Original languages: English, French and Spanish

DEVELOPMENT OR FISHING/MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR NORTH ATLANTIC SWORDFISH

Required by paragraph 3 of Rec. 13-02. Deadline 15 September 2015

In 2012, the Secretariat developed a form to standardise the content of the swordfish development plans. Notwithstanding, several CPCs have requested interpretation of currently capacity. The original intention of this was to indicate fishing capacity, but there are several measurements of this, and hence information is not necessarily standardised. If reports are required in the future, the Panel may wish to indicate what information it requires for review.

In 2015, Canada (text only), China, European Union, France St. Pierre and Miquelon, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Senegal (text only) United States (text only) Chinese Taipei provided the reports within the deadline stipulated by the Recommendation. Those received in the Secretariat format have been aggregated in **Table 1** below.

Canada and USA have provided summaries of their text reports for translation – the full reports are available electronically in original language only as **Annex 1.**

Table 1. Summary of North Swordfish Management Plans received in 2015

CPC	Current Fishery	Current quota (t)	No. of vessels	Gear	Current capacity	Planned No. of vessels	Gear	Planned capacity	Current management measures	Future planned measures
CANADA									See text report	See text report
CHINA	Yes	100	13	LL	60.293	27	LL	104,054	Fishing permit: Vessels must hold the high seas fishing license issued by government	Fishing permit: Vessels must hold the high seas fishing license issued by government
									Annual review: Annual review on the performance of tuna fishing company	Annual review: Annual review on the performance of tuna fishing company
									Catch limit: Vessels must strictly respect the catch limit stipulated by ICCAT recommendation	Catch limit: Vessels must strictly respect the catch limit stipulated by ICCAT recommendation

CPC	Current Fishery	Current quota (t)	No. of vessels	Gear	Current capacity	Planned No. of vessels	Gear	Planned capacity	Current management measures	Future planned measures
									VMS: Vessels are required to be equipped with VMS and report normally to government	VMS: Vessels are required to equip with VMS and report normally to government
									Logbook: Vessels are required to record fishing activities in the logbook everyday accurately including any by-catch	Logbook: Vessels are required to record fishing activities in the logbook everyday accurately including any by-catch
									Observers: Dispatch observers to monitor catch activities	Observers: Dispatch observers to monitor catch activities
									Catch report: A monthly catch report is required	Catch report: A monthly catch report is required
									Statistical Document: The statistical document is a must when exporting swordfish	Statistical Document: the statistical document is a must when exporting swordfish
									Catch import verification: verify catch clearance certificate when importing swordfish	Catch import verification: verify catch clearance certificate when importing swordfish
									Minimum size: issue official regulation to stipulate the swordfish minimize size consistent with ICCAT requirement	Minimum size: issue official regulation to stipulate the swordfish minimize size consistent with ICCAT requirement

CPC	Current Fishery	Current quota (t)	No. of vessels	Gear	Current capacity	Planned No. of vessels	Gear	Planned capacity	Current management measures	Future planned measures
EU-Portugal	No, but plans to develop	1325,88	49	LL	9191,79	46	LL	8208,79	Portugal allocated the swordfish quota to vessels registered in the ports of the mainland, Autonomous Region of Madeira and Autonomous Region of Azores. This allocation is based on the traditional activity (Decree-Law 898/2004, of 7 July and Ordinance 1466/2007 of 15 November). Vessels registered in the mainland have 66.1% of the Portuguese quota, those registered in the Azores had 31% and those registered in Madeira had 2.9%. Vessels without swordfish quota may only catch swordfish as by-catch which may not exceed 5% of the total catch retained on board at any time (Ordinance No.90/2013, of 28 February)	The EU regulation No. 605/2013, 12 June, obliges sharks, namely blue shark (*Priconace glauca*) and shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) to be landed with their fins naturally attached to the bodies, despite the fact that EU vessels didn't apply "finning" practices. This legislation has implied a change in the fishing patterns and swordfish became the most important target species instead of the referred sharks. As Portugal has a small quota for swordfish, a specific plan for the concerned fleet as well as a regulation to finance scrapping of longliners were adopted by national legislation (Ordinance No. 362-A/2013, 19 December). To create a level playing field, it would be essential that ICCAT adopts legislation requiring that all sharks be landed with fins naturally attached

