

PROPOSAL FOR THE CHANGE OF THE ENGLISH NAME OF EUTHYNNUS ALLETTERATUS

Assistant Executive Secretary

At the second meeting of the Ad-Hoc Consultation of Global Tuna Statistics (May, 1987, La Jolla, California), a member of this Inter-Agency Group proposed changing the official English common name for the Euthynnus alletteratus. This species is currently called "Little tuna" or "Little tunny". The reason for the change is that little tuna or tunny could be confused with small-sized fish of any tuna species (e.g., juvenile yellowfin), or with small-sized species of tuna (e.g., Auxis, Sarda, etc.).

That particular member was very eager to change the name and to put a new name into effect immediately, but I requested that this matter be consulted at least once with the ICCAT scientific body (since ICCAT is the most official body concerned with E. alletteratus as well as the most frequent user of the name), and a hasty decision should be avoided.

The Group agreed to recommend the change of the English name but referred the matter to ICCAT (COM-SCRS/87/16). There is actually no officially registered vernacular names except those in the FAO species list and any name can be used. However, in order to avoid confusion, ICCAT should settle the issue as soon as possible. It seems that FAO will follow the decision of ICCAT.

First, ICCAT should decide whether or not the English name should be changed. If the name is to be changed, then the new name has to be decided upon.

The person proposing the change of the name offered "spotted tuna" as a new name. Other suggestions include: "fourspot tuna", "shortfin tuna", and the "obvious Atlantic tuna". On the other hand, in the Atlantic, very frequently this species is called "black skipjack" particularly by those fishermen who have experience working in the Pacific, since the counter species E. affinis in the Pacific Ocean is called "black skipjack". As a matter of fact, more than half the quantity of catches of this species reported to the Secretariat has been under the name of black skipjack.

"Atlantic black skipjack" may be more easily acceptable by fishermen and less confusing than the adoption of a completely new name. There are many examples of similar species between two oceans which are called by the same name with the addition of the ocean name, such as Atlantic bonito, Atlantic sailfish, Atlantic blue marlin, etc.

The change of the English name, if so decided, should not affect French or Spanish names, nor species code currently used.