

RESOLUTION BY ICCAT ON CETACEAN ENCIRCLEMENT

RECOGNIZING the potential for interactions between cetaceans and ICCAT fisheries;

CONCERNED about the incidental mortality or serious injury to cetaceans that may occur in ICCAT fisheries;

RECALLING that under the *Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish Minimum Standards for Fishing Vessel Scientific Observer Programmes* (Rec. 16-14), Contracting Parties, non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities (CPCs) shall require observers in their domestic scientific observer programmes to record and report on, *inter alia*, the bycatch of marine mammals, including cetaceans;

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities, and Fishing Entities (CPCs) are strongly encouraged to prohibit their flag vessels from intentionally setting purse seine nets on a school of tunas in the ICCAT Convention area if a cetacean is sighted in or above the tuna school.
2. In the event that a cetacean is unintentionally encircled in the purse seine net, CPCs are encouraged to require the master of the vessel:
 - a) to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure its safe release while taking into consideration the safety of the crew;
 - b) to report the incident to the relevant authority of the flag State, including details of the species (if known) and number of individuals, location and date of such encirclement, steps taken to ensure safe release, and an assessment of the disposition of the animal on release (including, if known, whether the animal was released alive but subsequently died).
3. Each year, CPCs are encouraged to report on the implementation of this Resolution as part of their Annual Report.
4. The Commission requests that the SCRS, to the extent possible, develop further best practice guidelines for the safe handling and release of cetaceans caught in association with ICCAT fisheries, taking into account relevant guidelines already developed by relevant international organizations, and that these guidelines be submitted to the 2025 annual meeting for consideration and adoption by the Commission.
5. CPCs are encouraged to ensure that fishermen are aware of and use proper mitigation, identification, handling and release techniques and keep on board all necessary equipment for the safe release of cetaceans before the guidelines mentioned in paragraph 4 are developed and adopted.