

EXPLANATORY NOTE:
DRAFT RESOLUTION BY ICCAT ON DEVELOPMENT OF INITIAL MANAGEMENT
OBJECTIVES FOR NORTH ATLANTIC SWORDFISH

(a new proposal)
Proposal submitted by Canada

The intention of this proposal is to seek agreement on conceptual management objectives for North Atlantic swordfish (nSWO), which is an important step in advancing the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for nSWO. These draft conceptual management objectives are required in 2020 to 1) guide development of performance metrics for comparing candidate management procedure performance across operating models, and 2) provide the foundations for development of operational management objectives through intersessional work of Panel 4. The operational management objectives would then be proposed to the Commission for adoption in 2021, which corresponds to ICCAT's schedule for the nSWO MSE.

Fisheries management objectives can be framed in two ways: (1) conceptual objectives; or (2) operational objectives (Punt *et al.* 2016¹). Conceptual objectives are high-level aspirational objectives that verbalize a desired generic goal without including any specifics on a measurable target or timeframe for achievement. Operational objectives are more refined and more specific about measureable targets and associated likelihood of achieving those targets over determined timeframes. Operational objectives are the key foundational component of any MSE.

Conceptual objectives for nSWO were discussed at the *2018 Standing Working Group on Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers Meeting* (SWGSM). At that time, the Working Group agreed to begin with consideration of conceptual management objectives as a basis for future determination of operational management objectives.

¹ A.E. Punt, D.S. Butterworth, C.L. de Moor, J.A.A. De Oliveira, and M. Haddon. 2016. Management strategy evaluation: best practices. *Fish and Fisheries* 17:303-334.

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RECALLING that one of the main goals of the SCRS Science Strategic Plan 2015-2020 is to evaluate precautionary management reference points and robust harvest control rules (HCRs) through management strategy evaluations (MSE);

ANTICIPATING the transition to using management procedures, which the Commission has recommended for swordfish and other priority stocks to manage fisheries more effectively in the face of identified uncertainties, consistent with the Convention and the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Principles of Decision Making for ICCAT Conservation and Management Measures* (Rec. 11-13);

ACKNOWLEDGING the Kobe Strategy Matrix as a harmonized format for RFMO science bodies to convey advice and that current management objectives for North Atlantic swordfish predate the Kobe Process, omitting benchmarks for fishing mortality (Rec. 17-02);

CONSIDERING that the Commission intends to complete an MSE for North Atlantic swordfish by 2022;

UNDERSTANDING that conceptual objectives are high-level aspirational objectives that verbalize a desired generic goal without including any specifics on a measurable target or timeframe for achievement, while operational objectives are more refined and more specific about measurable targets and the associated likelihood of achieving those targets over determined timeframes. Operational objectives are the key foundational component of any MSE;

SEEKING to advance the development of management procedures, as agreed by the Commission pursuant to the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Development of Harvest Control Rules and of Management Strategy Evaluation* (Rec. 15-07);

NOTING that dead discards of swordfish may occur due to compliance with minimum size limits, the MSE process could be an opportunity to confirm initial SCRS advice that size limits in North Atlantic swordfish fisheries may not be achieving their purposes;

FURTHER NOTING ICCAT's need to commit to developing final operational management objectives for North Atlantic swordfish in advance of their presentation to the Commission in 2021;

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

1. Management objectives should be established for North Atlantic swordfish. Operational objectives are to be based on the Convention's objective: to maintain populations at or above levels that will support maximum sustainable catch (usually referred to as MSY).
2. Panel 4 should, preferably during a 2021 intersessional meeting, use these conceptual objectives to develop initial operational management objectives for North Atlantic swordfish. A final set of operational management objectives would be proposed to the Commission for adoption in 2021. To facilitate this development, the following candidate management objectives should be considered:
 - a. Stock Status
 - The stock should have a greater than [__]% probability of occurring in the green quadrant of the Kobe matrix;

- b. Safety
 - There should be a less than [__]% probability of the stock falling below B_{LIM}^2 :
[...]
 - c. Yield
 - Maximize overall catch levels; and,
 - d. Stability
 - Any increase or decrease in TAC between management periods should be less than [__]%.
3. In the development of the operating models, the Commission would like the SCRS to allow for the evaluation of minimum size limits as strategies to achieve management objectives.
 4. In developing initial operational management objectives, the candidate management objectives in paragraph 2 may be rejected, modified, or supplemented, as appropriate. Further, Panel 4 will need to consider the inclusion of timeframes.
 5. Panel 4 will provide its recommendations for initial management objectives to the SCRS Swordfish Species Group for review and consider any SCRS input before forwarding objectives to the Commission for consideration at its 2021 annual meeting.
 6. This resolution will be repealed upon adoption of final operational management objectives for North Atlantic swordfish by the Commission.

² Recommendation 17-02, paragraph 6, identifies $0.4 \cdot B_{MSY}$ as the interim limit reference point to be used when assessing stock status and providing management recommendations to the Commission.