

October 16, 2015 (1:18 PM)

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Appendix 1

**SUBMISSION OF REPORTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ADDITIONAL
CLOSURE SEASON FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SWORDFISH FISHERY**

(Requirement SWO 3006, Para 6, f. Rec. 13-04 – Deadline: 2 months before Commission meeting)

Recommendation 13-04, paragraph 6, requires that, in addition to the additional month closed season, 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. Reports, included here, have been received from: Algeria, European Union, Tunisia and Turkey.

ALGERIA

Algeria had established an additional closure for swordfish from 1 March to 31 March (decree dated 22 July 2012, completing decree dated 21 September 2011 establishing the fishing closure season for swordfish under national jurisdiction).

However, following the complaints by professionals as regards the closure, this was amended and established from 15 February to 15 March. Copy of the amended decree attached.

Therefore, this new device was applied by professionals of this fishery.

Furthermore, regular monitoring of the compliance of this closure, as well as the compliance of the provisions of the above-mentioned decree, was carried out by the relevant services at the landing ports.

EUROPEAN UNION

The EU, in accordance with paragraph 5 of ICCAT Recommendation [13-04], has informed the Commission by letter sent on 13 January 2012 (ARES (2012)40311) of its intention to implement the additional closure for Mediterranean Swordfish from 1 to 31 March.

In accordance with paragraph 6 of ICCAT Recommendation [13-04], I would like to inform you that the Swordfish fishery has been closed in all EU Member States for the entire month of March 2015, in addition to the closure for the months of October and November 2014.

EU Member States implemented the closures by legal acts under the respective national law or by administrative means (no authorisation delivered).

The EU Member States conducted verification and inspection missions to ensure that the rules were enforced by the operators during the closure periods. Part of those increased checks and controls were carried out in the context of the Joint Deployment Plan (JDP) for Bluefin Tuna (BFT) coordinated by the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA).

This specific inspection programme for BFT also covers the control of other large pelagic species such as Swordfish and Albacore in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

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In 2015, the control and follow-up of other highly migratory species such as Swordfish was also further enforced by way of a Commission Decision (extended Specific Control and Inspection Program from BFT to other species) which sets the conditions for the Joint deployment plan of the following years.

Furthermore, EU Commission officials carried out several inspection missions during October and November 2014, as well as during March 2015, together with national inspection administrations, to verify the implementation of the Swordfish closure and related control activities by Member States.

The EU is committed to the full implementation of provisions relating to ICCAT Recommendation [13-04] and in particular paragraph 6 thereof. We are at your disposal should more detailed information be considered useful.

TUNISIA

In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 5 of ICCAT Recommendation [13-04] and in response to ICCAT Circular #5126/11, Tunisia informed the Commission of its intention to implement the additional closure for Mediterranean swordfish from 15 February to 15 March each year.

In 2015, and in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6 of ICCAT Recommendation 13-04, the swordfish fishery was closed in all the Tunisian fishing areas throughout all the above-mentioned period as well as the period from 1 October to 30 November 2014.

This closure was essentially implemented by:

- legal texts within the framework of law No. 94-13, dated 31 January 1994 relating to fishing activity, in particular articles 13 and 14 concerning species where fishing is prohibited and circulars transmitted to regional fishery services to prevent and combat illegal swordfish fishing outside the fishing season.
- administrative measures: no authorisation was granted outside the fishing season.

The competent authority started control and inspection activities aimed at guaranteeing the compliance of these regulations during the closure. These controls were partly carried out jointly with the national guard services.

TURKEY

General Information and Legal Framework

The following information has been compiled in response to the requirements of Paragraph 6 of Recommendation for Management Measures for the Mediterranean Swordfish in the Framework of ICCAT (Rec. 13-04).

In 2012, Turkey has set an additional month of closure for the Mediterranean Swordfish (MED-SWO) from 15 February to 15 March in addition to the closure period from 1 October to 30 November. This measure was announced on 15 December 2011. In 2015, the aforementioned measure for MED-SWO has remained in force.

For ensuring efficiency of the aforementioned measure, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MoFAL) introduced the Notification on Regulating Commercial Fishing at Seas and Inland Waters covering the period 2012-2016, in order to ensure more sustainable fishing activities, improved quality for fishing products, and better conservation of fisheries resources.

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According to the Notification:

- The catch of swordfish smaller than 125 cm is prohibited.
- It is mandatory for the fishing vessels to catch swordfish obtain "Fishing Permit" from the provincial directorate issuing vessel's license. Applications by the fishermen to acquire a special fishing permit for swordfish is subject to some technical criteria; however, applications by the fishermen can legally be made even until November 29TH for the 2015 fishing season.
- As of 30 November 2015, the special fishing permits to be acquired by fishermen (or to be issued by the Ministry) shall belong to the 2015 fishing season for swordfish.
- When an application made is approved by the Ministry, the special permit information is simultaneously recorded in the Fisheries Information System (FIS) operated by the Ministry.
- When longlining for tuna and swordfish only hooks no. 1 and no. 2 with a gape width smaller than 2.8 cm is permitted.

During the closed season, MED-SWO fishermen engaged in other types of coastal fisheries, trawling, tourism and/or aquaculture activities.

Other Prohibitions

In 2002 and 2003, EU and ICCAT enforced a recommendation prohibiting the usage of drift-nets in the Mediterranean. Afterwards, drift-netting in Turkey was also banned in 2006 (Anon., 2006)¹.

Subsequently, Turkey announced its position for elimination of *modified driftnet usage* with the ICCAT Circular # 3225/2010. Accordingly, usage of all modified drift-nets has been prohibited as from 1 July 2011.

Accordingly, all fishing vessels with the modified drift-nets have gone under obligation to shift their fishing gears in accordance with provisions of *Revised Notification No. 2/1 Regulating Commercial Fishing*. MoFAL continued its efforts to promote the usage of more selective fishing methods and fishing gear by the majority of Turkish swordfish fishermen, with several regional training activities.

Inspection and Control

Inspection and controls have been the major components of the activities of MoFAL for ensuring the efficiency of the closed season and size regulations set for the Mediterranean Swordfish.

The inspection activities, which are still ongoing, have been concentrated at most potential fishing grounds, landing points, retail and wholesale markets.

Within this context, in consequence of the inspections conducted by MoFAL inspectors in several coastal provinces 735 Kgs. of MED-SWO have been seized during the first half of the year 2015. On the other hand, a total of 866 Kgs. of MED-SWO were seized by ministerial inspectors previously in 2014.

¹ Notification No. 37/1 Regulating Commercial Fisheries at Seas and Inland Waters (2006 – 2008). Republic of Turkey, General Directorate of Protection and Control, Ankara.