

1. Fishing situation

The quantities of large pelagic fish landed by the Italian fleets in the three-year period 1990 - 1991 - 1992 were respectively 8351.3 , 9538.1 e 12552.5 MT.

Table I - Total catches in MT of bluefin, albacore and swordfish in the three-year period.

	1990	1991	1992
BFT	1615.2	1819.6	3331.0
ALB	1319.1	1388.4	1616.0
SWO	5417.0	6330.1	7605.5
TOTAL	8351.3	9538.1	12552.5

An increase was observed for all three species in the period with a peak in 1992.

1.1 Bluefin

Catches were made with different gear.

Table II - Percentage of bluefin catches per gear in the three-year period 1990 - 1992

YEAR	Total catch in MT	HAND	GILL	LL	TRAPS	PS	OTHERS
1990	1615	31.4 %	3.2 %	3.7 %	17.9 %	32.9 %	10.9 %
1991	1819	6.5 %	10.9 %	5.0 %	14.5 %	55.9 %	7.2 %
1992	3331	2.9 %	5.6 %	1.7 %	11.0 %	75.9 %	2.9 %

The 10.9 % of the 1990 catch reported in the others refer to fishing- sport activity.

1.2 Albacore

Catches were nearly all made with long-lines e driftnets only a very few with traps.

Table III - Percentage of albacore catches per gear in the three-year period.

YEAR	Total catch in MT	LL	GILL	TRAPS
1990	1319	57 %	43 %	
1991	1388	52 %	48%	
1992	1616	36.4 %	63.4%	0.2 %

Although fishing for sport has been developing a great deal over recent years data for this is not reported as data for the catch are uncertain.

1.3 Swordfish

Catches were almost entirely made with long-lines and drift nets and only in a few cases with harpoons.

Table IV - Percentage of swordfish catches per gear in the three-year period.

YEAR	Total catch in MT	LL	GILL	HARP
1990	5417	45.1 %	54.8 %	0.1 %
1991	6330	54.9 %	44.8 %	0.3 %
1992	7605.5	46 %	53.7%	0.3 %

2. Research

With the setting-up of the III Three year fishing plan a new national programme of research on large pelagic has been got under way (*Xiphias gladius*, *Thunnus alalunga*, *Thunnus thynnus*, *Sarda sarda*, *Auxis rochei*, *Euthynnus alletteratus*, *Seriola dumerilii*, *Coryphæna hippurus*, *Pomatomus saltator*).

The research structures involved in the programme are the following:
 Laboratorio di Biologia Marina e Pesca di Fano, Laboratorio Provinciale di Biologia Marina e della Pesca di Bari, Dipartimento di Produzione Animale dell'Università di Bari, Dipartimento di Biologia Animale ed Ecologia Marina dell'Università di Messina, Aquastudio di Messina, Dipartimento di Genetica e Biologia Molecolare dell' Università La Sapienza di Roma, Dipartimento di Biologia Animale dell'Università di Cagliari, Istituto di Zoologia dell'Università di Genova, ICRAM Roma.

The aims of the programme are as follows:

- A - Collecting of fishing data; fishing effort, CPUE and distribution of size for each species;
- B - Research on biology of the species (feeding, growth, reproduction, fecundity);
- C - Study of population structure through genetic analyses and tagging campaigns;
- D - Tagging operations in collaboration with EEC and ICCAT programmes;
- E - Support campaign to the ICCAT programme for the search of tuna eggs and larvae in the Mediterranean in the 1994.

3. Reference

Fishing data reported here have been obtained from reports drawn up by research centres for the Ministry for the Merchant Navy for the II three-year fishing plan 1990-1992.