

PREVIOUS DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 14 NOVEMBER 2012

PURPOSE

To ensure the Scientific Committee (SC) is aware that in addition to the requests made to the SC by the Commission during its 16th Session, there are a number of decisions in the form of previous Resolutions that require a response from the Scientific Committee in 2012.

BACKGROUND

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

1) **Resolution 10/02 mandatory statistical requirements for IOTC members and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPC's)**

Para 4. Size data:

Size data shall be provided for all gears and for all species covered by the IOTC mandate according to the guidelines set out by the IOTC Scientific Committee. Size sampling shall be run under strict and well described random sampling schemes which are necessary to provide unbiased figures of the sizes taken. Sampling coverage shall be set to at least one fish measured by ton caught, by species and type of fishery, with samples being representative of all the periods and areas fished. Alternatively, size data for longline fleets may be provided as part of the Regional Observer Scheme where such fleets have at least 5% observer coverage of all fishing operations. Length data by species, including the total number of fish measured, shall be submitted by a 5° grid area by month, by gear and fishing mode (e.g. free swimming schools or schools in association with floating objects for the purse seiners). Documents covering sampling and raising procedures shall also be provided, by species and type of fishery.

Para 6. Timeliness of data submission to the IOTC Secretariat:

- (a) Longline fleets operating in the high seas shall provide provisional data for the previous year no later than 30 June. Final data shall be submitted no later than 30 December.
- (b) All other fleets (including supply vessels) shall submit their final data for the previous year no later than 30 June.
- (c) In case where the final statistics cannot be submitted by that date, at least preliminary statistics should be provided. Beyond a delay of two years, all revisions of historical data should be formally reported and duly justified. These reports should be made on forms provided by the Secretariat and reviewed by the Scientific Committee. The Scientific Committee will advise the Secretariat if revisions are then accepted for scientific use.

2) **Recommendation 10/13 on the implementation of a ban on discards of skipjack tuna, yellow fin tuna, bigeye tuna and non targeted species caught by purse seiners**

Para 6. The Scientific Committee is encouraged to provide advice at its 2010 session, on the management of discards in both purse seine and longline fisheries.

3) **Resolution 11/04 on a regional observer scheme**

Para 9. CPCs shall provide to the Executive Secretary and the Scientific Committee annually a report of the number of vessels monitored and the coverage achieved by gear type in accordance with the provisions of this Resolution.

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 Scientific Committee will elaborate an observer working manual, a template to be used for reporting (including minimum data fields) and a training program.

4) **Resolution 12/04 on the conservation of marine turtles**

Para 3. CPCs shall collect (including through logbooks and observer programs) and provide to the IOTC Secretariat no later than 30 June of the following year in accordance with Resolution 10/02 (or any subsequent revision), all data on their vessels' interactions with marine turtles. The data shall include the level of logbook or observer coverage and an estimation of total mortality of marine turtles incidentally caught in their fisheries.

Para 10. All CPCs are requested to:

- a) Where appropriate undertake research trials of circle hooks, use of whole finfish for bait, alternative FAD designs, alternative handling techniques, gillnet design and fishing practices and other mitigation methods which may improve the mitigation of adverse effects on marine turtles
- b) Report the results of these trials to the Scientific Committee (SC), at least 30 days in advance of the annual meetings of the SC

Para 11. The Scientific Committee shall request the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch to:

- a) Develop recommendations on appropriate mitigation measures for gillnet, longline and purse seine fisheries in the IOTC area
- b) Develop regional standards covering data collection, data exchange and training
- c) Develop improved FAD designs to reduce the incidence of entanglement of marine turtles, including the use of biodegradable materials

The recommendations of the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch shall be provided to the Scientific Committee for consideration at its annual session in 2012. In developing its recommendations, the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch shall examine and take into account the information provided by CPCs in accordance with paragraph 10 of this measure, other research available on the effectiveness of various mitigation methods in the IOTC area, mitigation measures and guidelines adopted by other relevant organizations and, in particular, those of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. The Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch will specifically consider the effects of circle hooks on target species catch rates, marine turtle mortalities and other bycatch species.

Para 17. The 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.

5) **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 Scientific Committee (or 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 WPEB and the Scientific Committee.

6) **Resolution 12/13 for the conservation and management of tropical tunas stocks in the IOTC area of competence**

Para 9. The Scientific Committee will provide at its 2010, 2011 and 2012 plenary Session any appropriate management options based on the Kobe II matrix (Annex 2) for the consideration of the Commission.

Para 10. The Scientific Committee will provide at its 2011, 2012 and 2013 Plenary sessions:

- a) an evaluation of the closure area, specifying in its advice if a modification is necessary, its basic scientific rationale with an assessment of the impact of such a closure on the tropical tuna stocks, notably yellowfin and bigeye tuna
- b) an evaluation of the closure time periods, specifying in its advice if a modification is necessary, its basic scientific rationale with an assessment of the impact of such a closure on the tropical tuna stocks, notably yellowfin and bigeye tuna
- c) an evaluation of the impact on yellowfin and bigeye tuna stocks by catching juveniles and spawners taken by all fisheries. The Scientific Committee shall also recommend measures to mitigate the impacts on juvenile and spawners

- d) any other advice on possible different management.

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 17th Session to be held in May 2013, in Mozambique.

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.