

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT
TO AMEND THE PLAN TO REBUILD BLUE MARLIN
AND WHITE MARLIN POPULATIONS**

RECALLING that in 2000, ICCAT established a plan to rebuild blue marlin and white marlin populations, which required SCRS to conduct stock assessments of Atlantic blue marlin and white marlin in 2002.

NOTING that according to the SCRS, in previous years, assessments of up to 6 species stocks have been accomplished, but the SCRS, Secretariat, and National Scientific infrastructures were stretched beyond maximum sustainable levels in these cases.

RECOGNIZING that for each assessment, multiple person-months of preparation of data, supporting analysis, and software development and testing are required for the conduct of a successful assessment and with the current infrastructures, an average assessment demand of four or five per year is manageable by SCRS.

FURTHER NOTING that the SCRS recommends that, until the Secretariat, SCRS, and National Scientific infrastructures support greater workload levels, no more than five species stock assessments be scheduled in any year, but that four be the norm,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the above and also the more serious nature of stock status and thus the greater immediate need for an updated evaluation of the status of Atlantic white marlin,

RECOGNIZING that some countries voluntarily complied with the *Recommendation by ICCAT Regarding Atlantic Blue Marlin and Atlantic White Marlin*, adopted at the Commission meeting in 1997, which called for the release of all live billfish and therefore reduced the landings and mortality of Atlantic marlins, and

ACKNOWLEDGING that any additional management actions for blue and white marlins need be based on scientific advice,

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

1. Amendment of Phase 1 of the plan outlined in the *Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Populations* adopted at the Commission meeting in 2000, as follows:

Paragraph 3 is amended by replacing the phrase “1999 landing levels” with “landing levels for either 1996 or 1999, whichever is greater.”

2. Amendment of Phase 2 of the plan outlined in the *Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Populations* adopted at the Commission meeting in 2000, as follows:

Paragraph 7 is amended to read “SCRS shall conduct a stock assessment of Atlantic white marlin in 2002 and of blue marlin in 2003.”

Paragraph 8 is amended to read “For white marlin, the SCRS shall, at the 2002 Commission meeting, present its evaluation of specific stock recovery scenarios that take into account the new stock assessments, any new information and any re-evaluation of the historical catch and effort time series. For blue marlin, the SCRS shall, at the 2003 Commission meeting, present its evaluation of specific stock recovery scenarios that take into account the new stock assessments, any new information and any re-evaluation of the historical catch and effort time series.”

Paragraph 9 is amended to read “Based on SCRS advice, the Commission at its 2002 meeting shall, if necessary, develop and adopt programs to rebuild the Atlantic stock of white marlin to levels that would support MSY. Management measures in effect during Phase 1 for blue marlin will be continued through 2003. Based on SCRS advice, the Commission at its 2003 meeting shall, if necessary, develop and adopt programs to rebuild the Atlantic stock of blue marlin to levels that would support MSY. Such rebuilding programs shall include a timetable for recovery to a scientifically derived goal consistent with the objectives of the Convention, with associated milestones and biological reference points. This objective could be reached through general plans of monitoring of effort and/or time-area closures and/or other measures practical to apply by the various Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-contracting parties, Entities, and Fishing Entities, taking the specific characteristics of their fisheries into account.”