

ICCAT Rolls Over Management Measure for Tropical Tunas for a Third Year

By: Robert Robinson – Deputy Director

The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) held its 23rd Special Meeting in Vale do Lobo, Portugal from November 13th to 21st, 2022 where it undertook a very ambitious agenda after being unable to hold a presential meeting for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Commission was able to adopt 13 Recommendations and 5 Resolutions at the meeting, one of the largest issues facing the Commission – the management of tropical tunas – did not achieve the level of success the Commission had hoped for.

ICCAT's subcommittee for the management and conservation of Tropical Tunas, Panel 1, was unable to achieve consensus on the various components of a comprehensive management measure for this multi-species

fishery. Member States generally agreed that the advice of the Standing Committee for Research and Statistics (SCRS) supported an increase in the total allowable catch (TAC) for bigeye tunas and maintaining the status quo for yellowfin and skipjack tunas; however, they could not agree on the level of the increase and the control mechanisms that had to be established to achieve the Commission's management objectives for the BET stock.



The challenges surrounding the management decision for the BET stock resulted from the SCRS advice to exercise extra caution in applying the scientific advice due to uncertainties created by the new assessment approach that was used for the stock analysis for BET in 2020. This caution opened the scientific advice to excess scrutiny and divergent interpretation by the various members of Panel 1. This problem was compounded even further by the need to formulate allocation criteria which would address the fishing aspirations of developing nations and meeting the fishing needs of the large harvesters.

As the meeting approached its conclusion, the Commission realized that a rollover of the existing management measure was the only remaining alternative for a conservation and management measure for tropical tunas in 2023; and reluctantly adopted text, *mutatis mutandis*, for a Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 21-01 on a multi-annual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas. The Chair of the Commission, Mr. Ernesto Penas Lado, reminded the plenary that these decisions do not constitute failure, but serves as a reminder of the difficulty of the work of the Commission.



While tropical tunas dominated much of the conversations at this year's annual meeting, Recommendations were adopted for the management of Western Atlantic Skipjack; Northern and Southern Swordfish; Mediterranean Albacore; Western, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna; South Atlantic Shortfin Mako Sharks; and Sea turtles caught in association with ICCAT fisheries. Despite its challenges and limitations, the net result of the 23rd Special Meeting of ICCAT was successful; enabling the Commission to continue working on those difficult issues that requires a little more time and attention.

Landmark Moment for Sharks and Rays at the CITES CoP19

The 19th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP19) was held in Panama City from 14th -25th November 2022. A key objective of CITES is to ensure that the international trade of wild fauna and flora does not threaten their survival and maintains biodiversity within ecosystems. This year's Conference concluded favorably for several wildlife in terms of global protection against unsustainable trade. The Conference was successful particularly for sharks and rays as approximately 90 percent of all internationally traded species can now only be traded if their stocks are not endangered. This is a landmark moment as compared to only 20 percent before the commencement of the Conference.

Fifty-four species of Requiem sharks, six species of hammerhead sharks and thirty-seven species of guitar fish have been included on the CITES Appendix II list. As a result, international trade in these species will only be permitted if the stocks of sharks and rays are not endangered.

While this is a momentous occasion for the conservation of sharks and rays it ultimately means that Belize flagged vessels targeting any of these species will only be allowed to harvest and trade these species by obtaining a special permit that shows legal and sustainability requirements are being met in the targeting of these species.



BHSFU Participates in the 2022 Blue Economy Climate Resilience Forum and Blue Economy Fair

By: Delice Pinkard- Senor High Seas Fisheries Officer

The Government of Belize through the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation (MBECA) in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representative for Jamaica, the Bahamas and Belize; and Belize's National Designated Authority to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), hosted the 2022 Blue Economy and Climate Resilience Forum and Blue Economy Fair on December 1-2, 2022, at the Belize City Civic Center.



The Forum and fair were deliverables under the GCF readiness project entitled **“Enhancing Adaptation Planning and Increasing Climate Resilience in the Coastal Zone and Fisheries Sector of Belize”**. The forum highlighted opportunities to improve livelihoods for all, understand the linkage between gender, climate change and Belize's blue economy and share information about professional and entrepreneurial opportunities. The fair featured informational and entrepreneurial booths from government, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, associations, private sector, and entrepreneurs working and investing in Belize's blue space and blue economy.



The BHSFU's participation in this forum was part of our outreach and sensitization initiative to inform the public on the functions of the Unit, its importance to conservation and the role we play in climate resilience and fisheries management. Our participation was successful as we were able to sensitize the public on who we are, what we do and how we contribute to Belize's economic development. The BHSFU looks forward to participating in future local forums to further inform the Belizean public about high seas fishing and to promote any opportunities within our sector.



Belize Attends 6th Meeting of the Global Record Informal Open-Ended Technical and Advisory Working Group and the 3rd Meeting of the Technical Working Group on Information Exchange of the PSMA

Experts from FAO Member states, regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) met at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy on 12-14 December 2022 for two very important working group meetings, the Sixth Meeting of the Global Record Informal Open-Ended Technical and Advisory Working Group in which Belize was represented by the BHSFU personnel.



