

- RESOLUTION -
ALTERNATIVES TO REDUCE CATCHES OF SWO JUVENILES & DEAD DISCARDS

TITLE: *Resolution by ICCAT for Evaluating Alternatives to Reduce Catches of Juveniles or Dead Discards of Swordfish*

(Transmitted to Contracting Parties: **March 22, 2002**)

RECALLING that the Commission and the SCRS has taken great interest in the potential of utilizing time-area closures as an effective tool for reducing the mortality of undersized swordfish and other species;

RECOGNIZING that in 1999, the SCRS expressed concerns “about the high catches (landings plus discards) of small swordfish” and regarding both the lack and possible inaccuracies of size data in many fisheries;

RECALLING that the Commission has responded to the concerns of the SCRS regarding small fish mortality with the adoption of two minimum size limitations, and has directed the SCRS to report at the 2002 Commission meeting on alternative means of reducing mortality on small swordfish, specifically area closures and gear modifications;

RECOGNIZING further that in 1999, the SCRS also emphasized that gains in yield could accrue if the current minimum size recommendations intended to reduce the mortality of undersized swordfish could be more effectively implemented through the application of innovative approaches;

RECOGNIZING also that in 2001, the SCRS, in response to a Commission request, hold a specific workshop to analyze the problem of juvenile swordfish catches in the Mediterranean, and the results show that time-area closures should be mostly effective if enforced on regional basis, to better protect a large distribution area including some non-Contracting Parties;

RECOGNIZING that some ICCAT Contracting Parties have already implemented time-area closures for the purpose of reducing the mortality of undersized swordfish, and that other Contracting Parties may also choose to do so;

RECALLING that the 1999 *Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Rebuilding Plan for North Atlantic Swordfish* encourages Contracting Parties to reduce dead discards of swordfish;

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

1. Contracting Parties, Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Entities, and Fishing Entities should evaluate any long-term time-area closures implemented within the Convention Area for vessels flying their flag for the purpose of reducing the mortality of undersized swordfish and present such evaluation in the form of a scientific paper to the SCRS for consideration.
2. Regional Fishery management organizations should be encouraged to implement time-area closures in their area of competence, if laying within the ICCAT Convention Area, in cases where there is scientific evidence that large identified areas are important for juvenile swordfish. The evaluation of any measures established by such organizations should be presented to SCRS for consideration.
3. The purpose of such evaluation should be to determine if such time-area closures implemented by a Contracting Party and/or a Regional Fishery management organization may be as effective, or are likely to be more effective, in reducing the mortality of undersized swordfish caused by vessels flying its flag as the ICCAT minimum size requirement in effect for that Contracting Party at the time of such evaluation, if such requirement were fully complied with.
4. The SCRS is requested to review such papers.
5. Subsequent to SCRS review, and upon request by a Contracting Party, the Commission should consider whether the applicable minimum size recommendations should be modified or eliminated by the relevant

Contracting Party with respect to its vessels, provided the time-area closure remains in place.

6. Following SCRS review, and upon request by a Contracting Party, the Commission should consider whether the applicable minimum size recommendations should be modified or eliminated by the relevant Contracting Parties acting in an area subject to a Regional Fishery management organization, provided the time-area closure remains in place in such area.