CPC	Current Fishery	Current quota (t)	No. of vessels	Gear	Current capacity	Planned No. of vessels	Gear	Planned capacity	Current management measures	Future planned measures
EU-Spain	Yes	6886,05	113	LL	6886 (2014)	113	LL	7167 (2015)	Unified Census of Surface Longline (*Censo Unificado de Palangre de Superficie*) (the only fleet authorised to catch SWO)	Previous measures will try to be maintained, except for those regarding mandatory stops
									Individual quota per vessel and conditions for the transfer of quotas per vessel	
									Annual fishing plans. Issuance of temporary fishing licenses by zone and vessel	
									Technical measures of surface longline gear (limit of number and hook size)	
									Conservation measures: 90 day mandatory stoppage in three years (2011-13), minimum size allowing for 15% tolerance	
									Control measures: ERS, notice of port arrival and departure	
FRANCE (SPM)	Yes	100	1	LL	50	1	LL	50	Fishing license system supervised by the State. See text below	See text below
JAPAN*	Yes	842	34	LL	15095 (total tonnage of all vessel)	221	LL	87527 (total tonnage of all vessels)	Japanese Fisheries Law has been prohibiting Japanese fishing vessels from fishing tuna on the high seas. Only fishing vessels with a fishing license issued by the Japanese Government can operate in high seas. The law also requires the Government to decide the maximum number of licenses to be issued and other fishing conditions. The Japanese Government ensures that fishing capacities have to	Japan will continue to restrict the number of longliners

CPC	Current Fishery	Current quota (t)	No. of vessels	Gear	Current capacity	Planned No. of vessels	Gear	Planned capacity	Current management measures	Future planned measures
									be commensurate with its fishing opportunities as determined by tuna RFMOs such as ICCAT	
									Japanese swordfish catch is by-catch, which has been fluctuating year by year mainly due to the shift of the fishing ground for bigeye tuna. Japan, having no intention to increase north Atlantic swordfish catch as target species, needs flexibility to address this nature. For this purpose, special arrangements for Japan including a multi-year block quota, as provided in paragraph 7 of Recommendation 13-02, should be continued	Will be continued according to paragraph 7 of Recommendation 13-02
									Japan has been properly reporting data on swordfish, which has been utilized in the stock assessment of north Atlantic swordfish	Japan will continue to instruct its fishermen to submit such data in a timely fashion
									Japan has been monitoring, controlling and enforcing all its tuna vessels operating on the high seas with VMS, port inspection and so on	Japan will continue [these activities] to comply with ICCAT measures
* As of 15 September 2015, a total of 221 Japanese vessels are registered of ICCAT. Since it could be possible that all of those vessels would operate in ICCAT area and catch swordfish as by-catch within TAC limit, the number of 221 and their total capacity were entered as the possible maximum figures.										
KOREA	Yes	50	14	LL	Over 50t	14	LL		Fourteen Korean longline fishing vessels have targeted bigeye tuna and northern swordfish have been caught as by-catch. Compared to the bigeye tuna quota (1983 t), there is a small amount of quota for northern swordfish (50 t). In recent	

