

- RECOMMENDATION -
REBUILDING PROGRAM: W. ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA

**TITLE: *Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Rebuilding Program
for Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna***
(Entered into force: **June 21, 1999**)

RECOGNIZING that the Commission's Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) has indicated in the 1998 stock assessment that bluefin tuna stocks in the west Atlantic are over-exploited ($B < B_{msy}$, $F > F_{msy}$; i.e. current biomass is less than biomass at MSY and current fishing mortality is higher than that of the MSY level);

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

RECALLING that in 1997, the Commission adopted a resolution for the development of additional recovery scenarios by the SCRS for bluefin tuna to provide the Commission with the information needed to consider, develop, and improve long term stock rebuilding plans in 1998;

CONSIDERING the rebuilding scenarios developed by SCRS based on the 1998 stock assessment; and

DESIRING to achieve a stock level consistent with the objectives of the Convention within twenty years;

GIVEN THAT the SCRS notes that MSY is dynamic, and therefore there are alternative results in terms of what the rebuilding target might be;

GIVEN THAT SCRS has provided two models, one based on the recent pattern of recruitment and the other based on recruitment that occurred in the 1970s, recognizing that SCRS also indicated there is no reason to select one recruitment model over another, it is necessary to implement a monitoring program to ensure that the stock is achieving the rebuilding objective in future years; and

RECALLING that in 1996, the Commission's recommendation for a scientific monitoring quota for 1997 and 1998 was based on SCRS's advice regarding a total annual catch of 2500 MT from which an allowance of 146 MT was deducted to account for estimated dead discards;

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

- 1 The Contracting Parties whose vessels have been actively fishing for bluefin tuna in the western Atlantic will initiate a 20-year rebuilding program beginning in 1999 and continuing through 2018, with a total allowable catch (TAC), inclusive of dead discards, of 2500 MT annually, until such time as the TAC is changed based on advice from SCRS, in accordance with paragraphs 2, 3, or 5.
- 2 The annual TAC, maximum sustainable yield (MSY) target, and 20-year rebuilding period may be adjusted based upon subsequent SCRS advice. However, no adjustments to the annual TAC or the 20-year rebuilding period shall be considered unless: (1) the SCRS advice indicates that a TAC greater than 2700 MT will allow the MSY target to be achieved within the 20-year rebuilding period with a 50 percent or greater probability, or (2) if the SCRS advice indicates that a TAC less than 2300 MT is necessary to achieve the MSY target within the 20-year rebuilding period with a 50 percent or greater probability.
- 3 At such time as the SCRS determines the stock size has achieved the level that would produce MSY, TAC levels up to the level of MSY will be considered.
- 4 The allocation of the annual TAC, inclusive of dead discards, will be as indicated below :
 - a An amount equal to 79 MT or 2.82% of the TAC, whichever is greater, will be deducted from the TAC as an allowance for dead discards. The TAC, minus the allowance for dead discards, is the amount of catch that can be retained;
 - b The United Kingdom, (in respect of Bermuda) and France (in respect of St Pierre et Miquelon) will each receive a quota (for catch that can be retained) of 4 MT;

- c If the remainder of the TAC, after subtracting the allowance for dead discards and the quotas for the United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda) and France (in respect of St Pierre et Miquelon), is less than 2413 MT, the remainder will be allocated (as catch that can be retained) as follows:

USA	57.48 %
Canada	23.75 %
Japan	18.77 %

- d If the remainder of the annual TAC, after subtracting the allowance for dead discards and the quotas for the United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda) and France (in respect of St Pierre et Miquelon), equals 2413 MT, the remainder will be allocated (as catch that can be retained) as follows:

USA	1387 MT
Canada	573 MT
Japan	453 MT

These are the quotas (of catch that can be retained) for a TAC of 2500 MT annually.

- e If the remainder of the TAC, after subtracting the allowance for dead discards and the quotas for the United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda) and France (in respect of St Pierre et Miquelon), is between 2413 MT and 2660 MT, the amount in excess of 2413 MT will be allocated (as catch that can be retained) to Japan;
- f If the remainder of the TAC, after subtracting the allowance for dead discards and the quotas for the United Kingdom (in respect of Bermuda) and France (in respect of St Pierre et Miquelon), is greater than 2660 MT, the remainder will be allocated (as catch that can be retained) as follows:

USA	52.14 %
Canada	21.54 %
Japan	26.32 %

- g The distribution of the allowance of dead discards will be 85.72 % for the USA and 7.14% each for Canada and Japan. If a Contracting Party's fishing activity results in an amount of dead discards in excess of the Contracting Party's allowance, it must deduct the amount in excess of the allowance, from its allocation of catch that can be retained. If a Contracting Party's fishing activity results in less dead discards than its allowance, it may add one half of the difference between the amount of dead discards and the allowance, to its allocation of catch that can be retained.

- 5 If scientific evidence results in an SCRS recommendation to alter the definition of management units, or to take explicit account of mixing between management units, then the rebuilding program shall be re-evaluated.
- 6 Starting in the year 1999, unused quota or overage from the previous year, shall be added or subtracted, as appropriate, to the current year's catch that can be retained.
- 7 In the year 2000, and thereafter every two years, SCRS will conduct a stock assessment and provide advice relative to paragraphs 2,3,and 5.
- 8 Contracting Parties, non-contracting parties, entities and fishing entities will prohibit the taking and landing of western Atlantic bluefin tuna weighing less than 30 kg, or in the alternative having a fork length of less than 115 cm.
- 9 Notwithstanding the above measures, Contracting Parties, non-contracting parties, entities and fishing entities may grant tolerances to capture western Atlantic bluefin tuna either weighing less than 30 kg, or in the alternative having a fork length less than 115 cm; provided they limit the take of these fish so that the average over each four-consecutive-year quota balancing period is no more than 8% by weight of the total bluefin quota on a national basis, and institute measures to deny economic gain to the fishermen from such fish.
- 10 The adoption of the above measures must not imply any modification of the ICCAT Recommendation adopted in 1974 concerning a minimum weight of 6.4 kg adopted for all Atlantic bluefin tuna.
- 11 Contracting Parties, non-contracting parties, entities and fishing entities will encourage their commercial and recreational fishermen to tag and release all fish less than 30 kg or in the alternative having a fork length less

than 115 cm.

- 12 All Contracting Parties, non-contracting parties, entities and fishing entities shall monitor and report on all sources of fishing mortality, including dead discards, and shall minimize dead discards to the extent practicable.
- 13 All Contracting Parties, non-contracting parties, entities and fishing entities shall provide the best available data for the assessment of the stock by SCRS, including information on the catches of the broadest range of age classes possible, consistent with minimum size restrictions.
- 14 The provisions of the Recommendation Regarding Compliance in the Bluefin Tuna and North Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries, adopted at the 1996 Commission meeting, shall apply.
- 15 In order to avoid increasing fishing mortality of bluefin tuna in the eastern or western Atlantic, Contracting Parties, non-contracting parties, entities and fishing entities will continue to take measures to prohibit any transfer of fishing effort from the western Atlantic to the eastern Atlantic and from the eastern to the western Atlantic.
- 16 There shall be no directed fishery on the bluefin tuna spawning stocks in the western Atlantic in spawning areas such as the Gulf of Mexico.
- 17 Notwithstanding the provisions of Article VIII, paragraph 2, of the Convention, with respect to the annual country quotas established above, the Contracting Parties whose vessels have been actively fishing for bluefin tuna in the western Atlantic shall implement this recommendation as soon as possible in accordance with the regulatory procedures of each country.