inspectors assisted with 21 inspections, resulting in two violations.

DFO and 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 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.

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.

The US and Canada held their bilateral meeting to discuss fisheries issues of mutual interest June 23-24 in Silver Spring. In addition to discussion of positions on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) and compliance-related issues at the Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs) to which both countries are party, the group discussed cooperative efforts to increase compliance with requirements related to the trade of Patagonian Toothfish across the US-Canadian border.

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United States-Mexico Fisheries Cooperation Program

Basic Instrument

There is no formal instrument establishing the United States-Mexico Fisheries Cooperation Program (FCP). 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 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 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 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 August 20-22, 2013, La Jolla, California, along with meetings of the MEXUS-Golfo and MEXUS- Pacífico scientific working groups. Prior to this, the last FCT meetings were held February 7-9, 2012, in Mazatlan, Mexico. 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 and hope to convene another round of FCP meetings in 2014.

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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 United States is expected to host the next meeting. The Southwest Fisheries Science Center has indicated that they would like to host. Preliminary discussions with Chile point to a summer 2014 date.

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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) expires on December 31, 2014.

Recent Activities

The United States and China continued joint operations in the North Pacific Ocean in 2013 pursuant to the terms of 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. The USCG has had a strong working relationship with China's FLEC for 20 years. This working relationship increases opportunities for cooperation on both high seas fisheries enforcement efforts and training. China has provided a total of 87 enforcement officials to the USCG since the MOU first entered into force in 1993. This cooperation has led to 18 interdictions and enforcement actions against vessels engaged in large-scale high seas driftnet fishing activity.

The USCG Cutter MUNRO hosted six Chinese FLEC officials during its patrol in 2013. 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 services of the FLEC officials were not utilized in 2013 as in previous years. Nevertheless, having Chinese FLEC shipriders onboard USCG patrol vessels effectively expands the jurisdictional reach of both enforcement agencies

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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 hold 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
John Henderschedt, Executive Director, Fisheries Leadership and Sustainability Forum, Seattle, Washington
Paul MacGregor, Partner, Law Firm of Mundt, MacGregor, Happel, Falconer, Zulauf, and Hall, Seattle, Washington
Marlyn Twitchell, Consultant, Seattle, Washington

Description

The United States and the Russian Federation maintain the bilateral ICC fisheries forum pursuant to the U.S.-Soviet Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement, signed on May 31, 1988. The ICC is responsible for furthering the objectives of the Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement. These objectives include maintaining a mutually beneficial and equitable fisheries relationship through (1) cooperative scientific research and exchanges; (2) reciprocal allocation of surplus fish resources in the respective national 200-mile zones, consistent with each nation's laws and regulations; (3) cooperation in the establishment of fishery joint ventures; (4) general consultations on fisheries matters of mutual concern; and, (5) cooperation to address illegal or unregulated fishing activities on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea. The agreement expires on December 31, 2018.

In recent years, the ICC also has also served as the forum for negotiating a bilateral fisheries management agreement for the Northern Bering Sea and an agreement to prevent, deter, and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) harvesting of living marine resources.

Current Status

Pursuant to Article XIV of the 1988 Agreement on Mutual Fisheries Relations, representatives of Russia and the United States conducted the 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.

The U.S. side provided an update on the extension of the 1988 Agreement on Mutual Fisheries Relations and requested an update from the Russian Federation on the status of the exchange of diplomatic notes necessary to extend the Agreement. The Russian delegation indicated that the interagency process is ongoing and that the Agreement should be renewed by the end of the year.

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.

Bering Sea Pollock Stocks**:** The U.S. delegation reported on the status of U.S. pollock stocks. The dominant stocks in the U.S. EEZ of the Bering Sea are located in the eastern Bering Sea, the Aleutian Islands, and the Bogoslof Island area. (Additional details on the status of pollock stocks in the Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands (BSAI) can be found on the following website: http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/stocks/assessments.htm.) The Russian side presented the results of Russian studies of pollock in the Bering Sea conducted during the inter-sessional period. From July 2012 to August 2013, 10 surveys were carried out in the Bering Sea. It was noted that in the Western Bering Sea, pollock stocks from the 2006, 2008, 2009 and 2010 year classes were above average. Studies of Navarin Basin pollock showed that its stock has stabilized. According to modeling data and by using a precautionary approach, the total allowable catch (TAC) for pollock for 2014 will remain at the 2013 TAC level. Due to the absence of abundant year classes of Karagin pollock in recent years, the TAC for 2014 was decreased twofold compared to the 2013 TAC level.

Marine Mammals

Walruses**:** **I**n 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated a multi-year, genetics based, capture-mark-recapture project for estimation of abundance and demographic rates (i.e. survival and recruitment) of Pacific walruses. This study requires the collection of a large number of skin biopsy samples from a representative sample of the Pacific walrus population and therefore sample collection must occur in both the U.S. and Russia. The United States proposed conducting a joint U.S./Russian research cruise in 2014 and 2015 to collect skin biopsy samples from walruses hauled out on sea ice in the Bering and Chukchi Seas.

