Original: English

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON A MULTI-ANNUAL CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME FOR NORTH ATLANTIC ALBACORE

Proposal submitted by the European Union

RECALLING the *Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Limitation of Fishing Capacity on Northern Albacore* [Rec. 98-08], *the Recommendation by ICCAT concerning Management Measures for Northern Albacore* [Rec. 99-05], the *Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT concerning the North Atlantic Albacore Rebuilding Programme* [Rec. 13-05] and the *Recommendation by ICCAT to establish harvest control rules for the North Atlantic Albacore stock* [Rec. 15-04];

RECOGNISING that the set of measures laid down in those Recommendations provide together for a multi-annual conservation and management programme for North Atlantic albacore;

ACKNOWLEDGING that it would be appropriate to streamline the existing measures concerning North Atlantic albacore and combine them into one Recommendation;

NOTING that the objective of the Convention is to maintain populations at levels that will support maximum sustainable catch (usually referred to as MSY);

CONSIDERING that the 2016 Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) stock assessment concluded that the relative abundance of North Atlantic albacore has continued to increase over the last decades and is likely somewhere in the green area of the Kobe plot, and as a result the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that the 2016 SCRS was unable to advise on the risks associated to an increase of the TAC and currently does not recommend an increase of the TAC;

WELCOMING the SCRS proposal to establish a coordinated, multi-year research program in order to advance knowledge of the stock and provide more accurate scientific advice to the Commission;

RECALLING the importance that all fleets participating in the northern albacore fishery submit the required data (catch, effort and catch-at-size) on their fisheries for transmission to the SCRS;

RECOGNISING that it would be appropriate, as already applicable to other stocks under the purview of ICCAT, to establish an ICCAT register of vessels authorized to fish North Atlantic albacore;

CONSIDERING that the Standing Working Group to Enhance Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers (SWGSM) has proposed, among other case studies, North Atlantic albacore as a suitable candidate to examine harvest control rules;

NOTING the progress achieved so far by the SCRS in the work for testing harvest control rules and conducting management strategy evaluations for North Atlantic albacore, and seeking to advance this work;

FURTHER NOTING that the SCRS intends to complete a full Management Strategy Evaluation for North Atlantic albacore in 2017;

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

PART I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

Multi-annual Management and Conservation Programme

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (CPCs) whose vessels fish North Atlantic albacore in the Convention area shall implement this Multi-annual Management and Conservation Programme.

2. The management objective for the Northern Atlantic albacore stock is:

   (a) to maintain the stock in the green zone of the Kobe plot, with at least a 60% probability, while maximizing long-term yield from the fishery, and

   (b) where the spawning stock biomass (SSB) has been assessed by the SCRS as below the level capable of producing MSY (SSB_{MSY}), to rebuild SSB to or above SSB_{MSY}, with at least a 60% probability, and within as short time as possible, while maximizing average catch and minimizing inter-annual fluctuations in TAC levels.

PART II
CATCH LIMTS

TAC and catch limits

3. An annual Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 28,000 t for North Atlantic Albacore is established for 2017 and 2018. An annual TAC of 30,000 t may be established for 2019 and 2020 subject to a decision of the Commission based on the advice of the SCRS in 2018. If the Commission adopts a harvest control rule pursuant to paragraph 13 during the period covered by this measure, the TAC shall be re-established according to those rules.

4. The annual TAC shall be allocated among the ICCAT Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (hereafter referred to as CPCs) according to the following:

CPC	*Quota (t) for the period 2017-2018*[1]	*Quota (t) for the period 2019-2020*[2]
European Union	21,551.3	23,090.7
Chinese Taipei	3,271.7**	3,505.4
United States	527	564.6
Venezuela	250	267.9

[1] *Quotas for 2018 may be altered contingent upon any decisions made under Paragraph 3.*
[2] *Quotas may be altered contingent upon any decisions made under Paragraph 3.*
[The European Union will transfer 20 t from its quota to Venezuela in 2014]*
*[** Chinese Taipei will transfer 100 t from its quota to St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 2014, 2015 and 2016 / Chinese Taipei will also transfer 200 t from its quota to Belize in 2014, 2015 and 2016*]

5. CPCs other than those mentioned in paragraph 4 shall limit their annual catches to 200 t in 2017-2018 and to 215 t in 2019-2020.

