

SWORDFISH BY-CATCH BY THE JAPANESE LONGLINE FISHERY IN THE RECENT YEARS

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SUMMARY

ICCAT recommendations for swordfish went into effect in July, 1991. They include specific measures, namely to reduce F of fish larger than 25 kg in the north Atlantic, to reduce the catch of fish less than 25 kg in the entire Atlantic, and to limit the incidental catch to no more than 10% of the total weight in the north Atlantic and so on. In this document, the recent status of the swordfish catch by the Japanese longline fleet is described, with an emphasis on the effect of the measures. The catch-at-size data and Task I data submitted to ICCAT were used for this document.

RESUME

Les recommandations de l'ICCAT pour l'espadon sont entrées en vigueur en juillet 1991. Elles comprennent des mesures spécifiques, surtout pour réduire le F des poissons de plus de 25 kg dans l'Atlantique nord, la prise de poissons inférieurs à 25 kg dans l'Atlantique entier, et de limiter les prises accessoires à un maximum de 10% du poids global de l'Atlantique nord et ainsi de suite. La situation récente de la prise d'espadon de la palangre japonaise est décrite dans ce document, en soulignant l'effet des mesures. Les données de prise par taille et les données de Tâche I présentées à l'ICCAT ont été utilisées dans ce document.

RESUMEN

Las recomendaciones de ICCAT para pez espada entraron en vigor en julio de 1991. Incluyen medidas específicas, concretamente, reducir la F de los peces superiores a 25 kg en el Atlántico norte, reducir la captura de peces inferiores a 25 kg en el total del Atlántico y limitar la captura fortuita a no más del 10% del peso total en el Atlántico norte, y así sucesivamente. En este documento, se describe la situación reciente de las capturas de pez espada por palangre de Japón, subrayando el efecto de las medidas. Para este documento se utilizaron los datos de captura por clases de talla y los datos de la Tarea I presentados a ICCAT.

1) Catch of larger fish than 25 kg (125 cm LJFL).

The catch in number for larger fish than 125 cm LJFL from 1988 to 1992 is shown in Fig. 1. In the north Atlantic, the catch of larger fish peaked at about 24,000 fish in 1989 and then decreased to around 14,000 fish. The catch has been fairly stable at around 14,000 fish in the most recent two years. In the south Atlantic, the catch of larger fish peaked at about 83,000 fish in 1990 and then continues to decrease year by year. The catch in 1992 attained to only 47% of the catch in 1990. In the entire Atlantic, the catch trend is very similar to it in the south Atlantic, because the catch in the south Atlantic comprises more or less 70% of the total catch.

2) Percentage of smaller fish than 25kg (125cm LJFL).

The percentage of smaller fish than 125 cm LJFL to the total swordfish catch in number is shown in Fig. 2. In the north Atlantic, the percentage peaked at about 8% in 1988. Then the percentage decreased gradually. The rate attained to 6% in 1992. The percentage of small fish in the south Atlantic is lower than it in the north Atlantic and it peaked at about 5% in 1989. The percentage was lowest (0.9%) in 1990 and then increased gradually. The catch of small fish was stable at around 800 fish in the recent three years, but the catch of larger fish decreased rapidly (Fig. 1). Therefore, this increase of the percentage is caused by the decrease of larger fish catch. In the entire Atlantic, the percentage peaked at about 6% in 1989. Since then the percentage were at around 2%.

3) Percentage of swordfish catch to the total catch in weight.

The percentage of swordfish catch to the total catch in tons, excluding the catch of sharks, is shown in Fig. 3. In the north Atlantic, the percentage of swordfish catch is stable at around 6% since 1988. The swordfish catch decreased from 1,570 tons in 1989 to 1,040 tons in 1992. In the south Atlantic, the percentage of swordfish peaked at 16% in 1990. Then it decreased to 10% in 1992. The swordfish catch also peaked at 6,250 tons in 1990 and decreased to 2,610 tons in 1992. In the entire Atlantic, the percentage peaked at 13% in 1990 and then decreased to 8% in 1992. The catch also peaked at 7,300 tons in 1990 and decreased to 3,660 tons in 1992.