CPC	Current Fishery	Current quota (t)	No. of vessels	Gear	Current capacity	Planned No. of vessels	Gear	Planned capacity	Current management measures	Future planned measures
									years, they have been forced to discard many northern swordfish regardless of live or dead condition. In doing so, they have been experiencing difficulty in sorting and discarding swordfish on board. This takes time and is costly to do without useful selective fishing gear. Finally, Korea hopes that its catch limit for northern swordfish would be adjusted in a new ICCAT multi-year conservation and management plan in order to fully utilize the swordfish as much as possible and at the same time to avoid the reckless practice of discarding swordfish. Korea believes that this would be consistent with a reasonable principle of an effective use and conservation of fisheries resources	
MEXICO		200	32	LL		32	LL		100% cover of longline tuna fishing vessels in the on board Observer Programme in the Gulf of Mexico	The conservation measures previously contemplated for the protection of swordfish have already been implemented, and in 2014 the Official Mexican Regulation was updated
									NOM-023-SAG/PESC-2014 regulates the exploitation of tuna species with longline in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. A programme to manage the development of the swordfish fishery is being implemented	

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									The levels of catches of this species by the longline tuna fleet in the Gulf of Mexico are low	
SENEGAL	Yes	250	3	LL	1430.13	4	LL	1430.13	Port State measures are taken into account in the current Law	Improvement of artisanal fishing monitoring devices
			4	Canoes	209.86	8	Canoes	482.85	National register of fishing vessels so as to ensure adequate traceability of fishing vessel activities	Monitoring of artisanal fishing capacity
									All industrial fishing vessels are fitted with an beacon onboard for automatic vessel monitoring (VMS)	Traceability of catches
									See also text below	See also text below
TRINI-DAD & TOBAGO	Yes	125	38	LL	175	45	LL	207	Statistical Document Program for swordfish	The Government of Trinidad and Tobago seeks to provide the greatest possible economic opportunity for its citizens. In this regard the Government facilitates the development of national fleets as far as is possible in accordance with established fisheries management principles and regulations. Given the differences between the catch limit and the estimates of harvesting potential and in addition Trinidad and Tobago's annual transfer of 75 t of its catch limit to Belize for the
									Inspection of landings for export	
									Monitoring of catches	
									Monitoring of exports	
									Biological sampling programme for longline fleet	

CPC	Current Fishery	Current quota (t)	No. of vessels	Gear	Current capacity	Planned No. of vessels	Gear	Planned capacity	Current management measures	Future planned measures
										period 2014 to 2016 [Rec. 13-02], catches of swordfish will be closely monitored to ensure compliance with the catch limit.
UKOT	Yes	35	1	LL	5	2	LL	10	The swordfish fishery is regulated locally by the Bermuda Fisheries Act 1972 and associated 2010 Regulations. The legislation sets a minimum legal size for swordfish of 125 cm lower jaw fork length and 25 kg. Fishermen wishing to set more than 5 hooks on a line (this was decreased from 15 hooks in 2013) must obtain a Special Licence from the Bermuda Department of Environmental Protection to do so. Licences for pelagic longlining are subject to terms and conditions, some of which are: the mandatory use of circle hooks and monofilament line (no wire leaders), the collection of data and handling of by-catch and discards in compliance with ICCAT requirements, and the obligation to allow the Department to place qualified observers on board for any given fishing trip. Swordfish are occasionally caught via rod and reel or trolling but the limit on the number of hooks deployed and associated licensing	The development of the swordfish fishery and offshore fishery in general is an important component of Bermuda's plans to diversify the local fishery as reef fish stocks close to the Island are essentially fully exploited. This step will also enhance the economic opportunities available to local fishermen. A number of factors have delayed the development of the fishery in Bermuda. The biggest issue at present is the lack of a shoreside support facility to provide processing and high quality freezing capacity. The 2005 Marine White Paper gave a commitment to establishing the needed support but the current financial situation

CPC	Current Fishery	Current quota (t)	No. of vessels	Gear	Current capacity	Planned No. of vessels	Gear	Planned capacity	Current management measures	Future planned measures
									requirements help to restrict such catches.	has delayed progress on this initiative. The small UK Overseas Territories' quota (35 tonnes), shared between Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands, has also hindered development, and the transfer of 20 tonnes of this amount to another party for the 2007-2010 seasons only compounded this. Therefore, despite continued interest by some local fishers in offshore fishing, no new participants entered the swordfish fishery last year. The Department will continue to work with the local fishing industry to overcome the obstacles to the development of the fishery. The Turks and Caicos Islands are also investigating the possibility of expanding their offshore fishery. Thus, securing a greater share of the swordfish TAC than currently allocated will likely to be necessary soon

