



International Game Fish Association Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum

300 Gulf Stream Way, Dania Beach, Florida, 33004 U.S.A.

Phone: (954) 924-2628 • Fax: (954) 924-4299 • Museum Fax (954) 924-4220

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November 11, 2005

Mr Glenn Hurry

Chair

WESTERN & CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION

Fisheries and Forestry Division

GPO Box 858

CANBERRA ACT 2601

AUSTRALIA

Email glenn.hurry@daff.gov.au

Dear Mr. Hurry,

I have attached IGFA's Position Statement on the WCPOFC for tabling at the inaugural meeting in December.

I had been planning to attend this first meeting as an observer for IGFA, however hurricane Wilma hit our building in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, leaving us without power, phones or computers until this week. This has left me in an extremely busy position organising our various functions and day to day work which has unfortunately made it impossible for me to attend.

I have been trying to arrange a substitute attendee however at this stage I am not sure if this will eventuate, given the timing and the difficulties in travel to Pohnpei.

May I wish you successful meeting of this very important fisheries commission and look forward to seeing the outcome in due course. If IGFA can be of assistance in regard to recreational/charter fishing information within the area of competence of the Commission we will do our utmost to assist.

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The International Game Fish Association is a not-for-profit organization committed to the conservation of game fish and the promotion of responsible, ethical angling practices through science, education, rule making and record keeping.



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POLICY STATEMENT

WESTERN CENTRAL PACIFIC OCEAN FISHERIES COMMISSION

The International Game Fish Association (IGFA) is a non-profit organisation that represents sports fishers throughout the world. IGFA was established in 1939, has active members in 123 countries, and is the governing body for international sports fishing which provides rules for ethical recreational fishing world wide. Its members target highly migratory species such as those targeted in the area of competence that will be managed by the WCPOFC.

IGFA has an International Committee of Representatives in many of these countries, who have been chosen for their integrity, fishing knowledge and concern for sportsmanship and conservation. These international representatives report to IGFA on issues affecting our interests.

We congratulate the member countries on the formation of this Commission and the Chair, Mr. Glenn Hurry on his appointment. We hope that IGFA, as an observer, will be able to contribute to the management policies of the commission so that it is managed in a sustainable manner for all users. The formation and success of the WCPOFC is of immense importance because of the very high percentage of the total take of tuna world wide caught within the area of competence.

We have all been aware of the massive increase in effort and catch of these highly migratory species throughout the world and hope that this new Commission will lead in establishing management measures, as soon as possible, that will enable continued viable fishing by indigenous, recreational and commercial fishers.

In many of the international fisheries commissions recreational and charter fishing have not previously been adequately recognised as a significant user group who provide valuable revenues to many nations, especially with long-term secure access to well managed fish resources.

It is widely acknowledged that responsible recreational fishing and fishing tourism brings very significant economic benefits to many countries. IGFA strongly believes that this should be recognised in forums such as those provided by WCPOFC. Existing examples of the positive economic benefits in the Commissions area of competence include Australia, Hawaii, Fiji and New Zealand, just to name a few.

YELLOWFIN AND BIGEYE TUNA

We understand that at the scientific meeting of this Commission it was agreed that both these species are presently being fished at above maximum sustainable yield (MSY). We would urge the Commission to take steps to ensure that effort is adequately controlled by nations fishing in the WCPOFC.

At the same time we would like to draw the Commissions attention to the recreational/charter fishing requirements for a biomass well above MSY in order to sustain viable recreational fisheries. We would also request that consideration be given to addressing localized stock depletion in identified areas fished by recreational fishers who are limited in their range of operations.

MARLIN

We understand that the Commission's scientific group has advised that striped marlin stocks should be the subject of a scientific study. We support this view however IGFA is of the opinion that any study should include all marlin species.

IGFA would emphasize that all marlin species, broadbill, sailfish and spearfish are very important recreational species and their utilisation by this sector will frequently represent a better sustainable long-term economic return for members within the WCPOFC area of competence. If in the short term there is no scientific study into the stocks of these species then we believe that all fishing nations should be required to keep accurate validated records of catches.

RECOMMENDATION TO COASTAL MEMBER NATIONS WITHIN THE WCPOF

IGFA recommends to all the coastal nations within the area of competence of the WCPOFC that they examine their recreational fisheries or prospective recreational fisheries, as a means to build tourism within their jurisdiction. IGFA also recommends that they utilise temporal and spatial measures as a means of resource management at the earliest opportunity.