



International Game Fish Association Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum

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The International Game Fish Association (IGFA) is a non-profit organization that represents recreational anglers throughout the world. IGFA was established in 1939, has active members in over 100 countries, is the governing body for international recreational fishing, and provides rules for ethical angling practices. Many of IGFA's members target the highly migratory species managed by ICCAT, especially marlin, sailfish and spearfish (i.e. billfish) which are primarily caught and released.

IGFA has great concern about how highly migratory species are being managed on a global level for recreational anglers. The lack of data and accurate reporting on billfish catch is of particular concern. As an organization that is committed to the conservation of game fishes, IGFA has deployed 41 pop-up satellite archival tags in marlin around the world in the last year, 13 of which have been in waters under this organization's purview. The information gained from this exercise is available to your scientific committee.

The following are IGFA's recommendations for the 18th Special Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas to be held in Agadir Morocco on November 12-19, 2012

Billfish

The most recent stock assessments for blue marlin, white marlin, and eastern Atlantic sailfish indicate that all three stocks are currently still overfished with overfishing occurring in blue marlin and eastern Atlantic sailfish. Catch data for all billfish species continues to be a problem, as does historic and current misidentification between white marlin and roundscale spearfish.

- IGFA recommends greater protection for sailfish and blue and white marlin by enhancing data collection
- IGFA further recommends implementing a prohibition on Atlantic billfish entering into international trade. Similar legislation has recently been passed, at the request of IGFA, in the United States that now bans importation of marlin, sailfish and spearfish into the continental United States.
- We also recommend all countries be required to report dead discards and use circle hooks in their longline fisheries.

Bluefin Tuna

Bluefin tuna TAC levels for *both* eastern and western bluefin tuna should not exceed the recommendations put forward by the SCRS.

- A recent SCRS report showed that total catch of eastern Atlantic bluefin has been as much as 77% above quota indicating the high prevalence of IUU fishing. As such IGFA agrees with the SCRS recommendation that the eastern stock should not be increased until stock assessment models incorporate more accurate catch data.

The International Game Fish Association is a not-for-profit organization committed to the conservation of game fish and the promotion of responsible, ethical angling practices through science, education, rule making and record keeping.

- The great uncertainties in the stock assessment for the western stock make it improbable that the stock will rebuild by the agreed on timeline. Particularly troubling are recent data that indicate that 72% of bluefin tuna caught off of the U.S. states of North Carolina and Virginia in 2011-2012 were of eastern origin, which may greatly overestimate the true population size of the western stock. Therefore, IGFA does not support increasing the western TAC from the current level of 1,750 mt.

Sharks

IGFA recommends that ICCAT adopt measures to require that all sharks be landed with fins naturally attached. Such a measure would help further curtail illegal shark finning practices.

Compliance

ICCAT members must take action to strengthen measures to help reduce or eliminate IUU fishing.

- IGFA urges ICCAT members to fully implement the electronic bluefin catch documentation (eBCD) program by the start of the 2013 Mediterranean purse seine fishing season.
- IGFA urges ICCAT to take all necessary steps to end illegal driftnet fishing for bluefin tuna and swordfish and to take action against all vessels that have been identified as engaging in IUU fishing.
- IGFA recommends better identification of fishing vessels, particularly those fishing for bluefin tuna.

General

Recreational angling is a growing and economically vibrant entity in many countries and we wish that ICCAT recognize both its relevance and that it may necessitate alternate management objectives than those used in commercial fisheries. IGFA kindly offers its consultation to ICCAT on recreational fisheries issues

- Current ICCAT quota allocation and reallocation policies do not take into consideration the economic value of catch and release recreational fisheries. ICCAT Contracting parties should be free to utilize quota as they desire, even if it is not fully harvested without penalty of quota redistribution.
- Managing fisheries on the basis of MSY is an excessively risk-prone approach. As such, we suggest that ICCAT adopt a target objective below MSY to compensate for biological, environmental and data uncertainties.