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MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEA  
Fisheries conservation and control Mediterranean and Black Sea

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**FAX**

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**Subject: ICCAT Annual Meeting: Transmission to the MEDRAC of draft proposals related to improved management measures for swordfish in the framework of ICCAT**

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Dear Madam,

In view of the next meeting of the MEDRAC that will take place on the 20-21 September, please find attached a document related to the Mediterranean swordfish.

This paper spells out the elements that will be part of a proposal to be tabled in November 2011 in order to improve and reinforce the current ICCAT Recommendation 09-04 for a management framework for the sustainable exploitation of Mediterranean swordfish.

I would be grateful if you could distribute this document to the members of the MEDRAC.

Yours sincerely,

Fabrizio DONATELLA  
Head of Unit

# **Improved management measures for swordfish in the framework of ICCAT**

## **Draft proposals**

This paper spells out the elements that will be part of a proposal to be tabled in November 2011 in order to improve and reinforce the current ICCAT Recommendation 09-04 for a management framework for the sustainable exploitation of Mediterranean swordfish, i.e.:

### **1. Improvement of ICCAT records of vessels authorised to fish swordfish**

1. CPCs shall provide the list of all fishing vessels authorized to catch swordfish, either as target or by-catch, in the Mediterranean Sea.

The list of fishing vessels authorized to catch swordfish in the Mediterranean Sea shall distinguish:

- a) Vessels targeting swordfish that is where swordfish is at any time after the end of the fishing operation the majority of the fish caught and/or retained on board
  - b) Vessels catching swordfish as by-catches that is where the swordfish is at any time after the end of the fishing operation the minority of the fish caught and/or retained on board;
  - c) Recreational fisheries
2. Vessels not entered into the ICCAT list of all vessels authorized to catch swordfish in the Mediterranean Sea are deemed not to be authorized to catch, retain on board, tranship, transport, process or land swordfish.
  3. Vessels included in the list of authorized vessels as under point 2 and which participate in pelagic longline fisheries for highly-migratory pelagic stocks in the Mediterranean shall have a special fishing permit for each authorised fishery (i.e. by target species and area).

### **2. Setting a Total Allowable Catches (TAC)**

1. The total allowable catches (TACs) for Mediterranean swordfish is set at 12,100 t on a multiannual basis for the years 2012 and 2013.
2. The TAC for 2014 onwards, if advisable, may be adjusted following the SCRS advice in 2013.
3. Necessary measures shall be taken to ensure that the fishing effort of its catching vessels is commensurate with the fishing opportunities on swordfish available.

### **4. Closed fishing season**

1. Swordfish fishing, both as a targeted fishery and as by-catch, shall be prohibited in the Mediterranean by pelagic longline vessels during the period from (3 months period, in any case including October and November). Mediterranean swordfish shall not be retained on board, transhipped or landed during the period of closure.
2. Effectiveness of this closure shall be monitored and relevant information on appropriate controls and inspections to ensure compliance with the measure shall be submitted.

## **5. Minimum size**

1. Necessary measures shall be taken to prohibit catching, retaining on board, transhipping, landing, transporting, storing, selling, displaying or offering for sale swordfish measuring less than 90 cm LJFL or, in alternative, weighing less than 10 kg of round weight or 7,5 kg of gilled and gutted weight

No tolerance should be allowed to the minimum catching size and weights.

2. Only entire specimens of swordfish, without removal of any external part or, if appropriate, gilled and gutted specimens can be retained on board, transhipped, landed, transported.

## **6. By-catch**

1. Catching vessels authorized to participate in pelagic longline fisheries for highly-migratory pelagic stocks and not authorized to target for swordfish are not authorized to retain on board or land swordfish exceeding more than 5% of the total catch on board by weight or/and number of pieces of other highly-migratory stocks.

## **7. Technical characteristics of fishing gears**

1. The maximum number of hooks that can be set or taken on board of vessels by fishery (defined on the basis of the more abundant species anytime on board) should be fixed at:
  - o 1600 hooks for bluefin tuna,
  - o 2800 hooks for swordfish,
  - o 4000 hooks for albacore.

A second set of hooks may be allowed on board for trips longer than 2 days.

2. Hook size should never be smaller than 7 cm of height for fishing targeting swordfish.
3. The length of the pelagic longline will be of maximum 30 NM (55 km).

## **8. Scientific information and advice**

1. Maintenance or development of adequate scientific information shall be ensured.

2. Specific information for the fishing vessels that were authorized to carry out pelagic longline fisheries in the Mediterranean during the preceding year shall be communicated.

The list of these vessels shall contain the following information for each vessel:

- name of vessel (if any);
  - register number;
  - external marking;
  - previous name (if any);
  - previous flag (if any);
  - type of vessel, length and gross tonnage (GT) and/or gross registered tonnage (GRT);
  - period(s) fished and total annual number of fishing days by fishery (i.e. by target species and area);
  - geographical areas, by ICCAT statistical rectangles, where fishing by fishery (i.e. by target species and area) was carried out;
  - number of hooks used by fishery (i.e. by target species and area);
  - number of longline units used by fishery (i.e. by target species and area);
  - overall length of all longline units by fishery (i.e. by target species and area).
3. The SCRS shall provide in 2013 an updated assessment of the state of the stock on the basis of updated data. It shall assess the effects of this management framework and provide advice on possible amendments of the various measures with a view to recover or to maintain the stock within safe biological limits while delivering economically viable fishing activity.
  4. Based on such scientific advice, the ICCAT may decide, by end of 2013 on advisable changes of the management framework for swordfish with a view to comply with the management objective.