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RAC MED REPORT OF THE ICCAT 18th SPECIAL MEETING

AGADIR, MOROCCO 12-19 NOVEMBER 2012

The RAC MED delegation was composed by the Chair and the Executive Secretary, as approved by the Executive Committee's members, and participated along all the Plenary Session.

First of all I want to inform you that the mandate of the Executive Secretary Driss Meski has been confirmed and renewed for two years.

All the Plenary meeting has been focused on the modification of the 10-04 ICCAT Recommendation on the Bluefin tuna (**BFT**) recovery plan, and thanks to the last SCRS advice that informed us on the improvement of the situation of the stock, and that *"...maintaining catches at the current TAC (12,900 t) or at the 2010 TAC (13,500 t) under the current management scheme will likely allow the stock to increase during that period and is consistent with the goal of achieving FMSY and BMSY through 2022 with at least 60% of probability, given the quantified uncertainties"*. During the Plenary it has been adopted the EU draft recommendation containing the following changes on management measures:

- The total allowable catches (**TACs**) shall be set at **13.400 t** annually, effective beginning in 2013 and thereafter, until such time the TAC is changed following the SCRS advice maintaining the same allocation keys. The quota allocated to EU is **7548,06t**;
- Algeria is granted an extra and temporary allocation of 100t/year for the years 2013 and 2014 prior to any future revisions;
- The quota transfer of 10t from Chinese Taipei to Egypt in 2013 shall be authorized.
- The Libyan delegation asked, for 2013, to review its quota allocation since they didn't fish in 2011 due to the war thus having no effective impact on the stock.
- Each CPC may (as **it is no longer an obligation**) also allocate a specific quota for the purpose of recreational and sport fisheries;
- No chartering operation for the bluefin tuna fishery is permitted from 2013.

On Open fishing seasons:



-Purse seine fishing for BFT shall be permitted in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean during the period from **26 May to 24 June**. (SO THE PERIOD has been shifted forward by 10 days as we proposed in our advice ref.248/AV/2012)

- Bluefin tuna fishing by baitboats and trolling boats shall be permitted in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean during the period from **1 July to 31 October**.

Referring to minimum size it has been decided to insert in the Recco. to prohibit catching, retaining on board, transshipping, transferring, landing, transporting, storing, selling, displaying or offering for sale bluefin tuna of BFT weighing less than 30 kg and also **the fork length less than 115 cms**. Moreover, in derogation of the paragraph mentioned above, a minimum size for bluefin tuna of 8 kg **or 75cms fork length** shall apply to the following situations in accordance with the procedures set out in Annex 1.

By-catch: the percentage of the by catch is unchanged (5%), but it is foreseen that this prohibition does not apply to CPCs whose domestic legislation requires that all dead fish be landed. Moreover, if no quota has been allocated to the CPC of the fishing vessel or trap concerned or if it has already been consumed, the catching of bluefin tuna as by-catch is not permitted and CPCs shall take the necessary measures to ensure their release.

Recreational fisheries: CPCs shall take the necessary measures to prohibit the catch and retention on board, transshipment or landing of more than one bluefin tuna per vessel per day (AND NO MORE IN EACH SEA TRIP). This prohibition does not apply to CPCs whose domestic legislation requires that all dead fish be landed. It has been added another sentence related to recreational and sport fisheries: Any bluefin tuna however landed should be done so whole, gilled and gutted.

Referring to **Panel 2**, The Chair of the Scientific Committee of ICCAT (SCRS) presented a draft recommendation establishing a multiannual constant Scientific quota for the funding of the Atlantic-wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (GBYP), be set at 300t per year, for the period 2013-2016. Unfortunately the measures proposed were not adopted and the final decision of the funding mechanism is deferred until 2013, so parties undertook to continue the research through voluntary contributions.

Other meetings The inter-sessional meetings in 2013 will be: 1) Working Group on the future of ICCAT; 2) West Atlantic bluefin tuna Working group; 3) Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM) Working Group (dealing with traceability, VMS); 4) Joint Panel and a Compliance Committee to review the members' management plans will be held probably in March; 5) Western BFT working Group will be hosted by Japan in June.

Date and place of the next meeting of the Commission: The next annual meeting of ICCAT will be held in Cape Town, South Africa between 16 and 26 November 2013.