6. By derogation to paragraphs 4 and 5, Japan shall endeavor to limit its total North Atlantic albacore annual catches to a maximum of 4% in weight of its total bigeye tuna longline catch in the Atlantic Ocean.

Underage or overage of catch

7. Any unused portion or excess of a CPC's annual quota/catch limit may be added to/shall be deducted from, according to the case, the respective quota/catch limit during or before the adjustment year, in the following way:

Year of Catch	*Adjustment Year*
2015	2017
2016	2018
2017	2019
2018	2020
2019	2021
2020	2022

However, the maximum underage that a Party may carry-over in any given year shall not exceed 25% of its initial catch quota.

If, in any year, the combined landings of CPCs exceed the TAC of 28,000 t, the Commission will re-evaluate this Recommendation at its next Commission meeting and recommend further conservation measures, as appropriate.

PART III
CAPACITY MANAGEMENT MEASURES

8. CPCs fishing for North Atlantic albacore shall limit the fishing capacity of their vessels, exclusive of recreational vessels, fishing for this stock from 1999 onwards, through a limitation of the number vessels to the average number in the period 1993-1995.

9. The provisions of paragraph 8 do not apply to CPCs whose average catches are less than 200 t.

PART IV
CONTROL MEASURES

Specific authorization to fish for North Atlantic albacore and ICCAT record of vessels

10. CPCs shall issue specific authorizations to vessels 20 meters LOA or greater flying their flag that are authorized to fish North Atlantic albacore in the Convention area. Each CPC shall indicate which such vessels it has so authorized on its vessel list submitted pursuant to the *Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Establishment of an ICCAT Record of Vessels 20 meters in Length Overall or Greater Authorized to Operate in the Convention Area* [Rec. 13-13]. Such vessels not entered into this record or entered without the required indication that fishing North Atlantic albacore is authorized are deemed not to be authorized to fish for, retain on board, tranship, transport, transfer, process or land North Atlantic albacore exceeding more than 5% of the total catch on board by weight.

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PART V
HARVEST CONTROL RULES AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION

11. In 2017, the SCRS shall refine the testing of candidate reference points (e.g., $SSB_{THRESHOLD}$, SSB_{LIM} and F_{TARGET}) and associated harvest control rules (HCRs)[1] that would support the management objective expressed in paragraph 2 above. The SCRS shall also provide statistics to support decision-making in accordance with the performance indicators in **Annex 2**.

12. The result of the analyses described in paragraph 11 will be discussed in a dialogue between scientists and managers to be organised in 2017, either during a meeting of the SWGSM or as an inter-sessional meeting of Panel 2.

13. Based on the SCRS inputs and advice provided pursuant to paragraph 11 above and the dialogue process indicated in paragraph 12, the Commission shall then, in 2017, adopt HCRs for the North Atlantic albacore, including pre-agreed management actions to be taken under various stock conditions. The application of HCR/MSE is an iterative process. For this specific purpose, the management actions below will be considered by the Commission and updated as necessary:

    (a) If the average spawning stock biomass (SSB) level is less than SSB_{LIM} (*i.e., $SSB<SSB_{LIM}$*), the Commission shall adopt severe management actions immediately to reduce the fishing mortality rate, including measures that suspend the fishery and initiate a scientific monitoring quota to be able to evaluate stock status. This scientific monitoring quota shall be set at the lowest possible level to be effective. The Commission shall not consider re-opening the fishery until the average SSB level exceeds SSB_{LIM} with a high probability. Further, before reopening the fishery, the Commission shall develop a rebuilding programme in order to ensure that the stock returns to the green zone of the Kobe plot.

