

### 13.9 WHM-White marlin (*Kajikia albida*)

#### Introduction

The assessment of white marlin includes the combined assessment of white marlin (WHM) and roundscale spearfish (RSP). Because of difficulties in species identification, white marlin landings reported to ICCAT include roundscale spearfish and historical statistics of white marlin most likely comprise a mixture of the two species. A stock assessment was conducted for white marlin/roundscale spearfish in 2025, through a process that included the Atlantic White Marlin Data Preparatory Meeting in March 2025 (Anon., 2025b) and the Atlantic White Marlin Stock Assessment Meeting in July 2025 (Anon., 2025h). The last year of fishery data used in the assessment was 2023. The Committee agreed that it was not advisable to estimate stock projections for this stock assessment. Therefore, no projections scenarios were conducted, and no Kobe matrices were provided. A summary of the stock status is provided in **Table 1**. The estimated catches and discards by gear, for the period 2000-2024, are shown in **Table 2**. The Kobe Phase Plot and uncertainty of current status estimates is summarized in **Figure 1**.

**Table 1.** White marlin/roundscale spearfish summary table.

<i>Indicator</i>		<i>Stock Status</i>
Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) <sup>1</sup>	1,497 t (1,160 t - 1,937 t) <sup>3</sup>	2023
Landing limit 2024	355 t	
Yield 2024 <sup>2</sup>	158 t	
Relative Biomass (B <sub>2023</sub> /B <sub>MSY</sub> )	0.80 (0.394 - 1.611) <sup>3</sup>	
Relative Fishing Mortality (F <sub>2023</sub> /F <sub>MSY</sub> )	0.191 (0.089 - 0.348) <sup>3</sup>	
Stock Status	Overfished: YES (73% probability of being overfished) <sup>4</sup>	
	Overfishing: NO (<1% probability of overfishing) <sup>4</sup>	
Management measures in effect	<a href="#">Rec. 18-04</a> and <a href="#">Rec. 19-05</a> Landing limit 2025 of 355 t	

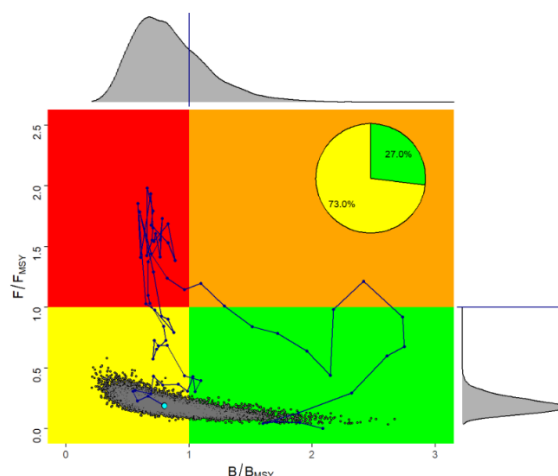
<sup>1</sup> Base case model results based on catch data from 1956-2023.

<sup>2</sup> Provisional and subject to revision as of 23 September 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Point estimate, 95% credibility intervals are shown.

<sup>4</sup> As estimated from the Kobe plot probability in each quadrant.





**Figure 1.** Kobe plot for the Atlantic white marlin/roundscale spearfish stock status in 2023, estimated during the 2025 stock assessment. The line indicates the stock status trajectory starting in 1956. The inserted pie chart indicates the probability of the stock being within each Kobe colour quadrant. The probability distributions shown in each axis represent uncertainty around current  $B/B_{MSY}$  and  $F/F_{MSY}$ .

## Outlook

The Kobe plot for the base case<sup>3</sup> (**Figure 1**) shows a historical trajectory moving from the overfished and overfishing quadrant (red) in the 1970s toward the overfished but not overfishing quadrant (yellow) through the 1990s and early 2000s. The most recent estimate (2023) lies within the yellow quadrant, indicating that the stock remained below  $B_{MSY}$ , but was being fished at levels below  $F_{MSY}$ . The posterior distribution in the Kobe plot shows that 73% of the estimated biomass and fishing mortality combinations fall in the yellow quadrant, and 27% in the green quadrant, suggesting high probability that overfishing was not occurring but that the stock remained overfished.