Russia reported on research on Pacific walruses conducted in the Chukotka rookeries by ChuckotTINRO. In 2011-2012, observations were conducted on four rookeries along the Arctic coast to study walrus age and sex composition, external influence on walrus behavior, and other factors. Russia supported the U.S. proposal for a joint five-year research program in order to determine the abundance of shared walrus populations. Russia also proposed developing a common approach to assessing the indigenous walrus hunt's impact on both countries.

Steller Sea Lions**:** The United States presented research on the status of domestic and trans-boundary Steller sea lions and other marine mammals. The eastern and western stocks constitute the two main stocks of Steller sea lions in the North Pacific. The National Marine Fisheries Service conducts surveys of Steller sea lions every other year, weather permitting. Currently, the largest rookeries and major haulouts in the western population occur in the eastern Aleutians and western Gulf of Alaska. Steller sea lion populations in these areas are increasing. By contrast, the rookeries and haulouts in the western and central Aleutians are much smaller and continue to experience declines. Despite a decline in the western and central Aleutians, the U.S. portion of the western stock has shown an increasing trend between 2005 and 2012. Russia presented information regarding current sea lion distribution in the Chukchi area. Abundance of sea lions is at average levels in the Russian EEZ.

Crab Species**:** The U.S. side reported that Bering Sea snow crab continues to comprise the highest catch of crab stocks in the Bering Sea. All major stocks have exhibited a declining trend except for the Aleutian Islands golden king crab. Russia presented stock assessment data for three species of crabs in the western Bering Sea: blue king, snow, and tanner crab. Stocks of all three are currently stable and there is a trend toward an increase in the number of recruits. The total annual catch of all three species in the last few years was below the TAC.

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.

Joint Research Planning, Data Exchanges, and Surveys**:** There is a long history of joint research planning between the Pacific Research Fisheries Center (TINRO) and the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC). As part of mutual efforts to advance the research program in the Bering Sea under the ICC that was discussed at the January 2011 ICC workshop, the AFSC invited a Russian scientist, Dr. Mikhail Stepanenko of TINRO, to come to Seattle, Washington during March 25-29, 2013. The main purpose of the visit was to review the 2012 Bering Sea midwater and bottom trawl survey information from AFSC and TINRO and make recommendations about possible future research. In addition, research on fish ageing protocols for pollock and Pacific cod were discussed. Also reviewed was available information about commercial catch amounts, spatial distribution and size composition around the maritime boundary line. A report was prepared that summarized the discussions and recommendations for future scientific exchanges between AFSC and TINRO. Both research centers plan on continuing their scientific collaborations in the coming years. In summer and fall of 2013 and 2014, there will be further midwater survey efforts around the maritime boundary line. A scientific exchange of information regarding pollock ageing

protocols is also planned for 2014.

The Russian delegation presented plans for echo-integration and bottom trawl surveys in the Bering Sea in 2014. TINRO-Center conducted an echo-integration trawl survey in the northwestern Bering Sea in the Russian and U.S. EEZs adjacent to the maritime boundary in October 2012. It conducted the same survey in August-September 2013 and plans a similar survey in 2014. The TINRO-Center and AFSC are planning bottom trawl surveys in the Bering Sea in 2014, thus potentially creating a possibility to conduct intercalibration of fishing gear used during these surveys. The AFSC is comparing pollock age determination by scales (Russia) and otoliths (United States). TINRO-Center sampled pollock scales and otoliths in the northwestern Bering Sea in the summer of 2013 and volunteered to send, with funding support from the AFSC, a specialist to AFSC for joint age readings by scales and otoliths in early 2014.

Fisheries Enforcement Cooperation**:** The U.S. Coast Guard presented an overview of cooperative maritime law enforcement efforts over the past year conducted by the USCG District 17 and Kamchatka Border Guard Directorate of the FSB of Russia, focused on stemming IUU fishing activity in the vicinity of the maritime boundary line in the Bering Sea, as well as efforts focused on curtailing illegal large-scale high seas drift netting in the North Pacific. No IUU fishing was observed in 2013.

Other Issues of Mutual Interest: The two sides exchanged views on the results of the 17th Annual virtual Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea, the Agreement on Preservation of Transboundary Fish Stocks in the Central Sea of Okhotsk, North Pacific Fisheries Commission, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and in particular the proposed Ross Sea MPA, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) IUU Pathfinder, and efforts to negotiate a central Arctic Ocean high seas fisheries agreement.

