



International Game Fish Association

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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. Additionally, IGFA has appointed an International Committee of Representatives and has official representatives in nearly all ICCAT Contracting Party nations. These representatives have been chosen for their integrity, fishing knowledge and concern for fisheries conservation. They report to IGFA on issues affecting our interests and are a primary way that IGFA participates in the international fishing community.

IGFA wishes to express our appreciation to ICCAT for arranging this 22nd Regular Meeting of the Commission and our gratitude to the city of Istanbul, Turkey for hosting. We hope IGFA, as an observer, will be able to contribute to the management policies of the Commission so that our marine resources are managed in a sustainable manner for all users.

IGFA would like to share the important impact that recreational fishing has in a country's economy. It is estimated that there are approximately 100 million recreational anglers in the world which includes individuals who fish locally as well as those who travel to fishing destinations around the world. Recreational anglers generate revenue in a variety of ways such as buying supplies (tackle, bait etc.), renting boats, travel & tourism costs (hotels, restaurants etc), and tax revenue generated to name a few. When a recreational fishing industry is properly developed as a sustainable industry, economic benefits can be forthcoming for years to come. For example, recent publications have reported that recreational fisheries have had an estimated annual economic contribution of \$599 million (USD) in Costa Rica¹, \$1.1 billion (USD) in Los Cabos, Mexico² and \$125 billion (USD) in the USA³.

In order for a fishery to be sustainable it must be managed properly. IGFA wishes to express its basic concern and opposition to the concept of continuing to manage our fisheries on the basis of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) for several reasons. Managing fisheries at MSY is excessively risk prone and may not properly and adequately consider natural variations in stock abundance and productivity. Managing stocks at MSY typically results in truncated size/age distribution, which is undesirable to many recreational anglers that favor having the potential to catch larger fish, even if they are not ultimately harvested. MSY also tends to ignore the economic benefits of catch and release recreational angling and the subsequent conservation benefits derived from it. Instead of managing fisheries at MSY, we would suggest adopting Optimum Yield (OY) as a targeted management objective. In the United States, OY is defined as the amount of fish that will provide the greatest overall benefit to the Nation (or Nations), particularly with respect to food production and recreational opportunities, and taking into account the protection of marine ecosystems. Optimum Yield is prescribed on the basis of MSY as reduced by relevant economic, social or ecological factors.

Furthermore, IGFA would also like to draw the Commission's attention again at this meeting to the importance of combating Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and strengthening controls against the detrimental effects of this practice. IUU fishing, by its very nature, endangers and undermines conservation and management efforts for sustainable fisheries. It continues to be a matter of concern in the ICCAT area.

As an organization with over 72 years of experience in the development of sustainable and responsible recreational fishing practices, IGFA stands ready to assist the Commission and/or any contracting parties seeking advice on this issue.

SOURCES

¹ Instituto de Investigaciones en Ciencias Económicas de Universidad de Costa Rica. *Analysis of the Economic Contribution of Recreational and Commercial Fisheries to the Costa Rican Economy*. San José, Costa Rica. 2010

² Southwick Associates Inc., Nelson Resources Consulting Inc., y FIRMUS Consulting. *Contribución económica de la pesca deportiva a la economía de Los Cabos*. 2008

³ American Sportfishing Association. *Sportfishing in America, an Economic Engine and Conservation Powerhouse*. January 2008.