CPC	Current Fishery	Current quota (t)	No. of vessels	Gear	Current capacity	Planned No. of vessels	Gear	Planned capacity	Current management measures	Future planned measures
										and the UKOTs may seek an increase to their quota when a new management plan for swordfish is negotiated in 2016.
USA									See text report	See text report
VENE-ZUELA	No, but plans to develop	85				30	LL	45	Domestic management measures are in force. There exists a fishery protection zone where fishing is prohibited by commercial and artisanal vessels, except for a small fleet composed of 35 vessels belonging to Playa Verde, Vargas State sector. In addition, only incidental catches of this species will be allowed with the following minimum sizes: 125 cm long, from the lower jaw to the fork or over 25 kg, according to Art. 12 of Administrative Ruling No. 69 of 2003	Plans to develop the fishery and internal management measures contemplated. A draft resolution, which updates the regulation of catches of fish belonging to the Xiphiidae and Istiophoridae family, is being developed in Venezuela. It makes provision for the 45 t quota which the emerging artisanal fishery, located in La Zorra (Vargas State), can catch in a year
CHINESE TAIPEI	Yes	270	88	LL	270	92	LL	270	Prior authorization by fleet and area. We limit the number of fishing vessels operating in the specific area. All vessels shall fish in fishing areas designated to the group they belong, and shall not fish in non-designated areas without prior authorization. We also prohibit vessels to fish in the Mediterranean Sea	

CPC	Current Fishery	Current quota (t)	No. of vessels	Gear	Current capacity	Planned No. of vessels	Gear	Planned capacity	Current management measures	Future planned measures
									Catch limitation and individual quota and management of catch reports. Species-based fishing quotas are allocated to individual fishing vessels. When the target species (i.e. albacore tuna) catch of an individual vessel has reached the quota allocated, the vessel should stop fishing immediately and must return to the designated port. If there is any further incidental catch of the species, it should be discarded.	
									Management of positions of fishing vessels. All vessels are required to install satellite-based vessel monitoring system (VMS). The VMS on board shall be maintained functional at all times and transmit positions of the vessels to the VMS center every 6 hours.	
									Management of catch reports: The captain of the fishing vessel is required to accurately fill in the catch logbook and weekly catch report, and the carbon-copied sheet of the complete catch logbook shall be maintained on board the vessel for at least 12 months. In case the fishing vessel enters into a port or has completed its transshipment, the fishery operator shall submit its catch logbook to the Fisheries Agency for record	

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CHIN-ESE TAIPEI (cont.)									Management of catch statistical documents. When a fishing vessel wishes to sell specific catch, the vessel owner shall apply for the catch statistical documents of the fish species, such as north Atlantic swordfish. The information on catch statistical document shall be verified against the data on weekly catch report. A fishing vessel shall not use the catch statistical document issued to another vessel	
									Observer program. Fishing vessels shall accept scientific observers on board appointed by the Fisheries Agency.	
									Measures specified for swordfish. In compliance with the measure on the restrictions of minimum weight and size of swordfish under Recommendation 11-02, fishermen are required to release live undersize swordfish for rebuilding swordfish stock	

CANADA

Executive Summary (full text in original language only in **Annex 1 to PA4-801**)

Canada's history of fishing North Atlantic swordfish dates back to the 1880s. Today, this fishery continues to be socially and economically important to communities throughout Atlantic Canada.

