

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT CONCERNING
CONSERVATION OF WESTERN ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA**

RECALLING that since 1982 the Commission has managed Atlantic bluefin tuna in two management areas with a management boundary line at 45 degrees W. longitude (north of 10 degrees N.), and that since 1982 the fishery in the Western Atlantic management area has been controlled by restrictive catch limits,

FURTHER RECALLING that in 1998 the Commission adopted a 20-year Rebuilding Program for the western Atlantic management area ([98-7], 1998 *Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Rebuilding Program for Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna* – hereinafter referred to as the 1998 Recommendation);

NOTING that the most recent Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) assessment of western Atlantic bluefin tuna indicates that the spawning stock biomass should increase in the future for all of the realistic catch levels considered by SCRS, and for both recruitment scenarios,

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC
TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT THE 1998 *RECOMMENDATION
BY ICCAT TO ESTABLISH A REBUILDING PROGRAM FOR WESTERN
ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA* [98-7] BE AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Change Paragraph 1 to set the annual Total Allowable Catch (TAC), inclusive of dead discards, for the western Atlantic management area to 2,700 t, effective beginning in 2003,

2. Replace Paragraph 2 with:

The annual TAC, maximum sustainable yield (MSY) target, and a 20-year rebuilding period may be adjusted based upon subsequent SCRS advice. No adjustment to the annual TAC or the 20-year rebuilding period shall be considered unless SCRS advice indicates that the TAC under consideration will allow the MSY target to be achieved within the rebuilding period with a 50 percent or greater probability.

3. After Paragraph 4b add:

4c In recognition of Mexico's conservation efforts in this fishery and its incidental catch of bluefin tuna in their longline fishery in the Gulf of Mexico, Mexico shall receive a by-catch quota (for catch that can be retained) of 25 t to be caught consistent with Paragraph 16 of the 1998 Recommendation,

4d The USA and Canada shall receive a quota (for catch that can be retained) of 25 t and 15 t, respectively, to account for by-catch related to their directed longline fisheries in the vicinity of the management area boundary.

4. Change Paragraphs 4c, 4d, 4e, and 4f (as currently numbered in the 1998 Recommendation) by including quota for Mexico, and quota to account for retained by-catch by the USA and Canada related to their directed longline fisheries in the vicinity of the management boundary area in those quotas that are subtracted from the TAC before applying the allocation percentages for the USA, Canada and Japan.

5. Notwithstanding paragraphs 4c, 4d, 4e and 4f (as currently numbered in the 1998 Recommendation), for 2003 and 2004 (thereafter the allocation formula as stated in the 1998 Recommendation shall apply) the TAC shall be allocated as follows:

- a. After subtracting (a) the quota to account for retained by-catch by the USA and Canada related to their directed longline fisheries in the vicinity of the management boundary area, (b) the quotas for United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda), France (in respect of St Pierre et Miquelon), and Mexico, and (c) the allowance for dead discards, the remainder of the TAC shall be allocated (as catch that can be retained) as follows:

United States	57.48 %
Canada	23.75 %
Japan	18.77 %

- b. The allocation of retained catch for a TAC of 2,700 t in 2003 and 2004 shall be as follows:

United States	1,489.60 t
Canada	620.15 t
Japan	478.25 t
United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda)	4 t
France (in respect of St Pierre et Miquelon)	4 t
Mexico	25 t

6. At the end of Paragraph 4g (as currently numbered in the 1998 Recommendation), add:

Contracting Parties should review their methodology for estimating dead discards, make revisions in estimates of dead discards, as appropriate, and report to SCRS.