

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT TO REPLACE REC. 15-05 TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN
THE PLAN TO REBUILD BLUE MARLIN AND WHITE MARLIN STOCKS**

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 2018 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 catch levels of 2000 t or less would end overfishing in 2019 with a 60% probability;

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. 16-14);

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 in 2019. These landings limits are 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. Tomé & 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/spearfish 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> |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 2018 | 2020 |
| 2019 | 2021 |

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. CPCs shall work to minimize the post-release mortality of marlins/spearfish in their ICCAT fisheries.
5. CPCs with recreational fisheries shall maintain 5% scientific observer coverage of blue marlin and white marlin/spearfish tournament landings.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. CPCs shall provide their estimates of live and dead discards, and all available data including observer data on landings and discards for blue marlin, white marlin/spearfish, annually by July 31 as part of their Task I and II data submission to support the stock assessment process. The SCRS shall review the data and determine the feasibility of estimating fishing mortalities by commercial fisheries (including longline and purse seine), recreational fisheries and artisanal fisheries. The SCRS shall also develop a new data collection initiative as part of the ICCAT Enhanced Program for Billfish Research to overcome the data gap issues of those fisheries, in particular artisanal fisheries of developing CPCs, and shall recommend the initiative to the Commission for its approval in 2019.
11. 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, with a priority focus on the Caribbean and Latin America.
12. Taking into account the findings of these regional reviews, the CPCs shall take action, as appropriate, to improve data collection and reporting programs in accordance with any SCRS advice in preparation for the white marlin/spearfish stock assessment in 2019 and the next blue marlin stock assessment.
13. 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.
14. This Recommendation repeals and replaces the *Recommendation by ICCAT to Further Strengthen the Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Stocks* (Rec. 15-05) and repeals the *Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation Rec. 15-05 by ICCAT to Further Strengthen the Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Stocks* (Rec. 16-10).