



OPRT

NEWSLETTER INTERNATIONAL

Sankaido Bldg. (9th Floor)
1-9-13 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan 107-0052
Tel: 03-3568-6388; Fax: 03-3568-6389
Website: <http://www.oprt.or.jp>

FEB. 2019/MAR. 2019
Nos. 67/68

FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF TUNAS

CITES/CoP18

Parties to CITES are urged to fully respect the assessments by the FAO Advisory Expert Panel for commercially-exploited aquatic species to be dealt with at CoP18

The next meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES-CoP18) will be held from May 23 to June 3 this year in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Proposals to be dealt with at CoP18 including those calling for inclusion of species in Appendices I or II were submitted to the CITES Secretariat by the deadline of December 24, 2018 (150 days prior to the Opening date of CoP18). The CITES Secretariat published these proposals on its website in early January of this year.

Among those proposals, four are related to commercially-exploited aquatic species as follows:

i) CoP18 Prop.42. Proposal to include mako shark, *Isurus oxyrinchus* in Appendix II in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(a) and *Isurus paucus* in Appendix II in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(b).

ii) CoP18 Prop.43. Proposal to include blackchin guitarfish *Glaucostegus cemiculus* and the sharpnose guitarfish, *Glaucostegus granulatus* in Appendix II in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(a) and inclusion of all other giant guitarfish, *Glaucostegus spp.* in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(b).

iii) CoP18 Prop.44. Proposal to include white-spotted wedgefish, *Rhynchobatus australiae* and *Rhynchobatus djiddensis* in Appendix II in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(a). If listed, this would include *Rhynchobatus cooki*, *Rhynchobatus immaculatus*, *Rhynchobatus laevis*, *Rhynchobatus luebberti*, *Rhynchobatus palpebratus*, *Rhynchobatus springeri*, *Rhynchobatus mauritaniensis*, *Rhina ancylostoma*, and all other putative species of the Family Rhinidae (wedgefish) in Appendix II in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(b).

iv) CoP18 Prop.45. Proposal to include the subgenus *Holothuria (Microthele)*: *Holothuria fuscogilva*, *Holothuria nobilis* and *Holothuria whitmaei* in Appendix II in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(a).

With respect to commercially-exploited aquatic species it is important to recall that CITES and FAO formalized their working relationship in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by CITES Secretary-General and FAO Assistant Director-General for Fisheries in 2006.

The full text of the MoU is available on page 3 of this issue.

This MoU includes paragraphs specifying cooperative procedures related to the evaluation and review of proposals to include commercially-exploited aquatic species in Appendices I and II as follows :

“4. The FAO will work together with CITES to ensure adequate consultations in the scientific and technical evaluation of proposals for including, transferring or deleting commercially-exploited aquatic species in the CITES Appendices based on the criteria agreed by the Parties to CITES, and both signatories will address technical and legal issues relating to the listing and implementation of such listings.

5. As is required by the Convention, the CITES Secretariat will continue to inform FAO of all relevant proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II. Such information shall be provided to FAO to allow FAO to carry out a scientific and technical review of such proposals in a manner it deems appropriate and for the resulting output to be transmitted to the CITES Secretariat. The CITES Secretariat shall communicate the views expressed and data provided from this review and its own findings and recommendations, taking due account of the FAO review, to the Parties to CITES.

6. In order to ensure maximum coordination of conservation measures, the CITES Secretariat will respect, to the greatest extent possible, the results of the FAO scientific and technical review of proposals to amend the Appendices, and technical and legal issues of common interest and the responses from all the relevant bodies associated with management of the species in question.”

In preparation for CoP18, the sixth FAO Expert Advisory Panel for the Assessment of Proposals to Amend Appendices I and II of CITES Concerning Commercially-exploited Aquatic Species was held at FAO headquarters from 21 to 25 January 2019.

Its Report was uploaded on FAO website early March [<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CA3576EN>].

The following is a summary of the Panel’s conclusions regarding the above-mentioned proposals to include commercially-exploited aquatic species in Appendix II:

For Prop.42 (mako shark): The FAO Expert Advisory Panel assessment of proposal 42 concluded that the available data do not provide evidence that the species meets the CITES Appendix II listing criteria.

