

Opinion 92: Fishing possibilities for bluefin tuna in the North-East Atlantic

Whereas:

- The evaluation carried out by the SCRS this year showed clearly and unequivocally the recovery of this stock.
- The biomass level of this stock has reached a new historical high, with the population increasing by a factor of four in ten years due to a very significant fall in fishing mortality levels, much lower than Fmsy.
- In spite of uncertainties linked to the quality of data, the scientific perception of this stock has improved.
- The enormous sacrifices made by the fleets involved over recent times, in order to put the scientific recommendations and the EU recovery plan n°302/2009 into effect, led to extraordinary reductions in fishing possibilities of this stock.
- The SCRS has judged it possible to increase fishing possibilities gradually and progressively, without endangering the achievement of management objectives defined as at least a 60% probability of achieving Fmsy and Bmsy between now and 2022.
- It is necessary to maintain a balance between the responsible management of this fishery and the socio-economic interests of the fleets involved.

The members of the SWW AC suggest:

- Gradually increasing fishing possibilities for the bluefin tuna in 2015 and 2016, up to a catch level in line with the harvesting recommendations for the most pessimistic MSY levels formulated by the SCRS in its recent evaluation.
- To continue with the effort to improve traceability and the quality of data.

These proposals were adopted following discussions that took place during the ICCAT and Pelagic Species working group of 28 October 2014, by consensus, with the exception of the duration of progressive implementation (of fishing possibilities), on the subject of which the NGOs did not wish to position themselves within this opinion.