
OUTCOMES OF THE 22nd SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 14 NOVEMBER 2018

PURPOSE

To inform the Scientific Committee (SC) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 22nd Session, held from 21-25 May 2018, specifically relating to the IOTC science process.

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 i.e., 4th October 2018.

The updated *Compendium of Active Conservation and Management Measures for the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission* may be downloaded from the IOTC website at the following link:

English: <http://iotc.org/cmms>

French: <http://iotc.org/fr/mcgs>

Below is a brief description of the new or revised CMMs adopted at the 22nd Session of the Commission, which have most relevance to the IOTC science process:

Resolution 18/01 *On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence.*

This Resolution requires CPCs to reduce their catch of yellowfin tuna. For Purse seine vessels this signifies that (i) CPCs whose purse seine catches of yellowfin reported for 2014 were above 5000 MT to reduce their purse seine catches of yellowfin by 15 % from the 2014 levels, (ii) The number of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) will be no more than 350 active instrumented buoys and 700 acquired annually instrumented buoys per purse seine vessel per year (iii) Supply vessels shall be gradually reduced by 31st December 2022 and a single purse seine vessel shall not be supported by more than one single supply vessel of the same flag State at any point in time. For gillnet fisheries, CPCs whose Gillnet catches of yellowfin reported for 2014 were above 2000 MT to reduce their Gillnet catches of yellowfin by 10 % from the 2014 levels while for longline, CPCs whose Longline catches of yellowfin reported for 2014 were above 5000 MT to reduce their Longline catches of yellowfin by 10 % from the 2014 levels. Lastly for all other gears, CPCs whose catches of yellowfin from other gears reported for 2014 were above 5000 MT to reduce their other gear catches of yellowfin by 5 % from the 2014 levels. The Resolution further stipulates monitoring of the catch of yellowfin and requires the Scientific Committee via its Working Party on Tropical Tunas to undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures detailed in this Resolution, taking into account all sources of fishing mortality and possible alternatives aiming at returning and maintaining biomass levels at the Commission's target level.

Resolution 18/02: *On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries.*

This Resolution requires that CPCs firstly implement data collection programmes that ensure improved reporting of accurate blue shark catch, effort, size and discard data to IOTC in full accordance with the Resolution 15/02. In addition, CPCs are encouraged to undertake scientific research on blue shark that would provide information on key biological/ecological/behavioural characteristics, life-history, migrations, post-release survival and guidelines for safe release and identification of nursery grounds, as well as improving fishing practices. Lastly the Commission shall consider, at its 2021 meeting, the adoption of conservation and management measures, to be decided taking into account the most recent reported catch information or bycatch mitigation.

Resolution 18/04: *On bioFAD experimental project.*

This Resolution acknowledges and supports the Biodegradable FAD (BIOFAD) project with the objective of reducing the impact and the amount of synthetic marine debris of the use of non-biodegradable FAD in the ecosystem. The Project Consortium will make available to the IOTC Scientific Committee the results of the project at the latest two months in advance of its 2020 meeting. The Scientific Committee will analyse the outcomes of the project and provide scientific advice on possible additional FAD management options for consideration by the Commission in 2021.

Resolution 18/05 *On management measures for the conservation for the conservation of billfish, striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish*

This Resolution established catch limits for striped marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*; 3,260t), black marlin (*Makaira indica*, 9,932 t), blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*, 11,930t) and Indo-Pacific sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*, 25,000t) stocks in the Indian Ocean. It notes that should the average annual total catch for these species in any 2 consecutive years from 2020 onwards exceed the catch limits, the Commission shall review the effectiveness and implementation of the measures in the Resolution and consider additional measures based on the advice of the Scientific Committee. The measure also stipulates that Pending advice from the Scientific Committee on a joint and/or a species specific minimum conservation size, notwithstanding Resolution 17/04, CPCs shall not retain on board, trans-ship, land, any specimen smaller than 60 cm Lower Jaw Fork Length (LJFL) of any of the species but shall release them immediately. The measure also calls for recording of catch of these species, implementing data collection programmes and the domestic actions to monitor these catches to be recorded in the annual reports. CPCs are also encouraged to undertake scientific research on key biological/ecological/behavioural characteristics, life-history, migrations, post-release survival and guidelines for safe release, identification of nursery grounds, improving selectivity of fishing practices and fishing gears, for Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish. Lastly the SC is called to provide advice on options to reduce fishing mortality with a view to recover and/or maintain the stocks in the Green zone of the Kobe Plot with levels of probability ranging from 60 to 90% by 2026 at latest, options for candidate reference points for their

conservation and management in the IOTC Area of Competence and Species specific minimum conservation sizes by taking into account the size at maturity and the recruitment size to the fishery by gear as well as its practicability.

