

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT AMENDING THE SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATION  
BY ICCAT CONCERNING THE WESTERN ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA  
REBUILDING PROGRAM**

*RECALLING* the 1998 Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Rebuilding Program for Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna [Rec. 98-07], the Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning Conservation of Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna [Rec. 02-07], the Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Rebuilding Program and the Conservation and Management Measures for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean [Rec. 04-05], the Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Rebuilding Program [Rec. 06-06], the Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Rebuilding Program [Rec. 08-04], the Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Rebuilding Program [Rec. 10-03], and the Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Rebuilding Program [Rec. 12-02],

*FURTHER RECALLING* that the objective of the Convention is to maintain populations at levels that will support maximum sustainable catch (usually referred to as MSY),

*CONSIDERING* that the 2013 scientific advice from the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) indicates no significant new information about the status of the stock and that under the low recruitment scenario the western Atlantic bluefin tuna stock is above the biomass level that can support MSY and is consistent with the Convention objective. Under the high recruitment scenario (under which higher sustainable yields are possible in the future), the stock remains overfished and overfishing will continue under the current total allowable catch (TAC),

*FURTHER CONSIDERING* that the SCRS has estimated MSY to be 2,634 t under the low recruitment scenario and 6,472 t under the high recruitment scenario,

*ACKNOWLEDGING* that the SCRS continues to indicate that there is no strong evidence to favor either the low or high recruitment scenario over the other,

*RECOGNIZING* that the 2015 stock assessments will incorporate new data from the research conducted under the GBYP and related activities and is expected to utilize new methodologies and the SCRS peer review process,

*FURTHER RECOGNIZING* the value of increasing biological sampling to provide additional support toward addressing key stock assessment uncertainties,

*FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING* the need to re-evaluate the western Atlantic bluefin tuna rebuilding program no later than 2015 in light of the 2015 stock assessment results and resulting advice from SCRS,

*UNDERSCORING* that the SCRS continues to advise that protecting the strong 2003 year class would enhance its contribution to the spawning stock biomass, which has the potential to increase the productivity of the stock in the future,

*UNDERSCORING FURTHER* that SCRS has advised that increases in spawning stock biomass may help resolve the issue of low and high recruitment potential,

*RECOGNIZING* that the SCRS noted the uncertainties associated with existing CPUE fishery dependent indices, and suggested using a scientific research quota to help support the improvement of stock abundance indices, including fishery independent indices, for western Atlantic bluefin tuna and overcome this situation,

*NOTING* that the SCRS encouraged Japan to prepare a detailed draft proposal for presentation to the Commission in November 2013 taking into consideration the SCRS and BFT species group's discussions, and Japan submitted a proposal accordingly,

*FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING* that management actions taken in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean are likely to affect recovery in the western Atlantic, given that the productivity of the western Atlantic bluefin tuna fisheries is linked to the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock,

*FURTHER RECOGNIZING* the ICCAT Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities [Ref. 01-25],

*RENEWING* the commitment to the full implementation of existing mandatory reporting obligations including those in the *Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Recording of Catch by Fishing Vessels in the ICCAT Convention Area* [Rec. 03-13],

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

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities (CPCs) whose vessels have been actively fishing for bluefin tuna in the western Atlantic will continue the 20-year rebuilding program that began in 1999 and continues through 2018.

***Effort and capacity limits***

2. In order to avoid increasing fishing mortality of bluefin tuna in the eastern or western Atlantic, CPCs will continue to take measures to prohibit any transfer of fishing effort from the western Atlantic to the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean and from the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean to the western Atlantic.

***TACs, TAC allocations, and catch limits***

3. The rebuilding program for bluefin tuna in the western Atlantic will have a TAC, inclusive of dead discards, of 1,750 t in 2014. The annual TAC for 2015 will be set in 2014.
4. The annual TAC, MSY target, and the 20-year rebuilding period shall be reviewed and, if appropriate, 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.
5. If the SCRS stock assessment detects a serious threat of stock collapse, the Commission shall suspend all bluefin tuna fisheries in the western Atlantic for the following year.
6. The allocation of the annual TAC, inclusive of dead discards, will be indicated as follows:
  - a) The annual TAC shall include the following allocations:

<i>CPC</i>	<i>Allocation</i>
USA (by-catch related to longline fisheries in vicinity of management area boundary)	25 t
Canada (by-catch related to longline fisheries in vicinity of management area boundary)	15 t

