

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE
PLAN TO REBUILD BLUE MARLIN AND WHITE MARLIN POPULATIONS**

RECALLING the 2010 *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Populations* [Rec. 10-05],

ALSO RECALLING that Rec. 10-05 requires Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities (CPCs) to establish at the 2011 Commission meeting a multi-year plan to rebuild blue marlin and white marlin populations on the basis of the SCRS advice;

FURTHER RECALLING that the objective of the Convention is to maintain populations at levels that will support maximum sustainable catch (usually referred to as MSY),

CONSIDERING that the 2011 Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) stock assessment indicates that the blue marlin stock is below B_{MSY} and that fishing mortality is above F_{MSY} and that unless the recent catch levels are substantially reduced, the stock will likely continue to decline,

ALSO CONSIDERING that the 2011 SCRS recommended that the Commission should implement management measures to immediately reduce fishing mortality on blue marlin stock, by adopting a TAC of 2,000 t or less, to allow the stock to increase, and by adopting measures to manage fishing mortality by the non-industrial fleet,

ALSO CONSIDERING that in 2012 the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) shall assess the stock of white marlin

NOTING that, due to the misidentification problems between white marlin and spearfishes (genus *Tetrapturus*), the SCRS also recommended that management recommendations combine these species as a mixed stock until more accurate species identification and differentiation of species catches are available,

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

1. The terms of the 2006 *Recommendation by ICCAT to Further Strengthen the Plan to Rebuild Atlantic Blue Marlin and White Marlin Populations* [Rec. 06-09] shall be extended through 2012, except for paragraph 3, which shall read as follows:

A TAC of 2,000 t for blue marlin shall be established for 2012, as recommended by the SCRS. In 2012, the annual amount of blue marlin and white marlin (including spearfish) that can be harvested and retained for landing by pelagic longline and purse seine vessels must be no more than 30% of a CPC highest annual landing level from 1996 to 2004 (excluding 1997 for Chinese Taipei), for blue marlin and white marlin individually. Should a CPC harvest and land less than the limit specified above, the CPC shall not carry forward any underharvest to subsequent years, with the exception of those CPCs whose catch limit under this measure is less than 5 t who will be limited to carry forward a maximum amount of 50% of their initial catch limit from one year to the next. All blue marlin and white marlin brought to pelagic longline and purse seine vessels alive shall be released in a manner that maximizes their survival. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to marlins that are dead when brought along the side of the vessel and that are not sold or entered into commerce.

2. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities (CPCs) shall establish at the 2012 Commission meeting a multi-year plan to rebuild blue marlin and white marlin populations on the basis of SCRS advice, including the establishment of total mortality limits by CPC, taking into account the *ICCAT Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities* [Ref. 01-25] adopted in 2001.

3. The Secretariat, in conjunction with the SCRS, shall research and review existing regional or individual CPC data collection programs, including capacity building programs, for artisanal fisheries. The Secretariat and the SCRS will present their findings at the 2013 Commission meeting, including a plan to work with relevant regional and sub-regional international organizations and CPCs to expand such programs or implement them in new areas to improve data on billfish catches in these fisheries.
4. In 2012, the SCRS shall analyze the potential benefits and applicability of the use of time/area closures as a tool for marlin conservation.