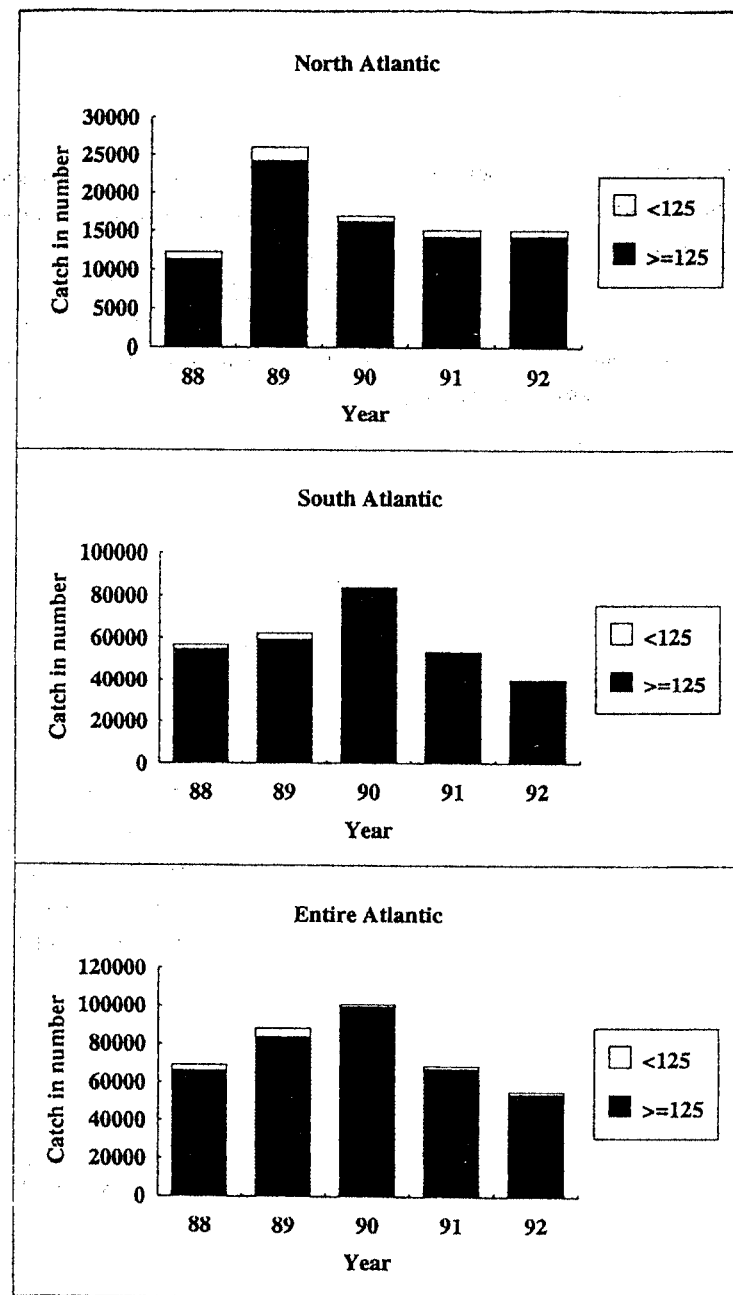


Fig. 1. Swordfish catch in number by size class for the Japanese longline fishery.

