

released fish in captivity at considerable expense once the monitoring indicated the countries had met their quota. Enforcement is working.

- A CITES listing will undermine the progress achieved at ICCAT. It would force countries to take formal “RESERVATIONS” which could spread like a western wildfire, and further encourage other countries to do the same to achieve windfall profits. Japan has objected 7 times to any CITES listing of any marine species and said they will again on this proposal.
- A CITES listing would be a slap in the face to ICCAT and those who worked so hard to produce this monumental change at ICCAT.
- A CITES listing would hurt Western Atlantic fishermen, the most compliant BFT fishermen in the world. What kind of message does that send? Western Atlantic fishermen are not the cause of current CITES momentum and have always followed Bluefin scientific advice and abided by international quotas.
- A CITES listing is not the remedy for the Eastern/Mediterranean failure to conserve. Nor does it take the place of proper fishery management or creating the political will to empower ICCAT to do the right job.

### **A VOTE AGAINST THIS PROPOSAL GIVES ICCAT THE SUPPORT IT NEEDS TO ACHIEVE THE REBUILDING OBJECTIVES THAT HAVE ALREADY BEGUN.**

Following are the actual ICCAT concessions from the Mediterranean and European fishing community agreed to at November ICCAT meeting 2009.

#### **09-06 BFT**

#### **RECOMMENDATION AMENDING RECOMMENDATION 08-05 TO ESTABLISH A MULTIANNUL RECOVERY PLAN FOR BLUEFIN TUNA IN THE EASTERN ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:**

##### **Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and associated conditions**

1. The total allowable catches for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna shall be set at 13,500 t in 2010. The allocation scheme established by Recommendation 08-05 shall remain unchanged.
2. The SCRS shall present a Kobe II strategy matrix reflecting recovery scenarios of eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna in accordance with the multiannual recovery plan of the present Recommendation.
3. The Commission shall establish at its 2010 meeting a three-year recovery plan for 2011-2013 with the goal of achieving BMSY through 2022 with at least 60% of probability, on a basis of the SCRS advice described in paragraph 2 above.
4. If the SCRS stock assessment detects a serious threat of fishery collapse, the Commission shall suspend all the fisheries for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna in 2011. Contracting Party, and Cooperating non-Contracting Party, Entity or Fishing Entity (hereafter referred to as CPCs) shall immediately intensify research activities so that SCRS can conduct further analysis and present recommendations on conservation and management measures necessary to resume the fisheries.

##### **Closed fishing season**

5. Purse seine fishing for bluefin tuna shall be prohibited in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean during the period from 15 June to 15 May.
6. The bad weather clause allowing for a possible extension of up to 5 days until 20 June (paragraph 21 of Rec.08-05) shall be cancelled.

##### **Further reduction of fishing capacity**

7. Without prejudice to paragraph 45 of Rec. 08-05, each CPC shall reduce its fishing capacity referred to in paragraphs 42, 43 and 44 of Rec. 08-05 so as to ensure that the discrepancy between its fishing capacity and its fishing capacity commensurate with its allocated quota in 2011, 2012 and 2013, in accordance with the methodology approved at the 2009 annual meeting, shall be reduced by:
  - a) at least 50% in 2011
  - b) 20% in 2012
  - c) 5% in 2013
8. Management plans on fishing capacity for the remaining period shall be submitted annually for discussion and approval by the Commission.

##### **Joint fishing operations**

9. For each CPC, the number of joint fishing operations between CPCs from 2010 shall be limited to the level of 2007, 2008 or 2009. Before the start of the fishing season, each concerned CPC shall notify the number of its joint fishing operations with other CPCs to the ICCAT Secretariat.

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##### **Inter-sessional meeting on compliance**

10. The Commission shall review and determine each CPC's compliance, in particular that with paragraph 1 above and paragraph 46 of Recommendation 08-05, at its special session before the 2010 fishing season starts.
11. The Commission shall decide on the interim suspension or reduction of quota for the declared non-compliant CPC, depending on the extent of the established non-compliance.

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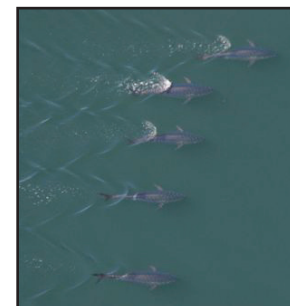
CITES

COP 15

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL  
TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD  
FAUNA AND FLORA

### **NORTHERN ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA**

#### *A Quick Bluefin Picture*



ICCAT 2009 in Recife, Brazil, where ABTA (American Bluefin Tuna Association) was represented, a monumental and irreversible event that will lead to the rebuilding of the Northern Atlantic bluefin tuna was negotiated and agreed to by ICCAT members.

