



CCSBT-EC/0610/16

Cooperating Non-members

Purpose

To discuss the on-going status of existing cooperating non-members.

Discussion

The resolution establishing the status of cooperating non-membership requires annual confirmation of that status after evaluation by the Extended Commission of the performance of cooperating non-members against commitments given to the Extended Commission.

Philippines

The Philippines is complying with the processes of the Authorised Vessel List, the Trade Information Scheme, monthly catch reporting and reporting of catch by vessel or company.

The Philippines has a catch limit of 45 tonnes and the reported catch in 2007 was 0.9 tonnes over this limit. Reported monthly catches for 2008 up to July totalled 35.6 tonnes.

South Africa

South Africa is generally complying with the processes of the Trade Information Scheme, monthly catch reporting and catch by vessel or company. However, South Africa has no vessels currently listed on the CCSBT approved vessel list.

South Africa has a catch limit of 40 tonnes. Catch in 2007 was 0.4 tonnes over this limit. Reported monthly catches for January to June 2008 totalled 41 tonnes and South Africa closes its SBT fishery from midnight on 1 July.

European Community

The European Community has advised the Secretariat that it is unable to comply with the CCSBT's Trade Information Scheme and monthly catch reporting regimes. A copy of the advice is at Attachment A. European Community vessels are included in the CCSBT vessel list.

The European Community has a catch limit of 10 tonnes and reported 9.8 tonnes in 2007 against this quota. However, in correspondence received on 24 September, the European Community revised this figure to 18.1 tonnes. The advice from the European Community is at attachment B.

In its advice of 24 September, the European Community has suggested that the overcatch is a reason for considering a higher catch limit in the future.

Prepared by the Secretariat



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND MARKETS
Regional fisheries organisations

Attachment A

Brussels, 19.06.2008
MARE/B-2 AK/ldb D(2008) 7179

Mr G T Crothers
Chair of the Extended Commission
for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
Ministry of Fisheries
PO Box 1020 Wellington
NEW ZEALAND

Subject: European Community's Involvement in CCSBT

Dear Chair,

I wish to refer to your letter concerning the perceived lack of engagement on the part of the European Community in the CCSBT processes to date. Firstly, may I clarify that this Directorate General has been undergoing a series of structural changes and my Unit has had severe staff shortages over the last 12 months. Inevitably, this has resulted in us prioritising activities in areas of major fishing activities and explains our absence from the 2007 Annual Meeting.

Secondly, as you are well aware, 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. In that context, I would like to assure you that the European Community remains dedicated to fulfilling our obligations towards CCSBT and to actively contributing to Southern Bluefin Tuna conservation issues.

Thirdly, I consider it important that I share with you some of the constraints we are experiencing in terms of fulfilling certain commitments to CCSBT. As you are aware, the European Community does not have a strong presence in the CCSBT area and our catches are extremely limited and result from unavoidable minor by-catches of Southern Bluefin Tuna during longline fisheries for swordfish and shark. The EC catch in 2007 amounted to only 9.8 tonnes of SBT, with 2 tonnes being taken by Portuguese vessels and 7.8 tonnes by Spanish vessels. This level of catches may indicate, however, that a higher quota allocation to the European Community would be desirable in the future.

Against this background and in relation to catch reporting, it has proven impossible for us to provide the catch data on a monthly basis. As no Community vessels are targeting SBT, the EU Member States are obliged to provide this type of data only on a quarterly basis, rendering it impossible for us to report this information every month. Also due to the fact that SBT is a non target species (as opposed to swordfish), there are no quota allocations by company, quota holder or vessel, nor any immediate scientific data available. The European Community is therefore unable to provide the CCSBT Secretariat with this information in the time frame foreseen. We would be very grateful if the Secretariat could take this into consideration in the future, noting that these limitations apply equally to our fisheries in relation to all other tuna RFMOs.

The system that applies to our swordfish vessels, which are those which might have incidental catches of SBFT, 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. Thus, in September 2008 by the latest, we would have finalised all 2007 data from our swordfish vessels. 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.

We are working to decrease this period in order for the Scientific Committees to be able to work on the basis of latest available data and I would also like to assure you that should the final data for 2007 be different to the above-mentioned statistics, we shall inform you in due course.

As to the authorised vessels, I would be grateful if you could include the vessels in Appendix 1 on the Authorised Vessels list. While most of them do not catch Southern Bluefin Tuna, they are present in the area and could potentially be taking individual tunas.

With regards to imports and exports, no members of the European Community have exported any SBT in 2007. Two Member States – France and Spain – have imported a total of 4 tonnes of SBT in 2007. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide Trade Information Scheme documentation, as we consider that in light of such a low level of imports, this obligation would introduce unjustifiable bureaucratic burden on the Member States. I would however, like to assure you that we monitor the imports and exports closely, and our trade data clearly distinguishes between Northern Atlantic Blue fin Tuna and SBFT, though different trade codes.

I trust these clarifications on catch reporting systems, trade information, and vessel list, will assist CCSBT Members in understanding the particular circumstances of the EC in relation to SBT, where after all we are a minor player. We hope however to be in a position to attend the 2008 Annual Meeting later this year.

Please note that from now on the person responsible for CCSBT within this Unit is Aleksandra Kordecka (aleksandra.kordecka@ec.europa.eu). Please do not hesitate to contact her should you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the issues further.

I would be grateful if you would distribute this letter to Members and Cooperating Non Members.

"signed"
John SPENCER

Enclosures: Annex I – European Community vessels present in the CCSBT area.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND MARKETS
Regional fisheries organisations

Brussels, 23.09.2008
MARE/B-2 AK/el D (2008) **10726**

Mr Stan Crothers
Acting Chief Executive
for the Extended Commission on Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
Ministry of Fisheries
PO Box 1020 Wellington
NEW ZEALAND

Subject: Final SBT catch figures in 2007

Dear Chair,

As you were informed in a letter from 19 June 2008, we have finalised the 2007 data from European Community swordfish vessels.

I wish to inform you that 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 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.

This indicates that a higher quota allocation to the European Community would be desirable in the future.

"signed"

Constantin ALEXANDROU