Canada's 2015 initial allocation of North Atlantic swordfish was 1,348 metric tonnes; of which 90% was allocated to its longline fleet targeting North Atlantic swordfish, and the remaining 10% to its harpoon fleet targeting North Atlantic swordfish. Canada's offshore tuna fleet is also allocated 5 t for swordfish by-catch. There is no recreational or sportfish component to this fishery.

Canada's capacity to harvest its quota share is well documented. Average annual landings have totalled 101% of Canada's annual allocations since 2011. Since 2007, Canada has been allocated 8.8% of the total ICCAT quota. Nevertheless, as the recipient of quota transfers, Canada has accounted for approximately 12% of all North Atlantic swordfish harvested over the past 5 years.

In fact, the Canadian fleet, which has been reduced significantly over the years in order to respect ICCAT quotas, is only able to harvest during a 3-month season before exhausting its quota share despite North Atlantic swordfish being present in significant numbers in Canadian waters throughout the year.

As the foundation for reliable research and stock assessments, Canada collects, among other things, catch and effort data for all fishing trips. Beginning in 1996, an industry-funded Dockside Monitoring Program (DMP) was instituted in Atlantic Canada to provide independent third party verification of logbook submissions.

Canada's DMP is conducted by certified agents who oversee all offloads of swordfish in Atlantic Canada as well as enter logbook data into a central database. The DMP ensures that precise and reliable information is collected on the number of fish caught, their weight, effort, environmental conditions, and other vital statistics. This data is available in real-time to fisheries managers, scientists, and enforcement officers. Due to the requirement for all logbook data to be uploaded prior to the commencement of their next fishing trip, Canada has 100% logbook coverage for its fleets targeting North Atlantic swordfish.

Canada's comprehensive approach to enforcement also includes the requirement for VMS on all longline vessels, despite only a few of Canada's 77 pelagic longline vessels being over 20 meters in length and thus subject to ICCAT's VMS measure. The Conservation and Protection Program of DFO fly approximately 300 aerial surveillance flights a year in areas where swordfish fishing activities are occurring. Also, Fishery Officers inspected 5 swordfish buying/processing facilities and conducted audits of the Dockside Monitoring Program in this fishery. At-sea observers are targeted for deployment on 5% - 10% of swordfish fishing trips despite no ICCAT requirements for observers onboard swordfish vessels smaller than 20 meters.

As of 2012, in recognition of the strong management regime which is in place for these fisheries in Canada, both the longline and harpoon fleets targeting North Atlantic swordfish have been awarded Marine Stewardship Council certification. Canada is the first ICCAT member to obtain this certification for its entire swordfish fleet.

FRANCE (ST. PIERRE AND MIQUELON)

1. Background and current state of the fishery

France has been a member of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) since 1968. When the European Community joined ICCAT in 1997, France became a Contracting Party as a coastal State in respect of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon (SPM), which is a French overseas collectivity having the status of overseas country and territory vis-a-vis the European Union (article 355 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and association decisions between the EU and the OCTs: part four of the TFEU).

Swordfish have been fished in SPM since 2002, initially under charter agreement of a Canadian-flagged vessel (consecutively IVY, IVY ROSE, and then ATLANTIC ODYSSEY). On 9 March 2011, ATLANTIC ODYSSEY, a longline vessel targetting tuna and mainly northern swordfish, became a French-flagged vessel. The vessel usually operates from April to November and catches are landed in SPM or in Canada.

The technical characteristics of this longline vessel are as follows:

- Gross registered tonnage: 345 UMS
- Length overall: 30.25 m
- Onboard installed power 646 Kw

As indicated below, the available fishing opportunities and catches taken between 2003 and 2014 vary between 0 and 89.80 t.

Year	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*
Initial quota	35	35	35	35	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Adjusted quota[1]	35	48.90	67.20	48.30	78.80	108.30	56.80	120.70	80	100	100	100
Catches (t)	2.8	35.65	48.46	0	82	43.60	20.10	89.80	0.6	0	17.85	3.02

It should be noted that, for many years, a system has allowed the carryover of unexploited fishing opportunities from one year to the next, in accordance with the methods developed through the successive revisions to ICCAT recommendations. In addition, France (in respect of SPM) has benefitted in the past from transfers from other CPCs (in particular from the United Kingdom, in respect of its overseas territories).

