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FISHERIES

#9a

2019 ICCAT Meeting

NEFMC Meeting
January 2020

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

- Management recommendations for tunas, billfish, swordfish, and sharks caught in ICCAT fisheries, as well as bycatch (seabirds, sea turtles)
- Recommendations binding
- Highly Migratory Species Management Division implements ICCAT recommendations
- Currently 53 Contracting Parties
- “Annual” Meeting held in Mallorca, November 2019
- None of the Recommendations or Resolutions adopted at the 2019 meeting requires changes to U.S. regulations



2019 Meeting – Key U.S. Achievements

Modernization of Fisheries Management

Comprehensive amendments made to the 50-year-old ICCAT Convention to:

- Bring ICCAT into line with modern fisheries management standards (such as ecosystem approach)
- Clarify ICCAT's mandate in relation to sharks
 - Expands the term "tuna and tuna-like species" to include oceanic, pelagic, and highly migratory sharks and rays
- Ensure that all key fleets targeting ICCAT species are bound by its rules



2019 Meeting – Key U.S. Achievements

Conservation and Management Plan for Bigeye and Yellowfin Tuna

- Reduces the TAC for bigeye tuna from 65,000 mt to 62,500 mt (2020) and 61,500 mt (2021)
- Protects juvenile bigeye and yellowfin, including:
 - Atlantic-wide closure for use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) (2 months in 2020; 3 months starting 2021)
 - FAD closure previously limited to the Gulf of Guinea and for only 2 months
 - Reduced FAD deployments per vessel
- Expected to reduce juvenile mortality of bigeye and enable the stock to begin rebuilding



2019 Meeting – Key U.S. Achievements

Rebuilding Programs for Atlantic Blue Marlin and White Marlin (co-sponsored by US)

- Includes landings limits and a buffer for reported dead discards, consistent with scientific advice
- Reduces annual limit for blue marlin from 2,000 mt to 1,670 mt; white marlin set at 355 mt
- Maintains U.S. annual retention limit of 250 recreationally-caught marlin

Protection of Observers (initially proposed by US)

- Protects the safety of observers in ICCAT's regional observer programs
- Now harmonized with global initiatives



2019 Meeting – U.S. Priorities Addressed

Sharks

- A one-year extension of current management measures for North Atlantic shortfin mako shark while ICCAT works toward a comprehensive rebuilding program
- Precautionary TAC for North Atlantic blue shark (39,102 mt)
- A U.S. proposal to require that sharks be landed with fins naturally attached gained 32 co-sponsors, the highest number to date, but was not ultimately adopted at this meeting

2019 Meeting – U.S. Priorities Addressed

Atlantic Bluefin Tuna

- A stock assessment update is scheduled in 2020 to provide scientific advice for 2021 and 2022, while Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) work continues
- A new Working Group on control and traceability measures



2019 Meeting – U.S. Priorities Addressed

Other

- Update of the MSE road map, outlining next steps for swordfish, albacore, bluefin, and tropical tunas MSE
- A measure encouraging boarding and inspection of vessels without nationality and non-member vessels
- Expansion of the inspection pilot program to include bluefin farms and traps
- Continued development of reporting systems to improve monitoring and compliance
- Improvements to the compliance review process
- A measure on loss and abandonment of fishing gear



2019 Meeting – U.S. Priorities NOT Addressed

Shortfin Mako

- The United States advanced a no retention measure that also offered an incentive to member nations if they reduced their mortality of shortfin mako by 80%, which would have resulted in needed mortality reductions
- This reduction has already been achieved by the United States domestically through Amendment 11 implementation
- Unfortunately, there were competing proposals and we could not gain the required consensus



ICCAT - Work Ahead

Other

- The United States will continue to push ICCAT and its parties to be forward leaning and to prioritize the implementation of measures to conserve and manage ICCAT species

Key 2020 Intersessionals:

- Panel 1 (tropical tunas) – focus on FAD management, allocations to Parties, electronic monitoring, observer coverage, and compliance
- Panel 4 (sharks, etc.) – continued discussion on development of shortfin mako rebuilding program
- Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures



For more information:

ICCAT website: www.iccat.int

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