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Cover sheet to accompany new proposals

(proposal submitted by Canada)

Title of the Proposed Draft Recommendation/Resolution: *Draft Recommendation by ICCAT for a conservation and management plan for North Atlantic swordfish*

Title of currently in force recommendation(s) or Resolution(s) addressing the same or related issues: *Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 22-03 extending and amending Recommendation 17-02 for the Conservation of North Atlantic swordfish (Rec. 23-04)*

1. Does it create new **reporting obligation(s)** for CPCs?

   Yes ☐ No ☒

   Brief description of new reporting obligation(s):

2. Does it require additional input or **work by the SCRS**? Yes ☒ No ☐

   Is this work already included in the current SCRS workplan? Yes ☒ No ☐

   Brief description of new scientific work required (i.e. stock assessment, analysis, external consultant):

   The swordfish Species Group will further refine the robustness tests in coming years and will assist Panel 4 in developing an exceptional circumstances protocol (ECP) in 2025. Moreover, the SCRS will be tasked with analyzing the statistical methodologies to estimate live and dead discards that need to be submitted by CPCs no later than 2025. Finally, the SCRS will be tasked with the ongoing work related to the implementation of the management procedure (MP) as per the implementation schedule, such as conducting stock assessments, applying the MP to calculate Total Allowable Catch (TAC), reviewing the MSE, and evaluating exceptional circumstances (ECs) annually.

3. Does it involve the creation of a **new working group or intersessional process**?

   Yes ☐ No ☒

4. Does it require a new **programme or additional activities to be managed by the Secretariat**?

   Yes ☐ No ☒

   Brief description of new Secretariat work required.

5. What is the proposed timeframe for implementation, and are there different specific timeframes for certain CPCs, fisheries, regions, etc.?

   Entry into force in 2025.

6. Is there any other relevant information regarding the resource and workload implications of the proposal?

   No

Explanatory note on the Draft Recommendation by ICCAT for a conservation and management plan for North Atlantic swordfish

(proposal submitted by Canada)

This proposal repeals and replaces the *Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation for the conservation of North Atlantic Swordfish, Rec. 16-03* (Rec. 17-02), the *Resolution by ICCAT on development of initial Management Objectives for North Atlantic swordfish* (Res. 19-14), the *Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Supplemental Recommendation 21-02 extending and amending Recommendation 17-02 for the conservation of North Atlantic swordfish* (Rec. 22-03), and the *Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 22-03 extending and amending Recommendation 17-02 for the Conservation of North Atlantic swordfish* (Rec. 23-04).

In practical terms, the proposed recommendation sets out a conservation and management plan for North Atlantic swordfish, including the adoption of a management procedure (MP) arising from the management strategy evaluation (MSE) exercise that was mandated by the Commission in 2015 (*Recommendation by ICCAT on the development of harvest control rules and of management strategy evaluation* (Rec. 15-07)).

As mentioned at the Panel 4 meeting of October 2024, Canada's intention at this year's Commission meeting is to engage in catch limit negotiations for the purposes of resolving the imbalance between the catch limits of North Atlantic swordfish and providing sustainable economic opportunities for those CPCs that have exhibited the interest and ability to prosecute this fishery. To recall, only 4 out of 19 CPCs harvesting swordfish have utilized[1] more than 85% of their annual allocation on average since 2010, while 10 out of 19 CPCs have utilized less than 50% of their annual allocation on average over the same time period.

In 2010, as North Atlantic swordfish emerged from a ten-year rebuilding plan, a commitment was undertaken to review future conservation and management plans in the context of SCRS advice and the ICCAT Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Opportunities, as reflected first in Ref. 01-25 and subsequently in *Resolution by ICCAT on criteria for the allocation of fishing possibilities* (Res. 15-13). This commitment has gone unfulfilled since 2010. In this proposal, the catch limits table and transfer provisions have been left intentionally blank and shall be discussed at the Annual meeting. To note, Costa Rica has been added to the allocation table as a new member of ICCAT, and Panel 4.

