

Original: English

**DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON THE
BY-CATCH OF SEA TURTLES CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION WITH ICCAT FISHERIES**

Proposal submitted by the United States, Panama, Cabo Verde, Nicaragua, and Guatemala

RECALLING that in the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the By-catch of Sea Turtles in ICCAT Fisheries* [Rec. 10-09] the Commission asked the SCRS to estimate the impact of ICCAT fisheries on sea turtle populations;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the *Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 10-09 on the By-catch of Sea Turtles in ICCAT Fisheries* [Rec. 13-11] stated that upon receipt of advice from the SCRS, the Commission shall consider additional measures to mitigate sea turtle by-catch in ICCAT fisheries;

RECOGNIZING that the SCRS in 2017 estimated that tens of thousands of sea turtles are caught every year by ICCAT longline fisheries and, taking into account that most sea turtle by-catch occurs on shallow longline sets, the SCRS recommended that the Commission consider adopting for longline fisheries targeting swordfish and sharks at least one of the following mitigation measures: (1) use of large circle hooks; (2) use of finfish bait; (3) other measures considered effective by the SCRS;

UNDERSTANDING that ICCAT fisheries are those for tuna and tuna-like species and that ICCAT manages sharks caught in association with those fisheries;

FURTHER RECALLING the recommendation from the second independent performance review in 2016 that the Commission consider the adoption of measures to reduce sea turtle by-catch such as the mandatory use of circle hooks;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the by-catch reporting obligations under the *Recommendation by ICCAT on Information Collection and Harmonization of Data on By-catch and Discards in ICCAT Fisheries* [Rec. 11-10] and the *Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish Minimum Standards for Fishing Vessel Scientific Observer Programs* [Rec. 16-14] of CPCs to report the number of interactions of their fisheries with sea turtles and all other required information using the statistical form developed by the SCRS;

NOTING the *Resolution by ICCAT Concerning the Application of an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management* [Res. 15-11];

CONSISTENT with the call to minimize waste, discards, catch of non-target species (both fish and non-fish species), and impacts on associated or dependent species, in particular endangered species, in the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and U.N. Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks;

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

1. CPCs shall require that their vessels employ at least one of the following mitigation measures in their surface longline* fisheries (i.e., longlines targeting swordfish and sharks, set at less than 100 m depth):
 - (a) Use of large circle hooks, which are fishing hooks originally designed and manufactured so that the point is turned perpendicularly back to the shank to form a generally circular, or oval shape; or
 - (b) Use of only whole finfish bait; or

* As described in Chapter 3.1.2, Section 2, of the ICCAT Manual.

- (c) Other measures considered effective by the SCRS and approved by the Commission in the future.
2. In addition to the by-catch reporting obligations under Recs. 11-10 and 16-14, CPCs should report to ICCAT where possible: the nature of the hooking or entanglement interaction (including interactions with Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) and gillnet gear); bait type; hook size and type; and other relevant information about the interactions (e.g., longline set depth). This information should be reported in the notes of the national observer program statistical form developed by the SCRS.
 3. In order to improve estimates of sea turtle by-catch, CPCs shall endeavor to increase scientific observer coverage beyond the minimum level required in Rec. 16-14.
 4. The SCRS shall continue to review relevant information on the by-catch of sea turtles and advise the Commission on the effectiveness of these mitigation measures and the impacts of any such mitigation measures on other species, as appropriate, by 2022. To support this work, CPCs should provide to the SCRS estimates of sea turtle by-catch rates that take into consideration: gear characteristics (including hook size); time (i.e., month or season), depth, and location of capture; targeted species during bycatch; hooking location (i.e., jaw or gut hooked), and disposition status (i.e., discarded dead or released alive).
 5. In their Annual Reports to ICCAT, CPCs shall report on the implementation of paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this Recommendation.
 6. Paragraphs 1-4 shall not apply to CPCs whose fishing vessels operate only north of 55 degrees N or south of 40 degrees S latitude (i.e., outside the geographic range of Atlantic sea turtles). CPCs claiming this exemption shall indicate this in their 2019 Annual Report.
 7. This recommendation supplements the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the By-catch of Sea Turtles in ICCAT Fisheries* [Rec. 10-09] and the *Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 10- 09 on the By-catch of Sea Turtles in ICCAT Fisheries* [Rec. 13-11]. For the purpose of streamlining existing Recommendations, the Commission will consider, in 2019, a Recommendation that combines Recs. 10-09, 13-11, and this Recommendation.
 8. This Recommendation will be reviewed in light of any new relevant SCRS advice.