- b) After subtracting the amounts under paragraph 6(a), the remainder of the annual TAC will be allocated as follows:

<b>CPC</b>	<i>If the remainder of the annual TAC is:</i>			
	<b>&lt;2,413 t (A)</b>	<b>2,413 t (B)</b>	<b>&gt;2,413-2,660 t (C)</b>	<b>&gt;2,660 t (D)</b>
United States	54.02%	1,303 t	1303 t	49.00%
Canada	22.32%	539 t	539 t	20.24%
Japan	17.64%	426 t	426 t + all increase between 2,413 t and 2,660 t	24.74%
United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda)	0.23%	5.5 t	5.5 t	0.23%
France (in respect of St. Pierre & Miquelon)	0.23%	5.5 t	5.5 t	0.23%
Mexico	5.56%	134 t	134 t	5.56%

- c) Consistent with paragraphs 1 and 6(b), the TAC for 2014 results in the following CPC-specific quota allocations (not including by-catch allowances listed in 6(a)):

	<i>2014</i>
TAC	1,750 t
United States	923.70 t
Canada	381.66 t
Japan	301.64 t
United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda)	4 t
France (in respect of St. Pierre & Miquelon)	4 t
Mexico	95 t

In no case shall the allocation to France (St. Pierre & Miquelon) and to the United Kingdom (Bermuda) be less than 4 t each in any single year unless the fishery is closed.

- d) Depending on availability, Mexico can transfer up to 86.5 t of its adjusted quota in 2014\* to Canada to support cooperative research as specified in paragraph 19.
- e) Depending on availability, the United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda) can transfer up to the amount of its adjusted quota in 2014 to the United States to support cooperative research as specified in paragraph 19.
- f) Depending on availability, France (in respect of St. Pierre & Miquelon) can transfer up to the amount of its adjusted quota in 2014\* to Canada to support cooperative research as specified in paragraph 19.
- g) CPCs planning to engage in the cooperative research activities specified in paragraphs 6(d), 6(e) and 6(f) above shall notify the Commission and the SCRS of the details of their research programs to be undertaken before they commence and shall present the results of the research to the SCRS in time to inform the 2015 stock assessments.
7. A CPC's total quota shall include its allocations in paragraph 6, adjusted for underharvest or overharvest consistent with the remainder of this paragraph. Each year shall be considered as an independent management period for the remainder of this paragraph.
- a) Any underharvest of a CPC's total quota in a given year may be carried forward to the next year. However, in no event shall the underharvest that is carried forward exceed 10% of the CPC's initial quota allocation under paragraph 6, with the exception of those CPCs with initial allocations of 100 t or less, for which the underharvest that is carried forward shall in no event exceed 100% of the initial allocation under paragraph 6 (i.e., the total quota for such CPC shall not exceed twice its annual quota in any given year).
- b) If, in the applicable management period, and each subsequent management period, any CPC has an overharvest of its total quota, its initial quota for the next subsequent management period will be reduced by 100% of the excess of such total quota, and ICCAT may authorize other appropriate actions.
- c) Notwithstanding paragraph 7(b), if a CPC has an overharvest of its total quota during any two consecutive management periods, the Commission will recommend appropriate measures, which may include, but are not limited to, reduction in the CPC's total quota equal to a minimum of 125% of the overharvest amount and, if necessary, trade restrictive measures. Any trade measures under this paragraph will be import restrictions on the subject species and consistent with each CPC's international obligations. The trade measures will be of such duration and under such conditions as the Commission may determine.

\* This transfer provision will continue in 2015 if the TAC in 2015 is set at 1,750 t or higher.

### ***Minimum fish size requirements and protection of small fish***

8. CPCs will prohibit the taking and landing of western Atlantic bluefin tuna weighing less than 30 kg or, in the alternative, having a fork length of less than 115 cm.
9. Notwithstanding the above measures, CPCs may grant tolerances to capture western Atlantic bluefin tuna either weighing less than 30 kg, or in the alternative, having a fork length of less than 115 cm, provided they limit the take of these fish to no more than 10% by weight of the total bluefin tuna quota for each CPC, and institute measures to deny economic gain to the fishermen from such fish. CPCs granting such a tolerance will prohibit the taking and landing of western Atlantic bluefin tuna having a fork length of less than 67 cm.
- 9bis. CPCs shall prohibit fishermen from selling or offering for sale recreationally harvested fish of any size, except for charitable purposes.
10. CPCs will encourage their commercial and recreational fishermen to tag and release all fish less than 30 kg or, in the alternative, having a fork length less than 115 cm and report on steps taken in this regard in their Annual Report.

