

OUTCOMES OF THE 21st SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT¹, 31 OCTOBER 2017

PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 13th Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS13) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 21st Session, held from 22 - 26 May 2017, specifically relating to the work of the WPDCS.

BACKGROUND

At the 21st Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 8 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (consisting of 8 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), 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.*

Pursuant to Article IX.4 of the IOTC Agreement, the above mentioned Conservation and Management Measures shall become binding on Members, 120 days from the date of the notification communicated by the Secretariat.

DISCUSSION

The Commission also made a number of general comments on the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee in 2016, which have relevance for the WPDCS (IOTC–2017–S21–R):

1. Para. 20. *The Commission noted that 9 Contracting Parties and 3 Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties did not submit a National Report to the Scientific Committee in 2016, and issues with lack of data and poor quality data persist. The Commission strongly **RECOMMENDED** that CPCs take immediate steps to review, and where necessary, improve their performance with respect to the provision of data through improved compliance with Resolutions 15/01 *On the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence,* and 15/02 *Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties.**
2. Para. 22. *The Commission noted the status summaries (2011-2015) for species of tuna and tuna-like species under the IOTC mandate, as well as other species impacted by IOTC fisheries (Appendix 6) and considered the recommendations made by the SC19 in its 2016 report (IOTC–2016–SC19–R, Appendix XXXVII) that related specifically to the Commission. The Commission **ENDORSED** the list of recommendations as its own, while taking into account the range of issues outlined in this Report (S21) and incorporated within Conservation and Management Measures adopted during the Session and as adopted for implementation as detailed in the approved annual budget and Program of Work.*

¹ IOTC-secretariat@fao.org; Mr. Fabio Fiorellato, fabio.fiorellato@fao.org

On the status of neritic tunas

3. 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.*

A pilot project for the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme

4. Para. 48. *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.*

Report of the Technical Committee on Management Procedures

5. Para. 54. *The Commission noted in particular, the intention of the TCMP to add elements of the data collection process to the Management Procedure, and the need for the Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics to be involved in this.*

Summary report on the level of compliance

6. Para. 62. *The Commission noted the marginal improvement in the levels of compliance of some CPCs in 2016, especially with regards to mandatory statistics. The Commission encouraged all CPCs and the IOTC Secretariat of the need to respect the 15 days deadlines set in the IOTC Rules of Procedure (2014) to finalise the Compliance Reports. The Commission **AGREED** to allow an additional seven days following the deadline for CPCs to finalise their comments on the draft Compliance Reports.*

Issues related to the implementation of Resolution 16/01

7. Para. 108. *The Commission noted that some CPCs have, to date, not confirmed their 2014 yellowfin tuna catches, as requested by IOTC Resolution 16/01.*
8. Para. 109. *The Commission also noted that one CPC which has confirmed its 2014 yellowfin tuna catch, has readjusted its catch to just below the threshold to which the yellowfin tuna catch reduction would become applicable to it, and invited the CPC clarify for the Commission the circumstances that has resulted in the downward adjustment of its 2014 catches.*

Issues related to the reporting of Nominal Catches (Res. 16/06)

9. Para. 111. *The Commission noted that some CPCs are failing to provide their nominal catch data to the IOTC Secretariat and that failure do so in the future data submissions may result in the Commission prohibiting those CPCs from retaining the concerned species in future, as permitted under IOTC Resolution 16/06.*
10. Para. 112. *The Commission urged all CPCs to provide their nominal catch data, as required by IOTC Resolutions 15/02, 15/05 and 05/05.*

Issues related to the submission of data for recreational fisheries

11. Para. 113. *Noting that only one CPC is providing data relevant to the IOTC for its sports and recreational fisheries, the Commission urged CPCs to report these components to the IOTC Secretariat. There was a discussion about the interpretation of data reporting requirements, including those in accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02.*
12. Para. 114. *Where required, the Commission **RECOMMENDED** that the IOTC Secretariat assist CPCs to recover and report data sets for the sport and recreational fisheries.*

Consideration of management measures related to compliance

13. Para. 119. *The Commission **AGREED** to defer IOTC–2017–S21–PropG Working party on socio-economic aspect of the fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence (Seychelles). The Commission noted the dearth of information available on the social and economic aspects of tuna fisheries in general, and expressed its desire to begin to collect relevant social and economic information, and use it when both developing and evaluating IOTC management measures. To this end the Commission **REQUESTED** the Secretariat to implement a scoping study to identify what types of social and economic data are most relevant to CPCs and IOTC, and how these data can be obtained. This is expected to include information about the past and present socio-economic conditions and indicators in IOTC fisheries of CPCs including inter alia the socio-economic contribution to the fisheries,*

respective economic dependence on fish stocks, economic and social importance of the fishery, contribution to national food security needs, domestic consumption, income from exports and employment.

The complete report of the 21th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available for download from the IOTC website: <http://www.iotc.org/sites/default/files/documents/2017/07/IOTC-2017-S21-RE.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the WPDCS:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2017–WPDCS13–04 which outlined the *provisional* outcomes of the 21st Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPDCS 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 WPDCS meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** the 8 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) adopted at the 21th Session of the Commission (consisting of 8 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), and in particular* Resolution 17/01 *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC Area of Competence*; and 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* which have a direct impacts on the work of the WPDCS.

* Resolutions 17/01 and 17/08 are provided as Information Papers 01 and 02 for the WPDCS13