
OUTCOMES OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 15 NOVEMBER 2013

PURPOSE

To inform the Scientific Committee (SC) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its Seventeenth Session, held from 6–10 May 2013, specifically relating to the work of the SC.

BACKGROUND

At the 17th Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 11 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (11 in total consisting of 11 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), as detailed below:

Resolutions

- Resolution 13/01 *On the removal of obsolete Conservation and Management Measures*
- Resolution 13/02 *Concerning the IOTC record of vessels authorised to operate in the IOTC area of competence*
- Resolution 13/03 *On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence*
- Resolution 13/04 *On the conservation of cetaceans*
- Resolution 13/05 *On the conservation of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*)*
- Resolution 13/06 *On a scientific and management framework on the Conservation of sharks species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries*
- Resolution 13/07 *Concerning a record of licensed foreign vessels fishing for IOTC species in the IOTC area of competence and access agreement information*
- Resolution 13/08 *Procedures on a fish aggregating devices (FADs) management plan, including more detailed specification of catch reporting from FAD sets, and the development of improved FAD designs to reduce the incidence of entanglement of non-target species*
- Resolution 13/09 *On the conservation of albacore caught in the IOTC area of competence*
- Resolution 13/10 *On interim target and limit reference points and a decision framework*
- Resolution 13/11 *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*

Pursuant to Article IX.4 of the IOTC Agreement, the above mentioned Conservation and Management Measures became binding on Members, 120 days from the date of the notification communicated by the Secretariat in IOTC Circular 2013–49 (17 May 2013), i.e. 14 September 2013, with the exception of Resolution 13/11, which will enter into effect on 1 January 2014, noting the following:

Pursuant to Article IX.5 of the IOTC Agreement, the IOTC Secretariat received an objection only from India (dated 13 September 2013), for the following Conservation and Management Measures adopted at the 17th Session of the Commission:

- Resolution 13/02 *Concerning the IOTC record of vessels authorised to operate in the IOTC area of competence*
- Resolution 13/03 *On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence*
- Resolution 13/06 *On a scientific and management framework on the Conservation of sharks species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries*
- Resolution 13/07 *Concerning a record of licensed foreign vessels fishing for IOTC species in the IOTC area of competence and access agreement information*

Thus, pursuant to Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, the 4 CMMs listed above entered into effect on Thursday 14 November 2013, for all other CPCs, except India.

Please note that three out of the four Resolutions above, superseded previous Resolutions. Resolutions adopted by the Commission are considered as self-standing instruments, which enter into force according to the relevant provision of the IOTC agreement (Article IX.1). **Therefore, the following Resolutions remain in force in relation to India:**

- Resolution 07/02 *Concerning the Establishment of an IOTC Record of Vessels Authorised to Operate in the IOTC Area*, Resolution 01/02 *Relating to Control of fishing vessels*

- Resolution 12/03 *On the Record of Catch and Effort by Fishing vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence*
- Resolution 12/07 *Concerning a Record of Licensed Foreign Vessels Fishing for IOTC Species in the Area of Competence and Access Agreement Information*
- Resolution 01/02 *Relating To Control Of Fishing Activities*

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, dated 14 November 2013:

English:

<http://iotc.org/files/CMM/IOTC%20-%20Compendium%20of%20ACTIVE%20CMMs%2014%20November%202013.pdf> [1.7 MB]

French:

<http://iotc.org/files/CMM/CTOI%20-%20Recueil%20des%20MCG%20ACTIVES%2014%20novembre%202013.pdf> [3.0 Mo]

Below is a brief description of the new or revised CMMs adopted at the 17th Session of the Commission:

1) Resolution 13/01 *On the removal of obsolete Conservation and Management Measures*

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 13/01 *On the removal of obsolete Conservation and Management Measures*. This Resolution supersedes a range of Recommendations that have been fulfilled or are obsolete, as they have been replaced without being superseded or are no longer relevant to the conservation and management of tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean. This Resolution supersedes Recommendations 01/01, 02/06, 03/04, 03/05, 03/06 and 05/06. Recommendation 02/07, proposed for revoking by the Compendium Working Group was not superseded as Japan indicated it believed the Recommendation was still current.

2) Resolution 13/02 *Concerning the IOTC record of vessels authorised to operate in the IOTC area of competence*

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 13/02 *Concerning the IOTC record of vessels authorised to operate in the IOTC area of competence*. This Resolution includes a requirement to submit a copy of the template, or official document used to give authorisation to fish outside National Jurisdictions for publication on a secure part of the IOTC website. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 07/02. India expressed reservations and concerns regarding its ability to comply with the requirements detailed in the Resolution and indicated that they could not support the Resolution in its current form. India reserved its right to lodge an objection to the Resolution, as permitted under Article IX, paragraph 9 of the IOTC Agreement.

