

Original: English

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT TO FURTHER
STRENGTHEN THE PLAN TO REBUILD BLUE MARLIN AND WHITE MARLIN STOCKS**

(Proposed by Brazil and the United States)

RECALLING the 2000 *Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Populations* [Rec. 00-13] from ICCAT to rebuild Atlantic blue marlin and Atlantic white marlin;

FURTHER RECALLING that the *Recommendation by ICCAT to Further Strengthen the Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Stocks* [Rec. 12-04] established an annual landings limit for each of these stocks, along with other conservation and management measures designed to address all sources of fishing mortality, as a step toward the establishment of formal rebuilding programs for these stocks;

CONSIDERING that the 2011 SCRS stock assessment indicated that the blue marlin stock is below B_{MSY} (the stock is overfished) and that fishing mortality is above F_{MSY} (overfishing is occurring) and that only catch levels of 2000 t or less would prevent further stock decline;

RECOGNIZING that SCRS expressed concern with the significant increase in the contribution from non-industrial fisheries to the total blue marlin harvest, that landings from these fisheries are not fully accounted for in the ICCAT database, and that it is imperative to develop CPUE indices for all fleets that have substantial landings of blue marlin;

TAKING NOTE OF the results of the 2012 white marlin assessment, which indicated that the stock was overfished but most likely not undergoing overfishing, while noting significant uncertainty associated with species composition in the historical time series of catch (white marlin vs. spearfish) and the actual magnitude of the catch due to the underreporting of discards, and acknowledging SCRS advice that, at a minimum, the Commission should limit white marlin catches to less than 400 t;

HIGHLIGHTING that the SCRS indicated that circle hooks can reduce deep hooking and, therefore, increase the post-release survival of marlins in many fisheries while not negatively affecting catch rates of target species, and that the SCRS recommended that the Commission consider this approach;

FURTHER RECALLING the existing obligations of Contracting Parties, non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities (CPCs) to require the collection of discard data in their existing domestic observer and logbook programs under the *Recommendation by ICCAT on Information Collection and Harmonization of Data on By-catch and Discards in ICCAT Fisheries* [Rec. 11-10], and the minimum standards for scientific observer programs established in the *Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish Minimum Standards for Fishing Vessel Scientific Observer Programs* [Rec. 10-10];

COGNIZANT that marlins are caught in industrial, artisanal and recreational fisheries, and that fair and equitable conservation actions are needed to end overfishing and support rebuilding;

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

1. An annual limit of 2,000 t for blue marlin and 400 t for white marlin/spearfish is continued for these stocks, for 2016, 2017 and 2018. This landings limit shall be implemented as follows:

<i>Blue Marlin</i>	<i>Landings Limit (t)</i>
Brazil	190
China, P.R.	45
Chinese Taipei	150
Côte d'Ivoire	150
European Union	480
Ghana	250
Japan	390
Korea Rep.	35
Mexico	70
S. Tome & Príncipe	45
Senegal	60
Trinidad and Tobago	20
Venezuela	100
TOTAL	1,985

<i>White Marlin/Spearfish</i>	<i>Landings Limit (t)</i>
Barbados	10
Brazil	50
Canada	10
China, P.R.	10
Chinese Taipei	50
European Union	50
Côte d'Ivoire	10
Japan	35
Korea Rep.	20
Mexico	25
S. Tome & Príncipe	20
Trinidad and Tobago	15
Venezuela	50
TOTAL	355

The United States shall limit its landings to 250 recreationally-caught Atlantic blue marlin and white marlin/spearfish combined on an annual basis. All other CPCs shall limit their landings to a maximum of 10 t of Atlantic blue marlin and 2 t of white marlin/spearfish combined.

2. To the extent possible, as the CPC approaches its landings limits, such CPC shall take appropriate measures to ensure that all blue marlin and white marlin that are alive by the time of boarding are released in a manner that maximizes their survival. For CPCs that prohibit dead discards, the landings of blue marlin and white marlin/spearfish that are dead when brought alongside the vessel and that are not sold or entered into commerce shall not count against the limits established in paragraph 1, on the condition that such prohibition be clearly explained in their Annual Report.
3. Any unused portion or excess of the annual landing limit established in Paragraph 1 may be added to/shall be deducted from, according to the case, the respective landing limit during or before the adjustment year, in the following way:

<i>Catch Year</i>	<i>Adjustment Year</i>
2013	2015
2014	2016
2015	2017

However, the maximum underage that a party may carry over in any given year shall not exceed 10% of its landing limit, for those CPCs whose landing limit is larger than 45 t, or 20% of its landing limit, for those CPCs whose landing limit is lower or equal to 45 t.

4. In light of SCRS advice, CPCs shall encourage the use of circle hooks in their ICCAT fisheries in order to minimize post-release mortality of marlins.
5. CPCs shall endeavor to conduct additional research to evaluate the effectiveness of circle hooks, and other methods of reducing post-release mortality, and report their findings to the SCRS.
6. CPCs with recreational fisheries shall maintain 5% scientific observer coverage of blue marlin and white marlin/spearfish tournament landings.
7. CPCs with recreational fisheries shall adopt domestic regulations that establish minimum sizes in their recreational fisheries that meet or exceed the following lengths: 251 cm LJFL for blue marlin and 168 cm LJFL for white marlin/spearfish, or comparable limits by weight.
8. CPCs shall prohibit the sale, or offering for sale, of any part or whole carcass of blue marlin or white marlin/spearfish caught in recreational fisheries.
9. In their Annual Reports, CPCs shall inform the Commission of steps taken to implement the provisions of this Recommendation through domestic law or regulations, including monitoring, control and surveillance measures.
10. CPCs with non-industrial fisheries shall provide information about their data collection programs in their Annual Reports, and the SCRS shall continue to review and evaluate this information as a basis for developing recommendations to improve or expand these programs, including through capacity building.
11. CPCs shall report to the SCRS in 2016 on their methods for estimating live and dead discards of blue marlin and white marlin/spearfish, as these estimates are critical to support the stock assessment process. The SCRS shall review the available reports and provide advice to the Commission on best practices for the estimation of dead discards.
12. The Secretariat, with support from the Commission and the SCRS, shall continue its review of the relevant work conducted by the regional and sub-regional international organizations, similar to the review conducted for West Africa in 2015, with a priority focus on the Caribbean/Latin America.
13. Taking into account the findings of these regional reviews, the Commission and the CPCs shall take action, as appropriate, to improve data collection and reporting programs in accordance with any SCRS advice in preparation for the marlin stock assessments in 2018.
14. Following the next assessments of blue marlin and white marlin/spearfish in 2018, where the SCRS will evaluate progress toward ending overfishing and rebuilding the stocks, the Commission shall amend this Recommendation as necessary to establish rebuilding goals and associated timeframes for rebuilding.
15. This Recommendation repeals and replaces the Recommendation by ICCAT to Further Strengthen the Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Populations [Rec. 12-04].