The Committee also concluded that, given the uncertainty in stock recruitment dynamics in recent years, it was not advisable to estimate stock projections for this stock assessment. Therefore, no projections scenarios were conducted, and no Kobe matrices were provided.

The Committee noted that the relative biomass has not increased by much despite relative fishing mortality having declined considerably over that time period (**Figure 2**).

## Management recommendation

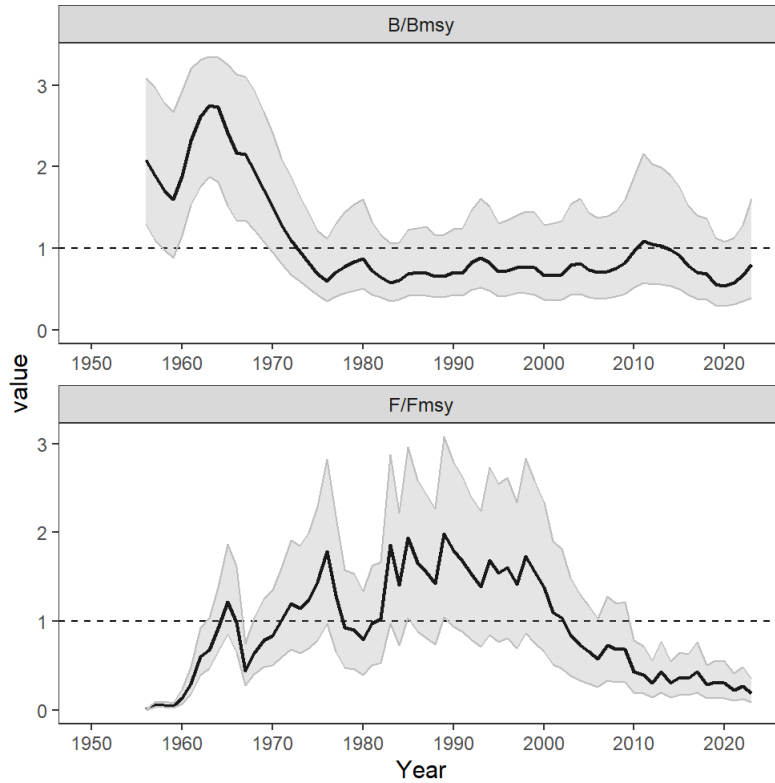
The Committee noted that despite the recent reported catches have been below the 355 t landing limits established in the *Recommendation by ICCAT to establish rebuilding programs for blue marlin and white marlin/roundscale spearfish (Rec. 19-05)* para 2, the stock has shown limited signs of recovery. Concerns were raised by the Committee regarding the potential impact of unreported catches, including both dead and live discards, which introduce uncertainty into current catch estimates. In order to better assess the status of the stock and provide more robust management advice, it is essential that CPCs comply with the data reporting requirements (i.e. landings and estimates of discards, size data) and provide improved indices of abundance. Until this objective is reached, future white marlin/roundscale spearfish stock assessments will continue to be hampered by data uncertainties and will limit the ability of the Committee to provide robust management advice for this stock.

The Committee reiterated the importance that the Commission, at the very least, maintains the landing limit of 355 t as set in paragraph 2 of *Rec. 19-05*.

<sup>3</sup> The “base case” refers to the run coded Group 0\_no\_CTP\_LL2 in the Report of the White Marlin Stock Assessment Meeting ([Anon., 2025h](#)) which was used for the summary of stock status.

The Committee concluded that the stock status of Atlantic white marlin/roundscale spearfish at the end of 2023 indicated that the biomass remained below  $B_{MSY}$  with a median  $B/B_{MSY}$  estimated at 0.80 (95% CRI: 0.394 - 1.611), and a fishing mortality below  $F_{MSY}$  with median  $F/F_{MSY}$  at 0.191 (95% CRI: 0.089 - 0.348) (Figure 1 and Table 1).

### Additional supporting information



**Figure 2.** Trajectories of biomass relative to  $B_{MSY}$  ( $B/B_{MSY}$ ) at the end of the years and fishing mortality relative to  $F_{MSY}$  ( $F/F_{MSY}$ ) for the final base case model for the Atlantic white marlin, the shaded area indicates the 95% CRI bounds.