

- RECOMMENDATION -
ATLANTIC BILLFISHES

TITLE: *Recommendation by ICCAT Regarding Atlantic Billfishes*
(Entered into force: **June 21, 1999**)

EXPRESSING CONCERN that the Commission's Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) estimated in 1996 the biomass of Atlantic blue marlin to be 24% of that necessary to produce MSY and the biomass of Atlantic white marlin to be 23% of that necessary to produce MSY;

BEING AWARE that the 1996 stock assessments were derived in part from problematic data as noted in the SCRS Report;

RECOGNIZING that all Contracting Parties, non-contracting parties, entities or fishing entities will reduce landings of Atlantic blue marlin and Atlantic white marlin by at least 25% for each species from 1996 landings by the end of 1999;

NOTING that such reductions may not be evident in data reported to the SCRS until the year 2000 or thereafter;

RECALLING that the SCRS last conducted an assessment of western Atlantic sailfish in 1993 and eastern Atlantic sailfish in 1997;

ALSO NOTING that the Commission will need information to develop long term rebuilding plans for any stocks that are identified as over-exploited by the SCRS; and

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

- 1 The landings of blue marlin and white marlin by each Contracting Party, non-contracting party, entity, and fishing entity in the year 2000 must be no more than the levels of landings of blue marlin and white marlin required to be achieved by the end of 1999.
- 2 The SCRS postpone the assessments of Atlantic blue marlin and Atlantic white marlin scheduled to be conducted in 1999 until the year 2000. In 2001, the SCRS shall conduct assessments of western Atlantic sailfish and eastern Atlantic sailfish. If any stocks are identified as over-exploited based on the new assessments, the SCRS will develop different stock recovery scenarios to levels that support MSY if the SCRS considers the data sufficient to do so. Contracting Parties, non-contracting parties, entities, and fishing entities shall undertake to provide the best available Task I and Task II data that will enable the SCRS to accomplish these analyses. All Contracting Parties, non-contracting parties, entities and fishing entities shall report sailfish and spearfish data separately and if feasible provide historical data for those species as well.

NB: Paragraph 2 of this document supercedes paragraph 4 of the 1997 "*Recommendation by ICCAT Regarding Atlantic Blue Marlin and Atlantic White Marlin*" [97-9] adopted by the Commission at its Fifteenth Regular Meeting and which entered into force on June 13, 1998.