

Original: English

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON BY-CATCH OF MARINE MAMMALS IN ICCAT FISHERIES, IN PARTICULAR THE INTENTIONAL ENCIRCLEMENT OF CETACEANS

Proposal submitted by the United States and Canada

RECOGNIZING the potential for interactions between cetaceans and ICCAT fisheries;

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

RECALLING that under *Recommendation 16-14*, Contracting Parties, non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities (CPCs) with national observer programs shall require their observers to record and report on, *inter alia*, the bycatch of marine mammals;

FURTHER RECALLING that *Recommendation 11-10* requires CPCs with logbooks and observer programs to collect bycatch data in their domestic scientific observer programs and logbook programs, and report these data to the Secretariat in the format specified by SCRS;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the development of an ecosystem report card by the SCRS, and the lack of data available to support a marine mammal indicator;

[...]

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

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities, or Fishing Entities (CPCs) shall prohibit their flag vessels from setting a purse seine net on a school of tunas if a cetacean is sighted in or above the tuna school.
2. CPCs shall require that, in the event that a cetacean is unintentionally encircled in the purse seine net, the master of the vessel shall:
 - a) ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure its safe release. This shall include stopping the net roll and not recommencing fishing operations until the animal has been released and is no longer at risk of recapture; and
 - b) report the incident to the relevant authority of the flag State, and the relevant Coastal state, as applicable, 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 life status of the animal on release (including, if known, whether the animal was released alive but subsequently died).
3. In applying this recommendation, the safety of the crew shall remain paramount.
4. The Commission requests that the SCRS, to the extent possible, develop further best practice guidelines for the handling and release, without harm, of cetaceans caught in association with ICCAT fisheries, taking into account relevant guidelines already developed by the International Whaling Commission, North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission, U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization and other Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, and that these guidelines be submitted to the 2020 annual meeting for approval by the Commission.
5. CPCs shall report on the implementation of this Recommendation in their Annual Reports, and report any interactions with marine mammals in accordance with obligations in Recommendations [16-14] and [11-10] in the format specified by the SCRS.