

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT AMENDING RECOMMENDATION 10-09
ON THE BY-CATCH OF SEA TURTLES IN ICCAT FISHERIES**

CONSIDERING that ICCAT adopted in 2010 a recommendation to mitigate the by-catch of sea turtles in ICCAT fisheries (Recommendation 10-09), which requested that the SCRS initiate an assessment of the impact of incidental catch of sea turtles no later than 2013 and advise on approaches to mitigate such incidental capture, including reducing the number of interactions and/or the mortality associated with those interactions.

NOTING that on that basis the SCRS in 2013 made specific recommendations to maintain the provisions of Recommendation 10-09 and to call for additional measures to reduce mortality of incidentally captured sea turtles through, safe-handling practices, such as the use of line cutters and the use of de-hooking devices.

ACKNOWLEDGING that it is necessary to amend Recommendation 10-09 to include the specific recommendations made by the SCRS in 2013.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. The following sub-items are inserted after point 2. c) of Recommendation 10-09:

d) Regarding safe-handling practices:

- i) When a turtle is to be removed from the water, an appropriate basket lift or dip-net shall be used to bring aboard sea turtles that are hooked or entangled in gear. No turtle shall be hauled from the water by a fishing line attached to, or entangled upon the body of a turtle. If the turtle cannot be safely removed from the water, the crew should cut the line as close as possible to the hook, without inflicting additional unnecessary harm on the turtle.*
- ii) In cases where marine turtles are taken on board, vessel operators or crew shall assess the condition of sea turtles that are caught or entangled prior to release. Those turtles with difficulties to move or are unresponsive shall be kept on board to the extent practicable and assisted in a manner consistent with maximizing their survival prior to release. These practices are described further in the FAO's Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations.*
- iii) To the extent practicable, turtles handled in fishing operations or during national observer programs (e.g. tagging activities) shall be handled in a manner consistent with the FAO's Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations.*

e) Regarding the use of line cutters:

- i) Longline vessels shall carry on board line-cutters and use these when de-hooking is not possible without harming the marine turtle while releasing them.*
- ii) Other types of vessels that use gear that may entangle sea turtles shall carry on board line-cutters and use these tools to safely remove gear, and release sea turtles.*

f) Regarding the use of de-hooking devices:

Longline vessels shall carry on board de-hooking devices to effectively remove hooks from sea turtles.

When a hook is swallowed, no attempt shall be made to remove the hook. Instead, the line must be cut as close to the hook as possible without inflicting additional unnecessary harm on the turtle.

2. Points 4, 5 and 6 of Recommendation 10-09 are deleted and replaced by the following:

4. The SCRS shall continue to improve the ERA initiated for sea turtles in 2013 and shall advise the Commission on its plan for future sea turtle impact analyses at the 2014 meeting. Upon receipt of advice from the SCRS, the Commission shall consider additional measures to mitigate sea turtle by-catch in ICCAT fisheries, if necessary.

3. Points 7, 8 and 9 of Recommendation 10-09 become points 5, 6 and 7.