



OCEANA Statement to Panel 4

Oceana calls on the Honorable Delegates to support a multi-annual recovery plan for Mediterranean swordfish as the only option to rebuild this stock in line with the ICCAT Convention objective.

Mediterranean swordfish is the stock under ICCAT's purview with lowest biomass level. **Since 2007 the SCRS has been repeatedly advising the Commission on the need to adopt a plan to rebuild this stock** to levels that are consistent with the ICCAT Convention objective (Tab. 1).

However, ICCAT inaction has brought us today to a point where, in order to recover the stock by 2022 - the deadline established for Eastern Bluefin tuna recovery plan - the fishing mortality of Mediterranean swordfish would have to be reduced today by 71%.

Not adopting this recovery plan today will certainly mean closing the fishery tomorrow. Lowering the ambition of the recovery plan to a set of technical measures should be ruled out completely. Since 2007, a series of technical measures were put in place expected to recover the stock in the medium-term but this has not been the case. **Technical measures alone, without a proper recovery plan with TAC and catch reduction, would not improve anything and would bring the stock to a point of no return.**

This ICCAT meeting cannot conclude without a lifeline for this species. We reiterate the urgency to Panel 4 to reach an agreement on the recovery plan for this stock. **Not doing so this year will compromise the status of Mediterranean swordfish for good. It will also call into question ICCAT's credibility once again and set a dangerous precedent for double standards in stock management within ICCAT.**

Inaction is not an option any more: this year is a make or break for Mediterranean swordfish.

Tab. 1: lack of coherence between scientific advice and management recommendations adopted in ICCAT for Mediterranean swordfish:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Stock status</i>	<i>Advice</i>	<i>Management measure adopted</i>	<i>Recc.</i>
2007	The stock is both overfished and undergoing overfishing	The Commission should adopt a Mediterranean swordfish fishery management plan with the goal of rebuilding the stock to levels that are consistent with the ICCAT Convention objective.	1 month closure in 2008 (Oct. 15 – Nov. 15); 1 month permanent closure (Oct. 1 - Nov. 30).	07-01 08-03
2010	The stock is overfished and subjected to overfishing	The Commission should adopt a Mediterranean swordfish fishery management plan which ensures that the stock will be rebuilt and kept at levels that are consistent with the ICCAT Convention objective.	Records of vessels authorised to catch Mediterranean swordfish; Two seasonal closures; Minimum landing size (90cm LJFL).	11-03 and 13-04
2016	The stock is overfished and subjected to overfishing	The stock requires rebuilding and fishing mortality has to be reduced in accordance with Rec. 11-13 AND through a substantial reduction in catches.		