

Inaction is not an option

A RECOVERY PLAN FOR MEDITERRANEAN SWORDFISH

November 2015

MEDITERRANEAN SWORDFISH STATUS AND FISHERY

- According to the SCRS stock assessment, the stock has been overfished for more than three decades now.
- The stock has declined steeply since the 1980s, falling to levels that are currently 70% lower than what is considered sustainable (i.e., biomass = 29% of B_{MSY}).
- Mediterranean swordfish is currently overfished by an overinflated fleet of more than 15 000 vessels.
- Data on fishing effort are misreported: the current, misreported fleet would catch an unlikely average of only 1 tonne per boat annually!

INACTION IS NOT AN OPTION

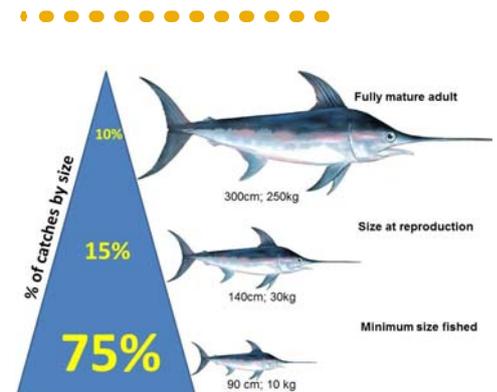
The few management measures put in place to date are insufficient to allow the stock to recover. Furthermore:

- There is no recovery target established for rebuilding the stock.
- The minimum landing size (90 cm) is set much smaller than the age of sexual maturity for the stock (130 cm for males, 149 cm for females). As a result, 75% of catches are composed of juvenile swordfish.
- Over 67% of the stock of tuna and tuna-like species are managed through plans that ensure the sustainability of the catches. Not addressing the recovery of Mediterranean swordfish sets an unprecedented double-

Stock levels are

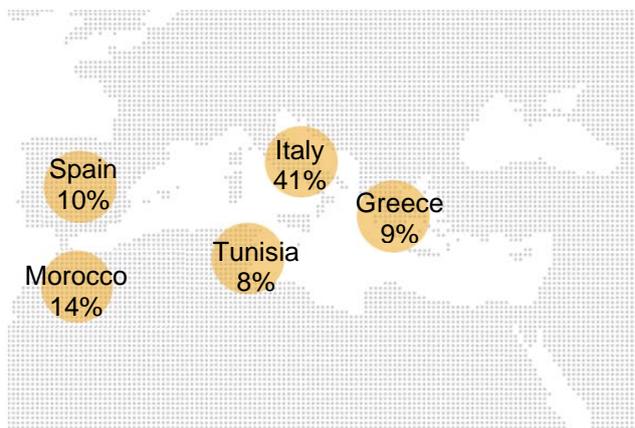
70%

lower than what is considered sustainable



75% of catches are juvenile swordfish. Source: ICCAT 2014 Mediterranean swordfish stock assessment report.

MAIN FISHING COUNTRIES (2003-13)



Source: ICCAT 2014 Mediterranean swordfish stock assessment. Algeria, Cyprus, Malta, Tunisia and Turkey have fisheries targeting swordfish in the Mediterranean.

Catches of swordfish have also been reported by Albania, Croatia, France, Japan, Libya, Syria and Portugal.

Israel, Lebanon, Egypt and Monaco may also target Mediterranean swordfish, but have never reported catches to either ICCAT or FAO.

WHAT IS NEEDED?

A recovery plan should be established within ICCAT, similar to that for bluefin tuna, aimed at:

- Rebuilding the stock to levels which can produce Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY).
- Balancing fishing capacity with fishing mortality at MSY.

Critically, the management plan for Mediterranean swordfish should include the establishment of **catch limits**.

A MANAGEMENT PLAN BASED ON CATCH LIMITS WOULD:

- Allow the stock to recover;
- Be the simplest and most effective way to regulate and enforce a management of the fishery;
- Be coherent with the management of the Atlantic swordfish stocks, which are already based on catch limits;
- Facilitate the collection of proper data on fishing activities.

*Oceana calls upon ICCAT to agree on a **recovery plan** for Mediterranean swordfish to allow the stock to recover from overfishing*

CONTACTS

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LEARN MORE

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