As Panel 4 is set to adopt a MP for North Atlantic swordfish, Canada believes that this is the right time to address the recurring imbalance in the catch limits table. To this end, we will engage with all CPCs during the annual meeting to agree to a more fair and equitable catch limits table.

[1] Utilization is defined as the sum of catch and transfers in a given year.

Draft Recommendation by ICCAT for a conservation and management plan for North Atlantic swordfish

(proposal submitted by Canada)

TAKING NOTE OF the *Resolution by ICCAT on Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities* (Res. 15-13);

SEEKING to ensure that the total catch does not exceed the annual Total Allowable Catch (TAC);

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

PART I
General Provisions

1. The Contracting Parties, and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (CPCs) whose vessels have been actively fishing for swordfish in the North Atlantic shall take the following conservation and fishery management measures for North Atlantic swordfish, which include the Management Procedure (MP) set out in **Annex 2** for establishing annual TAC.

Management Objectives

2. The management objectives for the North Atlantic swordfish stock are:

   (a) Stock Status:

   - The stock should have a 60% or greater probability of occurring in the green quadrant of the Kobe plot (no overfishing occurring and not overfished);

   (b) Safety:

   - There should be a less than [15/10%] probability of the stock falling below B_{LIM}[1]

   (c) Yield:

   - Maximize overall catch levels; and

   (d) Stability:

   - [Any increase or decrease in TAC between consecutive management periods should be less than [25%]/ There is no stability limitation on TAC changes between management cycles]

   Performance Measures (indicators) used to evaluate the performance of MPs for each management objective are found in **Annex 1**.

PART II
Management Procedure and Exceptional Circumstances

3. Consistent with the management objectives specified in paragraph 2, the [XXYY] management procedure has been selected and is fully described in **Annex 2**.

4. In 2025, Panel 4 with scientific guidance from the SCRS shall develop a protocol of exceptional circumstances (ECP) for this MP, for adoption by the Commission. The ECP shall become **Annex 3** of this Recommendation once adopted. The SCRS shall use **Annex 3** to assess the occurrence of Exceptional Circumstances (EC) and the Commission shall act in accordance with the ECP sets out in **Annex 3**.

PART III
Catch Limits

Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and catch limits

5. According to the timeline set out in **Annex 4**, the SCRS shall run the MP specified in **Annex 2** and advise the Commission of the resulting TAC. Pursuant to the application of the procedures established in **Annex 2** and **Annex 4**, constant annual TAC of [xx,xxx t] is established for the management period 2025-2027. This annual TAC shall be allocated as follows:

CPCs	*Catch limit** XX,XXX (t)*
European Union	
United States	
Canada	
Japan	
Morocco	
Mexico	
Brazil	
Barbados	
Venezuela	
Trinidad & Tobago	
United Kingdom	
France (SPM)	
China	
Senegal	
Korea	
Belize	
Côte d'Ivoire	
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	
Costa Rica	
Chinese Taipei	

6. Notwithstanding the *Recommendation by ICCAT regarding the temporary adjustment of quotas* (Rec. 01-12), in between meetings of the Commission, a CPC with a TAC allocation of North Atlantic swordfish, as per paragraph 5 may make a one-time transfer within a fishing year of up to 15% of its TAC allocation to other CPCs with TAC allocations, consistent with domestic obligations and conservation considerations. Any such transfer may not be used to cover overharvests. A CPC that receives a one-time catch limit transfer may not retransfer that catch limit.

7. If the catch in any year exceeds the TAC specified in paragraph 5, CPCs that have exceeded their individual catch limits shall pay back their overharvest in accordance with paragraph 8 of this recommendation. Any amount of the overharvest remaining after such adjustment shall be deducted from the annual catch limit of each CPC two years following the year in which the excess occurred, on a *pro rata* basis of the catch limits in the table in paragraph 5 above.