Restructuring Future ICC Meetings**:** Both sides agreed that, at the 25th ICC meeting, there would be focused discussion on identifying potential opportunities for cooperative research and data exchange between the two countries relating to fisheries, habitat, and ecosystem processes in the Chukchi and Northern Bering Sea. This workshop would look beyond existing institutional arrangements and would facilitate the identification of research needs and next steps.

Time and place for the 25th ICC meeting: Russia will tentatively host the 25th ICC Meeting in mid-September 2014 in Vladivostok.

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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 4th (most recent) U.S.-Norway Joint Committee on Fisheries was hosted by the Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs in Oslo on September 13-14, 2012. Sam Rauch, NMFS Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, and Russell Smith, NOAA Deputy Assistant Administrator for International Fisheries co-led the U.S. delegation, which consisted of NMFS, Department of State, and U.S. Embassy representatives. Mr. Arne Røksund, Secretary General, Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs, led the Norwegian delegation, which included officials from the Ministry, the Institute for Marine Research, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Paul Niemeier, NMFS Office of International Affairs, 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 2011. Other topics discussed were cooperation in the United Nations (UN), UN Food and Agriculture Organization, and regional fisheries management organizations; fishing regulations and catch control measures; trade; and Arctic fisheries management. A one-day seminar on marine recreational fisheries management topped off a very productive meeting.

Future Meetings: The United States agreed to host the 5th Joint Committee Meeting in Silver Spring, Maryland, on November 7-8, 2013. Unfortunately, the meeting had to be postponed until 2014. The location will not likely change, but the new date has not yet been 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 representatives met with representatives of the European Commission's Directorate-General (D-G) for Fisheries and Marine Affairs on March 26-27, 2014 in Brussels, Belguim, for the 13th 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 (14th) session of the U.S.-EU High Level Fisheries Consultations remains to be determined, but it is projected to be early in 2015 in Washington, DC.

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PART III: SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS AND COUNCILS

PACIFIC OCEAN

North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES)

Basic Instrument

Convention for a North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES)

Implementing Legislation

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

Member Nations

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

Organization Headquarters

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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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Academic Representative:

TBD

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 30ENorth 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 - 2012);

- WG-26: Working Group on Jellyfish Blooms around the North Pacific Rim: Causes and Consequences
- (Oct. 2010-).
- WG-27: Working Group on North Pacific Climate Variability and Change (Jun. 2011).
- WG-28: Working Group on Development of Ecosystem Indicators to Characterize Ecosystem Responses to Multiple Stressors (Jun. 2011 - 2013).
- WG-29: Working Group on Regional Climate Modeling (Jan. 2011 - Dec. 2014).

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. 2020)
- S-HD: Section on *Human Dimensions of Marine Systems* (Jan. 2012 – Dec. 2020)
- S-HAB: Section on *Ecology of Harmful Algal Blooms in the North Pacific* (Oct. 2003 – Oct. 2014)
- S-CC: Section on *Carbon and Climate* (Oct. 2005 – Oct. 2013)

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-MP: Study Group on "Marine Pollutants" (Jan. 2012 – Dec. 2012)
- SG-RS: Study Group on "Radionuclide Science in the North Pacific Ocean" (Jan. 2013 -)

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:

- AICE-AP: FUTURE Advisory Panel on *Anthropogenic Influences on Coastal Ecosystems*;
- COVE-AP: FUTURE Advisory Panel on *Climate, Oceanographic Variability and Ecosystems*;
- SOFE-AP: FUTURE Advisory Panel on *Status, Outlooks, Forecasts, and Engagement*;
- CREAMS-AP: Advisory Panel for a CREAMS/PICES Program in East Asian Marginal Seas;
- MBM-AP: Advisory Panel on *Marine Birds and Mammals*;

- CPR-AP: Advisory Panel on *the Continuous Plankton Recorder Survey in the North Pacific*.

Task Teams

Currently, there are no active Task Teams.

