

– RECOMMENDATION –
ON SWORDFISH CATCH AND SIZE LIMITS

Recommendation adopted by the Commission at its Seventh Special Meeting (Madrid, November, 1990), Report for Biennial Period, 1990-91, Part I. Entered into force: July 1, 1991.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the SCRS has determined that the present yield of the swordfish stock cannot be maintained over the long term without decreasing fishing mortality or the unlikely continued increase in recruitment over the next few years, and without decreasing fishing mortality over the next years, there is a significant probability of detrimental effects on future yield;

The Commission recommends that effective in 1991:

FIRST: That the Contracting Parties whose nationals have been actively fishing for swordfish in the North Atlantic take measures to reduce the fishing mortality of fish weighing more than 25 kg in the area north of five degrees North latitude by 15 percent from recent levels. The reduction in fishing mortality shall be determined by the catch in 1988 or may be a reduction of fishing effort that will result in the equivalent reduction of fishing mortality.

SECOND: In order to protect small swordfish, the Contracting Parties take the necessary measures to prohibit the taking and landing of swordfish in the entire Atlantic Ocean weighing less than 25 kg live weight (125 cm lower jaw fork length); however, the Contracting Parties may grant tolerances to boats which have incidentally captured small fish, with the condition that this incidental catch shall not exceed 15 percent of the number of fish per landing of the total swordfish catch of said boats.

In addition, the Contracting Parties are encouraged to take other appropriate measures within their national jurisdictions to protect small swordfish, including, but not limited to, the establishment of time and area closures.

THIRD: The Contracting Parties that are directly fishing for swordfish shall take the necessary measures to limit the fishing mortality of swordfish in the entire Atlantic Ocean to the level of catch in 1988, or will limit the fishing effort that will result in the equivalent level of fishing mortality.

FOURTH: That, notwithstanding the first and third paragraphs, Contracting Parties whose recent catch levels are small shall keep their annual catches within levels that are reasonable and abide by conservation measures mentioned in paragraph two.

FIFTH: That the Contracting Parties whose nationals do not target swordfish in the North Atlantic Ocean shall take necessary measures to limit the incidental catch to no more than 10 percent of the total weight of the entire catch so that fishing mortality of swordfish will stay at the current level.

SIXTH: That the Executive Secretary bring to the attention of governments of countries other than Contracting Parties, whose nationals fish for swordfish in the Atlantic Ocean, the measures being taken by the Contracting Parties and seek their cooperation in taking similar conservation measures consistent with the recommendations of the Commission.