    (b) If the average SSB level is equal to or less than $SSB_{THRESHOLD}$ and equal to or above SSB_{LIM} (*i.e., $SSB_{LIM} \leq SSB \leq SSB_{THRESHOLD}$*) and

        i. F is at or below the level specified in the HCR, the Commission shall assure that that applied management measures will maintain F at or below the level specified in the HCR until the average SSB is above $SSB_{THRESHOLD;}$

        ii. F is above the level specified in the HCR, the Commission shall take steps to reduce F as specified in the HCR to ensure F is at a level that will rebuild SSB to SSB_{MSY} or above that level.

    (c) If the average SSB is above $SSB_{THRESHOLD}$ but F exceeds F_{TARGET} (*i.e., $SSB>SSB_{THRESHOLD}$ and $F>F_{TARGET}$*), the Commission shall immediately take steps to reduce F to F_{TARGET}.

    (d) Once the average SSB level reaches or exceeds $SSB_{THRESHOLD}$ and F is less or equal than F_{TARGET} (*i.e., $SSB > SSB_{THRESHOLD}$ and $F \leq F_{TARGET}$*), the Commission shall assure that applied management measures will maintain F at or below F_{TARGET} and in case F is increased to F_{TARGET} this is done with a gradual and moderate increase.

14. The HCRs referred to in paragraph 13 should be evaluated by SCRS through the management strategy evaluation process, including in light of new assessments of the stock. The Commission shall review the results of these evaluations and make adjustments to the HCRs as needed. If necessary, the Commission shall request SCRS to evaluate the adjusted HCRs and make further adjustments based on the feedback from SCRS. This iterative process shall continue and the Commission shall from time to time review and amend the HCRs taking into account the scientific advice.

[1] **Annex 1** provides a generic form of the HCR recommended by SCRS in 2010 that would be consistent with UNFSA.

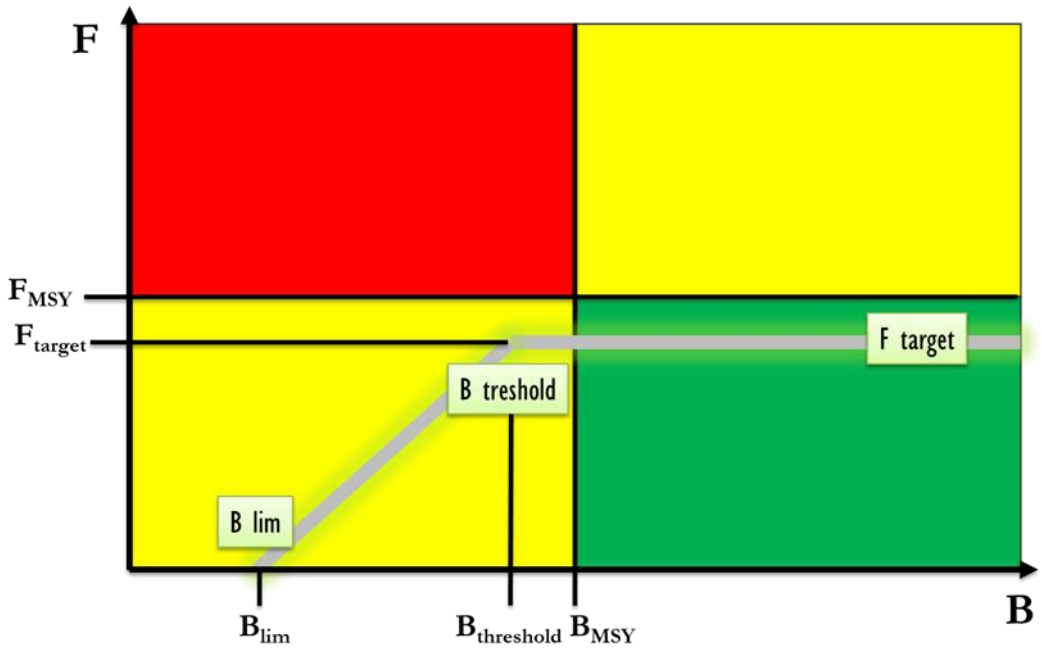
PART VI
FINAL PROVISIONS

15. The Commission welcomes the initiation of a multi-year North Atlantic Albacore Tuna Research Program, as proposed by the SCRS in 2016 and described in its Albacore Work Plan, and encourages CPCs to consider ways that they can contribute to this work.

