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**DRAFT RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT AMENDING REC. 17-06 FOR AN INTERIM
CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR WESTERN ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA**

(Document submitted by Panel 2 Chair)

RECOGNIZING that *Recommendation by ICCAT for An Interim Conservation and Management Plan for Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna* [Rec. 17-06] expires at the end of 2020,

UNDERSTANDING that due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19 it is difficult to have substantive discussion on conservation and management measures,

NOTING, however, that the new stock assessment conducted by the SCRS in 2020 does indicate a concern for maintaining the current TAC,

FURTHER NOTING that the SCRS has advised that the TAC should be reduced to 1,785 t or less for 2021 if the Commission wants to avoid overfishing for 2021-2023 with more than 50% probability;

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

1. The provisions in the *Recommendation by ICCAT for an Interim Conservation and Management Plan for Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna* [Rec. 17-06] shall be extended for one year with the following amendments:

(1) Paragraph 1 shall be replaced with:

“1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities (CPCs) whose vessels have been actively fishing for bluefin tuna in the western Atlantic shall implement the following interim conservation and management plan for the 2021 period.”

(2) Paragraph 3 shall be replaced with:

“3. The annual total allowable catch (TAC), inclusive of dead discards, of 1,785 t is established for 2021.”

(3) Paragraph 4 shall be replaced with:

“4. The annual TAC in Paragraph 3 shall be reviewed in 2021 by the Commission on the advice of the SCRS, which would include the review of updated fishery indicators. In support of this work, CPCs shall make special efforts to update abundance indices and other fishery indicators and provide them to the SCRS.”

(4) Paragraph 6 shall be replaced with:

“6. The allocation of the annual TAC, inclusive of dead discards, will be indicated as follows:

(a) The annual TAC shall include the following allocations:

| CPC | Allocation |
|---|------------|
| USA (by-catch related to longline fisheries in vicinity of management area boundary) | 25 t |
| Canada (by-catch related to longline fisheries in vicinity of management area boundary) | 15 t |

b) After subtracting the amounts under paragraph 6(a), the remainder of the annual TAC will be allocated as follows:

| CPC | If the remainder of the annual TAC is: | | | |
|--|--|----------------|--|-----------------|
| | <2,413 t (A) | 2,413 t (B) | >2,413-2,660 t (C) | >2,660 t (D) |
| United States | 54.02% | 1,303 t | 1,303 t | 49.00% |
| Canada | 22.32% | 539 t | 539 t | 20.24% |
| Japan | 17.64% | 426 t | 426 t + all increase between 2,413 t and 2,660 t | 24.74% |
| United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda) | 0.23% | 5.5 t | 5.5 t | 0.23% |
| France (in respect of St. Pierre & Miquelon) | 0.23% | 5.5 t | 5.5 t | 0.23% |
| Mexico | 5.56% | 134 t | 134 t | 5.56% |

(c) Consistent with paragraphs 1, 3, and 6(b), the TAC for 2021 results in the following CPC-specific quota allocations (not including by-catch allowances listed in 6(a)):

TAC for 2021: 1,785 t

| | |
|--|----------|
| United States | 942.65 t |
| Canada | 389.48 t |
| Japan | 307.82 t |
| United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda) | 4.01 t |
| France (in respect of St. Pierre & Miquelon) | 4.01 t |
| Mexico | 97.02 t |

In no case shall the allocation to France (in respect of St. Pierre & Miquelon) and to the United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda) be less than 4 t each in any single year unless the fishery is closed.

(d) Depending on availability, Mexico can transfer up to 97.02 t of its adjusted quota in 2021 to Canada to support cooperative research as specified in paragraph 20.

- (e) Depending on availability, the United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda) can transfer up to the amount of its adjusted quota in 2021 to the United States to support cooperative research as specified in paragraph 20.
- (f) Depending on availability, France (in respect of St. Pierre & Miquelon) can transfer up to the amount of its adjusted quota in 2021 to Canada to support cooperative research as specified in paragraph 20.
- (g) CPCs planning to engage in the cooperative research activities specified in paragraphs 6(d), 6(e), and 6(f) above shall: notify the Commission and the SCRS of the details of their research programs to be undertaken before they commence, and present the results of the research to the SCRS."

(5) Paragraph 16 shall be replaced with:

"16. The SCRS shall refine the MSE and continue testing the candidate management procedures. On this basis, in 2021, the Commission shall review the candidate management procedures and select one for adoption and implementation, including pre-agreed management actions to be taken under various stock conditions."

(6) Paragraph 17 shall be replaced with:

"17. In 2022, the SCRS will conduct a stock assessment for bluefin tuna for the western Atlantic stock and for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock and provide advice to the Commission on the appropriate management measures, approaches, and strategies, including, *inter alia*, regarding TAC levels for those stocks for future years."

(7) Paragraph 18 shall be replaced with:

"18. By 2021, the SCRS shall provide the Commission with advice on any potential impacts due to uncertainties (including regarding the spawner-recruit relationship) of implementing an $F_{0.1}$ strategy, and, for any identified risks, advise how they could be addressed in future management decisions."

(8) Paragraph 20 shall be replaced with:

"20. CPCs that harvest Atlantic bluefin tuna should contribute to the research, including that being undertaken through ICCAT's GBYP. CPCs should make or continue special efforts to enhance the collection and analysis of biological samples from Atlantic bluefin tuna fisheries, such as through sample contributions to the coordinated sampling plan recommended by the SCRS. The SCRS will report to the Commission in 2021 on these efforts. In addition, it is important to continue to explore sampling and/or other approaches for enhancing, and where needed developing, accurate abundance indices for juvenile bluefin tuna. CPCs should also make special efforts to ensure complete and timely submission of any collected data to the SCRS."

- 2. In 2021 the Commission shall review and amend, as appropriate, the Recommendation 17-06 amended by this recommendation.

Commented [A1]: Panel 2 Chair:
The SCRS recommends the next stock assessment to be conducted in 2022.

Commented [A2]: Panel 2 Chair:
The SCRS says that they could not address this request due to time constraint this year. The Chair suggests 2021.