Underage and overage of catch

8. Any unused portion or excess of the annual adjusted quota may be added to/shall be deducted from, according to the case, the respective quota/catch limit during or before the adjustment year, as follows:

Catch year	*Adjustment year*
2023	2025
2024	2026
2025	2027
2026	2028
2027	2029

However, the maximum underage that a CPC may carryover in any given year shall not exceed 15% of its initial catch limit (as specified in paragraph 5 above excluding quota transfers) for those CPCs holding catch limits more than 500 t, and 40% for other CPCs.

9. If Japan's landings exceed its catch limits in any year, the overage shall be deducted in subsequent years so that total landings for Japan shall not exceed its total catch limits for the six-year period commencing in [2025]. When annual landings by Japan are less than its catch limits, the underage may be added to the subsequent years' catch limits, so that total landings by Japan do not exceed its total for the same six-year period. Any underages or overages from the [2025-2027] management period shall be applied to the subsequent management period to be decided by the Commission in 2027.

PART IV
Scientific Research and Data Reporting Requirements

10. The SCRS shall continue to refine the MSE robustness tests in 2025-2027. In support of this effort, the SCRS and Panel 4 shall discuss these tests and the development of an ECP at an intersessional Panel 4 meeting in 2025.

11. When assessing stock status and providing management recommendations to the Commission, the SCRS shall consider the interim limit reference point (LRP) of $0.4*B_{MSY}$ or any more robust LRP established through further analysis.

12. All CPCs catching swordfish in the North Atlantic shall endeavor to provide annually the best available data to the SCRS, including catch, catch at size, location and month of capture on the smallest scale possible, as determined by the SCRS. The data submitted shall be for the broadest range of age classes possible, consistent with minimum size restrictions, and by sex when possible. The data shall also include discards (both dead and alive) and effort statistics, even when no analytical stock assessment is scheduled. The SCRS shall review these data annually.

13. No later than [2025], CPCs shall present to the SCRS the statistical methodology used to estimate dead and live discards. CPCs with artisanal and small-scale fisheries shall also provide information about their data collection programs. The SCRS shall review these methodologies and, if it determines that a methodology is not scientifically sound, the SCRS shall provide relevant feedback to the CPCs in question to improve the methodologies. Once these methods are approved CPCs should update their catch reporting to incorporate these estimated dead and live discards.

PART V
Management Measures

14. In order to protect small swordfish, CPCs shall take the necessary measures to prohibit the taking of and landing of swordfish weighing less than 25 kg live weight, or in the alternative, measuring less than 125 cm lower jaw fork length (LJFL); however, CPCs may grant tolerances to boats which have incidentally captured small fish, with the condition that this incidental catch shall not exceed 15 percent of the number of swordfish per landing of the total swordfish catch of said boats.

15. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 14, any CPC may choose, as an alternative to the minimum size of 25 kg/ 125 cm LJFL, to take the necessary measures to prohibit the taking by its vessels in the Atlantic Ocean, as well as the landing and sale in its jurisdiction, of swordfish (and swordfish parts), less than 15 kg/ 119 cm LJFL, provided that, if this alternative is chosen, no tolerance of swordfish smaller than 119 LJFL, or in the alternative 15 kg, shall be allowed. For swordfish that have been dressed, a cleithrum to keel (CK) measurement of 63 cm can also be applied. A Party that chooses this alternative minimum size shall require appropriate record keeping of discards. The SCRS should continue to monitor and analyze the effects of this measure on the mortality of immature swordfish.

16. CPCs shall issue specific authorizations to vessels 20 meters LOA or greater flying their flag that are authorized to fish for North Atlantic swordfish in the Convention area. Each CPC shall indicate which of such vessels it has so authorized on its vessel list submitted pursuant to the *Recommendation by ICCAT concerning the establishment of an ICCAT Record of Vessels 20 meters in length overall or greater authorized to operate in the Convention Area* [Rec. 13-13[2]]. Such vessels not entered into this record or entered without the required indication that fishing for North Atlantic swordfish is authorized are deemed not to be authorized to fish for, retain on board, transship, transport, transfer, process or land North Atlantic swordfish.

17. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article VIII, paragraph 2, of the Convention, with respect to the annual individual catch limits established above, the CPCs whose vessels have been actively fishing for North Atlantic swordfish shall implement this recommendation as soon as possible in accordance with the regulatory procedures of each CPC.

18. CPCs may allow bycatch of North Atlantic swordfish by vessels not authorized to fish for North Atlantic swordfish pursuant to paragraph 16, if the CPC establishes a maximum onboard bycatch limit for such vessels and the bycatch in question is accounted for within the CPC's quota or catch limit. Each CPC shall provide in its Annual Report the maximum bycatch limit it allows for such vessels. That information shall be compiled by the ICCAT Secretariat and made available to CPCs.

19. This Recommendation replaces and repeals the *Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 22-03 extending and amending Recommendation 17-02 for the conservation of North Atlantic swordfish* (Rec. 23-04).

[2] As amended by *Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 13-13 concerning the establishment of an ICCAT record of vessels 20 metres in length overall or greater authorized to operate in the Convention area* (Rec. 21-14).

Table of Operational Management Objectives and Performance Indicators (PIs)

Performance Indicators are calculated based on 80 simulations for each of the 9 operating models (OMs) for a 30-year projection under a Candidate Management Procedures (CMP).

Management objectives	*Corresponding key PIs*
Status The stock should have a [60, 70]% or greater probability of occurring in the green quadrant of the Kobe matrix.	**PGK_{SHORT}**: Probability of being in the Kobe green quadrant (i.e., $SB \geq SB_{MSY}$ and $F < F_{MSY}$) in years 1-10 **PGK_{MED}**: Probability of being in the Kobe green quadrant (i.e., $SB \geq SB_{MSY}$ and $F < F_{MSY}$) in years 11-20 **PGK_{ALL}**: Probability of being in the Kobe green quadrant (i.e., $SB \geq SB_{MSY}$ and $F < F_{MSY}$) over years 1-30 **PNOF:** Probability of not overfishing ($F < F_{MSY}$) over years 1-30.
Safety There should be a [10, 15]% or less probability of the stock falling below B_{LIM} ($0.4*B_{MSY}$) at any point during the 30-year evaluation period.	**LRP_{ALL}**: Probability of breaching the limit reference point (i.e., $SB < 0.4*SB_{MSY}$) in any of years 1-30.
Yield Maximize overall catch levels.	**TAC1**: TAC in the first management cycle (2025-2027) **$AvTAC_{SHORT}$**: Median TAC (t) over years 1-10 **$AvTAC_{MED}$**: Median TAC (t) over years 11-20 **$AvTAC_{LONG}$**: Median TAC (t) over years 21-30
Stability [Any increase or decrease in TAC between management periods should be less than 25%. / There is no stability limitation on TAC changes between management cycles.]	**VarC**: Mean variation in TAC (%) between management cycles over years 1-30.

Annex 2

Description and formulae for calculating Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for North Atlantic swordfish using the [MCC9, MCC11, SPSSFox] Management Procedure (MP)

[To be inserted once the MP has been selected by Panel 4.]

Exceptional Circumstances Protocol (ECP)

[The ECP to be developed in 2025 shall be inserted here.]

Annex 4

Schedule for Management Procedure (MP) implementation

Three-year management cycle

		Activity					***Data inputs***	
Year	*Management cycle*	*MP run*	*MP advice implemented*	*Stock assessment*	*MSE review*	*EC evaluated*	*Combined index**	*EC indicators*
2024		x					x	
2025	1		x			x		x
2026						x		x
2027		x				x	x	x
2028	2		x	[x]		x		x
2029				[x]	[x]	x		x
2030		x			[x]	x	x	x
2031	3		x			x		x
2032						x		x
2033		x				x	x	x

*The combined index may be updated every year, depending on the requirements set out in the ECP.