

- RECOMMENDATION -
PANAMA: LIFT BFT IMPORT PROHIBITION

**TITLE: *Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Importation
of Bluefin tuna and its Products from Panama***

(Implementation: see Operative paragraph 2)

RECALLING the adoption of the *Resolution by ICCAT Concerning an Action Plan to Ensure Effectiveness of the Conservation Program for Atlantic Bluefin Tuna* in 1994;

RECALLING as well the 1995 decision by ICCAT identifying Panama as a country whose vessels have been fishing for Atlantic bluefin tuna in a manner which diminishes the effectiveness of the ICCAT bluefin tuna conservation measures;

NOTING the adoption in 1996 of the *Recommendation by ICCAT Regarding Panama Pursuant to the 1994 Bluefin Tuna Action Plan Resolution*, pursuant to which Contracting Parties took appropriate measures to the effect that the import of Atlantic bluefin tuna and its products in any form from Panama have been prohibited, effective from 1 January 1998;

FURTHER RECALLING the 1998 decision by ICCAT identifying Panama as a country whose vessels have been fishing for Atlantic swordfish in a manner which diminishes the effectiveness of the ICCAT swordfish conservation program;

RECOGNIZING the steps that the Government of Panama has recently taken to reduce substantially the activities of its fishing vessels that were identified as diminishing the effectiveness of ICCAT conservation measures relating to Atlantic bluefin tuna and Atlantic swordfish;

ALSO RECOGNIZING, in this regard, the letter of 25 October 1999 from the Maritime Authority of Panama, which identifies the measures the Government of Panama has adopted to comply with its commitments under the Convention, including, since November, 1997, not authorizing the registration of any bluefin tuna fishing vessel in the ICCAT area; reducing the Panamanian registry to 85 vessels with an authorized International Fishing License; compiling data on fishing area, method, and species that can be caught for all vessels with an International Fishing License; refusal to validate any Bluefin Tuna Statistical Documents since 1997; and undertaking efforts to apply the ICCAT Port Inspection Scheme to Panamanian flag vessels that carry out fishing activities in the ICCAT Convention Area;

CONCERNED nevertheless that evidence still exists to indicate that some Panamanian vessels may be fishing in a manner that diminishes the effectiveness of these measures;

WELCOMING the fact that, in December, 1998, Panama became an ICCAT Contracting Party;

NOTING the commitment of the Government of Panama to comply with all ICCAT resolutions and recommendations, including those relating to the conservation and management of bluefin tuna;

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

- 1 Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities shall lift the import prohibition on Atlantic bluefin tuna and its products that was imposed pursuant to the *Recommendation by ICCAT Regarding Panama Pursuant to the 1994 Bluefin Tuna Action Plan Resolution* .
- 2 Notwithstanding the provisions of Article VIII, paragraph 2, of the Convention, the Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities shall implement this recommendation as soon as possible in accordance with the regulatory procedures of each Contracting Party and Cooperating Non-Contracting Party, Entity and Fishing Entity.