

OUTCOMES OF THE 22nd SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT¹, 02 OCTOBER 2018

PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 19th Working Party on Tropical Tunas (WPTT20) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 22nd Session, held from 21-25 May 2018, specifically relating to the work of the WPTT.

BACKGROUND

At the 22st Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 10 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (consisting of 10 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), as detailed below:

Resolutions

- Resolution 18/01 *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC Area of Competence*
- Resolution 18/02 *On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries*
- Resolution 18/03 *On establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the IOTC Area of Competence*
- Resolution 18/04 *On bioFAD experimental project*
- Resolution 18/05 *On management measures for the conservation for the conservation of billfish, striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish*
- Resolution 18/06 *On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels*
- Resolution 18/07 *On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC*
- Resolution 18/08 *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 design to reduce the incidence of entanglement of non-target species*
- Resolution 18/09 *On a scoping study of socio-economic indicators of IOTC fisheries*
- Resolution 18/10 *On vessel chartering in the IOTC Area of Competence.*

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 2017, which have relevance for the WPTT (IOTC–2018–S22–R):

Report of the 20th Session of the Scientific Committee (SC20)

(Para. 26): The Commission NOTED the stock status summaries for species of tuna and tuna-like species under the IOTC mandate, as well as other species impacted by IOTC fisheries (Appendix 5) and considered the recommendations made by the SC20 in its report that related specifically to the Commission. The Commission **ENDORSED** the SC 2017 list of recommendations as its own, noting the additional activities requested by the Commission at this meeting.

On the status of tropical and temperate tunas

(Para. 29) The Commission noted that the current status of tropical and temperate tunas is as follows:

Bigeye tuna

A bigeye assessment was carried out in 2016. The stock is not overfished and not subject to overfishing. If catch remains below the estimated MSY levels estimated for the current mix of fisheries, then immediate management measures are not required.

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Yellowfin tuna

A yellowfin assessment was carried out in 2016. The stock is overfished and subject to overfishing. The stock status is driven by unsustainable catches of yellowfin tuna taken over the last four years, and the relatively low recruitment levels estimated by the model in recent years. The Commission has revised the interim rebuilding plan for this stock through Resolution 17/01, with catch limitations beginning January 1 2017. The possible effect of this measure can only be assessed once estimates of abundance in 2017 would be available at the 2018 assessment.

Skipjack tuna

A skipjack assessment was carried out in 2017. The stock is not overfished and not subject to overfishing. A model grid was used to characterize the uncertainty in the assessment related to growth, tag mixing period, tagging programs, natural mortality, steepness and tag-release mortality. The median value of the distribution of spawning biomass relative to the unfished spawning biomass from the stock assessment was used by the Scientific Committee to calculate the overall skipjack catch limit for Indian Ocean, based on the Harvest Control Rule as established through Resolution 16/02. The IOTC Secretariat has informed the CPCs of the catch limit to be implemented for 2018–2020.

Albacore tuna

An albacore assessment was carried out in 2016. The stock is not overfished and not subject to overfishing. A precautionary approach to the management of albacore tuna should be applied by capping total catch levels to MSY levels.

Consideration of management measures to tropical and temperate tunas

(Para 30) The Commission **CONSIDERED** working paper IOTC-2018-S22-08 by the European Union and **REQUESTED** the Scientific Committee to review the effect of the revised interim plan for rebuilding yellowfin tuna in the IOTC Area (Resolution 17/01) as amended in the proposal.

(Para 31) The Commission **NOTED** that the revised interim rebuilding plan in Resolution 17/01 *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence*, which directs the Working Party on Tropical Tunas of the Scientific Committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures contained in the resolution, taking into account all sources of fishing mortality and possible alternatives aimed to restore and maintain biomass levels at the target levels, as stipulated in IOTC Resolution 15/10 *On target and limit reference points and a decision framework*.

Consideration of management measures related to all species

(Para. 52) The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 18/08 *On 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 Design to Reduce the Incidence of Entanglement of Non-Target Species*.

(Para. 53) The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 18/01 *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC Area of Competence*. The Commission also **AGREED**, notwithstanding paragraph 3 c) iii of Resolution 18/01, to grant a special approval for Japan to register one support vessel.

(Para. 54) The Commission **AGREED** to defer IOTC-2018-S22-PropD and PropJ *On a Regional Observer Scheme*. The proponents of these proposals attempted to merge the two proposals; however, they agreed more work needed to be done to reach a consensus and indicated that a revised proposal will be submitted to the next session of the Commission.

Development of management procedures***Report of the Technical Committee on Management Procedures***

(Para. 69) The Commission **NOTED** the report (IOTC-2018-TCMP-02-R) from the 2nd meeting of the Technical Committee on Management Procedures (TCMP) and **ENDORSED** its recommendations.

(Para. 70) The Commission **NOTED** the success of the TCMP in engaging discussions on Management Procedures through the use of interactive tools.

(Para. 71) The Commission **NOTED** the importance of the work of the TCMP and in addressing MSE issues. The Commission further **NOTED** the TCMP workplan for 2019-2020 and the proposed budget of approximately US\$ 91,500 and **EXPRESSED** its support for this work to continue, provided there is no increase in overall Commission

budget. To this end, the Commission **REQUESTED** the IOTC Secretariat to seek sources of extra-budgetary funds to support the proposed work.

(Para. 72) The Commission **NOTED** that the other tuna RFMOs are also undertaking work on management procedures and encouraged the TCMP to hold a dialogue with the t-RFMOS to ensure an exchange of information and to avoid duplication of work.

(Para. 73) The Commission **NOTED** the importance of data quality in developing management procedures and **RECOMMENDED** that the longline CPUE data for swordfish be made available and jointly standardized.

(Para. 74) The Commission **NOTED** that the Harvest Control Rule was implemented for skipjack tuna through Resolution 16/02 and **ENCOURAGED** CPCs to begin to develop management proposals for other IOTC species that are based on TCMP outputs and advice once the results of the current MSE analyses are reviewed and endorsed.

(Para. 75) The Commission **PROVIDED** directions on management objectives and guidance on the specifics of the risks and probabilities the Commission might want to consider to achieve its management objectives.

The complete report of the 20th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available for download from the IOTC website: <http://www.iotc.org/sites/default/files/documents/2018/06/IOTC-2018-S22-RE.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION

That the WPTT

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2018–WPTT20–04 which outlined the main outcomes of the 22nd Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPTT 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 WPTT meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** the 10 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) adopted at the 22nd Session of the Commission (consisting of 10 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), and in particular those Resolutions which have a direct impact on the work of the WPTT.