SPECIES	MEETS CITES CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CITES CRITERIA	OTHER
<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>		✓	



Shortfin Mako, *Isurus oxyrinchus*
Source: http://kokushi.fra.go.jp/H29/H29_38.html

For Prop.43 (guitarfish): The FAO Expert Advisory Panel assessment of proposal 43 concluded that there was insufficient evidence to make a determination against the CITES criteria. It recommended that CITES Parties take note of the one example of extirpation, the widespread lack of management and the very high value of guitarfish fins in international trade.

SPECIES	MEETS CITES CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CITES CRITERIA	OTHER
Blackchin guitarfish, <i>Glaucostegus cemiculus</i> and sharpnose guitarfish, <i>Glaucostegus granulatus</i>			Insufficient evidence*

* Insufficient evidence of declines to make a judgement in relation to CITES criteria (CITES Res. Conf. 9.24. Rev. CoP17).

For Prop.44 (wedgfish): The FAO Expert Advisory Panel assessment of proposal 44 concluded that there was insufficient evidence to make a determination against the CITES criteria. It recommended that CITES Parties take note of the widespread lack of

management and the very high value of wedgfish fins in international trade.

SPECIES	MEETS CITES CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CITES CRITERIA	OTHER
<i>Rhynchobats australiae</i> <i>Rhynchobatus djiddensis</i>			Insufficient evidence*

* Insufficient evidence of declines to make a judgement in relation to CITES criteria (CITES Res. Conf. 9.24. Rev. CoP17).

For Prop.45 (*Holothuria* Sea cucumber): The FAO Expert Advisory Panel assessment of proposal 45. concluded that the available data for *Holothuria fuscogilva* does not meet the CITES Appendix II listing criteria, and there was insufficient evidence to make a determination for *Holothuria nobilis* but that *Holothuria whitmaei* does meet the CITES Appendix II listing criteria.

SPECIES	MEETS CITES CRITERIA	DOES NOT MEET CITES CRITERIA	OTHER
<i>Holothuria (Microthele) fuscogilva</i>		✓	
<i>Holothuria (Microthele) nobilis</i>			Insufficient evidence*
<i>Holothuria (Microthele) whitmaei</i>	✓		

* Insufficient evidence of declines to make a judgement in relation to CITES criteria (CITES Res. Conf. 9.24. Rev. CoP17).

The Panel report includes an assessment of each of the four proposals following the objectives presented above, highlighting the Panel’s determination of whether information on the species in question meet the CITES Appendix criteria, and noting biology, ecology, trade and management issues, as well as, to the extent possible, the likely effectiveness of a listing for conservation.

It is reasonable to assume that every Party to the CITES fully respects the assessments made by the FAO Expert Advisory Panel for those four proposals in the decision-making process at CoP18 in light of the provisions stipulated in the MoU.

However, in the history since 2006- the year the MoU was concluded between FAO and the CITES Secretariat- such an assumption has not necessarily been the case.

It should be noted that frequently the decisions made at CITES CoPs have been inconsistent with assessments made by FAO Expert Advisory Panels.

For example, at the previous Conference of Parties to the CITES held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2016 (CoP17), decisions to include Silky shark (CoP17 Prop.42) and Thresher sharks (CoP17 Prop.43) in Appendix II were made by overwhelming majorities (111

in favor, 30 opposed, 5 abstentions for the former , and 108, 29, 5 for the latter) disregarding the relevant assessments by the fifth FAO Expert Advisory Panel [<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6026e.pdf> for silky shark and <http://www.fao.org/3/b-i6025e.pdf> for thresher sharks].

Deliberations and Decisions made at CITES COPs have disregarded relevant assessment conducted on the basis of scientific knowledge with specialized expertise for the aquatic species in question by the FAO Expert Advisory Panels. Such history poses serious questions concerning the objectivity, rationality and reliability of CITES.

Such series of (mal-) decisions made by the CITES for commercially-exploited aquatic species impose unnecessary barriers through restrictions on international trade against rational utilization of fisheries resources and eventual economic activities including gaining value-added in marketing. They may threaten food security and/or hinder economic development of rural societies in some situations.