Recent Activities

The 2013 PICES Annual Meeting was held October 11 – 20 in Nanaimo, Canada on the topic of "Communicating forecasts, uncertainty and consequences of ecosystem change." Information of other meetings, symposia and workshops held in 2013 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
2014	Feb 22-23	Symposium 2014	Honolulu, HI,USA	Bering Sea Open Science Meeting	NSF, NPRB, NOAA, PICES
2014	Mar 24-27	Training course 2014	Karawang, Indonesia	PICES/MAFF training course to develop and set-up pond experiments (under PICES/MAFF project on "*Marine ecosystem health and human well-being*")	PICES, MAFF
2014	Apr 13	Workshop 2014	Kohala Coast, HI, USA	Meeting of the Project Team for the PICES/MAFF project on "*Marine ecosystem health and human well-being*"	PICES, MAFF
2014	Apr 14-18	Symposium 2014	Kohala Coast, HI, USA	FUTURE Open Science Meeting	PICES
2014	Apr 19-20	Workshop 2014	Kohala Coast, HI, USA	FUTURE Evaluation Team meeting to assess progress of FUTURE in the first 5 years and suggest course adjustment for remaining years to achieve the objectives of the Program	PICES
2014	Apr 19-21	PICES Inter-sessional Science Board Meeting	Kohala Coast, HI, USA	Science Board-General oversight of the scientific interest of Council and its scientific work and research.	PICES
2014	May 13-16	Symposium 2014	Anchorage, AK, USA	29th Wakefield Fisheries Symposium on "*Fisheries Bycatch: Global Issues and Creative Solutions*"	ADFG, ASG, NMFS/AFSC, NPFMC, NPFRC, NPRB, PICES, UAF, USFWS
2014	June 2-4	Symposium 2014	Porvoo, Finland	ICES/PICES Symposium on "*Ecological basis of risk analysis for marine ecosystems*"	ICES, PICES, ECOKNOWS
2014	June 23-28	Joint Theme Session 2014	Bergen, Norway	IMBER/PICES Theme Session on "*Responses of society to marine and global changes as a core mandate for IMBER: ways forward*"	IMBER, PICES
2014	Aug 4–9	Summer School 2014	Shanghai, China	IMBER ClimECO4 Summer School on "*Delineating the issues of climate change and impacts to marine ecosystems: Bridging the gap between research, assessment, policy and management*	IMBER, IMR, CLIVAR, ECNU, KIOST, PAGES, PICES, SCOR

2014	Aug 18-21	Summer School 2014	Seoul, Korea	PICES Summer School on "*Ecological modeling for marine resources management and research*"	PICES, SNU, SCOR
2014	Sep 15–19	Joint Theme Session 2014	A Coruña, Spain	ICES/PICES Theme Sessions at the 2013 ICES Annual Science Conference: –Session A: "*Gelatinous zooplankton on global perspective: Interactions with fisheries and consequences for socio-economics*" – Session I: "*The increasing importance of biofouling for marine invasions: An ecosystem altering mechanism*" –Session Q: "*Physical and biological consequences of North Atlantic circulation patterns*"	ICES, PICES
2014	Oct 16-27	Annual Meeting	Yeosu, Korea	2014 PICES Annual Meeting under the theme "Toward a better understanding of the North Pacific: Reflecting on the past and steering for the future"	PICES
2015	Mar 23-27	Symposium 2015	Santos, Brazil	3rd PICES/ICES/IOC Symposium on "Effects of climate change on the world's oceans"	PICES, ICES, IOC

Budgetary Matters

The contracting parties are assessed approximately $120,000 annually.

Appointments and Elections

Governing Council

Mr. Robin Brown (Canada) to replace Dr. Laura Richards as the national delegate of Canada;
Dr. Kazumasa Ikuta (Japan) to replace Dr. Ichiro Nakayama as the national delegate of Japan;
Mr. Hyuntae Kim (Korea) to replace Mr. Yong-Seok Kang as the national delegate of Korea.

F&A Committee

Mr. Robin Brown (Canada) to replace Dr. Laura Richards as the Canadian member
Mr. Hyuntae Kim (Korea) to replace Mr. Yong-Seok Kang as the Korean member
Ms. Patricia Livingston (USA) to replace Dr. John Stein as the US member

Science Board

Dr. Thomas Therriault (Canada) replaced Dr. Sinjae Yoo (Korea) and started his term as the Chairman of Science Board;
Dr. Hiroaki Saito (Japan) was elected as the Vice-Chairman of Science Board to replace Dr. Thomas Therriault (Canada).

Committees

Dr. Angelica Peña (Canada) was elected as the Chairman of the Biological Oceanography Committee to replace Dr. Atsushi Tsuda (Japan);
Dr. Atsushi Tsuda (Japan) was elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Biological Oceanography Committee to replace Dr. Michael Dagg (U.S.A.);
Dr. Jennifer Boldt (Canada) was elected as the Chairman of the Technical Committee on Monitoring to replace Dr. Hiroya Sugisaki (Japan);
Dr. Sanae Chiba (Japan) was elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Technical Committee on Monitoring to replace Dr. Phillip Mundy (U.S.A.).

Future PICES Scientific Conferences

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

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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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Russia is serving as the current chair of CAFF.

Budget

The cost of the Secretariat is borne largely by Iceland, supported by voluntary contributions from Member countries. The U.S. contribution is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Alaska Region. Other U.S. agencies contribute funds for U.S. expert participation on various CBMP programs.

Website

The CAFF website is www.caff.is.

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; Flora Expert Group; and the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program. 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, undertaking an Arctic Biodiversity Assessment.

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://caff.arcticportal.org/expert-groups.

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 http://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 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) 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.

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

Member Nations

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

Council Headquarters

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Budget

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

U.S. Representation

A. Process:

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

B. U.S. Representation (Delegates):

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C. Committees and Working Groups:

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

Description

A. Mission/Purpose:

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

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

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

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

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

Further information on ICES can be found on the Web at 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 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 TORs and schedule for the international review of ICES advisory services.

