



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

FishWatch Fact Sheet: Swordfish

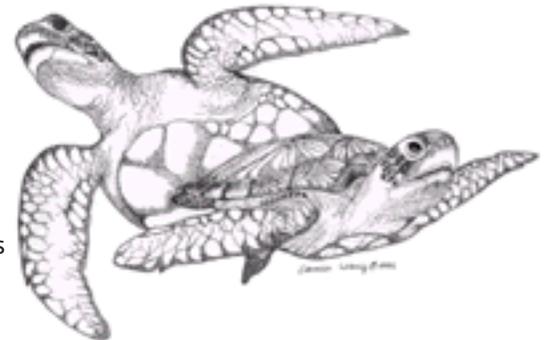
Swordfish population levels are high and overfishing is no longer occurring.

Background

Over the last decade, the North Atlantic swordfish stock has grown significantly. The population has gone from an overfished state in 1998 to one that is now no longer overfished. This is due, in part, to a number of management measures implemented by the United States that have been effective at reducing fishing mortality, and have allowed the swordfish population to grow. These management measures have also reduced the impact the U.S. fishery has on other marine animal populations, thus making it one of the most environmentally responsible longline fisheries in the world. Below are some highlights of management measures required of the U.S. North Atlantic swordfish fishery, and their positive impact on the ocean environment.

Partnering to Save Sea Turtles

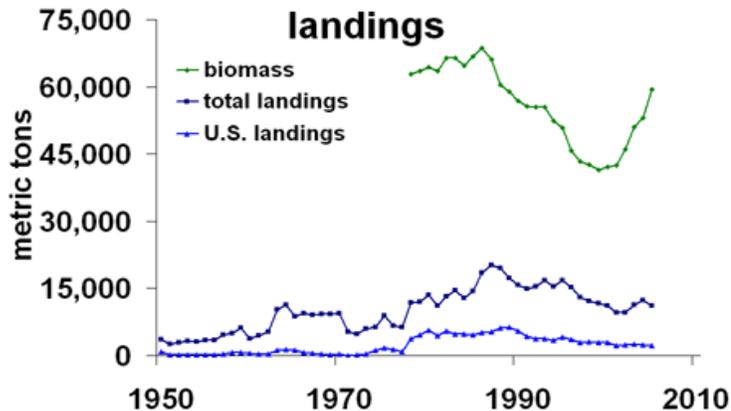
The Northeast Distant Fishery Experiment was conducted from 2001 through 2003 on the high seas of the Western Atlantic Ocean, in an area off Newfoundland known as the Grand Banks. In cooperation with Blue Water Fishermen's Association and the Fisheries Research Institute, NOAA Fisheries was able to determine gear/bait combinations that minimized sea turtle encounters in pelagic longline fisheries, while not reducing the swordfish catch rate. Thirteen American longline vessels were contracted to carry out the research with NOAA Fisheries scientists and private sector gear developers to find the winning combinations used to achieve up to a 90 percent reduction in fishing gear-sea turtle interactions for leatherbacks and loggerheads. The researchers went a few steps further and developed new gear so fishermen could safely dehook and disentangle the few turtles that were accidentally caught. NOAA Fisheries and partners are now launching an international education initiative to invite all fishing nations with pelagic longline fleets to begin exploring this technology to make all the world's longline operations more selective and help protect sea turtles, and other marine life.



Once heavily overfished, swordfish stocks have rebounded and are currently at healthy population levels. Strict federal fisheries management measures are improving the condition of the stock, and a fishing industry/NOAA partnership is successfully reducing sea turtle bycatch.



North Atlantic swordfish biomass and landings



ICCAT 2006 Atlantic Swordfish Stock Assessment can be found at http://www.iccat.int/Documents/SCRS/DetRep/DET_swo.pdf

Swordfish and Your Health

There are many health benefits associated with eating seafood. Swordfish is a terrific source of selenium, niacin, and vitamin B12, and contains omega-3 fatty acids, which are associated with improving heart health.

Although swordfish is known to contain methylmercury and, according to the FDA, should not be consumed by pregnant women, women planning on becoming pregnant, and children, the rest of the adult population should consider including swordfish in their diet, as the associated health benefits outweigh the potential risks. Recently, new studies are examining the potential neutralizing effect of selenium in swordfish on methylmercury.

Give swordfish a try!

Few people know of the significant sacrifices made by American swordfish fishermen to rebuild this stock in less than a decade. Swordfish is one of the great accomplishments of fishery management and great food, too. Swordfish is managed internationally by a number of fishing nations. For the past several years, the United States has not fully harvested its available North Atlantic swordfish quota. This is due in part to strict domestic management measures that were designed to help the swordfish stock rebuild. If the United States fails to catch its share of swordfish for a significant period, other countries can claim increased quotas, and the U.S. share could be reduced. Now is the time to support our swordfish industry by purchasing their catch. Rebuilding this stock is a conservation success for Americans and the world. It's time to buy American caught swordfish. Give swordfish a try!

Nutritional Facts

Servings 1

Serving Weight 100 g

Amount Per Serving

Calories 121

Total Fat 4.01 g

Total Saturated Fatty Acids 1.097 g

Carbohydrate 0 g

Cholesterol 39 mg

Selenium 48.1 mcg

Sodium 90 mg

Protein 19.8 g