3) Resolution 13/03 *On the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence*

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 13/03 *On the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence*. This Resolution introduces amendments to Resolution 12/03 *on the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence* by including a requirement for the submission to the IOTC Secretariat of the template of all flag and coastal State logbooks to record data for the IOTC catches for publishing on the IOTC web page to facilitate port and at-sea inspections. For CPCs that use electronic logbook systems, a copy of the applicable regulations implementing the electronic logbook system in that CPC, a set of screen captures and the name of the certified software may be provided. Thresher sharks and Oceanic whitetip shark, which are prohibited to be retained onboard, are moved from “optional species” to “other species” to be required to be recorded in logbooks for longline, purse seine and gillnet. Marine turtles (in number) are also now required to be recorded in logbooks not only for purse seine and gillnet vessels but also for longline vessels. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 12/03. India expressed reservations and concerns regarding its ability to comply with the requirements detailed in the Resolution and indicated that they could not support the Resolution in its current form. India reserved its right to lodge an objection to the Resolution, as permitted under Article IX, paragraph 9 of the IOTC Agreement.

4) Resolution 13/04 *On the conservation of cetaceans*

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 13/04 *On the conservation of cetaceans*. The Resolution aims to mitigate the interactions between cetaceans and purse seine fishing gear; gather additional information from CPCs on the interaction rates with other fishing gears, in particular gillnets and longlines; and requests that the IOTC SC

develop best practice mitigation and handling guidelines for consideration by the Commission at its 18th Session in 2014, to mitigate the impacts of fishing on cetaceans in the IOTC area of competence.

5) Resolution 13/05 On the conservation of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*)

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 13/05 *On the conservation of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*)*. This Resolution aims to mitigate the interactions between whale sharks and purse seine fishing gear; gather additional information from CPCs on the interaction rates with other fishing gears, in particular gillnets and longlines; and requests that the IOTC SC develop best practice mitigation and handling guidelines for consideration by the Commission at its 18th Session in 2014, to mitigate the impacts of fishing on whale sharks in the IOTC area of competence.

6) Resolution 13/06 On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of sharks species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 13/06 *On a scientific and management framework on the Conservation of sharks species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries*. This Resolution prohibits, as an interim pilot measure, the retention onboard, transshipment, landing or storing any part or whole carcass of oceanic whitetip sharks (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) by all vessels on the IOTC record of authorized vessels or authorised to fish for tuna or tuna-like species, with the exception of observers who are permitted to collect biological samples (vertebrae, tissues, reproductive tracts, stomachs) from oceanic whitetip sharks that are dead at haulback and artisanal fisheries for the purpose of local consumption, and will conduct a review and an evaluation of the interim measure in 2016.

7) Resolution 13/07 Concerning a record of licensed foreign vessels fishing for IOTC species in the IOTC area of competence and access agreement information

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 13/07 *Concerning a record of licensed foreign vessels fishing for IOTC species in the IOTC area of competence and access agreement information*. This Resolution introduces amendments to Resolution 12/07 by requiring the submission of a range of additional documents on access agreements, and templates of licenses issued to foreign fishing vessels to the IOTC Secretariat for publication in a secure part of the IOTC website. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 12/07.

8) Resolution 13/08 Procedures on a fish aggregating devices (FADs) management plan, including 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

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 13/08 *Procedures on a fish aggregating devices (FADs) management plan, including more detailed specification 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 introduces amendments to Resolution 12/08 by including principles for the design and deployment of FADs to reduce the entanglement of sharks, marine turtles or any other species as well as the inclusion in the suggested Guidelines for Preparation of FAD Management Plans for each CPC with more detailed specifications of catch reporting from FAD sets. This Resolution also prohibits the abandonment at sea, in the IOTC area of competence, of drifting FADs composed of synthetic materials. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 12/08.

9) Resolution 13/09 On the conservation of albacore caught in the IOTC area of competence

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 13/09 *On the conservation of albacore caught in the IOTC area of competence*. This Resolution requires the Scientific Committee to assess the coverage and the quality of catch and effort data made available by CPCs targeting albacore, and to advise the Commission before the end of 2014 on target and limit reference points (LRPs, TRPs) which may be used when assessing the albacore stock status and when evaluating potential management measures. In addition, the Scientific Committee, through its Working Parties on Temperate Tunas (WPTmT) and on Methods (WPM), is required to examine and evaluate potential management measures which would allow the achievement of the conservation and optimal utilization of the albacore stock.

