

**RECOMMENDATION FOR MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR
MEDITERRANEAN SWORDFISH IN THE FRAMEWORK OF ICCAT**

NOTING that the SCRS in its assessment in 2007, as reaffirmed in its 2009 advice, estimated that fish less than three years old usually represent 50-70% of the total yearly catches in terms of numbers and 20-35% in terms of weight and indicates that a reduction in the volume of juvenile catches would improve yield per recruit and spawning biomass per recruit levels,

RECOGNISING that the Commission's Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) indicated in its 2010 stock assessment that the Commission should adopt a Mediterranean swordfish fishery management plan which ensures that the stock will be rebuilt and kept in levels that are consistent with the ICCAT Convention objective,

NOTING that the SCRS in its assessment in 2010 indicated that overall results suggest that fishing mortality needs to be reduced to move the stock toward the Convention objective of biomass levels which could support MSY and away from levels which could allow a rapid stock decline,

NOTING that the SCRS in its assessment in 2010 indicated that technical modifications of the longline fishing gears, as well as, the way they are operated can be considered as an additional technical measure in order to reduce the catch of juveniles,

RECALLING the *Recommendation by ICCAT relating to Mediterranean Swordfish* [Rec. 03-04], which encourages Contracting Parties, and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (hereafter referred to as CPCs) to take measures to reduce juvenile Mediterranean swordfish catches,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the SCRS advice given in 2008, 2009 and 2010, advocating seasonal closures pending the adoption of a more comprehensive management plan for Mediterranean swordfish,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the SCRS advise that swordfish and in particular juvenile swordfish is also caught as a by-catch in other fisheries and that all catches of swordfish should stop during the closed period,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the advices given in 2010 for the swordfish have been considered as still valid in 2011,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the *Recommendation by ICCAT on Mediterranean Swordfish* [Rec. 09-04] needs to be replaced to set the basis for such a more comprehensive management plan for Mediterranean swordfish,

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

ICCAT records of vessels authorised to catch Mediterranean swordfish

1. At the latest on the 31 August 2012, and on the 15 January for the following years, CPCs shall provide to the ICCAT Secretariat the lists of all fishing vessels authorized to catch swordfish for the current year in the Mediterranean Sea. These lists shall distinguish:
 - a) All catching vessels authorized to fish actively for swordfish, meaning any vessel that targets swordfish (defined on the basis of the more abundant species anytime on board) during a given fishing season. Vessels not introduced on this list are not authorized to catch, retain on board, tranship, transport, process or land swordfish exceeding more than 5% of the total catch on board by weight or/and number of pieces.
 - b) All vessels authorized for swordfish sport and recreational fisheries as defined in the paragraph 2 m) and n) of ICCAT Recommendation 10-04.

CPCs shall provide these lists according to the format set out in the Guidelines for Submitting Data and Information Required by ICCAT.

2. Procedures referred in the *Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Establishment of an ICCAT Record of Vessels over 20 Meters in Length Overall or Greater Authorized to Operate in the Convention Area* shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Special fishing authorisation

3. Vessels included in the list of authorized vessels under point 1.a and which use harpoons, or participate in pelagic longline fisheries for highly-migratory pelagic stocks in the Mediterranean shall have a special fishing permit for each authorised fishery, by target species and area.
4. By 30 June each year CPCs shall submit to the ICCAT Secretariat the list of the special fishing permits delivered for the previous year.

Closed fishing season

5. Mediterranean swordfish shall not be caught (either as a targeted fishery or as by-catch), retained on board, transhipped or landed during the period from 1 October to 30 November and during an additional period of one month between 15 February and 31 March. CPCs shall communicate to the Commission, by 15 January 2012, the starting date of this additional month of closure.
6. CPCs shall monitor the effectiveness of these closures and shall submit to the Commission, at the latest two months before the annual meeting of the Commission, all relevant information on appropriate controls and inspections to ensure compliance with the measure.

Minimum size

7. Only entire specimens of swordfish, without removal of any external part, or gilled and gutted specimens, can be retained on board, transhipped, landed and transported.
8. In order to protect small swordfish, CPCs shall take the necessary measures to prohibit the catching, retaining on board, transhipping, landing, transporting, storing, selling, displaying or offering for sale Mediterranean swordfish measuring less than 90 cm LJFL or, in alternative, weighing less than 10 kg of round weight or 9 kg of gutted weight, or 7.5 kg of gilled and gutted weight.

However, the CPCs may grant tolerances to vessels which have incidentally captured small fish below the minimum size, with the condition that this incidental catch shall not exceed:

- a) 10% by weight or/and number of pieces per landing of the total swordfish catch of said vessels (in 2012),
- b) 5% by weight or/and number of pieces per landing of the total swordfish catch of said vessels as from 2013.

Technical characteristics of the fishing gear

9. The maximum number of hooks that can be set or taken on board of vessels targeting swordfish should be fixed at 2800 hooks for swordfish fishery. A second set of rigged hooks may be allowed on board for trips longer than 2 days provided that are duly lashed and stowed in lower decks so that it may not readily be used.
10. Hook size should never be smaller than 7 cm of height for fishing targeting swordfish.
11. The length of the pelagic longlines will be of maximum 30 NM (55 km).

Other measures

12. Recognition will be given to CPCs which take more restrictive measures than those foreseen in paragraphs 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Scientific information and advice

13. CPCs shall ensure the maintenance or development of adequate scientific information for highly migratory pelagic species in the Mediterranean.
14. By 30 June each year, CPCs shall communicate specific information for the fishing vessels that were authorized to carry out pelagic longline fisheries and harpoons in the Mediterranean during the preceding year:
 - a) Specific information on the fishing vessel:
 - Name of the vessel (if no name, the registry number without country initials should be indicated);
 - Registry number;
 - ICCAT list number;

CPCs shall communicate this list electronically to the ICCAT Secretariat according to the format set out in the Guidelines for Submitting Data and Information Required by ICCAT.

- b) Specific information related to fishing activities, based on sampling or for the whole fleet:
 - Fishing period(s) and total annual number of fishing days of the vessel, by target species and area;
 - Geographical areas, by ICCAT statistical rectangles, for the fishing activities carried out by the vessel, by target species and area;
 - Type of vessel, by target species and area;
 - Number of hooks used by the vessel, by target species and area;
 - Number of longline units used by the vessel, by target species and area;
 - Overall length of all longline units for the vessel, by target species and area.
 - c) Specific data on the catches, in the smallest time-area possible:
 - Size and, if possible, age distributions of the catches,
 - Catches and catch composition per vessel and,
 - Fishing effort (average fishing days per vessel, average number of hooks per vessel, average longline units per vessel, average overall length of longline per vessel).

These data shall be provided to SCRS in the format required by ICCAT.

15. The SCRS shall provide in 2013 an updated assessment of the state of the stock on the basis of updated data. It shall assess the effects of this management framework and provide advice on possible amendments of the various measures with a view to recover or to maintain the stock within safe biological limits while delivering economically viable fishing activity.
16. Based on such scientific advice, the ICCAT may decide, by end of 2013 on advisable changes of the management framework for swordfish with a view to complying with the management objective.

Repeals

17. This Recommendation replaces the *Recommendation by ICCAT for a Management Framework for the Sustainable Exploitation of Mediterranean Swordfish and Replacing ICCAT Recommendation 08-03* [Rec. 09-04].