

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT TO ESTABLISH  
HARVEST CONTROL RULES FOR THE NORTH  
ATLANTIC ALBACORE STOCK**

*(Proposal by the European Union and Norway)*

*RECALLING* the Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT concerning the North Atlantic Albacore Rebuilding Program [Rec.13-05];

*NOTING* 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 Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) stock assessment concluded that the northern albacore stock is overfished but that overfishing is not occurring, and advised that a level of catch of 28,000 t would meet the Convention management objective by 2020 with a 53% probability;

*CONSIDERING* that the Standing Working Group for Enhancing the Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers has proposed, among other case studies, the northern albacore stock as a suitable candidate to examine harvest control rules;

*NOTING* the progress achieved so far by the SCRS in the work for testing harvest control rules and conducting management strategy evaluations for northern albacore and in particular the Kobe II Strategy matrix showing the different levels of probability of being in the green quadrant for different combinations of reference point values;

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

1. The management objective for northern albacore stock is
  - a. to maintain the stock in the green zone of the Kobe plot while maximizing long-term yield from the fishery, and
  - b. where the spawning stock biomass (SSB) has been assessed by the SCRS as below the level capable of producing MSY ( $SSB_{MSY}$ ), to rebuild SSB to or above  $SSB_{MSY}$  within as short time as possible, by 2020 at the latest, while maximizing average catch and minimizing inter-annual fluctuations in TAC levels, with at least a 60% probability.
2. The SCRS shall identify and test candidate reference points (e.g.,  $SSB_{THRESHOLD}$ ,  $SSB_{LIM}$  and  $F_{TARGET}$ ) and associated harvest control rules (HCRs) that would support the management objective expressed in paragraph 1 above and/or any other management objectives agreed by the Commission.
3. Based on the SCRS inputs and advice provided pursuant to paragraph 2 above, the Commission shall adopt HCRs for the northern Atlantic albacore stock, including pre-agreed management actions to be taken under various stock conditions as follows:
  - a. If the average spawning stock biomass (SSB) level is less than  $SSB_{LIM}$  (i.e.,  $SSB < SSB_{LIM}$ ), the Commission shall adopt severe management actions immediately to reduce the fishing mortality rate, including measures that suspend the fishery and initiate a scientific monitoring quota to be able to evaluate stock status. This scientific monitoring quota shall be set at the lowest possible level to be effective. The Commission shall not consider re-

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- opening the fishery until the average SSB level exceeds  $SSB_{LIM}$  with a high probability. Further, before reopening the fishery, the Commission shall develop a rebuilding program in order to ensure that the stock returns to the green zone of the Kobe plot.
- b. If the average SSB level is equal to or less than  $SSB_{THRESHOLD}$  and equal to or above  $SSB_{LIM}$  (i.e.,  $SSB_{LIM} \leq SSB \leq SSB_{THRESHOLD}$ ) and F is above the level specified in the HCR, the Commission shall take steps to reduce F as specified in the HCR to ensure F is at a level that will rebuild SSB to or above  $SSB_{MSY}$ .
- c. If the average SSB is above  $SSB_{THRESHOLD}$  but F exceeds  $F_{TARGET}$  (i.e.,  $SSB > SSB_{THRESHOLD}$  and  $F > F_{TARGET}$ ), the Commission shall immediately take steps to reduce F to  $F_{TARGET}$ .
- d. Once the average SSB level reaches or exceeds  $SSB_{THRESHOLD}$  and F is less or equal than  $F_{TARGET}$  (i.e.,  $SSB > SSB_{THRESHOLD}$  and  $F \leq F_{TARGET}$ ), the Commission shall assure that applied management measures will maintain F at or below  $F_{TARGET}$ .
4. These HCRs should be evaluated by SCRS through the management strategy evaluation process, including in light of new assessments of the stock. The Commission shall review the results of these evaluations and make adjustments to the HCRs as needed.

Generic form of the HCR recommended by the SCRS in 2010 that would be consistent with UNFSA (Report of the 2010 WGSAM)