16. This Recommendation replaces the Supplemental *Recommendation by ICCAT concerning the North Atlantic Albacore Rebuilding Programme* [Rec. 13-05], the R*ecommendation by ICCAT concerning the limitation for fishing capacity on Northern Albacore* [Rec. 98-08], the *Recommendation by ICCAT concerning management measures for Northern Albacore* [Rec. 99-05] and the *Recommendation by ICCAT to establish harvest control rules for the North Albacore stock* [Rec. 15-04].

Annex 1

Generic form of the HCR recommended by SCRS in 2010 that would be consistent with UNFSA (Report of the 2010 WGSAM)



Annex 2

Indicative outline of the performance metrics to be provided by SCRS to support decision-making[SM1]

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND ASSOCIATED STATISTICS	*UNIT OF MEASUREMENT*	*TYPE OF METRICS*
1 Status		
1.1 Minimum spawner biomass relative to B_{MSY}	B/B_{MSY}	Minimum over [x] years
1.2 Mean spawner biomass relative to B_{MSY}[1]	B/B_{MSY}	Geometric mean over [x] years
1.3 Mean fishing mortality relative to F_{MSY}	F/F_{MSY}	Geometric mean over [x] years
1.4 Probability of being in the Kobe green quadrant	B, F	Proportion of years that $B \geq B_{MSY}$ & $F \leq F_{MSY}$
1.5 Probability of being in the Kobe red quadrant[2]	B, F	Proportion of years that $B \leq B_{MSY}$ & $F \geq F_{MSY}$
2 Safety		
2.1 Probability that spawner biomass is above B_{lim} ($0.4B_{MSY}$)[3]	B/B_{MSY}	Proportion of years that $B > B_{lim}$
2.2 Probability of $B_{lim} < B < B_{thresh}$	B/B_{MSY}	Proportion of years that $B_{lim} < B < B_{thresh}$
3 Yield		
3.1 Mean catch – short term	Catch	Mean over 1-3 years
3.2 Mean catch – medium term	Catch	Mean over 5-10 years
3.3 Mean catch – long term	Catch	Mean in 15 and 30 years
4 Stability		
4.1 Mean absolute proportional change in catch	Catch (C)	Mean over [x] years of $\lvert(C_n - C_{n-1}/C_{n-1}\rvert$
4.2 Variance in catch	Catch (C)	Variance over [x] years
4.3 Probability of shutdown	TAC	Proportion of years that TAC=0
4.4 Probability of TAC change over a certain level[4]	TAC	Proportion of management cycles when the ratio of change[5] $(TAC_n - TAC_{n-1})/TAC_{n-1} > X\%$
4.5 Maximum amount of TAC change between management periods	TAC	Maximum ratio of change[6]

1 This indicator provides an indication of the expected CPUE of adult fish because CPUE is assumed to track biomass.
2 This indicator is only useful to distinguish the performance of strategies which fulfil the objective represented by 1.4
3 This differs slightly from being equal to 1- Probability of a shutdown (4.3), because of the choice of having a management cycle of 3 years. In the next management cycle after B has been determined to be less than B_{lim}, the TAC is fixed during three years to the level corresponding to F_{lim}, and the catch will stay at such minimum level for three years. The biomass, however, may react quickly to the lowering of F and increase rapidly so that one or more of the three years of the cycle will have $B > B_{lim}$.
4 Useful in the absence of TAC-related constraints in the harvest control rule.
5 Positive and negative changes to be reported separately
6 Positive and negative changes to be reported separately.