The latest 2008 stock assessment for the East suggest 5 million fish are swimming with about a million of these of spawning age. For the western Atlantic spawning stock, there are varying estimates that the biomass is 5 to 10 times smaller, but even so there are considerable ABT around. In recent years, recruitment has increased by more than a quarter of a million fish annually. Genetic experts have a term for this, but in short, it is a species response to self preservation. BFT are pretty good at this since they have been fished since the Roman Empire period, and over fished in the Mediterranean since 1996 when the introduction of farms began. But, given the dire predictions of the west going extinct since 1981, western BFT are not just still ticking but 2009 will go down as our best fishery in the US since 2003.

[This CITES proposal is damaging to the rebuilding of the Northern Atlantic Bluefin Tuna and takes power away from an inspiring RMFO \(ICCAT\) that also manages 13 other species.](#)

- The Northern Atlantic bluefin tuna are not remotely close to being endangered with extinction and are, widely distributed from Argentina to Norway. The latest 2008 ICCAT SCRS stock assessment provides no evidence or suggestion of a threat of the northern Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) going biologically extinct. Nor have we seen any suggestion by any mainstream, credible bluefin tuna scientists to the effect that there is any significant level of capability of a fishery or mankind to fish to extinction a species with the reproductive strategy of a highly migratory, highly fecund, widely distributed tuna species such as the Atlantic bluefin tuna.
- Catch rates would become uneconomical for commercial fishermen to fish to extinction this species.
- Over the last several years the Canadian fishery performance indicates we have plenty of western spawners with rapid quota achievement being filled with 700 to 1,100 lb fish prior to the main body of fish making the journey to the Gulf of Mexico to spawn and replenish the western metapopulation. Many scientists now seem to prefer describing BFT as “metapopulations” or “contingent hypothesis” group theories with one of the implications being survival of the species even if one or more of the sub-populations is under extreme stress and fishing pressure.
- Many believe that the view described above is the proper context to view any potential eastern “fishery collapse” of a contingent or assemblage i.e. there is no threat of extinction to the stock. In the west we have already noticed the drop in Eastern catches to about 19,000 mt confirmed by SCRS with increased abundance of juveniles supporting exceptional and valuable recreational fishing here, many of which the fish are released.
- Table 4 of the latest stock assessment suggests the capacity of the eastern Atlantic spawning stock to compensate. In the last 10 years the average spawning stock biomass has dropped almost in half but the average recruitment has increased by a quarter of million fish. A stock recruitment relationship cannot be the justification for an argument of extinction or CITES listing.
- The collapse of the Nordic fisheries some 51 years ago still yielded catches over 100 tons in the 1990’s. And, The Brazilian fishery reported 13 tons in 1999 after the collapse in the 1960’s. The collapse of a regional commercial fishery that is based on a sub population is not evidence of imminent extinction.
- In 1989 the Southern Bluefin tuna stock collapse was accepted by the participating fishing nations when the total catch dropped to the 10,000 to 15,000 mt level. 20 years later the Total Allowable Catch for the “collapsed” fishery is now set by the CCCSBT at 11,810 mt. Another example to demonstrate that with a highly migratory, highly fecund tuna species -- collapse of the fishery is not an indication of threat of extinction or imminent extinction of the species.
- The key issue controlling the future health of BFT is what just happened in Brazil at ICCAT: the new quota of 13,500 is remarkable, it is consistent with the SCRS advice of a quota between 8- to 15,000 mt. Additionally, an extended spawning closure, elimination of weather days, and an 11 month purse seine closure were negotiated. This is incredible protection. It lowers the historical catches of 50,000 mt and higher.
- The plan adopted by ICCAT this year requires an eastern TAC beginning in FY 2011 that has a 60% probability of achieving Bmsy by 2023. While the precise TAC will be based on the 2010 stock assessment yet to occur, the current stock assessment would strongly suggest that this requirement will result in a TAC of less than 8000 mt beginning in FY2011
- ICCAT also promised a suspension of fishing activity. “If the SCRS stock assessment detects a serious threat of fishery collapse, the Commission shall suspend all the fisheries for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna in 2011.” This assurance coupled with the massive fishing capacity reductions by ICCAT members guarantees a sustainable fishery in the future. Not even CITES can completely shut down a fishery, ICCAT can. A CITES listing for marine species is the beginning of a dangerous precedent.
- One should also keep in mind this reduction in F in the east has a double benefit for the future health of the western stock. It will substantially reduce the fishing mortality rate on western origin fish when they have migrated east and are subject to eastern fisheries. It will also increase the contribution of eastern origin fish that migrate west and enter our western fishery and, thereby, reduce the proportion of western origin fish killed in the western fishery—i.e. this reduces the fishing mortality rate on western origin fish.
- The ICCAT Compliance Committee provided an unprecedented breakthrough of enormous proportions. From the European Community to North African producers, the message has been received to fix the problem and it is being fixed expeditiously.
- The EC has finally spent the money to develop monitoring and control mechanisms to keep the catches within the scientific advice. It should not go unnoticed that last season 3 farms and 1 trap