For information on recent activities, please consult 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.

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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 3,690 projects in more than 165 developing countries and countries with economies in transition. These grants amount to $12.5 billion from the GEF alongside an additional $58 billion in cofinancing. Through its Small Grants Programme (SGP), the GEF has also made more than 16,030 small grants directly to civil society and community based organizations, totaling $653.2 million.

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 is scheduled to take place in China (location TBD) in August 2014.

Recent events:

The 2nd meeting of the APEC OFWG was held in Medan, Indonesia 23-25 June 2013. Seventeen APEC economies attended: Australia; Chile; People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Mexico; New Zealand, Papua New Guinea; Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; the United States; and Viet Nam. Observers included the Nature Conservancy (TNC); the World Wildlife Fund (WWF); and the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC). The meeting was chaired by the OFWG Lead Shepherd, Mr. Greg Schneider (USA). The meeting agenda focused on discussions organized around the four pillars of the OFWG Strategic Plan: Food Security, Free and Open Trade and Investment, Climate Change, and Sustainable Development of the Marine Environment. Additional discussions included dialogue on how to internally improve operations and elevate the group's work in the broader APEC context and presentations on ideas on how to further examine the concept of "blue economy" within the OFWG.

OFWG 2013 Meeting Recommendations

OFWG discussions highlighted the need to 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 recommended an increased level of communication and cooperation with other relevant APEC fora on ocean and fisheries issues. Target APEC fora include: the Public Partnership for Food Security; the Public Partnership for Science, Technology, and Innovation; the Committee on Trade and Investment; the Energy Working Group; the Transportation Working Group; and the APEC Business Advisory Council (among others). In an effort to address recent OFWG failures to secure project funding under the current APEC criteria, the OFWG encouraged its representatives and the SCE-COW to consider elevating ocean and fisheries issues to Rank 1 of the funding criteria for APEC 2014. The group also expressed the hope that meeting dates across all working groups can be determined well in advance for the 2014 host year and ensure that complementary groups do not overlap, in order to enable further participation by OFWG and private sector representatives.

The following items were endorsed/agreed during Medan OFWG Meeting:

- A draft framework for the Marine Sustainable Development Report, other than the "Blue Economy" and "Ocean Health Index" sections.
- A self-funded proposal from Indonesia for an APEC Ocean and Fisheries Information Center.
- A proposal for the 14th Roundtable Meeting on the Involvement of the Business/Private Sector in the Sustainability of the Marine Environment. Economies suggested that future topics align with the OFWG Priority Areas.
- OFWG participation in the Friends of PPFS Working Group on Agriculture and Fisheries.
- A Russian Pathfinder Interim project on Enhancement of Partnerships among APEC economies on Combating IUU Fishing and Associated Trade by Undertaking Voluntary Obligations on Nonproliferation of Flags of Convenience Practices. The United States and Indonesia agreed to co-sponsor.
- Draft language for the 2013 APEC Leaders' Statement, to be sent to the SCE for further consideration between now and the CSOM.
- A proposal to hold an APEC Oceans Ministerial Meeting in 2014, hosted by in China. Concern was raised by several economies (including the United States) that no theme or topics had been proposed for the Ministerial Meeting and it was not until after the OFWG meeting that this proposal was actually endorsed.

The following actions were proposed for the intersessional period:

- Further discussions regarding the inclusion of the "Blue Economy" and "Ocean Health Index" sections of the Marine Sustainable Development Report.
- Sharing of information and review of the proposed APEC Ocean Ministerial Meeting's timeline, details and proposed priority topics.
- Review of the "Mainstreaming Ocean Issues" paper tabled by Indonesia.
- Development, review, and endorsement of the 2014 OFWG Work Plan.
- Drafting, review, and endorsement of the OFWG Food Security Action Plan (in coordination with PPFS).
- Review, finalize and endorse language for the 2013 APEC Leaders' Statement.
- Provide information to ISOM about OFWG priorities.

Upcoming Meeting: The next meeting of the OFWG will be hosted by China in May 2014. This meeting will address on-going subjects from the 2013 meeting and will serve as a preparatory meeting for the AOMM4 in August 2014. For more information on the activities of the OFWG, see the APEC web site: http://www.apecsec.org.sg or contact one of the individuals identified below.

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Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC)

The Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission 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.

APFIC (The Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission) has a more than 50-year history and is one of the longest established regional fishery bodies. The history of APFIC is reviewed in the document "50 Years of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission".

APFIC's area of competence (the Asia-Pacific) 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 4th APFIC Regional Consultative Forum Meeting (4th RCFM) was held 17-19 September 2012 followed by the 32nd APFIC Session from 20-22 September 2012. Both events were hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Viet Nam.

