
PREVIOUS DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 1 NOVEMBER 2017

PURPOSE

To ensure the Scientific Committee (SC) is aware that in addition to the requests made to the SC by the Commission during its 21st Session, there are a number of decisions in the form of previous Resolutions that require a response from the Scientific Committee in 2017.

BACKGROUND

The Commission has considered and adopted a range of Conservation and Management Measures (CMM) in the past that provided clear directions to the Scientific Committee (SC). While the SC has responded to most, several remain outstanding or are ongoing. These are outlined below:

Resolution 17/04 On a ban on discards of bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna and non-targeted species caught by purse seine vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence

(para. 6) The IOTC Scientific Committee, the IOTC Working Party on Tropical Tunas, and the IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch shall as a matter of priority:

- a) act on its recommendation in the Report of the 18th Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee and undertake work to examine the benefits of retaining non-targeted species catches, other than those prohibited via IOTC Resolution, and present its recommendations to the 22nd Annual Session of the Commission. The work should take into account all species that are usually discarded on all major gears (i.e., purse-seines, longlines and gillnets), and should look at fisheries that take place both on the high seas and in coastal countries and the feasibility of both retraining on-board and processing of the associated landings.

Resolution 17/05 On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by the IOTC

(para. 9) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall request that the IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch continue its work on identifying and monitoring the status of sharks until such time as comprehensive assessments are possible for all relevant shark species/groups. In particular, the IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch will establish the Terms of Reference for the Commission to establish a long term-project on sharks in IOTC, with the aim to ensure the collection of data required for performing reliable stock assessments for key shark species. The project will include:

- a) the identification of data gaps for key shark species in IOTC;
- b) the collection of relevant data, including through direct contacts with CPC national administrations, research institutes and stakeholders;
- c) any other activity that could contribute to improving the collection of data required for performing stock assessments of key shark species in IOTC.

The IOTC Scientific Committee will incorporate results of the project in its reports on sharks and based on progress achieved will propose a timeframe for performing stock assessment of key sharks species. CPCs are encouraged to contribute financially to the implementation of the project.

(para. 10) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall review annually the information reported by CPCs pursuant to this Resolution and, as necessary, provide recommendations to the Commission on ways to strengthen the conservation and management of sharks within IOTC fisheries.

Resolution 16/02 On harvest control rules for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence

- (para. 15) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall:
- a) Include the LRP and TRP as part of any analysis when undertaking all future assessments of the status of the IOTC Skipjack tuna stock.
 - b) Undertake and report to the Commission a model-based Skipjack tuna stock assessment every three (3) years, commencing with the next stock assessment in 2017.
 - c) Undertake a programme of work to further refine Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the IOTC Skipjack tuna fishery as required in paragraph 12 including, but not limited to,
 - i. Refinement of operating model(s)/ used,
 - ii. Alternative management procedures,
 - iii. Refining performance statistics.

Resolution 15/10 On target and limit reference points and a decision framework

(Annex 1: para. 4) The initial assessment described in points 2 and 3 shall be completed, where possible, for:

- b) Assessments for yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna and swordfish to be completed by 2017 and presented to the Commission meeting in 2018.

Resolution 12/04 On the conservation of marine turtles

- (para. 17) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall annually review the information reported by CPCs pursuant to this measure and, as necessary, provide recommendations to the Commission on ways to strengthen efforts to reduce marine turtle interactions with IOTC fisheries.

Resolution 12/09 On the conservation of thresher sharks (*Family Alopiidae*) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence

- (para. 7) Scientific observers shall be allowed to collect biological samples (vertebrae, tissues, reproductive tracts, stomachs, skin samples, spiral valves, jaws, whole and skeletonised specimens for taxonomic works and museum collections) from thresher sharks that are dead at haulback, provided that the samples are part of the research project approved by the IOTC Scientific Committee (or IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB)). In order to obtain the approval, a detailed document outlining the purpose of the work, number and type of samples intended to be collected and the spatio-temporal distribution of the sampling work must be included in the proposal. Annual progress of the work and a final report on completion of the project shall be presented to the IOTC WPEB and the IOTC Scientific Committee.

Resolution 11/04 On a regional observer scheme

- (para. 15) The elements of the Observer Scheme, notably those regarding its coverage, are subject to review and revision, as appropriate, for application in 2012 and subsequent years. Basing on the experience of other Tuna RFMOs, the IOTC Scientific Committee will elaborate an observer working manual, a template to be used for reporting (including minimum data fields) and a training program.

DISCUSSION

The Scientific Committee should address each of the requirements detailed above by providing advice, or alternative commentary for the Commission's consideration at its 22nd Session to be held in May 2018, in Thailand (TBC).

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Scientific Committee **NOTE** the requests made by the Commission in each of the Conservation and Management Measures detailed in this paper, and to develop advice to the Commission in response to each request.