

## Bush urges U.S. Senate to ratify Pacific tuna, swordfish treaty

*By The Wave*

*May. 17 2005.- The Wave News Network - (The following is a message to the U.S. Senate from President Bush regarding his wishes that the Convention on the Conservation and Management of the Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean be ratified. The message was posted Monday on the White House Web site.)*

"With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Convention on the Conservation and Management of the Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, with Annexes (the "WCPF Convention"), which was adopted at Honolulu on September 5, 2000, by the Multilateral High Level Conference on the Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. The United States signed the Convention on that date.

I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Secretary of State with respect to the WCPF Convention.

The WCPF Convention sets forth legal obligations and establishes cooperative mechanisms that are needed in order to ensure the long term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks (such as tuna, swordfish, and marlin) that range across extensive areas of the high seas as well as through waters under the fisheries jurisdiction of numerous coastal States.

These constitute resources of worldwide importance, with the fisheries for tuna in the Western and Central Pacific being the largest and most valuable in the world. Implementation of the WCPF Convention will offer the opportunity to conserve and manage these resources responsibly before they become subject to the pressures of overfishing and over capacity that are so evident elsewhere in the world's oceans.

The WCPF Convention builds upon the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1995 United Nations Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. The WCPF Convention gives effect to the provisions of these two instruments, which recognize cooperation to conserve highly migratory fish stocks as essential, and require those with direct interests in them -- coastal states with authority to manage fishing in waters under their jurisdiction and nations whose vessels fish for these stocks -- to engage in such cooperation through regional fishery management organizations.

The WCPF Convention balances in an equitable fashion the interests of coastal States, notably the island States that comprise the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), in protecting important fishery resources off their shores, and the interests of distant water fishing states, notably Asian fishing nations and entities (Japan, Republic of Korea, China, and Taiwan), whose fishing vessels range far from their own shores.

The United States, which played an instrumental role in achieving this balance, has direct and important interests in the WCPF Convention and its early and effective implementation. The United States is both a major distant water fishing nation (with the fourth-largest catch in the region) and an important coastal State with significant Exclusive Economic Zone waters in the region (including the waters around Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands).

United States fishing concerns, including the U.S. tuna industry, U.S. conservation organizations, and U.S. consumers, as well as those residents of Hawaii and the U.S. Flag Pacific island areas of Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands, all have a crucial stake in the health of the oceans and their resources as promoted by the WCPF Convention.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the WCPF Convention and give its advice and consent to its ratification.

GEORGE W. BUSH  
THE WHITE HOUSE,  
May 16, 2005.