Proposals to include commercially-exploited aquatic species in Appendices I and II submitted in the past tend to be crafted by utilizing anecdotal information such as decline in catch of the species in question observed in a limited region. Further some proposals did not mention important information such as a change in harvesting mode that may bring about sudden and substantial decline in catch and/or CPUE (catch per unit effort) for the species concerned regardless of the stock status, in order to emphasize deterioration of the stock. For example, a fishery that had been targeting the species concerned up to a certain year but the fishery changed to target other species and the species in question became no longer captured as target species but only as bycatch. In such case, catch and CPUE for the ex-target species has been decreased substantially after the change in target species regardless of the stock status of the ex-target species. That decrease in catch and CPUE do not at all correspond to deterioration of the stock concerned.

Considering potential biases that may be included in proposals to include aquatic species as mentioned above it is important to make deliberations and decisions at CoP18 based on scientific advice that covers stocks of the species in question in a holistic manner including observations on a global basis.

In summary, all participants in CoP18 are urged to respect the assessments made by the sixth Expert Advisory Panel that are now available on the FAO website [<http://www.fao.org/3/ca3576en/CA3576EN.pdf>], keeping relevant provisions of the MoU between FAO and CITES Secretariat in mind.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO) AND THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES (CITES) [<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/disc/sec/FAO-CITES-e.pdf#search=%27MOU+CITES+FAO%27>]

FAO AND CITES IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THEM HAVE DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The signatories will communicate and exchange information regularly and bring to each other's attention general information of common interest and areas of concern where there is a role for the other to play. The signatories will be invited as observers to meetings under their respective auspices where subjects that are of common interest will be discussed.
2. The signatories will cooperate as appropriate to facilitate capacity building in developing countries and countries with economies in transition on issues relating to commercially-exploited aquatic species listed on the CITES Appendices.
3. FAO will continue to provide advice to CITES on, and be involved in any future revision of, the CITES listing criteria.
4. The FAO will work together with CITES to ensure adequate consultations in the scientific and technical evaluation of proposals for including, transferring or deleting commercially-exploited aquatic species in the CITES Appendices based on the criteria agreed by the Parties to CITES, and both signatories will address technical and legal issues relating to the listing and implementation of such listings.
5. As is required by the Convention, the CITES Secretariat will continue to inform FAO of all relevant proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II. Such information shall be provided to FAO to allow FAO to carry out a scientific and technical review of such proposals in a manner it deems appropriate and for the resulting output to be transmitted to the CITES Secretariat. The CITES Secretariat shall communicate the views expressed and data provided from this review and its own findings and recommendations, taking due account of the FAO review, to the Parties to CITES.
6. In order to ensure maximum coordination of conservation measures, the CITES Secretariat will respect, to the greatest extent possible, the results of the FAO scientific and technical review of proposals to amend the Appendices, and technical and legal issues of common interest and the responses from all the relevant bodies associated with management of the species in question.
7. The Secretariats to CITES and FAO will periodically report on work completed under the MoU to the Conference of the Parties to CITES and the FAO Committee on Fisheries, respectively.
8. This MoU will take effect on the date of signature by both signatories. It will remain in force unless terminated by 90 days' written notice served by one upon the other, or replaced by another agreement. It may be amended by written mutual agreement.
9. Unless otherwise agreed, neither signatory will be legally or financially liable in any way for activities carried out jointly or independently under this MoU. Separate letters of agreement or other arrangements, with specific budgets and resource identification, will be concluded for individual activities involving the commitment of financial resources by either signatory.

<i>Signed</i>	<i>Signed</i>
Assistant Director General, Fisheries Department Date: 29 September 2006	Secretary-General CITES Secretariat Date: 3 October 2006

IATTC Workshop on Age and Growth of Bigeye and Yellowfin Tunas in the Pacific Ocean

The Report of the January 23 to 25 Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Workshop on Age and Growth of Bigeye and Yellowfin Tunas in the Pacific Ocean should be published as soon as possible to expedite work to reduce the level of uncertainty included in the current stock assessment for the WCPO bigeye stock.

Growth is one of the key factors for stock assessment. The stock assessment conducted in 2017 at the 13th Regular Session of Scientific Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)(SC13) showed optimistic result for the stock status. Overfishing has not been taking place or the stock has never been overfished for the entire period subject to this stock assessment.

With such results and related recommendations from the SC13, WCPFC at its Regular Session in December 2017 decided to relax conservation and management measures for WCPO tropical tunas including bigeye. And, at its Regular Session last December, WCPFC further decided, in principle, to extend these measures for 2018 to 2020.

However, the results of the stock assessment conducted by the SC in 2017 and thereafter are totally different from the assessments made by the SC up to 2016- Over fishing has been occurring and the stock has been overfished, and substantial reductions in fishing mortalities including that by purse seine operation associated with Fishing Aggregating Devices (FADs) are required to rectify the situation.

In this connection, the SC itself admitted that the 2017 stock assessment includes high level of uncertainty, to which the newly introduced growth curve and the change in regional division of the stock are major contributors.

Considering the history mentioned above, it is of concern that the current management measures that were relaxed for 2018 and will be applied up to 2020 will lead to further deterioration and irreparable damage to the stock.

In this regard, the SC made recommendations at its session held in August 2018 to facilitate work to reduce the level of uncertainty included in the assessment specifically:

“53. The following additional research activities were also recommended by SC14 in order to improve the understanding of the age and growth of bigeye across the Pacific:

-
- 1) Collaboration with the IATTC to analyze bigeye growth from otolith and tagging data collected across the entire Pacific, to better characterize the apparent

regional difference in growth between the WCPO and EPO, and possible environmental determinants of such differences.“

[Page xiv of Summary Report of the 14th Regular Session of the SC: <https://www.wcpfc.int/meetings/14th-regular-session-scientific-committee>]

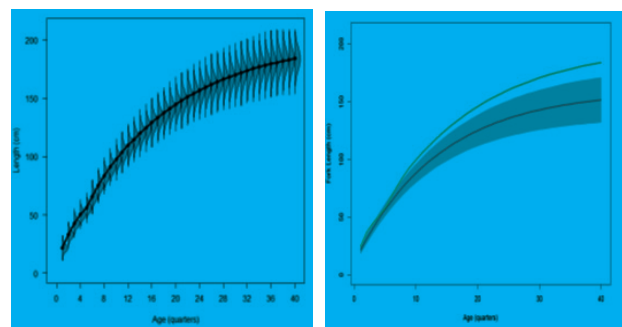
According to the material posted on the IATTC website [<http://www.iattc.org/Meetings/Meetings2019/WSBAY-01/WorkshopEvaluateBigeyeYellowfinENG.htm>], scientists from Oceanic Fisheries Programme, Pacific Community including authors of STOCK ASSESSMENT OF BIGEYE TUNA IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC OCEAN WCPFC-SC10-2014/SA-WP-01 Rev1 25 July participated in the workshop to make presentations related to the WCPO bigeye and to join the discussion.

It is sad that the extra-work related to aging scheduled just prior to the workshop meeting had to be postponed unfortunately because of the 2018-2019 US Federal Government Shutdown.

However the workshop was conducted as scheduled and its deliberations and results should provide a good basis and/or good guidance for future work necessary to reduce the level of uncertainty included the current WCPO stock assessment for bigeye, which will bring about appropriate management measures.

However, to date the workshop report has not been published on the IATTC website.

Therefore the IATTC Secretariat is kindly requested to publish the report of the workshop and/or make it available to relevant scientists in an appropriate manner, as soon as possible, which will expedite relevant scientific work which may lead to a substantial reduction in the uncertainty related to the current stock assessment.



Left: Figure 20. Estimated growth for the reference case. The black line represents the estimated mean length (FL, cm) at age and the grey area represents the estimated distribution of length at age. For this assessment the length of the oldest age class was fixed at 184 cm

[STOCK ASSESSMENT OF BIGEYE TUNA IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC OCEAN WCPFC-SC10-2014/SA-WP-01 Rev1 25 July]

Right: Figure 29: Estimated growth for the diagnostic case model and the sensitivity model L2-184. The blue line represents the estimated mean fork length

(cm) at-age and the blue region represents the length-at-age within one standard deviation of the mean, for the diagnostic case model. The red line represents the estimated mean length-at-age for model L2-184. [Stock assessment of bigeye tuna in the western and central Pacific Ocean WCPFC-SC13-2017/SA-WP-05 Rev1 04-August]

Jiro's Eye

Problems in bluefin aquaculture -Need to increase effective utilization of stereoscopic cameras
Ziro Suzuki (Tuna scientists)

Introduction

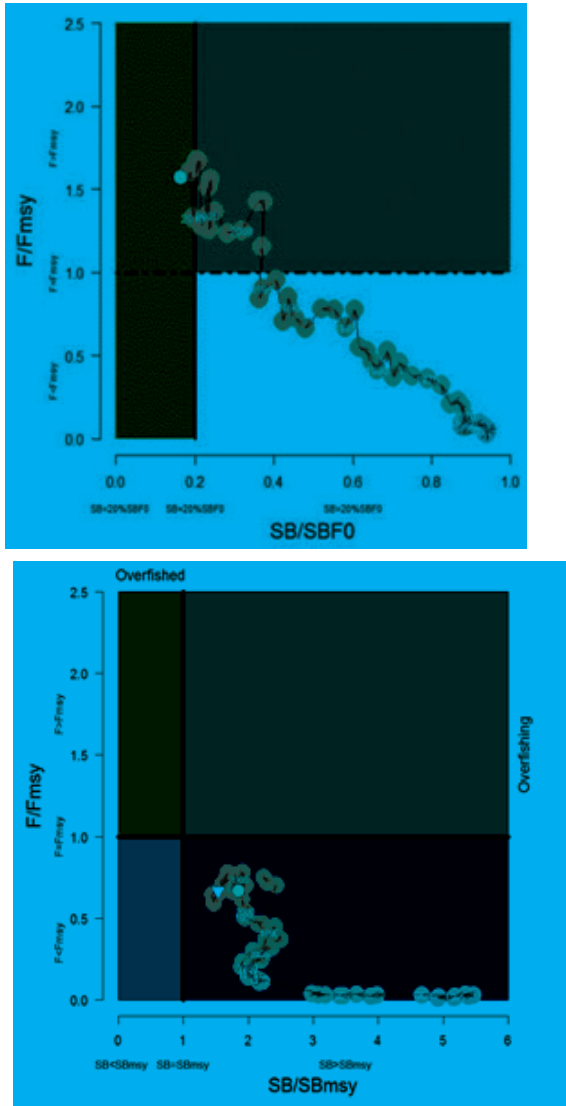
Southern bluefin tuna farming as currently practiced, started successfully from the mid-1990s by Australian companies and thereafter spread rapidly to various Mediterranean countries and to Mexico (along Californian Peninsula coast) by the mid -2000s and continues to the present. Japan, the originator of bluefin tuna farming has the oldest history of small scale bluefin tuna farming which started in the 1970s. Japan continues to be a bearer of the tuna farming industry and has now begun bluefin tuna farming using artificial seeds obtained from parents produced by lifecycle aquaculture along with use of seed juveniles caught in wild.

Bluefin tuna farming production substantially surpasses wild tuna production which used to be the main provider of bluefin tunas. The farming innovation and development is continuing. However, recently some negative issues related to the bluefin farming seem to be appearing such as illegal transactions involving several thousand tons of farmed bluefin tuna disclosed by the Spanish government and the EU and doubts related to false reports from a part of the Mediterranean farmed bluefin tuna that showed abnormally high weight gain during farming. In addition, I am concerned about the stock assessment of the east Atlantic bluefin stock although the stock assessment has improved significantly due to mandatory use of the stereoscopic cameras that monitor the number and length/weight of the wild tuna transferred into the farming cages. Here, I would like to express briefly my opinions, specific to use of stereoscopic camera, with the concerns related to the Atlantic tuna farming and how to resolve them.

Problems of using the stereoscopic camera

As previously mentioned, after bluefin farming started in the Mediterranean Sea and the Strait of Gibraltar areas, most of the bluefin tuna caught in the east Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea has become produced by the farming. Before the farming era, catch in number and length/weight of bluefin were measured mostly by scientists and enumerators at unloading ports but this direct measurement became impractical after the farming started because tunas destined to the farming operations are transferred alive into the farming cage. To obtain the number and size of the live tuna used for the farming, the use of stereoscopic camera has become a mandatory requirement.

Tuna farming starts from catching wild bluefin mostly by purse seiners, then the live tuna caught are trans-



