

7.0 OBJECTIVES

1. The economic objective is to maintain high landings in the form of larger fish that are preferred in the market. This is accomplished by controlling the harvest of smaller fish.
2. The biological objectives are to prevent or reduce growth overfishing and to create a buffer against possible recruitment overfishing. This also is accomplished by maintaining a sufficient number of larger fish by controlling the harvest of smaller fish.
3. Obtain the necessary scientific information to continually monitor and refine the management of the swordfish fishery. This is accomplished by an onboard technician program on a sample number of commercial boats.
4. Monitor competition for space and user group conflicts for future management measures. This is also accomplished by the onboard technician program.
5. Minimize the impacts of foreign fishing on our domestic swordfish fishery. This is accomplished by minimizing the swordfish bycatch of foreign longliners and squid trawls consistent with the requirement to allow opportunities to harvest tuna or catch squid under a Governing International Fisheries Agreement (GIFA).

8.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE FISHERY

8.1 Description of Stocks

Distribution. The swordfish, Xiphias gladius, has a worldwide distribution.

Reproduction. Swordfish are heterosexual; however, there are no known external characteristics to separate males from females. Sex must be determined by examining the gonads in the body cavity. Age at first spawning is between four and five years. Estimates of sexual maturity off the Florida east coast are 21 kg (49.3 lb) for males and 74 kg (163.1 lb) for females. More recent work off South Carolina indicates that males become reproductively active between 12.7 and 17.0 kg (28.0 - 37.5 lb) dressed weight and that females become reproductively active between