

RESOLUTION BY ICCAT ON PELAGIC *SARGASSUM*

RECALLING that the Commission is responsible for the study of the populations of tuna and tuna-like fishes and that such study includes research on the abundance, biometry and ecology of the fishes, the oceanography of their environment, and the effects of natural and human factors upon their abundance;

RECOGNIZING that pelagic *Sargassum* supports a diverse assemblage of marine organisms, including over 140 species of fish, and that the fishes associated with pelagic *Sargassum* include tuna and tuna-like species at different life stages;

WHEREAS the greatest concentrations of pelagic *Sargassum* (*Sargassum natans* and *S. fluitans*) are found within the North Atlantic Central Gyre in the Sargasso Sea, providing nutrients and habitat for large pelagic fish traversing the otherwise nutrient-poor, energy-poor open ocean;

RECOGNIZING that certain stocks under ICCAT jurisdiction could be adversely impacted by a decline in the abundance of pelagic *Sargassum*, diminishing the Commission's ability to maintain the stocks at maximum sustainable levels;

RECALLING that the United Nations Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks calls for consideration of habitat and biodiversity in the marine environment, refers to the need to take ecosystem considerations into account, and that many countries, including Contracting Parties, are moving to incorporate ecosystem considerations into fisheries management;

FURTHER RECALLING that the Commission's Sub-Committee on the Environment, meeting October 6, 2005, recommended expanding its area of research to ecosystem matters;

CONFIRMING that the objective of including ecosystem considerations in fisheries management, including protection of fish habitat, is to contribute to long-term food security and to human development and to assure the effective conservation and sustainable use of the ecosystem and its resources;

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

1. Contracting Parties, Non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities, where appropriate, undertake to provide to the SCRS information and data on activities that impact pelagic *Sargassum* in the Convention area on the high seas, directly or indirectly, with particular emphasis in the Sargasso Sea.
2. The SCRS should examine available and accessible information and data on the status of pelagic *Sargassum* and its ecological importance to tuna and tuna-like species.