



BELIZE HIGH SEAS FISHING VESSEL CIRCULAR



FVC-13/03

Issued: 28th January 2013

Rev:

Revision Date:

TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, CHARTERERS, MASTER AND CREW, DEPUTY REGISTRARS AND RESIDENT AGENTS

SUBJECT: HARVESTING OF BLUE AND WHITE MARLIN/SPEARFISH IN THE ICCAT CONVENTION AREA

Reference: Issued in accordance with Part II 3 (1)(f) and Part VII 19(1)(2) of the Belize High Seas Fishing Act, 2003

BACKGROUND:

In 2012 ICCAT adopted Recommendation 12-04 to strengthen the plan to rebuild blue and white marlin on the basis of the advice from the Scientific Committee. The objective of this plan is to maintain populations at levels that will support maximum sustainable catch. The current report on these species is that they are subject to overfishing and that countries should immediately adopt measures to ensure an end to overharvesting.

Scientific assessments indicates that the blue marlin stock is overfished and that overfishing is occurring and that unless the recent catch levels are sustainably reduced to 2000 m/t or less the stock will likely continue to decline.

The results of the 2012 white marlin assessment indicate that stock remains overfished. The scientific committee concluded that at minimum, white marlin catches should not exceed current levels of approximately 400 m/t.

APPLICATION

1. Based on the assessments indicated above, an annual limit of 2000 t for blue marlin and 400 t for white marlin/spearfishes is established for these stocks for 2013-2015.
2. Certain countries, based on their historical catches have been allowed landing limits for both these species. However, as Belize has not had a directed fishery of these species, we were not allocated a specific landing limit.
3. The harvesting of blue marlin and white marlin for countries without an allowed landing limit is limited to 10 t and 2 t, respectively.

4. Considering the very small quantities that we are allowed to harvest, it is the decision of this Administration that, in an effort to ensure proper monitoring and compliance with this measure, the harvesting of these two species will be prohibited as either target or by-catch species.
5. Vessel operators are urged to ensure that any incidental harvesting of these species that are alive at the time of boarding are released in a manner that maximizes their survival. All harvesting of these species that are dead when brought alongside the vessel shall be reported to this Administration in their regular reports.
6. Vessels' catches and landings will be monitored to ensure compliance with this circular. No documents will be validated or issued for species caught or landed in contravention of this Circular.

ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

This Circular is considered a legally binding document in accordance with Part XIII 108(1)(2) of the Merchant Ships Registration Act 2010. Failure to comply with this circular will result in disciplinary actions taken against the vessel owners and operators and any other party affiliated with the operation of the vessel.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS NOTICE

This Fishing Vessel Circular is to be implemented with immediate effect and shall remain in force until further notification by the Belize Administration.

Any queries related to this Circular should be directed to:

International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize
Fishing Vessels Manager
Tel: 501-223-5026/5031/5047
Email: immarbe@btl.net

Belize Fisheries Department
Fisheries Administrator
Tel: 501-223-2187
fisheries_department@fisheries.gov.bz