10) Resolution 13/10 On interim target and limit reference points and a decision framework

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 13/10 *On interim target and limit reference points and a decision framework*. This Resolution establishes the general principles that would guide the application of the

precautionary approach in the context of IOTC, including the adoption of provisional reference points that would apply until such time as the Commission decides to update the reference points after considering the advice of the Scientific Committee following the management strategy evaluation exercise. The Resolution also considers a decision framework to facilitate management measures that are currently being undertaken by the Commission. This Resolution supersedes Recommendation 12/14.

11) Resolution 13/11 *On a ban on discards of bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna and a recommendation for non-targeted species caught by purse seine vessels in the IOTC area of competence*

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 13/11 *On a ban on discards of bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna and a recommendation for non-targeted species caught by purse seine vessels in the IOTC area of competence*. The Resolution bans the discard of three tropical tuna species, with the exception of fish unfit for human consumption or if no space available to accommodate all fish. This Resolution supersedes Recommendation 10/13.

DISCUSSION

The Commission considered the following proposals as Conservation and Management Measures, but consensus could not be reached:

On the conservation of sharks

The Commission **CONSIDERED** a proposal on the conservation of sharks, but agreement could not be reached and the proposal was deferred until the next meeting of the Commission. This proposal was to introduce amendments to Resolution 05/05 *On the conservation of sharks*, that require sharks to be landed with their fins attached to their respective carcass, to promote full utilisation of shark protein for food, and to facilitate the collection of critical data by species i.e. nominal catch, required to undertake rigorous assessments of the impact of fishing on these populations. The proposal also encouraged research into the effectiveness of prohibiting the use of wire trace on longline fishing vessels as a proven mitigation measure that will ameliorate the impact of fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species on shark populations throughout the IOTC area of competence. Japan, China and the Republic of Korea indicated that this proposal, which called for fins to be landed attached, was not operationally feasible at this point in time.

On the conservation of silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC

The Commission **CONSIDERED** a proposal on the conservation of silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence, but agreement could not be reached and the proposal was deferred until the next meeting of the Commission. Many Members could not support the proposal and Japan, China and the Republic of Korea indicated that there were insufficient scientific justifications for the prohibition of retention of this species.

On the conservation of hammerhead sharks (Family Sphyrnidae) caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC

The Commission **CONSIDERED** a proposal on the conservation of hammerhead sharks (Family Sphyrnidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence, but agreement could not be reached and the proposal was deferred until the next meeting of the Commission. Many Members could not support the proposal and Japan and China indicated that there were insufficient scientific justifications for the prohibition of retention of this species.

Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPC'S)

The Commission **CONSIDERED** a proposal on *Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Members and Cooperating Contracting Parties (CPC's)* but agreement could not be reached and the proposal was deferred until the next meeting of the Commission. This proposal aimed to introduce amendments to Resolution 10/02 *Mandatory statistical requirements for IOTC Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPC's)* by including a list of the most commonly caught elasmobranch species for which nominal catch data could be reported as part of the statistical requirement for IOTC CPCs. In addition, the amendments aimed to improve the completeness of the fisheries data by including new obligations on data reporting on FADs, marine turtles and seabirds as well as better defining fishing gears.

On establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the IOTC area of competence

The Commission **CONSIDERED** a proposal on establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the IOTC area of competence, but agreement could not be reached and the proposal was deferred until the next meeting of the Commission. The proposal aimed to introduce an amendment to Resolution 11/03 by inserting a mechanism for inter-sessional listing of IUU vessels to eliminate the potential of the vessel being permitted to continue fishing for almost one year or more after conducting illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing activities in the IOTC area of competence.

On an IOTC tropical tuna – bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna and yellowfin tuna, catch certification scheme

The Commission **CONSIDERED** a proposal on an IOTC tropical tunas – bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna and yellowfin tuna - catch certification scheme but agreement could not be reached and the proposal was deferred until the next meeting of the Commission. An addition to the proposal during the Session outlined terms of reference for an IOTC intersessional working party to progress on a catch documentation scheme for tropical tuna species.

On penalties to be applied in case of non fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC

The Commission **CONSIDERED** a proposal on penalties to be applied in case of non fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC, but agreement could not be reached and it was deferred until the next meeting of the Commission.

On the implementation of an interim harvest control rule for skipjack tuna

The Commission **CONSIDERED** a proposal on the implementation of an interim harvest control rule for skipjack tuna, but agreement could not be reached and it was deferred until the next meeting of the Commission

Requests from the Commission

Finally, at the 17th Session of the Commission, Members made several comments on the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee, which participants are asked to **note** (extracts from the S17 report):

- 1) The Commission addressed the list of recommendations made by the SC15 (Appendix VII) [of the S17 Report] in its 2012 report that related specifically to the Commission or concerned the work of the Secretariat. The Commission **ENDORSED** the list of recommendations, noting the following: (para. 24 of the S17 report).

Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE)

- 2) The Commission **RECALLED** that at its 15th Session, Members ‘endorsed the development of a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) in the framework of IOTC and requests that this process be continued in 2011’ (para. 43 of the S15 report). MSE is a procedure whereby the performance of alternative management strategies are evaluated using simulations of stock and fishery dynamics. (para. 18 of the S17 report).
- 3) The Commission **AGREED** to initiate a consultative process among managers, stakeholders and scientists to begin discussions about the implementation of an MSE in the IOTC. (para. 21 of the S17 report).

National Reports

- 4) **NOTING** that the Commission, at its 15th Session, expressed concern regarding the limited submission of National Reports to the SC, and stressed the importance of providing the reports by all CPCs, the Commission **NOTED** that in 2012, 26 reports were provided by CPCs, up from 25 in 2011, 15 in 2010 and 14 in 2009. In congratulating the 26 CPCs who provided a report in 2012, the Commission also stressed the importance of the submission of National Reports by all CPCs and **REQUESTED** those who did not meet their reporting obligations in this regard (Seven: Eritrea, Guinea, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Vanuatu and Yemen), to provide a National Report to the SC in 2013. (para. 25 of the S17 report).
- 5) The Commission **REMINDED** CPCs that the purpose of the National Reports is to provide relevant information to the SC on fishing activities of Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties operating in the IOTC area of competence. The report should include all fishing activities for species under

the IOTC mandate as well as sharks and other byproduct / bycatch species as required by the IOTC Agreement and decisions by the Commission. The submission of a National Report is mandatory, irrespective if a CPC intends on attending the annual meeting of the SC. (para. 26 of the S17 report).

Alternative management measures for swordfish

- 6) The Commission, at its 16th Session requested *'that the southwest region continue to be analysed as a special resource, as it appears to be highly depleted compared to the Indian Ocean as a whole, acknowledging that the SC and Working Party on Billfish should benefit from the findings on stock structure from the Indian Ocean Swordfish Stock Structure (IOSSS) project. However the difference in depletion does not appear to be as extreme as analyses in previous years have suggested. A review of the spatial assumptions should be conducted following the final results of the IOSSS project and the analysis of tagging experiments undertaken.'* (para. 21 of the S16 report) (and para. 27 of the S17 report).
- 7) The Commission **REQUESTED** that the southwest region continue to be analysed as a special resource, as it appears to be highly depleted compared to the Indian Ocean as a whole. (para. 29 of the S17 report).

Kobe II Strategy Matrix

- 8) The Commission **NOTED** the provision by the SC of the Kobe II strategy matrix for bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna and swordfish (IO and SWIO) and recognized that it is a useful and necessary tool for management. The Commission **REQUESTED** that such matrices shall be provided for all stock assessments by the species Working Parties, and for these to be included in the report of the SC in 2013 and all future reports. (para. 31 of the S17 report).

On data

- 9) The Commission **NOTED** the paucity of catch statistics for the main species of sharks, by major fisheries (gears), for the period 1950–2011, as provided in the SC15 report. Although some CPCs have reported more detailed data on sharks in recent years, including time-area catches and effort, and length frequency data for the main commercial shark species, the Commission expressed strong **CONCERN** as the information on retained catches and discards of sharks contained in the IOTC database remains very incomplete for most fleets despite their mandatory reporting status, and that catch-and-effort as well as size data are essential to assess the status of shark stocks. (para. 32 of the S17 report).
- 10) The Commission **NOTED** some minor improvements in the quantity of fisheries statistics available to the SC and its Working Parties in 2012 but reiterated its concerns about the lack of fisheries data from some gears and fleets for target and bycatch species. Specifically, many fisheries statistics are missing or incomplete for some industrial and artisanal fisheries. As such, the Commission **REQUESTED** that all CPCs improve their data collection and reporting to the IOTC, especially taking into account that the Commission has initiated the consultation process on developing criteria for a quota allocation system. (para. 34 of the S17 report).

The entire Report of the 17th Session of the Commission may be downloaded from the IOTC website in English or French.

English: <http://iotc.org/files/proceedings/2013/s/IOTC-2013-S17-R%5BE%5D.pdf> [1.5 Mb]

French: <http://iotc.org/files/proceedings/2013/s/IOTC-2013-S17-R%5BF%5D.pdf> [1.6 Mb]

Recommendation/s

That the Scientific Committee:

- 1) **NOTE** the outcomes of the Seventeenth Session of the Commission, including the 11 Conservation and Management Measures (11 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations) adopted during the Session.
- 2) **DEVELOP** advice in response to each of the requests made to the SC by the Commission at its 17th Session.