

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT
ON A MULTI-YEAR CONSERVATION AND
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR BIGEYE TUNA**

CONSIDERING the need to conserve and manage the bigeye tuna stocks, the Standing Committee for Research and Statistics (SCRS) recommends that the total catch not exceed 90,000 t;

CONVINCED that the implementation of this advice would provide the foundations for a stable management strategy for these stocks in the medium term;

MINDFUL of the 2001 ICCAT *Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities* [01-25];

AWARE of the considerable efforts that have already been carried out by Contracting Parties involved in these fisheries;

NOTING that the implementation of a closed area/season, to be applied by purse seine and baitboat fleets, significantly contributes to the reduction of the catches of juvenile bigeye tuna,

CONCERNED at the increasing development of IUU activities and the consequent need to regulate strictly transshipment operations,

RECOGNIZING that timely reporting of catch will assist greatly in the monitoring of the fisheries,

CONSIDERING that the adoption of a multi-annual program for the medium-term will contribute to the conservation and sustainable development of the bigeye tuna stocks;

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

- 1 Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (hereafter named CPCs) whose vessels fish bigeye tuna in the Atlantic shall implement a multi-annual management and conservation program for the period 2005 to 2008.

Capacity limitation

- 2 A capacity limitation shall be maintained in accordance with the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Bigeye Tuna Conservation Measures for Vessels Larger Than 24 Meters Length Overall (LOA)* [Rec. 98-03] limiting the number of fishing vessels to the average number of fishing vessels having fished bigeye tuna in the Convention area in 1991 and 1992.

- a) Each CPC which has been allocated a catch limit, in accordance with operative paragraph 4 below, shall restrict the number of its vessels fishing for bigeye tuna, by gear type, in 2005 and subsequent years, to the number of their bigeye vessels notified to ICCAT for 2005.

In that regard, each of these CPCs shall notify by 30 June 2005, to the Commission the number of their bigeye vessels, by gear type. Each CPC shall adjust fishing effort commensurate with the available fishing opportunities.

- b) The following limits shall be applied to:

China 45 longline vessels
 Philippines 8 longline vessels
 Chinese Taipei 98 longline vessels
 Panama 3 purse seine vessels

These CPCs shall ensure that their presence in this fishery is commensurate with their fishing possibilities.

- c) Each CPC shall manage the inclusion and exclusion of its vessels in/from the ICCAT Record of Vessels. Vessels may be replaced on the Record by a vessel of equivalent capacity.

TAC and Catch limits

- 3 The annual total allowable catch (TAC) is fixed at 90,000 t for each of the years 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

- 4 a) The following catch limits shall be applied for the four year period until 2008, based on the average catch of Atlantic bigeye tuna in 1991 and 1992 and taking account of recent developments, for the following CPCs:

CPC	2005	2006	2007	2008
China	5,400	5,700	5,900	5,900
European Community	25,000	24,500	24,000	24,000
Ghana	4,000	4,500	5,000	5,000
Japan	27,000	26,000	25,000	25,000
Panama	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500
Chinese Taipei	16,500	16,500	16,500	16,500

- b) All underages or overages of this catch limit of bigeye may be added or shall be deducted from the catch limit as follows:

Year of catch	Adjustment year
2005	2006 and/or 2007
2006	2007 and/or 2008
2007	2008 and/or 2009

However, the maximum underage that a CPC may transfer in any given year shall not exceed 30% of its annual catch limit.

- 5 The over-harvest of China in 2003 will result in a yearly deduction of 500 t from their annual catch limit in the period 2005-2009.

The over-harvest of Chinese Taipei of 8,000 t in 2003 will result in a yearly deduction of 1,600 t from their annual catch limit in the period 2005-2009.

- 6 The TAC and catch limits for 2008 in operative paragraph 4 shall be reviewed and, if necessary, revised based upon the results of the stock assessments in 2007 by the SCRS. Should adjustments to the TAC for 2008 be required following this assessment, the relative shares of the CPCs for 2008 shall remain unchanged from those in operative paragraph 4.a of the current Recommendation.

- 7 The provisions of paragraphs 2 and 4 shall not apply to CPCs whose reported 1999 catch, as provided to the SCRS in 2000, was less than 2,100 t.

Area/Season closure

- 8 In order to protect the stock, in particular juvenile fish, fishing by purse seiners and baitboats flying a CPC flag, shall be prohibited during the period and in the area specified in paragraphs 9 and 10 below;
- 9 The area referred to in paragraph 8 is the following:
- Southern limit: parallel 0° South latitude
 - Northern limit: parallel 5° North latitude
 - Western limit: meridian 20° West longitude
 - Eastern limit: meridian 10° West longitude.
- 10 The period covered by the prohibition of paragraph 8 will be from 1 November to 30 November of each year.
- 11 The SCRS shall examine in 2005 the impact on stocks of this measure, and shall recommend the necessary modifications that would improve its effectiveness and review possible modifications to be applied to the closure.
- CPCs shall establish internal procedures to sanction fleets flying their flag that do not comply with the closure. They will submit an annual report on their implementation to the Secretariat. The Executive Secretary shall make a report to the Commission.
- 12 CPCs shall use their Vessel Monitoring Systems to ensure enforcement of the area/season closure.

Data collection

- 13 CPCs shall:
- Increase or maintain appropriate systems of collection and processing of fisheries catch and effort data;
 - Respect the guidelines established for the transmission of annual Task I and Task II data.
- 14 CPCs shall adopt the necessary measures to ensure the reporting of their total landings and transshipments of bigeye tuna carried out by the vessels that fly their flag.
- 15 In order to obtain data on the composition of the catches, particularly those of spawners, relative to the fishing areas and seasons, there shall be observers on board at least 5% of longline vessels over 24 meters fishing for bigeye.

General provisions

- 16 This recommendation replaces the *Recommendation by ICCAT on a Bigeye Tuna Size Limit* [Rec. 79-01] and the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Establishment of a Closed Area/Season for the Use of Fish-Aggregation Devices (FADs)* [Rec. 99-01].