



BLUE WATER FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

P O Box 398
910 Bayview Avenue
Barnegat Light, NJ 08006
Phone: (609)361-9229 e-mail: nelson@bwfa.org
Fax: (609)494-7210 website: www.bwfa.org

BWFA Press Release

International Scientific Commission Determines North Atlantic Swordfish Near Full Recovery

September, 30, 2002

The scientific committee of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) has determined that by 2001 the North Atlantic swordfish stock had recovered to 94% of optimum biomass and continues to rebuild. U.S. Atlantic swordfish fishermen are elated by this successful and rapid response to international conservation and management measures.

In 1990, ICCAT initiated international conservation measures, including several Total Allowable Catch reductions for North Atlantic swordfish. In 1999, it was scientifically determined that the stock increased from 58% at the end of 1996 to 65% at the beginning of 1999. ICCAT then instituted a recovery program to fully rebuild the stock to its maximum sustainable level within ten years. The recent assessment attributes this rapid recovery to ICCAT's conservation measures and favorable environmental conditions and confirms that the rebuilding was well underway before the U.S. unilaterally implemented vast time/area closures that have decimated our domestic fleet.

Congratulations to the many commercial and recreational fishermen, past and present U.S. ICCAT Commissioners and U.S. ICCAT Advisory Committee Members, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), fisheries managers, scientists, politicians and certain environmentalists who have assisted the U.S. Atlantic Pelagic Longline Fishery in its quest for swordfish to progress this far toward a full recovery. These American fishermen have consistently promoted, not opposed, several international catch reductions, minimum size regulations, and international compliance and tracking mechanisms necessary to accomplish this goal, despite enduring the harsh sacrifices. In particular, we would like to recognize and congratulate our U.S. ICCAT Commercial Commissioner Glenn Delaney for his leadership in negotiating many ICCAT conservation measures including the swordfish rebuilding plan that has led to this achievement. Bravo to ICCAT for demonstrating that an internationally-shared renewable resource can be restored for the benefit of future generations.

For further information:

ICCAT; go to: iccat@es.org

NMFS/Highly Migratory Species Division; at: 301-713-2347

BWFA; contact information above