

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 229

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 14, 2007

Received and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should seek a review of compliance by all nations with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas' conservation and management recommendations for Atlantic bluefin tuna and other species, and should pursue strengthened conservation and management measures to facilitate the recovery of the Atlantic bluefin tuna, and for other purposes.

Whereas Atlantic bluefin tuna are a valuable commercial and recreational fishery of the United States and many other countries;

Whereas the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (hereinafter referred to as "the Convention") was signed in 1966;

Whereas the Convention established the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (hereinafter referred to as “the Commission”) to coordinate international research and develop conservation and management recommendations on Atlantic bluefin tuna and other highly migratory species in the Atlantic Ocean and the adjacent seas, including the Mediterranean Sea;

Whereas in 1974, the Commission adopted its first conservation and management recommendation to ensure the sustainability of Atlantic bluefin tuna throughout the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, while allowing for the maximum sustainable catch for food and other purposes;

Whereas in 1981, for management purposes, the Commission adopted a working hypothesis of two Atlantic bluefin tuna stocks, with one occurring west of 45 degree west longitude (hereinafter referred to as the “western Atlantic stock”) and the other occurring east of 45 degree west longitude (hereinafter referred to as the “eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock”);

Whereas since 1981, the Commission has adopted additional and more restrictive conservation and management recommendations for the western Atlantic stock, and these recommendations have been implemented by nations fishing west of 45 degree west longitude;

Whereas despite adoption and full implementation of a science-based rebuilding program for the western Atlantic stock by countries fishing west of 45 degree west longitude, catches and catch rates remain very low;

Whereas in contrast to the conservation and management measures implemented for the western Atlantic stock, total allowable catches for the eastern Atlantic and Medi-

terranean stock have been consistently set at levels significantly above scientific recommendations intended to maintain bluefin tuna populations at levels that will permit the maximum sustainable catch;

Whereas compliance with eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock quotas by parties to the Convention that harvest that stock has been very poor, most recently with harvests exceeding such total allowable catch levels by over 50 percent for each of the last 4 years;

Whereas poor management and compliance with recommendations for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock are of grave concern because the condition of the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock could adversely affect recovery of the western Atlantic stock due to mixing between the two stocks;

Whereas recent scientific data shows considerable mixing of the two stocks and additional research on stock mixing will improve the understanding of the relationship between the two stocks and the fisheries for such stocks, which will assist in the management of these species throughout their ranges;

Whereas poor data reporting on eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock quotas has frequently thwarted efforts by the Commission to assign quota overharvests to specific countries;

Whereas many Commission members fishing east of 45 degree west longitude do not comply with other Commission recommendations to control eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fisheries and conserve this overfished resource and, more generally, lack of compliance

with Commission recommendations is an ongoing problem;

Whereas the Commission’s Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (hereinafter referred to as “SCRS”) noted in its 2006 report that the fishing mortality rate for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock may be more than three times the level that would permit the stock to stabilize at the maximum sustainable catch level, and continuing to fish at the level of recent years “is expected to drive the spawning biomass to a very low level” giving “rise to a high risk of fishery and stock collapse”;

Whereas the SCRS has recommended that the annual harvest levels for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna be reduced from 32,000 metric tons to approximately 15,000 metric tons to halt decline of the resource and initiate recovery;

Whereas in 2006, the Commission adopted the “Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Multi-Annual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean” (hereinafter referred to as the “Recovery Plan”) containing a wide range of management and monitoring and control measures designed to facilitate the recovery of the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna stock; and

Whereas the Recovery Plan is inadequate and allows overfishing and stock decline to continue, and initial information indicates that implementation of the plan in 2007 by many eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna-harvesting countries has been poor, reflecting a business-as-usual attitude from the countries harvesting this stock that is unacceptable in light of the 2006 SCRS assess-

ment showing a high risk of a fishery and stock collapse:
Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that the
3 United States, through the International Commission for
4 the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (hereinafter in this
5 concurrent resolution referred to as the “Commission”),
6 should—

7 (1) pursue a review and assessment of compli-
8 ance with conservation and management measures
9 adopted by the Commission and in effect for the
10 2006 eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin
11 tuna fishery, occurring east of 45 degree west lon-
12 gitude, and other fisheries that are subject to the ju-
13 risdiction of the Commission, including data collec-
14 tion and reporting requirements;

15 (2) seek to address noncompliance by nations
16 with such measures through appropriate actions, in-
17 cluding, as appropriate, deducting a proportion of a
18 future quota for a country to compensate for such
19 country exceeding its quota in prior years;

20 (3) pursue a meaningful discussion of the im-
21 plementation and effectiveness of the Commission
22 recommendation entitled “Recommendation by
23 ICCAT to Establish a Multi-Annual Recovery Plan
24 for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Medi-

(4) seek to strengthen the conservation and management of the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna by making recommendations to halt the decline of the stock and begin to rebuild it.

Attest: LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk.