

DCF national correspondents

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Our Ref: H.4/LWC/CP/RF/AV/JR

16 July 2024

Subject: Data call for ICES advisory work related to bycatch of protected species (WGBYC-2024)

Dear Reader,

Please find enclosed a document describing the rationale, scope and technical details of the data call for ICES advisory work by the Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC).

ICES has a standing request from the European Commission (DG MARE) to advise and inform on the impact of fisheries on the ecosystem. ICES currently provides advice on bycatch of endangered, threatened, and protected species and the requested data will be used by the ICES advisory groups involved in the provision of such advice.

ICES has an ongoing special request for advice from the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) to assess seabird bycatch rates in the NEAFC regulatory area. Data gathered through this data call will be used as part of a scoping exercise of data availability related to this request.

For EU member countries, this data call is under Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/967, Regulation (EU) 2019/124, the DCF regulation (EU) No 2017/1004, and Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/910).

For questions about the content of the data call, please contact: advice@ices.dk. For questions on data submission, please contact: data.call@ices.dk.

Sincerely,



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WGBYC 2024: Data call 2024 related to bycatch of protected species for ICES advisory work

1. Scope of the Data Call

This data call aims to collate data describing fishing effort, monitoring/sampling effort, and bycatch event records of species of bycatch relevance from **2023**. These data will be used by the ICES Working Group on bycatch of protected species (WGBYC) to support the provision of ICES advice on the wider effects of fishing activity. The data may be used by other ICES or Joint ICES Expert Groups when the work of those expert groups contributes to ICES advisory processes and is in line with the *ICES roadmap for bycatch on endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species**.

2. Rationale

This data call aims to improve consistency and completeness in the reporting of bycatch data at a regional scale.

ICES has a standing request from the European Commission to advise and inform on the impact of fisheries on the ecosystem. ICES currently provides advice on the effects of fishing on a variety of protected and sensitive species (marine mammals, seabirds, sea turtles and fish) and the requested data will be used by the ICES advisory groups involved in the provision of such advice.

ICES also has a Memorandum of Understanding with the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). Data gathered through this data call may be used to support recurring and special request advice to NEAFC on the state of marine ecosystems and human impacts.

When possible, the data will be used to provide summaries of bycatch rates by species, gear type and area and will inform estimates of bycatch mortality and risk which are designed to provide insights into the potential effects of fisheries on protected and sensitive species. Data on fishing effort, monitored/sampling effort, and bycatch of protected species will be aggregated as appropriate by ICES Division/Subdivision and Ecoregion, by GSA areas in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, and by statistical Division in the NAFO area. These data will be shown in maps and tables within ICES WGBYC reports and in ICES Advice[†]. Aggregated data will be visible and accessible in the [ICES Publications Library](#).

3. Legal framework

All governments and intergovernmental commissions requesting and receiving advice from ICES have signed international agreements under UNCLOS 1995[‡] Fish Stocks agreement article 5 and 6 (to incorporate fisheries impacts on other components of marine ecosystems) and WSSD 2002 article 30 (to implement an ecosystem approach in relation to oceans policy including fisheries).

* ICES. 2024. *ICES roadmap for bycatch on endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species*. ICES Convention, policies, and strategy.

† ICES. 2023. *Bycatch of endangered, threatened and protected species of marine mammals, seabirds and marine turtles, and selected fish species of bycatch relevance*. In *Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023*. ICES Advice 2023, byc.eu. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.24681123>

‡ United Nations (UN). 2011. *Agreement related to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks*. Available at: https://www.un.org/oceancapacity/sites/www.un.org.oceancapacity/files/files/Projects/UNFSA/docs/unfsa_text-eng.pdf

For EU Member States, this data call is under Council Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy and Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 May 2017 and Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2021/1167 of 27 April 2021.

Please note that the absence of DCF/EU MAP activity should not exempt countries from reporting.

This Data call follows the principles of personal data protection, as referred to in paragraph (9) of the preamble in Council Regulation (EC) No 2017/1004.

These data are made available to facilitate the scientific basis for advice in support of marine policies. ICES has an established license on data use for this type of data, which governs decisions on who is given access and what they can do with the data; see <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.22188157>

4. Deadlines

ICES request that the data for the year 2023 be uploaded to the ICES bycatch monitoring database by the **19th of August 2024**, to provide enough time for additional quality assurance and data handling procedures before the upcoming WGBYC meeting in September 2024. **Data submitted after this date cannot be processed and will not be used at the WGBYC 2024 meeting.**

5. Data to report

Please NOTE: there have been some changes to the data to report in relation to the previous WGBYC data call. The main changes are:

- A new quality filter is in place; for a given submission and for a given monitoring method, monitored effort cannot be higher than the total fishing effort.

5.1 Temporal and geographic scope

The temporal scope is for data collected specifically in **2023**. Please refer to the ICES bycatch data portal for guidance on the data submission process, format, data fields, and definitions; <https://www.ices.dk/data/data-portals/Pages/Bycatch.aspx>

The geographic scope of this data call covers the Northeast Atlantic and adjacent areas ([Fishing areas \(europea.eu\)](https://europea.eu)) including:

- Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO); Fishing Area 21
- ICES; Fishing Area 27, with the adjustments included in Table 5.1.1 to report for the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) Regulatory Area https://www.neafc.org/managing_fisheries/measures/ra_map
- General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM); Fishing Area 37, including the Black Sea. <http://www.fao.org/gfcm/data/maps/gsas>

Please NOTE: Data from ICES divisions containing both National EEZ and NEAFC Regulatory Area waters should be reported with the appropriate ICES/NEAFC Subdivision code (e.g., 27.7.k.1 or 27.7.k.2 not just 27.7.k). See Table 5.1.1 for a list of NEAFC areas.

Table 5.1.1. NEAFC area codes and description.

| ICES Code | Description |
|------------|---|
| 27.1.a | Barents Sea - NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.10.a.1 | Azores Grounds - Parts of the NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.10.b | Northeast Atlantic South |
| 27.12.a.1 | Subdivision XIIa1 - NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.12.a.2 | Subdivision XIIa2 - NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.12.b | Western Hatton Bank |
| 27.12.c | Central Northeast Atlantic - South |
| 27.14.b.1 | Southeast Greenland - Parts of NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.2.a.1 | Norwegian Sea - NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.2.b.1 | Spitsbergen and Bear Island - NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.5.b.1.a | Faroe Plateau - Part of NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.6.b.1 | Rockall Bank – Part of NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.7.c.1 | Porcupine Bank – Part of NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.7.j.1 | Southwest of Ireland - East - Parts of the NEAFC Regulatory |
| 27.7.k.1 | Southwest of Ireland - West - Part of the NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.8.d.1 | Bay of Biscay - Offshore - Parts in NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.8.e.1 | West of Bay of Biscay - Parts in NEAFC Regulatory Area |
| 27.9.b.1 | Portuguese Waters - West Parts in NEAFC regulatory Area |

5.2 Data types

Data covered by this data call are:

For ICES Member Countries (except the United States and Canada) with fisheries operating in ICES area waters:

- A) *all fishing effort (for all gear types even if no at-sea monitoring has occurred in the relevant period);*
- B) *all at-sea monitoring/sampling effort (for all gear types whether or not incidental bycatch has been recorded during the relevant time period);*
- C) *all recorded incidental bycatches of relevant species of marine mammals (cetaceans, phocids), seabirds, sea turtles and fish species of bycatch relevance. Annex 1 (Annex 1 WGBYC_2024_DataCall_Species_per_Ecoregion; <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.26124430>) contains Ecoregion specific species lists of mammals, birds, turtles and fish that can be used as guidance.*

For ICES Member Countries (except the United States and Canada) with fisheries operating in NAFO area waters:

- A) *all fishing effort (for all gear types even if no at-sea monitoring has occurred in the relevant period);*
- B) *all at-sea monitoring/sampling effort (for all gear types whether or not incidental bycatch has been recorded during the relevant time period);*
- C) *all recorded incidental bycatches of relevant species of marine mammals (cetaceans, phocids), seabirds and sea turtles (Please do NOT submit data related to protected/sensitive fish species from NAFO waters).*

For all EU Member States with fisheries operating in GFCM area waters:

- A) *all fishing effort (for all gear types even if no at-sea monitoring has occurred in the relevant period);*
- B) *all at-sea monitoring/sampling effort (for all gear types whether or not incidental bycatch has been recorded during the relevant time period);*
- C) *all recorded incidental bycatches of marine mammals (cetaceans, phocids), seabirds and sea turtles. For fish species, report data only for the species of bycatch relevance described in Annex 1 (Annex 1 WGBYC_2024_DataCall_Species_per_Ecoregion; <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.26124430>). Priority fish species, as identified in the “EU Action plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries”, are included for GFCM waters.*

6. Data submission

Data submissions must conform to the present structure of the data format definition (<https://datsu.ices.dk/web/selRep.aspx?Dataset=128>). To facilitate the submission of the data, ICES has developed an Excel template. The template can be downloaded from the bycatch database data portal: <https://www.ices.dk/data/data-portals/Pages/Bycatch.aspx>

Once the Excel data submission template is completed, go to the “Export_data” sheet and press the “Export data to XML” button to create a data file in XML format, then save it onto your computer or network. **Please NOTE:** do not use the Excel automatic XML conversion function, as it will not produce the correct file.

Press the ‘Submit data’ link in the bycatch data portal and log in with your ICES SharePoint user credentials. If you do not have access to ICES SharePoint, please contact data.call@ices.dk for assistance.

If errors are found in your file, you can re-upload and overwrite previously entered data. If you have no success with your data upload, please contact the ICES Data Centre (data.call@ices.dk). After successful upload, you can check the records entered by clicking on “Summary of Submissions”.

7. Contact information

For support concerning any issues about the data call, including questions regarding the format, content, or submission procedure, please contact the ICES Secretariat at data.call@ices.dk or the WGBYC chairs Ailbhe Kavanagh (ailbheskavanagh@gmail.com), Lotte Kindt-Larsen (lol@aquadtu.dk), and Gudjon Sigurdsson (gudjon.mar.sigurdsson@hafogvatn.is).