

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT
ON BLUEFIN TUNA RESEARCH IN
THE CENTRAL NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN**

GIVEN that at its 1998 meeting the Commission adopted a 20-year rebuilding program for bluefin tuna in the West Atlantic;

CONSIDERING that the uncertainty associated with the boundary between the eastern and western management units for bluefin tuna highlights the need for sound management in both the East and West Atlantic;

CALLING ATTENTION to the research recommendations of the ICCAT Bluefin Year Program and to an international workshop that was held in Bermuda on May 5-7, 2000 to discuss the distribution and biology of Atlantic bluefin tuna in the central Atlantic, the stimulus for this workshop being to focus attention on compelling new scientific information that differs broadly from prevailing views of bluefin biology;

NOTING that since 1997, new fishery-independent pop-up satellite tagging efforts targeting adult and spawning size fish in New England, Atlantic Canada and North Carolina showed at least 30% of bluefin each year were located in the eastern management zone when their tags reported (30-45 degrees West longitude, 30-50 degrees North latitude);

AND NOTING that none of the spawning size fish were located in either known spawning ground when their tags reported their location, raising the possibility of a previously unknown spawning area in the Central Atlantic;

DESIRING to support the outcome of the Workshop on the Biology of Bluefin Tuna in the Mid-Atlantic (endorsed by the ICCAT Bluefin Year Program) that recommends both an exploratory research cruise for the sampling of spawning size bluefin tuna and larvae be conducted in May –July, 2001, and the use of ships of opportunity to collect biological samples;

FURTHER NOTING that the aforementioned Workshop encouraged that 15 metric tons of bluefin tuna be set aside for scientific sampling:

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

- 1 The Commission fully endorse the recommendation of the ICCAT Bluefin Year Program and the Workshop on the Biology of Bluefin Tuna in the Mid-Atlantic (SCRS/00/125) regarding new research on bluefin tuna in the central Atlantic;
- 2 All Contracting Parties, Non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities undertake to consider providing funding or other logistical support in order to conduct this critical scientific endeavour;
- 3 Participants in this research be exempt from the Commission's conservation measures for up to 15 MT of bluefin tuna sampled during the research; and
- 4 The United Kingdom on behalf of the Overseas Territory of Bermuda assign exemptions, in accordance with Paragraph 3, to participants in the research such that the objectives of the research are fulfilled to the extent possible, and report to the Commission.