

[02-08]

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT CONCERNING A MULTI-YEAR
CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BLUEFIN TUNA
IN THE EAST ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN**

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) considers that, according to the quality of the data and the results of the 2002 assessment, it was not in a position to formulate or propose short-term management recommendations, and regretting the increasing degree of uncertainty in the statistics on catch and sizes;

NOTING that the SCRS has however pointed out that the current catches or higher catches can be sustained if total fishing mortality or fishing mortality on juveniles could be considerably reduced;

CONVINCED of the urgent need to improve scientific knowledge on the stock of East Atlantic bluefin tuna;

INSISTING on the need to immediately improve the protection of juveniles and to adjust the minimum sizes for East Atlantic bluefin tuna;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the 2001 *Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities*;

CONVINCED that this policy constitutes a decisive step in defining a management strategy for tunas over the medium-term and will result in stability in the management of these fisheries;

NOTING that the new allocation criteria should be applied in a progressive manner;

DESIRING to achieve a fair and equitable allocation of the Total Allowable Catches (TACs) among all the Parties that fish bluefin tuna in the East Atlantic;

DESIRING to assure the implementation of effective measures aimed at halting the decline in the stock of East Atlantic bluefin tuna;

CONSIDERING that the implementation of a multi-year program of conservation and management over the medium term will assist the management of the bluefin tuna fishery, reducing fishing mortality and the fishing mortality on juveniles.

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

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities whose vessels actively fish bluefin tuna in the East Atlantic implement a multi-year conservation and management program for 2003 to 2006.

Catch limits

2. Total allowable catches (TACs) are fixed at 32,000 MT for the years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.
3. To establish a fair and equitable allocation of parts of the quotas in the bluefin tuna fishery in the East Atlantic and Mediterranean, an allocation scheme, for a period of four years starting in 2003, shall be established as follows:

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Algeria	1,500	1,550	1,600	1,700
China (People's Republic)	74	74	74	74
Croatia	900	935	945	970
European Community	18,582	18,450	18,331	18,301
Iceland (1)	30	40	50	60
Japan	2,949	2,930	2,890	2,830
Korea	Pm	pm	pm	pm
Tunisia	2,503	2,543	2,583	2,625
Libya	1,286	1,300	1,400	1,440
Morocco	3,030	3,078	3,127	3,177
Chinese Taipei	pm	pm	pm	pm
Others	1,146	1,100	1,000	823

*pm: Fishing possibilities attributed to Korea and Chinese Taipei based on their traditional shares of 1.5% and 1.5% will only be activated in a given year when they individually have fished their current level of underages.

- (1) Underages in the Icelandic fishery in any given year shall be transferred to the European Community.
4. Notwithstanding paragraph 2 of the 1996 *Recommendation Regarding Compliance in the Bluefin Tuna and North Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries* which is also applicable to the South Atlantic swordfish fishery, any unused part (if this is specified in the pertinent management recommendation) or excess of the annual quota/catch limit shall be deducted from or added to, according to the case, the respective quota/catch limit during or before the adjustment year in the following manner:

	Year of Catch	Adjustment Year
East Atlantic/Mediterranean bluefin tuna	2003	2005
	2004	2006
	2005	2007
	2006	2008

5. The provisions of the *Recommendation Regarding Compliance in the Bluefin Tuna and North Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries* adopted at the 1996 Commission meeting and the provisions established in paragraph 3 shall be applied for the implementation of the individual quotas under paragraph 3 and for any Contracting Party and Cooperating non-Contracting Party, Entity or Fishing Entity. Each year shall be considered as an independent management period such as this term is used in the *Recommendation Regarding Compliance in the Bluefin Tuna and North Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries*.
6. The TAC and the catch limits for 2006 in paragraph 1 shall be reviewed and, if necessary, revised based upon the results of stock assessments in 2005 by the SCRS. Should adjustments to the TAC for 2006 be required following this assessment, the relative shares of the Parties for 2006 shall remain unchanged from those in the current recommendation.

Closed fishing seasons

7. Bluefin tuna fishing shall be prohibited in the Mediterranean by large-scale pelagic longline vessels over 24 m in length during the period from 1 June to 31 July
8. Purse seine fishing in the Mediterranean shall be prohibited during the period between 16 July and 15 August in order to protect juveniles.

Minimum size

9. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall take the necessary measures to prohibit the catch, landing or transshipment of bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus thynnus*) weighing less than 6.4 kg.

Notwithstanding this provision, the Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall have the possibility to grant tolerances for landing by vessels that have incidentally caught bluefin tuna weighing less than 6.4 kg with the condition that the total of these incidental catches is less than 10% in number of fish

per landing of the total bluefin tuna catches of these vessels or their equivalent in percentage in weight.

It is prohibited to retain on board, land or sell bluefin tuna under 4.8 kg in the Mediterranean.

Data collection

10. The Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall respect the guidelines established for the transmission of annual nominal catch data (Task I) for the vessels that fly their flag, as established in the ICCAT *Field Manual for Sampling and Statistics**. The Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall adopt the necessary measures to guarantee the reporting of their total landings, transshipments and caging of bluefin tuna carried out by the vessels that fly their flag.
11. The Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities shall provide the SCRS with specific data on bluefin tuna caught within the framework of the sport fishery in order to assess the impact of sport fishing on this species and to make recommendations.
12. The Commission shall consider and, if necessary, adopt at its 2003 meeting, appropriate effective measures to control expansion of fisheries, in particular in the “others” category, which exceed the catch limits set by this recommendation.

*Note from Secretariat:

The Secretariat annually notifies Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities of reporting requirements and deadlines (see also www.iccat.es).