

[03-07]

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON THE SOUTHERN ALBACORE
CATCH LIMIT AND SHARING ARRANGEMENT FOR 2004**

NOTING that the current best estimate of the MSY of the southern albacore resource is 30,915 t, and that certainty in this MSY estimate has improved substantially following the 2003 southern albacore assessment;

NOTING FURTHER the conclusions of the 2003 Albacore Assessment Meeting, and of the 2003 SCRS Report, that the southern albacore stock is not considered to be over-exploited, that the current best estimate of $B_{\text{current}}/B_{\text{MSY}}$ is 1.66, that the current best estimate of $F_{\text{current}}/F_{\text{MSY}}$ is 0.62, and that current average catches are close to MSY;

RECOGNIZING that further work is needed before sharing arrangements for southern albacore based on the *ICCAT Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities* can be developed and agreed on;

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

1. The annual total catch limit for albacore caught in the Atlantic Ocean south of 5°N shall be set at 29,200 t for 2004, this being close to the current best estimate of the Replacement Yield (RY) of the stock.
2. For the purpose of this Recommendation, Brazil, Namibia, South Africa and Chinese Taipei shall be considered to be Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities fishing actively for southern albacore. All other Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall be considered to be not actively fishing for southern albacore.
3. The annual catch limit for southern albacore caught by those Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities fishing actively for southern albacore shall be set at 27,500 t per year for 2004.
4. Those Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities fishing actively for southern albacore shall make every effort to improve their catch reporting systems to ensure the reporting of all southern albacore catches during 2004 to the ICCAT Secretariat within two months of those catches having been made.
5. The ICCAT Secretariat shall notify all those Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities referred to in paragraph 2 above when a cumulative catch level of 22,000 t is reached, that being 80% of their catch limit of 27,500 t.
6. Those Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities referred to in paragraph 2 above shall immediately initiate multi-lateral discussions when the 22,000 t warning level is reached, in order to decide on steps to be taken to prevent total catches by those Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities from exceeding their 27,500 t catch limit.
7. Those Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities referred to in paragraph 2 above immediately implement measures to stop fishing for southern albacore when their established catch limit of 27,500 t is reached, so as to ensure that the limit is not exceeded.
8. Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities not actively fishing for southern albacore and having caught, on average, less than 100 t of southern albacore per year during 1998 - 2002 shall be subject to a catch limit of 100 t.
9. Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities not fishing actively for southern albacore and having caught, on average, more than 100 t of southern albacore during 1992 - 1996, but excluding Japan, shall be subject to an annual catch limit of 110% of their respective average 1992 - 1996 catches of albacore in the Atlantic Ocean south of 5°N.

10. Japan shall endeavour to limit its total catch of southern albacore to 4% by weight of its total longline bigeye tuna catch in the Atlantic Ocean south of 5°N.
11. No provision shall be made for carry-over of any under-harvests made under this sharing arrangement.
12. Those Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities fishing for southern albacore should participate in an inter-sessional meeting of Panel 3 to develop proposals for a sharing arrangement based on the *ICCAT Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities* adopted in 2001.
13. The southern albacore catch limit and sharing arrangement shall be reviewed and revised at the 2004 ICCAT Commission meeting, based on the outcome of the Panel 3 inter-sessional meeting to develop a sharing arrangement based on the ICCAT allocation criteria.
14. This Recommendation replaces, in its entirety, the 2002 *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Southern Albacore Catch Limit and Sharing Arrangement for 2003* [02-06].