

Original: English

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT TO FURTHER
STRENGTHEN THE PLAN TO REBUILD BLUE MARLIN AND WHITE MARLIN STOCKS**
(Proposal by Japan)

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 Populations* [Rec. 11-07] called for Contracting Parties, non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities (CPCs) to establish at the 2012 Commission meeting a multi-year plan to rebuild blue marlin and white marlin populations on the basis of advice of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), including the establishment of total mortality limits by CPC;

RECOGNIZING that the objective of the Convention is to maintain populations at levels that will support maximum sustainable catch (usually referred to as maximum sustainable yield or MSY);

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Principles of Decision Making for ICCAT Conservation and Management Measures* [Rec. 11-13] states that for stocks that are subject to overfishing, the Commission shall immediately adopt management measures, taking into account, *inter alia*, the biology of the stock and SCRS advice, designed to result in a high probability of ending overfishing in as short a time as possible;

CONSIDERING that the 2011 SCRS stock assessment indicates that the blue marlin stock is below BMSY (the stock is overfished) and that fishing mortality is above FMSY (overfishing is occurring) and that unless the recent catch levels are substantially reduced to 2000 t or less and that the Commission adopts measures to manage fishing mortality by non-industrial fleets, the stock will likely continue to decline;

TAKING NOTE OF the results of the 2012 white marlin assessment, which indicated that the stock remains overfished and that overfishing is probably not occurring, 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 that SCRS concluded that, at a minimum, the Commission should ensure that white marlin catches do not exceed current levels of approximately 400 t;

NOTING that, due to the misidentification problems between white marlin and spearfishes (genus *Tetrapturus*), the SCRS also recommended that management measures should be applied to these species together as a mixed stock complex until more accurate species identification and differentiation of species catches are available;

FURTHER RECALLING the obligations of 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 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 established 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 & Principe	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 duly informed to the ICCAT Secretariat.
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>
<u>2016</u>	<u>2018</u>
<u>2017</u>	<u>2019</u>
<u>2018</u>	<u>2020</u>

- However, the maximum underage that a party may carryover 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. All CPCs with recreational fisheries shall maintain 5% scientific observer coverage of blue marlin and white marlin/spearfish tournament landings.
 5. All 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.
 6. 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.
 7. In their Annual Reports, beginning in 2013, CPCs shall inform the Commission of steps taken to implement this Recommendation through domestic law or regulations, including monitoring, control and surveillance measures.
 8. All CPCs shall report to the SCRS by July 31, 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 these reports and start its work to estimate fishing mortalities for blue and white marlins and sailfish by commercial longline and purse seine fisheries, recreational fisheries and artisanal fisheries using all the available data and information including observer data. The SCRS shall also develop a new research program based on the ICCAT Enhanced Program for Billfish Research to overcome the data gap issues of those fisheries, in particular artisanal fisheries of developing CPCs and recommend the program to the Commission for its approval in 2017.
 9. The Secretariat, in conjunction with the SCRS, shall research and review existing regional or individual CPC data collection programs, including capacity building programs, for artisanal fisheries. The Secretariat and the SCRS will present their findings at the 2017 Commission meeting, including a plan to work with relevant regional and sub-regional international organizations and CPCs to expand such programs or implement them in new areas to improve data on billfish catches in these fisheries.
 10. At its next assessments of blue marlin and white marlin/spearfish stocks, the SCRS shall evaluate progress toward the goals of the rebuilding programs for blue marlin and white marlin/spearfish.
 11. This Recommendation replaces Recommendation by ICCAT to Further Strengthen the Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Stocks [Rec. 12-04].