Top: **Figure 36.** Temporal trend in annual stock status, relative to SBMSY (x-axis) and FMSY (y-axis) reference points, for the period 1952–2011 from the reference case. The colour of the points is graduated from mauve to dark purple through time and the points are labelled at 5-year intervals. The white triangle represents the average for the current period and the pink circle the latest period as defined in Table 6(the purpose of this assessment, ‘current’ is the average over the period 2008-2011 and ‘latest’ is 2012)[STOCK ASSESSMENT OF BIGEYE TUNA IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC OCEAN WCPFC-SC10-2014/SA-WP-01 Rev1 25 July]
 Bottom: Fig. BET-10 :Estimated time-series (or “dynamic”) Kobe plot from the bigeye ‘diagnostic case’ model run.[Page viii of Summary Report of SC13[Aug. 2017]]

ferred from the purse seine net to another net specifically designed to tow fish very slowly for a few weeks keeping them alive from the fishing ground to the farming sites. At the farming site, a short net tunnel that connects the towing net and the farming cage is used to transfer the tuna. Measurement of length of bluefin tuna takes place by simultaneous shots of the target tuna entering through the short net tunnel by two cameras fixed about 1m apart installed at the entrance part of the farming cage. Measurement of length of target live tuna is made indirectly with use of triangulation theory.

At times, when tunas overlap without showing the whole body or when the water is not clear enough, the measurement does not work. However, length measurement and number of tuna is accurately made in most cases. According to the rules stipulated in the regulatory measures, the total number and length of 20% of the total number of tuna randomly selected into the farming cage should be reported for each caging time. The measured data thus obtained form fundamental statistics for stock assessment of the east Atlantic stock which includes the Mediterranean Sea. In addition, these data form an important basis to check whether or not allocated catch limit is observed by estimating total weight of caged tuna. This is done by multiplying the total number and average weight obtained through conversion of length to corresponding weight using length-weight equation. Although it seems that some technical improvements are required with the stereoscopic camera, particularly with respect to size reduction and easier/versatile manipulation, such improvements are expected in the near future. Thus, the use of the stereoscopic cameras is an effective and indispensable tool.

Lack of witness inspection of length by observers

However, the operational procedures for the use of the stereoscopic camera, rather than the tool itself, is problematic.

Current regulatory measures require attendance of observers qualified by the ICCAT (regional observer : ROBS) to check whether recording of the number and length of tuna is carried out satisfactorily during transfer and caging. Although the ROB witnesses the counting of the number of fish, they never witness length measurements. This leads to the doubt that the estimate of the total weight of caged fish is biased. For example, it could be suspected that a catch of more than that allocated (over-quota) can be made if intentionally small fish are selected to be measured, as the ROB does not make witness the length measurement process. This intentional measurement of the small fish at the start of the caging results in abnormally higher weight gain than that estimated by the Scientific Committee of ICCAT(SCR) and that will be discovered in the final stage of the transaction as it is impossible to cheat weight at harvest stage. Whether or not my suspicion is true can be seen if the record of actual size measurement is carefully examined. To increase transparency of the tuna farming, Japan has been proposing the ROB check both size measurement and estimated

weight as a mandatory requirement. However, the EU and other parties in the ICCAT are opposing this by postulating this measure causes practical difficulty to be implemented. This opposition is regrettable and can not be justified in view of responsibility of Contracting Parties to ensure compliance with regulatory measures. Opposing measures like this raises suspicions that illegal acts are being silently approved.

This situation should be urgently rectified.

Has stock assessment really been improved by use of the stereoscopic camera?

Total catch in number/weight and length composition of the east stock of Atlantic bluefin was quite uncertain after the tuna farming rapidly spread and became the major producer of bluefin until use of the stereoscopic camera was made mandatory. To cope with this situation and make reliable stock assessment possible, the stereoscopic camera was introduced and it is true to say that the basic statistics such as catch and size composition has been significantly improved during the past 10 years or so. However, it seems that stock assessment that requires a long time series data over decades can not be improved in relations to or as a result of the use of the stereoscopic camera. Here, some sign of doubt can be seen if current length measurement, one of the crucially important factors of reliable stock assessment, is accurately done. The doubt is about the strong year class that originated in 2003, supposed to be the strongest year class ever observed in the history of the Atlantic bluefin fisheries. This year class was first recognized in the Japanese longline catch operating in the north Atlantic and a clear transition of modes in length composition has been observed yearly for over 10 years, indicating this is really a strong year class. This year class was identified in other fisheries like in the trap net fishery but the overall estimate of the 2003 year class strength in the stock assessment including length measurement by the stereoscopic camera, ranks only at the same level of the strength among adjacent years. This is somewhat surprising because the 2003 year class towers above the other year classes in the Japanese data which has reputation as one of the highest reliability. Why does the stock assessment show a different view?