For 2015, France's initial quota (in respect of SPM) is 40 t, to which a transfer of 40 t from the European Union should be added, as in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

2. Management, surveillance and control measures

ICCAT is sent periodic notifications regarding these measures, as required by the recommendations of this organisation.

[1] Including eventual carryovers from previous years and/or transfers from another Contracting Party.

The vessel is fitted with a VMS beacon. A controller can be embarked for a specific period. All landings are controlled. In addition, provisions are in place regarding the boarding of a scientific observer during the fishing campaigns of ATLANTIC ODYSSEY.

In order to limit the mortality of sea turtles caught as by-catch, ATLANTIC ODYSSEY is fitted with circle hooks.

3. Legal and administrative aspects

Licenses are granted by the State representative on the archipelago (Prefect) to fishing vessels upon application on the basis of the following French and international texts:

- Book IX of the rural and maritime fishing code, regarding maritime fishing and marine aquaculture;
- Law 76-655 of 16 July 1976 on the economic zone along the coasts of the territory of the Republic;
- Agreement on the reciprocal relations between France and Canada regarding fishing, signed on 27 March 1972;
- Order of 20 March 1987 establishing management and conservation measures for fishery resources and Order of 24 March 2015 establishing measures on technique and catch sizes for the professional fishery in territorial waters and the French economic zone off the coasts of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon;
- Decree No. 2010-1582 of 17 December 2010 regarding the organisation and State service missions in the overseas departments and regions, in Mayotte and Saint-Pierre and Miquelon.

4. Objectives

The northern swordfish fishery in SPM must be regarded as an element of internal economic development of this island collectivity, in particular the fact that ATLANTIC ODYSSEY, which was purchased from Canada, started to operate under the French flag on 9 March 2011.

Catches of this stock are a source of export revenue in the archipelago's economy, the fish being sold for an approximate price of Can$5 a pound. In the future, this fish could also be processed locally which would create employment in the processing industry, whose future depends in particular on the diversification of the species of fish handled.

Given the risks that could affect a small scale fleet, maintaining the possibility of carryover from year to year constitutes a very important element for France (in respect of SPM).

SENEGAL

1. Background

The swordfish fishery was first started in the 1980s by a Spanish longline fleet. The catches were approximately 500 t each year and the yields were among the highest observed in the Atlantic. The monthly size frequencies of the individuals caught were dominated by swordfish weighing between 50 and 100 kg, except in the month of July when the small specimens prevailed; the average weight of individuals caught (44 kg) is relatively low compared to those observed in other Atlantic fisheries.

2. Intermediate situation

Surface longline swordfish fishing is very recent in Senegal. Spain was the forerunner of this fishery which has been transformed for the most part into a bottom fishery. In Senegal, three species belonging to the billfish family are known and exploited both by the artisanal and industrial fisheries.

The Senegalese fishery is essentially composed of an artisanal fishery targetting small coastal pelagics and coastal demersals. This fishery catches as by-catch tunas and billfish and the distinction between swordfish, billfish and marlins is very poorly understood.

Sailfish and marlins are targeted in particular by the canoe artisanal fishery while marlins are mainly caught by the sport fishery. The gears used are trolling lines, pelagic gillnets and occasionally harpoons.

The industrial fishery is focused on one vessel owner with trawlers and tuna vessels. In 2003 and 2004, the latter were comprised of 4 baitboats and a longliner which targeted billfish, in particular, swordfish.

3. Current situation

From 2005, the number of longlines increased to 3, then to 4 in 2008 and 5 in 2009. In 2010, two of these three vessels changed flag, and the third one changed its fishing method. Today, 3 longlines are registered even though they are not all active.

