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## REVIEW OF CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES RELATING TO BILLFISH

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### PURPOSE

To encourage participants at the Working Party on Billfish (WPB13) to review the existing Conservation and Management Measures (CMM) relating to Billfish, noting the CMMs contained in document IOTC–2015–WPB13–04; and as necessary to 1) provide recommendations to the Scientific Committee on whether modifications may be required; and 2) recommend whether other CMMs may be required.

### BACKGROUND

In addition to the CMMs outlined in document IOTC–2015–WPB13–04, billfish in the Indian Ocean are currently subject to several other CMMs adopted by the Commission, including:

**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 This Resolution superseded Recommendation 12/14.

**Resolution 10/08** *[Concerning a record of active vessels fishing for tunas and swordfish in the IOTC area](#)*. This resolution makes provision for a mandatory annual submission by all CPCs to the IOTC Secretariat of a list of their respective vessels fishing for tunas and swordfish in the IOTC area that were active during the previous year. The resolution applies to vessel larger than 24 meters in length overall or vessel under 24 meters fishing outside the EEZ of their flag State.

### DISCUSSION

As part of best practice, the WPB is obliged to review existing CMMs and consider whether their science-based components need to be updated. If this is the case, then the WPB should provide clear, science-based recommendations for the Scientific Committee's consideration.

### RECOMMENDATION

That the WPB **NOTE** paper IOTC–2015–WPB13–05 which aimed to encourage the WPB to review the existing Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) relating to billfish, and as necessary to 1) provide recommendations to the Scientific Committee on whether modifications may be required; and 2) recommend whether other CMMs may be required.

### APPENDICES

**Appendix A:** Resolution 13/10 *[On interim target and limit reference points and a decision framework](#)*

**Appendix B:** Resolution 10/08 *[concerning a record of active vessels fishing for tunas and swordfish in the IOTC area](#)*

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## APPENDIX A

### RESOLUTION 13/10

#### ON INTERIM TARGET AND LIMIT REFERENCE POINTS AND A DECISION FRAMEWORK

##### The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

BEING MINDFUL of Article XVI of the IOTC Agreement regarding the rights of Coastal States and of Article 87 and 116 of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea regarding the right to fish on the high seas;

RECALLING that Article 6, paragraph 3, of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea of December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA), establishes the application of precautionary reference points as a general principle for sound fisheries management;

FURTHER RECALLING that Annex II of UNFSA provides guidelines for the application of precautionary reference points in the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, including the adoption of provisional reference points when information for establishing reference points is absent or poor;

NOTING that Article 7.5.3 of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries also recommends the implementation of stock specific target and limit reference points, *inter alia*, on the basis of the precautionary approach;

NOTING that recommendations 37 and 38 of the Performance Review Panel, adopted by the Commission as Resolution 09/01, indicate that pending the amendment or replacement of the IOTC Agreement to incorporate modern fisheries management principles, the Commission should implement the precautionary approach including, *inter alia*, precautionary reference points, as set forth in the UNFSA;

NOTING [Resolution 12/01](#) *On the implementation of the precautionary approach* that recommends adoption of provisional reference points, and that the IOTC Scientific Committee proposed provisional values at its 14<sup>th</sup> Session;

RECALLING ALSO that the IOTC Scientific Committee has initiated a process leading to a management strategy evaluation (MSE) process to improve upon the provision of scientific advice on Harvest Control Rules (HCRs);

ACKNOWLEDGING that continuing dialog between scientists and managers is necessary to define appropriate HCRs for the IOTC tuna and tuna-like stocks;

ADOPTS in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, that:

1. When assessing stock status and providing recommendations to the Commission, the IOTC Scientific Committee should apply the following interim target and limit reference points for the species of tuna and tuna-like species listed in **Table 1**.  $B_{MSY}$  refers to the biomass level for the stock that would produce the Maximum Sustainable Yield;  $F_{MSY}$  refers to the level of fishing mortality that produces the Maximum Sustainable Yield.

**Table 1.** Interim target and limit reference points.

Stock	Target Reference Point	Limit Reference Point
Albacore	$B_{MSY}; F_{MSY}$	$B_{LIM} = 0.40 B_{MSY}; F_{LIM} = 1.40 F_{MSY}$
Bigeye tuna	$B_{MSY}; F_{MSY}$	$B_{LIM} = 0.50 B_{MSY}; F_{LIM} = 1.30 F_{MSY}$
Skipjack tuna	$B_{MSY}; F_{MSY}$	$B_{LIM} = 0.40 B_{MSY}; F_{LIM} = 1.50 F_{MSY}$
Yellowfin tuna	$B_{MSY}; F_{MSY}$	$B_{LIM} = 0.40 B_{MSY}; F_{LIM} = 1.40 F_{MSY}$
Swordfish	$B_{MSY}; F_{MSY}$	$B_{LIM} = 0.40 B_{MSY}; F_{LIM} = 1.40 F_{MSY}$

2. These interim target and limit reference points shall be assessed and further reviewed by the IOTC Scientific Committee and the results shall be presented to the Commission for adoption of species-specific reference points. If applicable, the IOTC Scientific Committee should endeavour to apply the interim reference points in the provision of advice on the status of stocks and on recommendations for management measures.
3. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall assess, as soon as possible and more particularly through the management strategy evaluation process (MSE) process, the robustness and the performance of the interim

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reference points, specified under paragraph 1 and other reference points based on the guidelines of International agreements taking into account: i) the nature of these reference points – target or limits, ii) the best scientific knowledge on population dynamics and on life-history parameters, iii) the fisheries exploiting them, and iv) the various sources uncertainty.