Poor statistics for purse seine fishery

Again here, this difference in estimates of the year class strength could come from the bias incurred from lack of witness inspection by the ROB of size measurement made by the stereoscopic cameras already previously mentioned. As previously suspected, if length measurement of caging tuna was intentionally made for smaller individuals, it means that many smaller fish have been caught from the stock every year and this is translated into continuous good recruitment in the stock assessment. Despite of appearance of a very strong 2003 year class in the Japanese longline fishery, the Japanese catch is only a small fraction of the total bluefin catch, far smaller than that by the major purse seine fisheries. Therefore, the 2003 year class strength was buried under the total statistics.

In addition, it should be born in mind that the purse seine catch statistics in the Mediterranean Sea was notoriously bad, almost black box around the time when the 2003 year class originated and the overwhelmingly dominant bluefin catch has been made by purse seiners continuously to the present time. During the period around 2003, the stereoscopic camera and ROB monitoring was not mandatory. In this situation, under reporting of the real catch through intentionally measuring smaller fish could be suspected. In fact, SCRS reported huge amount of non-reporting of the Mediterranean bluefin from the mid 1990s to the 2000s. Size information for the non-reported catch is very poor. This biased information can blur the real strength of the 2003 year class. Lack of transparency in length measurement of bluefin at the start of caging appears to lingering now as previously mentioned. Therefore, I do not feel easy about the optimistic view that the current stock assessment has been improved significantly. Again, I would like to stress mandatory witness inspection of the ROB be materialized for length measurements at caging operations.

Ending remarks

Going back to the start of my talk, i.e., farming of southern bluefin tuna in Australia, the situation with respect to the stereoscopic camera is much worse than that in the ICCAT. Australia is the only member practicing farming of substantial amount of southern bluefin tuna in the CCSBT that manages southern bluefin tuna. However, it has not yet made use of the stereoscopic camera mandatory despite repeated recommendations to do so from its Scientific Committee. Ironically, many stereoscopic cameras currently used are made in Australia where Australian scientists played a major role in developing the stereoscopic camera for the purpose of measuring length of marine animals. It is regrettable and hard to understand with respect to this situation. Finally, it seems that the farming of Pacific bluefin tuna is facing the same problems as Atlantic and southern bluefin farming. All stake folders should work hard together to secure transparency of tuna farming. In this regard, I would suggest increased and effective utilization of the stereoscopic camera, as a means of establishing truly responsible fisheries.

Toyosu auction

Highest-priced bluefin tuna fetches JPY 336 million at the year's first auction in Toyosu Market.

The first auction of 2019 was held in Toyosu Market on January 5.

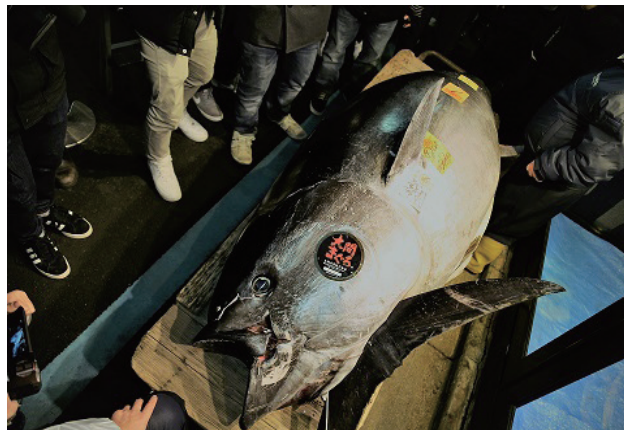
Since the relocation of Tsukiji Market to Toyosu took place in last October, the first year's first auction of 2019 was the first one for Toyosu Market

At the auction, the highest-priced tuna was a 278-kg fresh bluefin tuna landed at Oma (大間), Aomori Prefecture. The price was JPY 336 million, namely JPY

1.20 million per kg.

Some say the successful bidder expects advertising and publicity effects for such price level.

Previously the highest price was recorded in the 2013 first auction at JPY 155 million for a 222-kg bluefin tuna (JPY700 thousand per kg). The price of this year's highest-priced fish surpasses the previous high-est price by a substantial amount.



Prior to the auction, on behalf of Wholesalers working at Tsukiji Market Mr. Yoshihiko Ohtaki (大滝義彦 中央魚類社長), President of Chuo Gyorui stated "The year's first auction of 2019 is here at Toyosu Market where we started operations last October. We can expect a flourishing auction today since many tunas have been brought to this auction site, as we saw at Tsukiji Market up to 2018. I would like to contribute with others to the development of business in Toyosu Market."