The 4th RCFM provided a forum to review the status and trends in fisheries and aquaculture in the Asia Pacific region. Taking part will be over 60 representatives of member governments, regional fishery organizations, development programmes, UN organizations and civil society organizations. In addition to providing an updated overview of the state of fisheries and aquaculture in the Asia-Pacific region, participants also discussed improving assessments of fisheries resources, adaptation and mitigation measures for climate change and improving livelihoods for fishing communities.

Recommendations arising from the RCFM were to the 32nd Session of APFIC for their consideration and possible endorsement. The 32nd Session acts as the decision making body for the Commission and will be attended by 40 high-level participants comprising the representatives of APFIC member countries and regional organizations. The agreed upon focus areas for 2013-2014 biennial are:

1. APFIC Regional consultative workshop on "Putting trawl fishery assessment & management into action in the APFIC region",
2. APFIC Regional consultative workshop on "Improving feeds for aquaculture in the Asian region",

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.

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 nutriceuticals. 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.

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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) Healthy Communities and Ecosystems, (2) Climate Change-Low-Carbon Economy and (3) Greening the North American Economy. Projects focus on the protection of the North American environment, and therefore trilateral environmental problems, issues and cooperation are given priority in funding.
Within these three broad strategic priorities, the Council is focusing its 2013-2014 Operational Plan on addressing three key environmental areas: (1) Tackling Climate Change and Improving Air Quality; (2) Greening Transportation in North America; and (3) Addressing Waste in Trade in North America.

The marine project included in CEC's current Operational Plan is 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.

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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 meets annually in New York, in two-year cycles, with each cycle focusing on clusters of specific thematic and cross-sectoral issues, outlined in its new multi-year programme of work (2003-2017) (E/CN.17/2003/6).

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 18th session of the CSD was held 3-14 May 2010 at UN Headquarters in New York and focused on transport, chemicals, waste management, mining, and the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. Additional information from the meeting can be found at: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd18.shtml.

The 19th session of the CSD was held 2-13 May 2011 at UN Headquarters in New York and again focused on transport, chemicals, waste management, mining, and the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. Additional information from the meeting can be found at: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd19.shtml.

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 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 will not return to ocean issues until the 2014-2015 biennium.

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; and
- 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 to be established.

Today, FAO is the largest autonomous agency within the United Nations system with 192 member countries plus the European Community (Member Organization) and one Associate Member (Faroe Islands). The FAO employs 1600 professional staff and 2000 general services staff 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).

$53,867,000 was budgeted in 2010-2011 for FAO’s Program of Work for the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department supplemented by $35,219,000 in direct support of the Program of Work from Trust Funds and an additional $52,466,000 from other voluntary contributions. About 57 percent of the Organization’s budget depends on voluntary contributions.

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 last meeting of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, in October 2013.

The 30th Session of COFI met in Rome on July 9-13, 2012. Its report can be downloaded from the FAO website. The meeting included delegations from over 200 states, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and fishers' groups. Delegates received the rollout presentation of FAO's flagship publication *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture2012* and proceeded to have a wide-ranging discussion of projected trends over the next fifty years and FAO's roles in this context.

The agenda dealt with major global fisheries and marine conservation issues, including implementation of the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments; management of fishing capacity; fisheries bycatch issues such as the incidental take of seabirds and sea turtles; improvement and standardization of fisheries status and trends reporting; the effects of subsidies on fishery management; issues related to fish and seafood products trade, including subsidies and cooperation with CITES; aquaculture; reduction of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and strengthening monitoring, control, and surveillance; ecosystems approaches to fisheries management; deep-sea fisheries; and strengthening the performance and functioning of regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements.

The COFI meeting advanced several significant U.S. objectives, particularly in addressing the effects of fishing on the marine environment; cracking down further on IUU fishing; and making international organizations in this field more accountable. Other recent products of COFI initiatives include the International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas in 2008 and the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in 2009, and the Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance in 2013, all funded in part by the NOAA Fisheries Office of International Affairs.

The United States chaired the meeting's Drafting Committee (Dean Swanson) and also served as a representative on that Committee (Cheri McCarty and Shannon Dionne).

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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 environment chapter, the environmental assessment, the environmental cooperation agreement and associated work plan.

- *Environmental Chapters* of FTAs are negotiated by USTR, and formulated through an interagency process in the US, with public input. The text is similar across FTAs, with differences most apparent between developed and developing countries. Provisions of these chapters include a commitment to not fail to effectively enforce one's environmental laws. 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 on the environment of all countries participating in the FTA.
- The State Department negotiates *Environmental Cooperation Agreements* and the 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 focused on two modules: Global GOOS, which largely addresses global climate observing requirements; and Coastal GOOS, which addresses the other GOOS objectives.

