
OUTCOMES OF THE 21st SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 26 JUNE 2017

PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 7th Working Party on Neritic Tunas (WPNT07) of the decision and requests made by the Commission at its 21st Session, held from 22 – 26 May 2017, specifically relating to the work of the WPNT.

BACKGROUND

At the 21st Session of the Commission, 8 proposed Conservation and Management Measures were adopted, as detailed below:

Resolutions

- Resolution 17/01 *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC Area of Competence.*
- Resolution 17/02 *Working Party on the implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM).*
- Resolution 17/03 *On establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the IOTC Area of competence.*
- Resolution 17/04 *On a ban on discards of Bigeye tuna, Skipjack tuna, Yellowfin tuna, and non-targeted species caught by vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence.*
- Resolution 17/05 *On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by the IOTC.*
- Resolution 17/06 *On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels*
- Resolution 17/07 *On the prohibition to use large-scale driftnets in the IOTC Area.*
- Resolution 17/08 *Proposal for amendment of Resolution 15/08: Procedures on a fish aggregating devices (FADs) management plan, including a limitation on the number of FADs, more detailed specifications of catch reporting from FAD sets, and the development of improved FAD designs to reduce the incidence of entanglement of non-target species.*

These Conservation and Management Measures shall become binding on Members on the 3rd October 2017 as detailed and confirmed in IOTC Circular 2017-061. The final versions of the newly agreed CMMs will be made available here in due course: <http://iotc.org/cmms>

DISCUSSION

The Commission made a number of comments related to the work of the WPNT which are provided below for reference.

Consideration of management measures related to Neritic tunas (IOTC-2017-S21-R, para. 38)

The Commission noted that IOTC–2017–S21–PropL On the conservation and management of IOTC Kawakawa, Longtail Tuna and Spanish Mackerel was withdrawn. There was only limited agreement with this proposal, due largely to the uncertainty on the status of the stocks as a result of a general lack of data on catches, as well as concern by one CPC that the proposal could set an unacceptable precedent for allocation by seeking to cap catches. The Commission encouraged CPCs to improve the data collection and submission. The Commission encouraged Coastal States catching neritic tunas to propose and present to next year's Commission meeting possible management measures to recover the over-exploited IOTC neritic stocks, in response to the recommendation of the SC.

Consideration of management measures related to all species (IOTC-2017-S21-R, paras. 42-45)

The Commission **AGREED** to defer IOTC-2017-S21-PropN On the Allocation of Fishing Opportunities for IOTC species. This proposal included allocation principles and their criteria, that received support of the majority of coastal States. Some CPCs noted their concerns with elements of both the procedure and substance of the proposal. In particular, that the technical elements of the proposal were not discussed by the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria. There was debate on the extent to which the proposal reflected international legal principles.

The invited experts informed the Commission that the distant-water fishing fleets they represent also shared the concerns of the CPCs as mentioned above.

The Commission **AGREED** to continue its deliberations on allocation according to the following plan: (1) Feedback by CPCs on the latest version of IOTC-2017-S21-PropN is to be received by the IOTC Secretariat within 40 days of the end of S21, then to be provided to the proponents of proposal; (2) The Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC) will meet as soon as possible, preferably within three (3) months, to continue its deliberations on, inter alia, the above proposal; and (4) The IOTC Secretariat to consider requesting FAO legal support for the TCAC meeting.

The coastal States in support of the proposal noted their preference for this proposal to be the basis for the discussions on allocation during the next TCAC meeting.

A pilot project for the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme (*IOTC-2017-S21-R, paras. 48-52*)

The Commission recalled that in 2016 it adopted Resolution 16/04 On the implementation of a pilot project in view of promoting the Regional Observer Scheme of IOTC and requested the Secretariat to develop a comprehensive plan for a Regional Observer Scheme Pilot project, as part of a long-term, holistic strategy for supporting the implementation of the Regional Observer Scheme.

The Commission noted the presentation on the pilot project given by the Chair of the Scientific Committee and **ENDORSED** the framework as outlined in IOTC-2017-S21-10.

Furthermore the Commission accepted that the Project Steering Committee will be required to advise the Secretariat on a range of critical matters relating to the implementation of the project.

The Commission encouraged CPCs, especially those that are likely to be participating in and benefitting directly from the project, to support the initiative further with co-funding. The Commission also **AGREED** that project activities would begin with the current funding available and that a budget for subsequent phases be prepared for the S22.

The Commission **REQUESTED** nominations from members that want to participate in the Pilot Project Steering Committee to be sent to the Secretariat.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the WPNT

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2017–WPNT07–04 which outlined the outcomes of the 21st Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPNT and **AGREE** to consider how best to provide the SC with the information it needs, in order to satisfy the Commission’s requests, throughout the course of the current WPNT meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** the 8 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) adopted at the 21st Session of the Commission (consisting of 8 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations).