

- RESOLUTION -
REGARDING THE RELEASE OF LIVE BILLFISH CAUGHT BY LONGLINE

Resolution adopted by the Commission at its Tenth Special Meeting (San Sebastian, November 1996). Report for Biennial Period, 1996-97, Part I. Officially transmitted to the Contracting Parties: February 3, 1997.

RECOGNIZING that the objective of ICCAT is to maintain populations of tuna and tuna-like fishes in the Atlantic at levels that will produce maximum sustainable yield;

CONSIDERING that the SCRS has determined that Atlantic blue marlin and white marlin are over-fished (total Atlantic - blue marlin stock abundance is at 24% of MSY, white marlin stock abundance is at 21% of MSY);

RECOGNIZING that the SCRS has indicated that one approach to reducing billfish mortality would be to release or tag and release live marlins caught recreationally or commercially;

RECOGNIZING that catch statistics are important to evaluate and plan the rebuilding of Atlantic marlin stocks;

NOTING that the United States has implemented sound conservation measures for recreational and commercial fishing that would facilitate the rebuilding of Atlantic marlin, and that some other countries have begun implementing the voluntary scientific tag and release program; and

RECOGNIZING that additional sound conservation assistance is necessary to facilitate rebuilding of the stocks of these important species;

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

- FIRST:* as recommended by the Third ICCAT Billfish Workshop (1996), Contracting Parties should promote the use of monofilament leaders (on hook gangions) to avoid hindering the live release of billfishes;
- SECOND:* the Contracting Parties concerned should report, at the 1997 Commission meeting, the costs and benefits of the use of monofilament leaders (on hook gangions);
- THIRD:* the SCRS improve catch statistics and information about post-release mortality of fish released live from commercial as well as recreational fisheries, in order to develop a recovery program for billfish;