The meeting was followed by the Third Meeting of the Technical Working Group on Information Exchange of the Port State Measures Agreement which is an informal open-ended technical working group created by the Parties to provide guidance on elaborating information exchange mechanisms and other technical matters, including the need to provide for varying levels of access depending on the nature of the information provided.

The Global Trade of Canned Tuna

Tuna is one of the most valuable and most consumed fish globally, contributing billions to the world's economy each year. The most popular commercial tuna species are skipjack, albacore, yellowfin, Atlantic bluefin, inter alia. Canned tuna is well known for its high protein content and vitamins and is an inexpensive commodity found in most households. The major consumers of canned tuna are the European Union and the United States of America while Japan is the largest consumer of Sashimi grade tuna. Skipjack tuna is the species mostly imported to the European Union as canned product. Another of the common species that is also popular among consumers is the yellowfin tuna known for its rich flavor and unique texture. The major exporters of processed canned tuna are Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam.

Canned tuna is basically classified into two categories which are the light meat and white meat. The light meat canned tuna is mostly skipjack tuna and sometimes yellowfin tuna. While the white meat canned tuna is usually comprised of albacore tuna. Three popular brands of canned tuna are Star Kiss, Chicken of the Sea, and Bumble Bee, although several other brands are available commercially.

As the world population grows, the demand for affordable, healthy, and long-lasting food products has increased, making canned tuna a successful trade product globally. As a result, this billion-dollar tuna industry is important to the world's economy. However, the biggest threat to this sector is overfishing and unsustainable management of tuna resources.



BHSFU Welcomes 2023 with a Year in Review

The BHSFU hope that you have enjoyed our Newsletters. This newsletter, our website and social media outlets are a testament of our love for this industry. We aim to continue this tract and bring you a diverse array of articles on what is happening in the world of high seas fisheries in 2023. As 2022 ends like a story in a book, we are eager to start our new chapter. As we enter 2023, lets looks back at the growth and momentum we had in 2022.

- Belize rejoined the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO) as a Cooperating non-Contracting Party.
 - Belize's ranking as a responsible fisheries nation on the Global IUU Fishing Index went up from number 8 in 2019 to number 5 in 2021 with an IUU index of 1.69. Belize ranked in the top five among countries such as Estonia, Switzerland, New Zealand, and Finland.
 - The BHSFU participated in four sport fishing tournaments made possible through the ICCAT/Japan Capacity Building Assistance Project. The aim of the project was to collect fisheries data for ICCAT regulated species from anglers fishing in Belize's jurisdictional waters.
 - The BHSFU also participated in a Ship Registry Sanctions Risk Management Workshop for Belize facilitated by Sandia National Laboratories and the United States State Department.
 - The Unit attended the Fish Right Eat Right forum hosted by OCEANA Belize and its partners. The objective of the forum was to highlight ways technology is currently being used in fisheries management by various partners of the Fishing Right Eat Right initiative.
- We continue to actively participate in the meetings of the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) to which we subscribe and have maintained overall compliance with these organizations thereby ensuring our vessel's continued operation in these ocean areas.
 - We continue to collaborate with local agencies such as Costal Zone Management Authority and institute (CZMAI), Belize Fisheries Department (BFD), Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation (MBECA), inter alia and have successfully built closer relationships with our sister companies, The International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE), Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry (BCCAR) and the Financial Services Commission (FSC)

As we reflect on the past year, we realize the importance of our stakeholders and readers. We wish to thank you for your support and partnerships. Our entire team wishes you lots of joy and happiness during the holiday season and may the new year be full of new achievements that bring you huge success.

Happy New Year

2023!!



WHAT THE HOLIDAY SEASON MEANS TO US



Joy

My children Damion, 22 and Britney, 18 are well beyond the magic and wonder of Santa Clause, but they are still my reason for loving and enjoying Christmas. I love sharing the joys of the season and experiencing the traditions of Christmas that we as a family hold so dear to our hearts. This holiday season let's make it a point to cherish what is truly important in our lives.

Valarie Lanza



Hope

Love

Christmas will always be special to me, for many reasons. Christmas day is my birthday, and I am thankful to be able to see another year with God's graces. Most importantly, Christmas for me is a time where I celebrate and enjoy being a mom to one of the most inspirational little souls, my daughter Bianka or 'Chiny Gial' as my family calls her. She has changed my entire world for the better. From my little family to yours, I want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Delice Pinkard



Christmas for me is all about family. As a Christian family we prepare to welcome the birth of Christ and keep teaching our children the true value of life. To learn to love, share and forgive and always keep faith in God. Best wishes for a Christmas filled with love, happiness, and prosperity

Ernie Howe



The Christmas Season when families reunite and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. In many ways, this was like the first Christmas when Jesus was born, and the institution of the Holy Family was established. As we gather to celebrate this year, I hope you are all near to your families and remember the first Holy Family. From my family to yours, Happy Christmas!

Robert Robinson



Peace

Christmas for me is about enjoying the laughs, hugs, and joys of being around family, friends, and colleagues. But we cannot forget those we lost along the way. Let's remember to offer a toast in memory of those who are not here with us but will always remain in our hearts. All the best to you and yours this holiday season.

Ian Constantino

Charity

