

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT
TO ESTABLISH A REBUILDING PROGRAM
FOR NORTH ATLANTIC SWORDFISH**

RECOGNIZING that the Commission's Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) has indicated in the 1999 stock assessment that the North Atlantic swordfish stock is over-exploited ($B < B_{msy}$, $F > F_{msy}$, i.e. current biomass is 65% of the biomass at MSY and current fishing mortality is 1.34 times that of the MSY level), and that the expected 1999 catch level of 11,800 MT, with a greater than 50% probability, will result in a decline in stock status;

NOTING that the current base case assessments indicate that the decline in the North Atlantic swordfish biomass appears to have been slowed or arrested due to recent reductions in reported catch;

NOTING FURTHER that there are positive signs from the fishery in terms of catch rates with just two years of management action under the strict quota scenarios introduced in 1997;

NOTING that the observed high recruitment of age one fish in 1997 and 1998 should allow for increases in spawning biomass in the future and a more optimistic outlook, if these year classes are not heavily harvested;

RECALLING the resolution of ICCAT 98-17 relative to the elaboration of recovery scenarios for north and south Atlantic swordfish, adopted in 1998.

CONSIDERING the recovery scenario to reestablish the stocks of north Atlantic swordfish developed by the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) in 1999 pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2 of the *Resolution on Recovery Scenarios for North and South Atlantic Swordfish*;

RECALLING that the objective of the Convention is to maintain stocks of fish at levels which permit the maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

NOTING that dead discards of swordfish may occur due to compliance with minimum size and catch of predator-damaged fish;

RECALLING that a rebuilding plan must account for all sources of fishing mortality, and that dead discards of North Atlantic swordfish reported to ICCAT have averaged 500 MT over the past three years;

RECALLING that the 1995 recommendation establishing percentage shares of Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for nations fishing for north Atlantic swordfish did not include the amount of each nation's dead discards reported to SCRS in the calculation of national quota shares, nor have such dead discards counted against national quotas since 1995;

STRESSING the immediate need to improve small fish conservation;

DESIRING to achieve, with greater than 50% probability, stock and catch levels consistent with the objectives of the Convention within 10 years;

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

- 1 The Contracting Parties, Non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities whose vessels have been actively fishing for swordfish in the North Atlantic will implement a 10-year rebuilding program with the goal to achieve B_{msy} , with greater than 50% probability, beginning in 2000 and continuing through 2009.

- 2 For this purpose, a total allowable catch (TAC), inclusive of dead discards, of 10,600 MT, 10,500 MT, and 10,400 MT for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002, respectively, is established. Starting in 2003 and thereafter, the TAC may be adjusted according to SCRS advice and in a manner consistent with paragraph 1.
- 3 The allocation of the annual TAC, inclusive of dead discards, will be as indicated below:
- a A dead discard allowance will be deducted from the TAC in the first three years as follows:

YEAR	DEAD DISCARD ALLOWANCE
2000	400 MT
2001	300 MT
2002	200 MT

The dead discard allowance will be phased out by 2004. The TAC, minus this allowance for dead discards, is the amount of catch that can be retained;

- b The United Kingdom (Overseas Territories) receives a quota (for catch that can be retained) of 24 MT;
- c The remainder of the TAC, after subtracting the allowance for dead discards and the quota for the United Kingdom (Overseas Territories), will be allocated according to the 1996 *Recommendation on Establishment of Percentage Shares of Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and Overage and Underage Provisions for Nations Fishing for North Atlantic Swordfish* adopted by the Commission in 1995:

**ALLOCATION OF CATCH THAT CAN BE RETAINED
AND TOTAL DEAD DISCARD ALLOWANCE**

Country	Share	2000	2001	2002
European Community	49.85%	5073 MT	5073 MT	5073 MT
United States	29%	2951 MT	2951 MT	2951 MT
Canada	10%	1018 MT	1018 MT	1018 MT
Japan	6.25%	636 MT	636 MT	636 MT
Others	4.9%	498 MT	498 MT	498 MT
UK (Overseas Territories)		24 MT	24 MT	24 MT
Total Catch to be Retained		10,200 MT	10,200 MT	10,200 MT
Dead Discard Allowance		400 MT	300 MT	200 MT
TOTAL		10,600 MT	10,500 MT	10,400 MT

c Includes all EC Member States, including those that were "Others" in the previous management recommendations. Percentage shares for EC and "Others" have been adjusted accordingly.

- d The Other Parties (Contracting Parties, Non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities) shall each reduce their landings from their allowed levels under the 1997 *Supplemental Recommendation to ICCAT Regarding Catches of North Atlantic Swordfish for 1998 and 1999*, by an amount proportional to the reduction necessary to achieve the reduction in total catches that can be retained under "Others." The caps for these years were based on a 45% reduction in each country's 1996 landings as reported in the 1997 SCRS report, unless landings were less than 100 MT, in which case the landings were capped at 1996 levels.
- e The allocations in this paragraph will be reviewed in the light of recommendations from the Working Group on Allocation Criteria.

- 4 The distribution of the allowance of dead discards will be 80% for the United States and 20% for Canada. If a Contracting Party's fishing activity results in an amount of dead discards in excess of the Contracting Party's allowance, it must deduct the amount in excess of the allowance from its allocation of catch that can be retained in the following year. If a Contracting Party's fishing activity results in fewer dead discards than its allowance, the difference between the amount of dead discards and the allowance shall be added to the total catch that may be retained by all Contracting Parties, Non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities in subsequent years, as calculated by the Commission.
- 5 Unused quota from the previous year may be added to the subsequent year's quota that can be retained, consistent with the *Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT Regarding Compliance in the Bluefin Tuna and Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries*, adopted at the 1998 Commission meeting.
- 6 Provisions of the *Recommendation by ICCAT Regarding Compliance in the Bluefin Tuna and North Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries* adopted at the 1996 Commission Meeting, and the *Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT Regarding Compliance in the Bluefin Tuna and Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries*, adopted at the 1998 Commission meeting, shall be applied to the implementation of the country quotas in paragraph 3 and for over-harvests that occurred in 1998 and/or 1999, for each Contracting Party, Non-Contracting Party, Entity and Fishing Entity. Each year is considered a separate management period, as that term is used in the *Recommendation by ICCAT Regarding Compliance in the Bluefin Tuna and North Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries*, except for Japan, for which the management period is five years (e.g. 1997-2001). Japan is provided a second five-year management period for 2002-2006, pending satisfactory review of Japan's landings at the 2000 Commission meeting.
- 7 If Japan's landings exceed its quota in any year, the overage shall be deducted in subsequent years such that total landings for Japan shall not exceed its total quota for the five-year period commencing in 1997. When annual landings by Japan are less than its quota, the underage may be added to the subsequent years' quota, such that total landings for Japan do not exceed its total for the same five year period. Any underages or overages from the first five-year management period will be applied to the second five-year management period. Japan's quota for 1997, 1998 and 1999 was 706.25 MT, 687.5 MT, and 668.75 MT, respectively. At the Commission meeting in the year 2000, the Commission shall conduct a comprehensive review of Japan's landings.
- 8 All Contracting Parties, Non-Contracting Parties, Entities, and Fishing Entities catching swordfish in the North Atlantic shall endeavor to provide annually the best available data to the SCRS, including catch, catch at size, location and month of capture on the smallest scale possible, as determined by the SCRS. The data submitted shall be for the broadest range of age classes possible, consistent with minimum size restrictions, and by sex when possible. The data should also include discards and effort statistics, even when no analytical stock assessment is scheduled. The SCRS should review these data annually.
- 9 In the year 2002, and thereafter every three years, SCRS will conduct a stock assessment and provide advice relative to paragraphs 2 and 3.
- 10 In order to protect small swordfish, Contracting Parties, Non-Contracting Parties, Entities, and Fishing Entities shall take the necessary measures to prohibit the taking and landing of swordfish in the entire Atlantic Ocean weighing less than 25 kg live weight, or in the alternative, 125 cm lower jaw fork length (LJFL); however, the Contracting Parties, Non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities 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 swordfish per landing of the total swordfish catch of said boats.
- 11 Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 10, any Contracting Parties, Non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities may choose, as an alternative to the minimum size of 25 kg/125 cm LJFL, to take the necessary measures to prohibit the taking by its vessels in the Atlantic Ocean, as well as the landing and sale in its jurisdiction, of swordfish and swordfish parts, less than 119 cm LJFL, or in the alternative 15 kg, provided that, if this alternative is chosen, no tolerance of swordfish smaller than 119 cm LJFL, or in the alternative 15 kg, shall be allowed. A Party which chooses this alternative shall require appropriate record keeping of discards.
- 12 Notwithstanding the provisions of Article VIII, paragraph 2, of the Convention, with respect to the annual country quotas established above, the Contracting Parties, Non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities whose vessels have been actively fishing for North Atlantic swordfish shall implement this recommendation as soon as possible in accordance with the regulatory procedures of each Contracting Party, non-Contracting Party, Entity and Fishing Entity.