This was followed by another statement made by Mr. Shigeo Yokota (横田繁夫 東京豊洲市場大物業会会長), President of the Tokyo Toyosu Shijo Ohmono Gyokai (Association of Intermediate Wholesalers for Tunas, Tokyo Fish Market). Mr. Yokota stated "All workers in Toyosu Market share the responsibility for the development of Toyosu Market. To this end, not only wholesalers and intermediate wholesalers but also workers of other categories have to display our ability in our respective areas of business in Toyosu."

Governor of Tokyo Metropolitan YuriKo Koike mentioned "I hope Toyosu Market will develop into a splendid core wholesale market." And she also announced that the Tuna auction observation deck will be open for visitors from January 15, 2019."



Application process for viewing the Toyosu Market Tuna Wholesale Market Auctions from the Tuna Auction Observation Deck:

[Source: <http://www.shijou.metro.tokyo.jp/english/toyosu/>]

Viewing the Toyosu Market Tuna Wholesale Market Auctions from the Tuna Auction Observation Deck

We would like to inform you that the observation deck for viewing tuna auctions at Toyosu Market is accepting applications by the public for a market tour.

Visitors accepted

Up to 120 visitors per day in 10-minute shifts.

Application process

(1) Applying for the tour

If you wish to take part in the tour you must first submit an application through the site listed below. If there are a large number of applicants, participants will be chosen by lottery. Those who do not have internet access can apply using the phone number below.

* Those not chosen by the lottery can view the auctions from the Visitor's Walkway on the second floor.

(2) Application information, website, phone number

• Apply for the tour here during the period open for applications:

<https://pia.jp/v/toyosushijou19/>

• Tel:0570-02-9965

(Automated voice guidance available in Japanese only, voice charges apply)

(3) Application schedule

For the month of April 2019:

from 3:00 p.m. on Monday, Mar. 4, 2019 until

11:59 p.m. on Friday, Mar. 15, 2019

(No longer accepting applications for March)

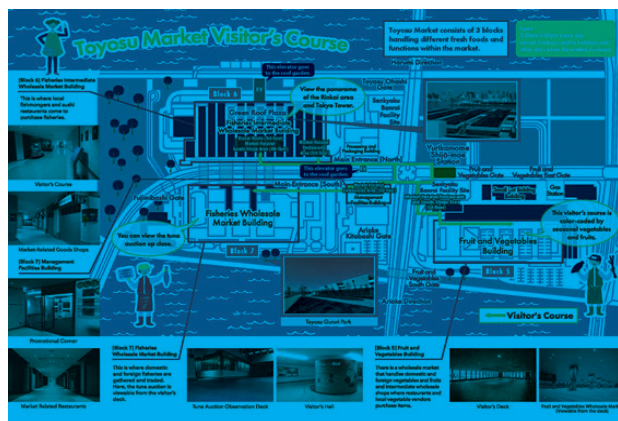
* Those not chosen by the lottery can view the auctions from the Visitor's Walkway on the second floor.

* If you would like to know more detail, please visit this website.

Detail of the application process(the month of April 2019)/(219KB)

Inquiries

question@pia.co.jp



[Source: Tokyo Metropolitan Government <http://www.shijou.metro.tokyo.jp/english/toyosu/>]

Dates and Venues for 5t-RFMO's Annual meetings in 2019

Schedule for Annual Commission Meetings of Tuna-related RFMOs*

—2019— (as of March 27, 2019)

Dates	RFMOs	Venues
June 17(Mon) - 21(Fri)	IOTC: 23rd SESSION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION (S23)	Hyderabad, India
July 22 (Mon) - 26(Fri)	IATTC: 94th Meeting of the IATTC	Bilbao, Spain
Oct. 14 (Mon) - 17(Thu)	CCSBT: 26th Annual Meeting of the CCSBT	Cape Town, South Africa
Nov. 18 (Mon) - 25 (Mon)	ICCAT: 26th Regular Meeting of the Commission	Curaçao
Dec. 5 (Thu) - 11 (Wed)	WCPFC:16th Regular Session of the Commission (WCPFC16)	Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

Source: Websites of respective Commissions
Note: Date and/or Venue might be subject to change.