

## Billfish Species Working Group

#12d

Convener: Rick Weber

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### Current ICCAT measures:

[Rec 15-05](#): Blue and white marlin rebuilding plan

[Rec 16-11](#): Sailfish management measure

### Excerpts from 2017 SCRS Report relevant to BAYS

[http://iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2017\\_SCRS\\_REP\\_ENG.pdf](http://iccat.int/Documents/Meetings/Docs/2017_SCRS_REP_ENG.pdf)

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## **Billfish Species Working Group 2018 Agenda**

### **1. Introductions**

### **2. Status of the stocks and update on relevant SCRS activities**

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

- A. What should the scope of ICCAT's engagement on recreational fisheries issues be?
  - i. From a U.S. perspective, what benefits has or could ICCAT provide on recreational issues? What specific outcomes would U.S. stakeholders like to see from ICCAT engagement on recreational issues?
  - ii. What are the potential obstacles/objections and/or risks associated with ICCAT engagement in recreational fisheries issues? How might these be addressed?
  - iii. What method(s)/approach(es) can/should be taken to best achieve any identified outcomes and who may be like-minded partners in other ICCAT members?
    - 1. What role should ICCAT's Working Group on Sport and Recreational Fisheries play, if any? Would the terms of reference for the working group need to be revised?
    - 2. Are there other methods/approaches that should be considered?

### **4. Conservation and Management**

- A. Actions at the 2017 ICCAT meeting
- B. Other relevant conservation and management measures already in force
- C. Review of relevant [2017 BIL SWG conservation and management recommendations](#)
- D. Consideration and development of 2018 conservation and management recommendations, including relevant matters from agenda items 3 and 4 above

### **5. Research and Data Collection**

- A. Research needs identified by the SCRS
- B. Recent research (domestic and international)
- C. Review of relevant 2017 SWG research and data collection recommendations
- D. Consideration and development of 2018 research and data collection recommendations, including any relevant matters from agenda items 3 and 4 above.

### **6. Other Business**

### **7. Adoption of the report and adjournment**

## **2017 Billfish SWG Recommendations**

### **Management Recommendations:**

1. Circle hooks can provide a significant means to decrease fishing mortality on billfishes. All transfers of surplus swordfish quota should not enable re transfer of quota from the recipient and should either require the use of circle hooks or support SCRS approved circle hook research.
2. The United States should continue to support ICCAT efforts to improve reporting from artisanal billfish fisheries. In an effort to better understand the impact of artisanal billfish fisheries, the United States should continue to work on ongoing efforts to improve data collection programs for the Caribbean, Central and South America, and African regions.
3. The BSWG has identified possible anomalies in Task I billfish data, which will be provided to NMFS. As a first step the United States through the SCRS should seek clarification from CPCs. If responses are unsatisfactory this should be brought to the attention of the Compliance Committee.
4. The United States should propose a ban on the international trade of overfished species of Atlantic billfish.

### **Research Recommendations:**

1. Increase the emphasis on collection and analysis of life-history data. Noting that many of the basic life-history parameters of billfish are still poorly understood for all species, the BSWG encourages continuing basic billfish research in age, growth, natural mortality, spawning areas, and population structure.
2. Encourage the SCRS to promote cooperative research programs with CPCs and enhance current information regarding potential differences in the catchability of non-target finfish species on pelagic longline gear when deploying circle hooks versus J-hooks.
3. In addition to the purse seine fisheries, the BSWG has identified the need for a characterization of the FAD fisheries in the Caribbean. The United States should encourage the SCRS to increase data collection and begin identifying billfish catches associated around this FAD fishery and encourage the SCRS to consider the effect of increasing numbers of moored and drifting FADs in the Western Atlantic on CPUE estimates.
4. The United States should continue to explore ways to improve under reporting of catches from artisanal fleets, such as collaborating with the GEF funded Caribbean Fisheries Management Plan Project to enhance data sharing.