GOOS is part of the Global Climate Observing System. GOOS is 61% complete as measured by the status of the GCOS Implementation Plan and Joint WMO/IOC Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM) targets.

The United States contribution to GOOS is the United States Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS®). The US IOOS mirrors GOOS with a Global component and a coastal component. Within NOAA, the Oceanic Atmosphere Research (OAR) Climate Program Office's Climate Observation Division is the Program Manager for the Global Component of US IOOS. The United States contributes resources for ~50% of the Global GOOS. The coastal component of US IOOS is comprised of 17 Federal Agencies, 11 Regional Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (RCCOOS), and a National consortium for sensor verification and validation – the Alliance for Coastal Technologies (ACT). Web address: http://www.ioos.noaa.gov

GOOS comprises many observation platforms:

- 3000 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
- 1250 drifting buoys which record the currents of surface, the temperature and the atmospheric pressure
- 350 embarked systems on commercial or cruising yachts which collect temperature, salinity, the oxygen and the carbon dioxide (CO2) in the ocean and the atmosphere, and atmospheric pressure
- 100 research vessels which measure all the physical, chemical and biological parameters, between the surface of the sea and the ocean floors every 30 nautical miles out of 25 transoceanic lines
- 200 marigraphs and holographs which transmit information in quasi real time, thus providing the possibility of detecting tsunamis
- 50 commercial ships which launch probes measuring the temperature and salinity between the surface and the ocean floor on their transoceanic ways
- 200 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

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.

Argo is a key component of the Global Ocean Observing System, led by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/UNESCO). The Joint WMO - IOC Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorlogy (JCOMM) office in Toulouse manages deployments to maintain an 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 GRA completed an assessment of their capabilities and an overall summary was completed. The assessments and summary can be found at: http://ioc-goos.org/index.php?option=com_oe&task=viewEventDocs&eventID=1288.

A new GOOS Regional Policy was drafted and subsequently approved by the IOOS in June 2013: http://ioc-goos.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=159&Itemid=89&lang=en

Interim GOOS Steering Committee Chair
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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:

- Prevention and reduction of the impacts of natural hazards
- Mitigation of the impacts and adaptation to climate change and variability
- Safeguarding the health of ocean ecosystems
- Management procedures and policies leading to the sustainability of coastal and ocean environment and resources.

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

- For 15 years, UNESCO-IOC has been overseeing 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.
- U.S. support to the IOC ocean carbon program (through staff support and scientific leadership) 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 over the past 12 years through its quadrilennial Ocean in a High CO2 World expert meetings. IOC also provides 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 more than 60 training courses in species identification, toxicity testing, and monitoring and management strategies.
- IOC's participation in the international Large Marine Ecosystem partnership for twenty years has been instrumental in forging scientific and management collaboration through the Global Environment Facility, with key U.S. scientific engagement.
- The IOC celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010. In addition, 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.

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 of the United Nations. 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, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States, and Venezuela.

Web address: http://ioc.unesco.org/iocaribe/What_is%20IOCARIBE.htm

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 April 2013.

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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 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 October 2014).

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 ISC13 Plenary Meeting

The 13th ISC Plenary, held in Busan, Republic of Korea from 17-22 July 2013 was attended by members from Canada, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea, Mexico and the United States as well as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Management Commission. The Plenary reviewed results, conclusions, new data and updated analyses of the Billfish, Shark and Pacific Bluefin tuna working groups. The Plenary endorsed the findings that the Pacific blue marlin and North Pacific blue shark stocks are not overfished nor experiencing overfishing, and re-iterated that Pacific bluefin tuna are overfished and experiencing overfishing. It further provided projections for managers to consider in crafting management measures for North Pacific albacore tuna, swordfish, and striped marlin, and updated the conservation advice of ISC12 based on these projections. A special seminar on Pacific Ocean ecosystem and tuna dynamics was held.

The Plenary discussed formalizing the ISC structure and administration and began 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 2013-2014 includes completing new albacore tuna and swordfish stock assessments, and an updated Pacific bluefin tuna assessment in time for ISC14, completing a shortfin mako shark stock assessment in 2014, enhancing database and website management, and a tuna ageing workshop scheduled for November 2014 in Shimizu, Japan. The Plenary re-elected Gerard DiNardo for a second term as ISC Chair and welcomed Ziro Suzuki as the newly elected Pacific Bluefin Tuna Working Group Chair. The next Plenary will be held in Chinese Taipei in July 2014.

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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 the 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 2014 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 2014 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.

Next Meeting

The two countries have scheduled the annual Joint Project Agreement meeting for July 2014 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 and two NGOs (IUCN, WWF) to provide scientific and technical support to the LME projects (e.g. UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO, FAO, and IOC-UNESCO).

