

**CCSBT-CC/0810/SBT Fisheries – European Community**  
**CCSBT-EC/0810/SBT Fisheries – European Community**

***Report of 2007 SBT Fishery - European Community***

The European Community is committed to RFMOs and the key role they play in the long term conservation and sustainable use of stocks and, in particular, to the importance of the strengthening and modernising these organisations. The European Community remains dedicated to fulfilling our obligations towards CCSBT and to actively contributing to Southern Bluefin Tuna conservation issues.

The European Community is a contracting party to all RFMOs with areas overlapping or adjacent to the CCSBT Convention area (ICCAT, IATTC, IOTC, WCPFC and CCAMLR) and fulfills all the conservation and management measures applicable in the areas of jurisdiction of those RFMOs.

**1. Operational Constraints on Effort**

**Catch reporting**

The EC catch in 2007 amounted to 18.1 tonnes of SBT, with 13.2 tonnes being taken by Portuguese vessels and 4.9 tonnes by Spanish vessels. This, final figure, represents a higher amount to the one reported previously and became available only in September to specific nature of longline fisheries for swordfish.

The system that applies to our swordfish vessels, which are those which might have incidental catches of SBT, is as follows. In the Atlantic, the EC has a quota allocated by ICCAT. This is allocated to Member States who in turn allocate to their vessels. These vessels report on a three monthly basis their preliminary swordfish catches and, of course, must maintain a daily logbook of all catches and have operational VMS. These logbooks are then compiled for the different oceans for both the directed catch species (swordfish and shark) and for by-catch, such as SBT. Coupled with the scientific data on line sets/hooks, length and sex of fish etc, our data is normally finalised by September of the year following the year of fishery. This data is submitted to the RFMOs – ICCAT, IOTC, IATTC, WCPFC, and now CCSBT, in time for their Scientific Committee Meetings and the Compliance Committees, where relevant.

This level of catches is higher than the allocated quota, yet it represents a minor unavoidable bycatch (4% in the case of Portuguese vessels, 0.007% in the case of Spanish vessels) during longline fisheries for swordfish and shark.

The current reporting of catches of Southern Bluefin Tuna occurs on a quarterly basis. This stems from the Community law, more specifically the Control Regulation 2847/93 which obliges the member states to provide this data on a quarterly basis only. Given the limited number of catches, the Community would advocate maintaining this status quo. However, should the Contracting Parties advocate otherwise, the EC is ready to transpose the monthly reporting requirement into EC law.

The SBT quota allocated to the European Community for 2009 will be included in the EC TAC&Quota Regulation, which legally obliges the member states to cease fishing activities once the quota is exhausted.

### **Authorised Vessels List**

All vessels present in the area are included on the Authorised Vessels list. Should this situation change we will inform the Secretariat accordingly.

### **Trade**

There have been no exports of SBT in 2007 from the European Community. The amount of imported SBT reported equals 7.2 tonnes and is said to have come to France from Peru. Given that Peru is not a party to CCSBT, it is indeed dubious whether this import originated from Peru. It is a possibility that a miscoding occurred and the imported species is Bluefin Tuna not Southern Bluefin Tuna. The investigation of this issue is underway.

With regards to Trade Information Scheme, given the limited number of imports, the TIS has not been transposed into the Community law. Instead, the data is provided by the member states in form of notification. The level of imports remain extremely low, with reported 1.3 tonnes of SBT in the first half of 2008 (import to the Netherlands, originating from Australia). The European Community would strongly advocate replacement of TIS with a Catch Documentation Scheme which would enable for a better monitoring and control of the SBT catches in the area addressing the concern of serious over-fishing of SBT and under-reporting of SBT catches. Moreover, adoption of CDS would align CCSBT requirements with measures adopted in other tuna RFMOs, as recommended at the meeting of tuna RFMOs held in San Francisco on 5-6 February this year.

### **Reporting of quota allocations and catch by company, quota holder or vessel**

Given that the Community catches of SBT constitute by catch, there is no quota allocations.

### **Controls**

All EC vessels over 24m operating on high seas are equipped with a Vessels Monitoring System.

The Community has recently adopted a regulation on Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing which is due to enter into force on 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2010. The EC will be happy to provide further information on this regulation to the CCSBT partners in the near future.

## **2. Catch and Effort**

The total catch of SBT in 2007 amounted to 18.1 tonnes, with 13.2 tonnes taken by Portuguese and 4.9 tonnes taken by Spanish vessels. This constitutes whole weights. There are currently 32 Portuguese and 81 Spanish vessels operating in the area.

There are no recreational catches in the area.

There is no mortality allowance.

## **3. Historical Catch and Effort**

The historical catches of SBT by EC vessels have been very limited and amounted to 3.5 tonnes in 2003, 1 tonne in 2004 and 2.6 tonnes in 2006.

## **4. Annual Fleet Size and Distribution:**

There are currently 32 Portuguese and 81 Spanish vessels operating in the area.

## **5. Other factors:**

Seabird mitigation. The European Community is currently preparing an international plan of action on seabirds. All EC vessels fishing in the area of CCSBT comply with the measures for seabird mitigation adopted in overlapping or adjacent RFMOs.

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