4. In addition the IOTC Scientific Committee shall develop and assess potential harvest control rules (HCRs) to be applied, considering the status of the stocks against the reference points assessed in paragraph 3 for albacore, bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna and swordfish. Based on the results of the MSE and considering the guidelines set forth in the UNFSA and in Article V of the IOTC Agreement, the IOTC Scientific Committee will recommend to the Commission HCRs for these tuna and tuna-like species, which among other factors, taking account of the following objectives:
  - a) For stocks which assessed status will match with the lower right (green) quadrant of the Kobe Plot, aim at maintaining the stocks in a high probability within this quadrant;
  - b) For stocks which assessed status will match with the upper right (orange) quadrant of the Kobe Plot, aim at ending overfishing with a high probability in as short a period as possible;
  - c) For stocks which assessed status will match with the lower left (yellow) quadrant of the Kobe plot, aim at rebuilding these stocks in as short a period as possible;
  - d) For stocks which assessed status will match with the upper left quadrant (red), aim at ending overfishing with a high probability and at rebuilding the biomass of these stocks in as short a period as possible.
5. Bearing in mind Article 64 of UNCLOS and Article 8 of UNFSA, the entirety of this Resolution is subject to Article XVI (Coastal States' Rights) of the IOTC Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, and Articles 87 and 116 of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea regarding the right to fish on the high seas;
6. This Resolution supersedes Recommendation 12/14 *On interim target and limit*

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**APPENDIX B****RESOLUTION 10/08****CONCERNING A RECORD OF ACTIVE VESSELS FISHING FOR TUNAS AND SWORDFISH IN THE IOTC AREA**

**The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),**

CONSCIOUS of the duties of every State to exercise effectively its jurisdiction and control over vessels flying its flag;

RECALLING the responsibilities incumbent on States whose vessels fish for highly migratory fish stocks on the high seas;

NOTING that the information about the size of active fleets for implementing the limitation of fishing capacity as set forth in Resolution 09/02 *[superseded by [Resolution 12/11](#)]* *On the implementation of a limitation of fishing capacity of Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties*;

MINDFUL of the recommendation 17 of the Performance Review Panel, as listed in [Resolution 09/01](#) *On the performance review follow-up*, that the obligation incumbent on a flag State to report data for its vessels be included in a separate Resolution from the obligation incumbent on Members to report data on the vessels of third countries they licence to fish in their exclusive economic zones (EEZs);

ADOPTS, in accordance with the provisions of Article IX, paragraph 1 of the IOTC Agreement, the following:

1. All IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) with vessels fishing for tunas and swordfish in the IOTC area of competence (hereinafter referred to as “the Area”), shall submit to the IOTC Executive Secretary by 15 February every year a list of their respective vessels that were active in the Area during the previous year and that are:
  - a) larger than 24 metres in length overall; or
  - b) in case of vessels less than 24m, those operating in waters outside the economic exclusive zone of the flag state.
2. These lists shall contain the following information for each vessel:
  - The IOTC number;
  - Name and registration number;
  - IMO number, if available;
  - Previous flag (if any);
  - International radio call sign (if any);
  - Vessel type, length, and gross tonnage (GT);
  - Name and address of owner, and/or charterer, and/or operator;
  - Main target species,
  - Period of authorisation
3. The IOTC Executive Secretary shall maintain the IOTC Record of Active Vessels, and take any measure to ensure publicity of the Record and through electronic means, including placing it on the IOTC website, in a manner consistent with confidentiality requirements noted by CPCs.
4. The IOTC Executive Secretary shall compile, for consideration by the IOTC Compliance Committee, a report on the information submitted by CPCs.

5. The objective of the report shall be to provide the IOTC Compliance Committee with an independent evaluation of the level of compliance to this Resolution, and other pertinent IOTC Resolution(s), by the concerned CPCs.
6. The IOTC Compliance Committee shall after its evaluation of the IOTC Executive Secretary's report, make appropriate recommendations to the Commission on actions that should be pursued against the non-complying CPCs. These should include, *inter alia*, taking actions under [Resolution 10/10](#).
7. IOTC Resolution 07/04 *Concerning registration and exchange of information on vessels fishing for tunas and swordfish in the IOTC Area* is superseded by this Resolution.