### ***Area and time restrictions***

11. There shall be no directed fishery on the bluefin tuna spawning stock in the western Atlantic spawning grounds (i.e., the Gulf of Mexico).

### ***Transshipment***

12. Transshipment at-sea shall be prohibited.

### ***Scientific research and data and reporting requirements***

13. In 2014, the SCRS will update the stock assessment for bluefin tuna for the western Atlantic stock. In 2015 and thereafter every three years, the SCRS will conduct a stock assessment for bluefin tuna for the western Atlantic stock and for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock and provide advice to the Commission on the appropriate management measures, approaches, and strategies, including, *inter alia*, regarding TAC levels for those stocks for future years.
14. The SCRS shall prepare and present a Kobe II strategy matrix reflecting recovery scenarios of western Atlantic bluefin tuna consistent with *Resolution by ICCAT to Standardize the Presentation of Scientific Information in the SCRS Annual Report and in Working Group Detail Reports* [Res. 11-14].
15. Each CPC will prepare, where practical, a research plan to obtain reliable stock abundance indices for BFT of western origin and exchange it by April 30, 2014, for scientific review and comments, taking into account, as appropriate, the research programs proposed at the 2013 Commission meeting. CPC scientists will exchange views prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Working Group of Fishery Managers and Scientists in Support of the Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Stock Assessment as described in Annex 1 of Rec. 12-02 to be held in June or later of 2014 to review the research plans for their earliest implementation. In addition, the SCRS will be informed of the outcomes of these activities.
16. The SCRS shall annually review available fishery and stock indicator trends and evaluate whether they warrant advancing the scheduling of the next stock assessment. In support of this evaluation, CPCs shall make special efforts to update abundance indices and other fishery indicators annually and provide them in advance of the SCRS annual species group meetings.
17. In preparation for the 2015 stock assessment, the SCRS should thoroughly review the evidence that initially was used in support of each recruitment scenario as well as any additional information available as a means of informing the Commission on which recruitment scenario is more likely to reflect the current stock recruitment potential. If the SCRS is unable to support one scenario over the other, the SCRS then should provide the Commission with management advice that takes into consideration the risks (e.g., risk of not achieving the Convention objective, lost yield) that would be associated with opting to manage the stock under a scenario that does not accurately reflect the stock-recruit relationship.

18. If scientific evidence results in an SCRS recommendation to alter the definition of management units, or to take explicit account of mixing between management units, then the western Atlantic rebuilding program shall be re-evaluated.
19. CPCs that harvest western Atlantic bluefin tuna should contribute to ICCAT's GBYP. In particular, CPCs should make special efforts to enhance biological sampling activities in order to provide significant new information for the new assessment. Priority research should be obtaining new information on natal origin, maturity, and age of the catch in all fisheries, following protocols developed by the SCRS. Complementary information will also be required for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock in order to evaluate the effects of mixing. In addition, it is also important to enhance, and where needed develop, an accurate abundance index for juvenile fish.
20. All CPCs shall monitor and report on all sources of fishing mortality, including dead discards, and shall minimize dead discards to the extent practicable.
- 20bis. Each CPC shall ensure that its fishing vessels landing bluefin tuna are subject to a data recording system, in accordance with the *Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Recording of Catch by Fishing Vessels in the ICCAT Convention Area* [Rec. 03-13].
21. As part of the 2015 stock assessment, the SCRS shall review and report to the Commission on new available information on the potential existence of additional western Atlantic bluefin tuna spawning grounds.
22. Each CPC shall report its provisional monthly catches of bluefin tuna. This report shall be sent to the ICCAT Secretariat within 30 days of the end of the calendar month in which the catches were made.
23. The ICCAT Secretariat shall, within 10 days following the monthly deadline for receipt of the provisional catch statistics, collect the information received and circulate it to CPCs together with aggregated catch statistics.
24. All CPCs shall provide the best available data for the assessment of the stock by the SCRS, including information on the catches of the broadest range of all age classes encountered in their fisheries, consistent with minimum size restrictions.
25. This Recommendation replaces the *Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Western Atlantic Rebuilding Program* [Rec. 12-02].