Senegal was allocated swordfish quotas at the ICCAT annual meeting held in Croatia in 2006. This quota is comprised of a northern stock equivalent to 400 t and a southern stock of 300 t and has been subject to certain modifications due to provisional transfer of quotas since 2009.

As regards ICCAT management measures, Senegal has established compliance mechanisms in relation to Commission management measures for companies and the vessel owner. The new code under validation allows for transposition of ICCAT management measures into Senegal's legal framework through notes, circulars and decisions.

Senegal has embarked upon a process to improve the capacity of its fleet on the basis of a development plan which is under implementation and which provides for a new approach in the scaling of its fleet and for account to be taken of the artisanal fleet which is increasingly likely to catch ICCAT species.

As regards the sport fishery, it targets billfish and swordfish during the fishing season from May to November. In Senegal, traditionally, there are two large fish centres in Dakar and Mbour. The sport fishery is both a sporting discipline and a tourist product. This fishery also strengthens protection of the marine environment and maintenance of biodiversity.

Every year, the Federation participates regularly in data collection broken down by sport and recreational fisheries for ICCAT. These data are included in Senegal's annual report which is submitted to the SCRS. The data collected concern in particular species, fishing periods and areas, number of fishing trips, number of individuals, average weight, and average size.

Efforts have been made in conjunction with ICCAT through the Japanese project JDIP to improve data collection and to produce results based on size weight correspondence to quantify specimens that have never been assessed for weight.

Today, there is a new management approach to the Senegalese fishery and a fishing permit has been introduced for artisanal fishermen. This process includes tagging boats for the purposes of computerised management. The regulation makes provision for a fishing permit for artisanal fishermen for the purposes of compartmentalization of the fisheries and to ensure monitoring in relation to Senegal's obligations.

Senegal's swordfish fishing plan, which has an industrial fishery approach and entails redeployment of its fleet, is as follows:

Year	*2016*	*2017*
Fishing type	Bottom longliners	Bottom longliners
Number of vessels	4	6
Target species	Swordfish-tunas-shark	Swordfish-tunas-shark

UNITED STATES

Executive Summary (full text in original language only in **Annex 1**)

ICCAT Recommendation 13-02 renewed the requirement for each CPC to submit its development or fishing/management plan to the Commission by September 15 of each year. This document describes the history, future development, management, and socio-economic aspects of the U.S. North Atlantic swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) fishery.

The conservation and management of U.S. Atlantic swordfish fisheries since 1985 – five years before active management by ICCAT – has been defined by a comprehensive suite of ecosystem-based measures that go beyond the requirements of ICCAT recommendations. These measures have been developed following the results and advice from scientific studies with the goal of developing and maintaining a sustainable swordfish fishery. The U.S. commercial swordfish fishery is quota managed and operated under a permit program. There are no trip limits for directed commercial swordfish permit holders, and there is a trip limit of 30 swordfish per trip for incidental swordfish permit holders. U.S. commercial swordfish fishermen may only sell to permitted swordfish dealers, and reporting in a logbook is mandatory for limited access permit holders. All importers, exporters, and re-exporters of swordfish are required to obtain an International Trade Permit and submit bi-weekly reports. All pelagic longline vessels fishing in the Gulf of Mexico must use weak hooks to reduce by-catch of bluefin tuna. In addition, all pelagic longline vessels are required to have a functioning vessel monitoring system (VMS) unit onboard, are subject to mandatory observer coverage, and effective June 1, 2015, are required to have electronic monitoring systems installed, operable, and certified in order to depart on a fishing trip with pelagic longline gear on board. The U.S. observer coverage target for this fishery is eight percent of all fishing sets in each area/quarter strata; actual coverage in 2014 was 12.9 percent overall.