Resolution 18/07 On Measures Applicable in Case of Non-Fulfilment of Reporting Obligations in the IOTC

This Resolution calls for CPCs to include information in their Annual Reports (Report of Implementation) on actions taken to implement their reporting obligations for all IOTC fisheries; including shark species caught in association with IOTC fisheries, in particular steps taken to improve their data collection for direct and incidental catches. The Resolution states that the Compliance Committee will review the actions taken and may consider to prohibit CPCs that did not report nominal catch data (exclusively), including zero catches, for one or more species for a given year, in accordance with the Resolution 15/02, paragraph 2 (or any subsequent revision), from retaining such species as of the year following the lack or incomplete reporting until such data have been received by the IOTC Secretariat. The Resolution provides guidelines for the provision of zero catches and states that it may be expanded to incorporate additional species as well as gear/stock combinations.

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 Designs to Reduce the Incidence of Entanglement of Non-Target Species.

This Resolution applies to CPCs having purse seine vessels and fishing on Drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (DFADs), equipped with instrumented buoys for the purpose of aggregating tuna target species, in the IOTC area of competence. It further provides guidelines for preparation of drifting fish aggregating device (DFAD) management plans, guidelines for preparation of anchored fish aggregating device (AFAD) management plans and principles for design and deployment of FADs.

Resolution 18/09: On a scoping study of socio-economic indicators of IOTC fisheries.

This Resolution specifies the terms of reference for a scoping study of socio-economic aspects of IOTC fisheries. Pursuant to Article XII.5 of the Agreement, the Commission shall review the results of the scoping study and determine if a permanent Working Party on the Socio-Economic Aspects of the Fisheries the IOTC Area of the Competence is needed, at its 23rd Session in 2019.

DISCUSSION

The Commission considered the following proposals as Conservation and Management Measures, but consensus could not be reached and the proposals were either withdrawn or deferred until the next Session.

1) On the conservation of Mobula and Manta rays caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC Area of competence.

(Para 33) The Commission **NOTED** that IOTC–2018–S21–PropL *On the conservation of mobula and manta rays caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC Area of competence* was deferred. The Commission also **NOTED** that there is no specific research that indicates an association of mobula and manta rays with surface fisheries. One CPC highlighted the need for data be collected in order for the SC to provide potential management advice on the conservation of this species.

(Para 34) The Commission **REQUESTED** the SC to review the status of manta and mobula rays and their interaction with IOTC fisheries and to report this to the Commission in 2020. This work should include an evaluation of data availability and data gaps. Where data is insufficient, the SC should propose options for strengthening data collection.

2) On a Regional Observer Scheme.

(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.

3) On limiting fishing capacity

(Para 125) The Commission **NOTED** that the proposal on implementation of the limitation of fishing capacity (PropN) was withdrawn noting that the Resolution 03/01 *On the limitation of fishing capacity of Contracting Parties and CNCPs* still provides capacity measures even though the Resolution 15/11 is no longer applicable.

Requests from the Commission

Finally, at the 22nd Session of the Commission, Members made several comments regarding the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee, which participants are asked to **NOTE** (extracts from IOTC–2018–S22-R):

1. 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. (para 26).
2. The Commission **ENDORSED** the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons elected by the Scientific Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the coming years, as listed in Appendix VII of the 2017 Scientific Committee Report. (para. 27).

Matters related to ecosystems, bycatch and the status of sharks

3. The Commission **NOTED** the information provided by the SC that there continues to be catches of oceanic whitetip shark in the IOTC Area, although prohibited as per Resolution 13/06. (para. 36).

The Status of neritic tunas

4. The Commission **NOTED** that neritic tuna are vital resources to the coastal States and **EXPRESSED** its concern that the current nature and extent of management measures applying to the neritic species is much less than that being applied to other IOTC species. The Commission **EXPRESSED** further concern about the overall lack of information on neritic tunas, strongly **ENCOURAGED** the coastal States to improve data collection and reporting, and develop measures to underpin sustainable management of IOTC neritic species. Some CPCs also expressed concern that the concerned coastal States had not tabled conservation and management measures for this stock at this annual meeting in response to the Commission's call to do so at the last annual meeting (para. 47).

Report of the 22nd Session of the IOTC

The report of the 22nd Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available on the IOTC website.

<http://www.iotc.org/sites/default/files/documents/2018/06/IOTC-2018-S22-RE.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Scientific Committee:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2018–SC21–03 which outlined the main outcomes of the 22nd Session of the Commission, specifically related to the IOTC science process and **AGREE** to consider how best to provide the Commission with the information it has requested, throughout the course of the current SC meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** the 10 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) adopted at the 22nd Session of the Commission (consisting of 10 Resolutions and 0 Recommendation).