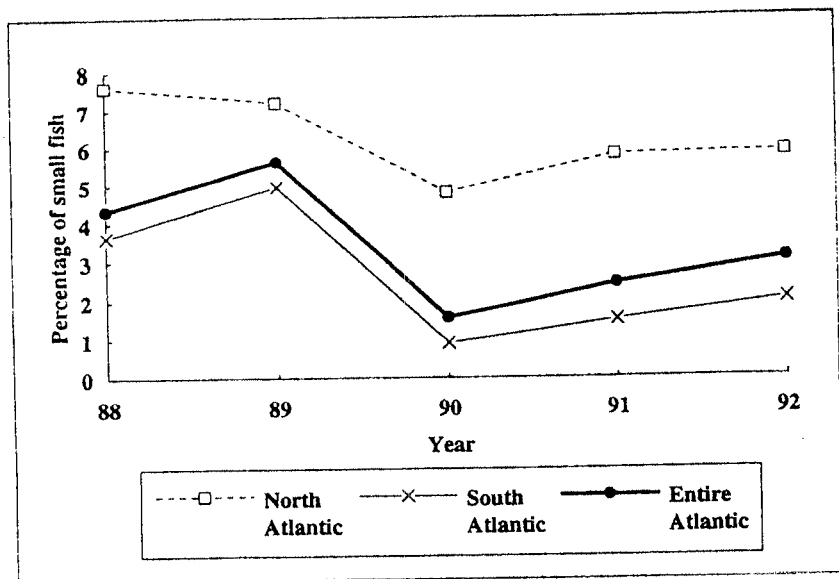


Fig. 2 Percentage of smaller fish than 125 cm LJFL in the total swordfish catch in number by the Japanese longline fishery.

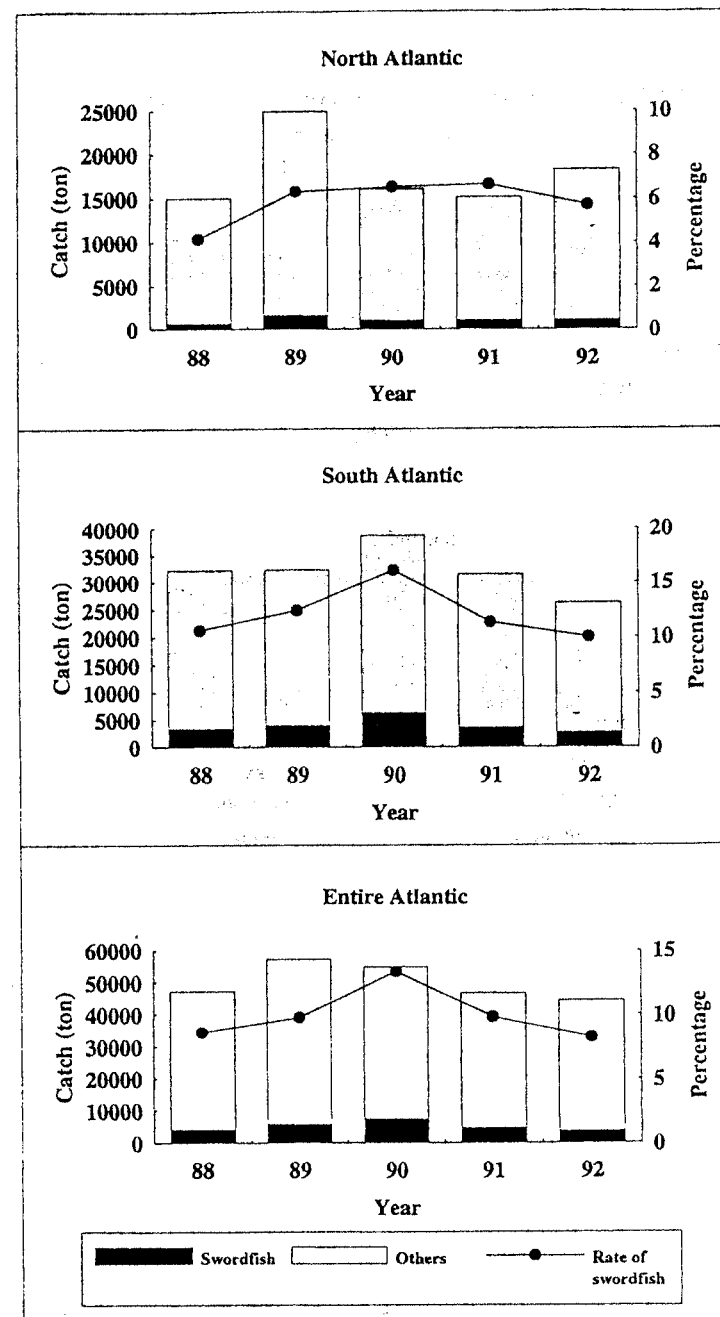


Fig. 3. Percentage of swordfish in the total catch in tons by the Japanese longline fishery.