

REPORTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CLOSED SEASONS FOR MEDITERRANEAN SWORDFISH

ALGERIA

Algeria established two annual closures for the swordfish fishery, the first one from 1 October to 30 November and a second one from 15 February to 15 March.

It should be noted that the swordfish fishery closures are domestically respected by all the professionals and no infringements have been noted during the closure period from 15 February to 15 March 2017.

The control and inspection system is established as follows:

The Coast Guards National Service, who is the authority responsible for the maritime police, guarantees the control and inspection of fishing activities at port access points aimed at the compliance of fishery regulations. Controls at sea are also carried out.

However, fishery inspectors of the Wilayas Fisheries Directorates guarantee the surveillance fishing product landings during the swordfish fishery closure, in particular.

At central level, weekly reports related to the monitoring status of the closure period of the swordfish fishery are transmitted to the Wilayas Fisheries Directorates.

EUROPEAN UNION

The EU has informed the Commission by letter sent on 22 December 2016 (Ares (2016)7133902) of its intention to implement the provisions of Recommendation [16-05] (Recovery plan for Mediterranean swordfish) as of 1 January 2017 and the closure for Mediterranean swordfish during the period from 1 January to 31 March, starting in 2017. Please note however that this closure period is not additional to a closure during the period 1 October to 30 November 2017.

In accordance with paragraph 11 of ICCAT Recommendation [16-05], I would like to inform you that the swordfish fishery has been closed in all EU Member States for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2017 in addition to the closure for the months of October and November 2016 according to paragraph 6 of ICCAT Recommendation [13-04].

EU Member States implemented the closures by legal acts under the respective national law or by administrative means (no fishing authorisation delivered).

The EU Member States conducted verification and inspection missions to ensure that the rules were enforced by the operators during the closure periods.

Part of those increased checks and controls were carried out in the context of the EU Joint Deployment Plan (JDP) for Bluefin Tuna (BFT) coordinated by the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA). This procedure is applied since 2014 when the control and follow-up of the Swordfish fishery had been enforced by way of Commission Decision No (2014/156/EU)¹. This Decision extended the Specific Control and Inspection Program for BFT to other species and sets the conditions for the JDP.

¹ Commission Implementing Decision (2014/156/EU) of 19 March 2014 establishing a specific control and inspection programme for fisheries exploiting stocks of bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, swordfish in the Mediterranean and for fisheries exploiting stocks of sardine and anchovy in the Northern Adriatic Sea

Furthermore, EU Commission officials carried out several inspection missions, together with national inspection administrations, to verify the implementation of the Swordfish closure and related control activities by Member States.

The EU is committed to the full implementation of provisions relating to ICCAT Recommendation [16-05] and in particular paragraph 11 thereof. We are at your disposal should more detailed information be considered useful.

MOROCCO

The Kingdom of Morocco has implemented the appropriate measures for the relevant compliance of provisions in Recommendation 13-04 adopted by the Commission in November 2013, in particular, paragraph 5 which states that "Mediterranean swordfish shall not be caught (either as a targeted fishery or as by-catch), retained on board, transhiped or landed during the period from 1 October to 30 November and during an additional period of one month between 15 February and 31 March, etc."

Taking this into account, this compliance was strengthened by the following legislative instruments:

- The Mediterranean swordfish closure is regulated by the transposition of closures established by ICCAT in the national regulation by enactment of the Ministerial Decree No. 1176-13, dated 8 April 2013, published in the Official Bulletin No. 6144, dated 18 April 2013;
- Enactment of a Ministerial Decree in Official Bulletin No. 6144, dated 18 April 2013, regulating Moroccan North Atlantic and Mediterranean swordfish fishing;
- The market size in accordance with the ICCAT provisions (25kg or 125cm) transposed into national regulation by the Ministry of Maritime Fishing and Merchant Marine No. 1154-88 dated 3 October 1988, establishing the minimum market size of species caught in Moroccan maritime waters as amended and supplemented;
- Law No. 1-14-95 dated 12 May 2014, enacting Law No. 15-12 to prevent and combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and amending and supplementing Law No. 1-73-255 dated 23 November 1973 which establishes the regulation on maritime fishing;
- Enactment of Decree No. 2-09-674, dated 17 March 2010, establishing the terms and conditions to install and use a positioning and location system on board fishing vessels, with the continued use of satellite communications for the transmission of data, which establishes, inter alia, that all fishing vessels flying a Moroccan flag and operating within the framework of a fishery subject to conservation and management measures adopted by RFMOs must carry a positioning and localisation system on board fishing vessels.
- The Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fishing No. 3338-10, dated 16 December 2010 concerning the provisions on positioning and localisation of fishing vessels;
- All vessels which are likely to catch Mediterranean swordfish must be registered in the "SWO MED VESSELS" ICCAT record.

Surveillance and Control

- Law 1-14-95 dated 12 May 2014 on the enactment of Law No. 15-12 on preventing and combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and amending and supplementing Law No.1-73-255, dated 23 November 1973 establishing regulation on maritime fishing.

- Decree No. 2-09-674 dated 17 March 2010, establishing the conditions and procedures for installation and usage onboard fishing vessels of a positioning and localisation system using communications by satellite to transmit data that, among others, has the obligation of carrying a positioning and localisation system onboard for all vessels flying a Moroccan flag and operating within the framework of a fishery in accordance with conservation and management measures adopted by RFMOs.
- The Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fisheries No. 3338-10, dated 16 December 2010 related to the positioning and localisation device of fishing vessels.