The United States has implemented several time/area closures for pelagic longline gear to minimize by-catch mortality of juvenile swordfish and other highly migratory and protected species. The United States has implemented sea turtle protection measures including the use of dipnets and line cutters to release turtles. Gangion lengths must be 110 percent of the length of the floatline in sets of 100 meters or less in depth, sea turtle guidelines for safe handling and release must be posted inside the wheelhouse, and fishermen must use corrodible circle hooks on all pelagic longline vessels. In addition, all U.S. longline vessel owners and operators must attend mandatory workshops to learn to carefully release and handle sea turtles and other protected species.

Recreational swordfish fishermen must have an Angling or Charter/Headboat permit and the sale of recreational landings of swordfish is prohibited. Recreational trip limits for swordfish include one per person, up to four per trip. In addition, charter boats and headboats may retain one swordfish per paying passenger for a total of up to six and 15 swordfish, respectively. Recreational fishermen are required to report all non-tournament swordfish landings and tournament operators, if selected, must report tournament swordfish landings. If a tournament is not selected, vessel owners are responsible for reporting their swordfish landings.

The United States has also implemented extensive scientific programs to support the collection of reliable fishery data, participation in stock assessments, and innovative research on swordfish biology, life history, and fishing techniques to reduce by-catch. These actions support our efforts to prevent and eliminate overfishing and excess fishing capacity, while ensuring that levels of fishing effort are commensurate with the ICCAT objective of achieving and maintaining a swordfish biomass that can support MSY. Together, they help ensure the sustainability of the swordfish stock and support an ecosystem-based approach to management.

Several U.S. domestic management measures (e.g., gear requirements, time/area closures, by-catch mitigation) have temporarily affected the ability of the U.S. fleet to fully harvest its ICCAT allocation. For example, as a responsible steward of the Florida Straits swordfish nursery grounds, U.S. actions to reduce fishing effort by our fleet in this area reduced mortality on both immature and mature swordfish. Such actions resulted in substantial declines in U.S. catches during the first part of the last decade (2001-2006), which were further exacerbated by natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. However, these same measures also resulted in a significant U.S. contribution to the health and rebuilding of the North Atlantic swordfish stock and the associated marine ecosystem, to the ultimate benefit of all ICCAT members that fish for this stock.

Ecosystem based management plays a key role in the sustainability of fisheries. It is a challenging but essential task to achieve broad ecosystem conservation and management objectives while preserving a viable fishery. As this document will demonstrate, the United States is taking its ocean stewardship responsibilities seriously. While ICCAT has taken some steps aimed at addressing certain ecosystem matters, in particular with regard to by-catch, the United States has gone beyond those requirements, and we are implementing measures designed to ensure the health of both the swordfish stock and the fishery. It is important for ICCAT and other RFMOs to encourage these kinds of efforts by their members in order to ensure sustainable fisheries and healthy ecosystems.

Since the North Atlantic stock of swordfish was declared rebuilt, the United States has been fully committed to the revitalization of our swordfish fishery and has made significant efforts over the past few years to restructure its fisheries and adjust regulatory constraints on its swordfish fishery in light of the new circumstances. These measures are designed to increase swordfish landings while ensuring that the fishery complies with U.S. laws and regulations, including those aimed at preserving the long-term sustainability of the stock, and ICCAT requirements. Notably, in 2013, the Marine Stewardship Council certified the U.S. North Atlantic Swordfish fishery.

In summary, the United States has chosen to pursue a prudent and deliberate strategy of allowing an incremental increase in Atlantic swordfish fishing effort to ensure an environmentally and economically sustainable fishery while preserving its record of strong sustainable management of the fishery, including through implementation of all ICCAT recommendations. Our approach to the management of this fishery supported ICCAT's rebuilding efforts and is now helping to ensure the long-term sustainability of the stock in accordance with the objectives of the Convention. The United States looks forward to continuing its active participation in this socially and economically important fishery. To that end, this document describes the interests, fishing patterns, and fishing practices of the U.S. Atlantic swordfish fleet – past, present, and future.