The GEF and the World Bank have committed financial assistance to the following LME projects:

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 2013, 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 global effort underway for healthier LMEs, supported by substantial financial assistance to developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Pacific, and eastern Europe. Mobilizing for healthier LMEs, the coalition converged on Boston's John F. Kennedy Library on February 16 to inform the attendees of a range of successful partnerships for recovering the health and sustainable development of LMEs around the globe.

The conference on "Stress, Sustainability and Development of Large Marine Ecosystems During Climate Change" was linked with the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), bringing an estimated 6,000 natural and social scientists to Boston. The Executive Summary and related documents are available online at: www.lme.noaa.gov and http://on.undp.org/pbjO3.

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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 2014, the Pacific Cetacean MoU 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.

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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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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, IMR and Fisheries and Oceans Canada met in Bergen, Norway on September 14, 2012 to continue dialog on collaborative research activities. This meeting was held in conjunction with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea's (ICES) Annual Science Conference.

The following issues were discussed in detail:

Ecosystem Science:
- Status of the project on Marine Ecosystem Comparisons of Norway and the US (MENU)
- Stock production models
- System models (ATLANTIS)
- Biophysical modelling

Polar Issues:
- Recommendations for collaborative research areas
- Periodic Arctic surveys
- Evaluation of potential Arctic fisheries
- Joint articles, comparison of ecosystems, and continued exchanges on oil spill impacts on fisheries

Ocean Acidification:
- Identification of indicative species
- Comparison of cold water and warm water areas
- Potential opportunities for collaboration
- Follow-up on Austevoll ocean acidification workshop
- International Conference on Ocean Acidification, May 6-8, 2013 in Bergen, Norway

Climate and Fisheries:
- Revision of an article on the biological consequences of a decrease in sea ice in the Arctic submitted to "Fisheries Oceanography"
- ICES/PICES strategic initiative on climate change effects on marine ecosystems
- Research collaboration between NOAA and IMR on fisheries, acidification and climate
- Joint workshop on "Climate Change Effects on Biological Productivity and Fisheries" to be held in Iceland in September 2013

Joint Scientific Expeditions:
- Proposed 2014/2015 Norwegian Antarctic/Atlantic research cruise

Advanced Sampling Technology:
- Consideration of a trilateral workshop on advanced survey technologies

Exchange of Scientists and Training Opportunities:
- Facilitation of scientist exchanges for the near future

Next meeting

The next science meeting is scheduled for June 2014, in Seattle, Washington.

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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 Oorganization 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.

Web address: http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en_2649_33901_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

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The Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

SPREP is a regional organization established by the governments of the Pacific island region to look after its environment. It has grown from a small program attached to the South Pacific Commission (SPC) in the 1980s into the Pacific region's major intergovernmental organization charged with protecting and managing the environment and natural resources. The Secretariat is based in Apia, Samoa, with over 70 staff, and is also referred to by the acronym SPREP.

SPREP members saw the need for SPREP to serve as the conduit for concerted environmental action at the regional level, established by the Treaty. The establishment of SPREP also sends a clear signal to the global community of the deep commitment of the Pacific islands region towards sustainable development, especially in light of multilateral attention to sustainable development issues facing small islands 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.

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

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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 Fifteenth Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Program (CEP), held concurrently with the Twelfth Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention), met in the Dominican Republic, October 25-27, 2012. This meeting was preceded on October 23 by the Seventh Meeting of Contracting Parties to Cartagena Convention's Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW Protocol) and adopted its decisions. The SPAW decided to extend the mandate of a Working Group to assess species to list under the annexes of the SPAW Protocol as endangered or threatened. Caribbean Member States reviewed proposed guidelines for adopting exemptions to certain obligations under Article 11 of the SPAW Protocol. The SPAW also continued its implementation of the regional Marine Mammal Action Plan, in which the National Marine Fisheries Service actively participates. SPAW's Workplan and Budget for 2013-2014, includes the development of pilot projects to strengthen the management of Marine Protected Areas, activities to promote the conservation of threatened and endangered species, such as marine mammals and sea turtles, and conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems. We are working with the Secretariat on an initiative to collaborate with the Governments and partners to implement a regional strategy for managing the invasion of lionfish in the Wider Caribbean Region.

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

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

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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 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: 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.

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 providincg further recommendations, where necessary.

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

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

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

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

The IJC 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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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 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 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. A revised version of the proposal referenced above was discussed in depth and a review by NOAA is currently underway to further refine the proposal. Additional scoping meetings may be held in 2014 to help facilitate this process.

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. Further discussions will be needed to identify the most important and feasible areas for collaboration over the near term. Options for holding these discussions were considered. In addition, it was agreed that the Polar Science Panel should be included in discussions of a possible long-term project that would revolve around the global oceans' role in climate, including the polar regions and associated database creation and sharing.

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 Program

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 Tanger 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 2012 and 2013, a NMFS team provided a 6-day 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 2014.

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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 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	UN FSA	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	UN FSA	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
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 Standards 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