In accordance with the measures implemented within the framework of the Halieutis plan, aimed at the conservation and sustainability of fishery resources, in particular and, aimed at guaranteeing the compliance of the implementation of provisions related to the management and sustainable exploitation of these resources, the Department of Maritime Fisheries strengthened the control system installed at sea, at the ports and after landing. Thus, swordfish fishing is covered by the following control measures:

- Controls by the permanent mobilisation of control agents of the fisheries department at landing ports, fishing sites and halls;
- Ground control with the Royal Police and the local Authorities;
- Satellite vessel control (VMS positioning and localisation device);
- At-sea vessel control by the Royal Police and Royal Navy;
- Mandatory reporting of catches at landing and monitoring of trade flow through catch certification procedures.

Aimed at guaranteeing the effective monitoring of swordfish catches, the Fisheries Department has also invested in a fully computerised procedure, since 2011, for the certification of catches guaranteeing a complete traceability from landing to export. Computerisation of the procedure allows the availability of information related to the flow of catches and a better exploitation for more effective and efficient control and cross-check, aimed at combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Thus, ICCAT statistical documents are validated for swordfish by using the computerised procedure of catch certification when traceability cross-checks are carried out.

TUNISIA

In accordance with Recommendation [16-05], regarding the Mediterranean swordfish closure, Tunisia notified the Commission as regards the closure from 15 February to 15 March and from 1 October to 30 November.

In 2016, and in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6 of ICCAT Recommendation 13-04, the swordfish fishery was closed in all the Tunisian fishing areas throughout the entire above-mentioned period.

In 2017, the swordfish fishery was closed from 15 February to 15 March 2017. It will also be closed on 30 September 2017.

This closure was essentially implemented by:

- legal texts within the framework of Law No. 94-13 dated 31 January 1994 on fishing activities, in particular, Articles 13 and 14 related to the species which are prohibited and to the circulars transmitted to regional fishery services to prevent and combat illegal swordfish fishing outside the fishing season.
- administrative measures: no authorisation was granted outside the fishing season.
- Control operations were strengthened through mixed control fishing seasons among the fisheries services and the coast guards. Control missions were indeed conducted during the closure period in the fishing ports and markets to ensure the compliance of provisions taken in this regard.

TURKEY

General Information and Legal Framework

The following information has been compiled in response to the requirements of Paragraph 13 of Recommendation by ICCAT Replacing the Recommendation [13-04] and Establishing a Multi-Annual Recovery Plan for Mediterranean Swordfish (Rec. 16-05).

In 2012, Turkey has set an additional month of closure for the Mediterranean swordfish (Med-SWO) from 15 February to 15 March in addition to the closure period from 1 October to 30 November. This measure was announced on 15 December 2011. In 2017, the aforementioned measure for Med-SWO has remained in force.

To ensure efficiency of the aforementioned measure, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MoFAL) introduced the Notification on Regulating Commercial Fishing at Seas and Inland Waters covering the period 2016-2020, in order to ensure more sustainable fishing activities, improved quality for fishing products, and better conservation of fisheries resources.

Technical Regulations

- The catch of swordfish smaller than 125 cm is prohibited.
- It is mandatory for the fishing vessels to catch swordfish to obtain a "Fishing Permit" from the provincial directorate issuing vessel's license. Applications by the fishermen to acquire a special fishing permit for swordfish is subject to some technical criteria. When an application made is approved by the Ministry, the special permit information is simultaneously recorded in the Fisheries Information System (FIS) operated by the Ministry.
- When longlining for tuna and swordfish, only hooks No. 1 and No. 2, with a gape width smaller than 2.8 cm, is permitted.

During the closed season, Med-SWO fishermen engaged in other types of coastal fisheries, trawling, tourism and/or aquaculture activities.

Other Measures

In accordance with the relevant provisions of ICCAT Rec. 16-05; a list of designated landing points for Med-SWO has been made available and reported to ICCAT on 28 February 2017. Inspectors from Turkish Coast Guard have been trained to actively participate to inspections for Med-SWO in the context of IJIS.

Regular catch reports on a quarterly basis have been submitted to ICCAT in line with Turkey's TAC allocation as set forth by the document PA4-009B/2017.

In 2002 and 2003, EU and ICCAT enforced a recommendation prohibiting the usage of drift-nets in the Mediterranean. Afterwards, drift-netting in Turkey was also banned in 2006.

Subsequently, Turkey announced its position for elimination of *modified driftnet usage* with the ICCAT Circular #3225/2010. Accordingly, usage of all modified drift-nets has been prohibited as from 1 July 2011.

Accordingly, all fishing vessels with the modified drift-nets have gone under obligation to shift their fishing gears in accordance with provisions of *Revised Notification No. 2/1 Regulating Commercial Fishing*. MoFAL continued its efforts to promote the usage of more selective fishing methods and fishing gear by the majority of Turkish swordfish fishermen, with several regional training activities.

Inspection and Control

Inspection and controls have been the major components of the activities of MoFAL for ensuring the efficiency of the closed season and size regulations set for the Mediterranean swordfish. The inspection activities, which are still ongoing, have been concentrated at most potential fishing grounds, landing points, retail and wholesale markets.

In this context, 5,613 Kgs. of Med-SWO have been seized within the first half of the year 2017 in consequence of the inspections conducted by MoFAL inspectors at several coastal provinces. A total of 1,364 Kgs. of Med-SWO were seized by ministerial inspectors previously in 2016.