

OUTCOMES OF THE 19th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 3 NOVEMBER 2015

PURPOSE

To inform the Scientific Committee (SC) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 19th Session, held from 27 April to 1 May 2015, specifically relating to the IOTC science process.

BACKGROUND

At the 19th Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 11 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (consisting of 11 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), as detailed below:

Resolutions

- Resolution 15/01 *On the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence*
- Resolution 15/02 *On mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)*
- Resolution 15/03 *On the vessel monitoring system (VMS) programme*
- Resolution 15/04 *Concerning the IOTC record of vessels authorised to operate in the IOTC area of competence*
- Resolution 15/05 *On conservation measures for striped marlin, black marlin and blue marlin*
- Resolution 15/06 *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*
- Resolution 15/07 *On the use of artificial lights to attract fish to drifting fish aggregating devices*
- Resolution 15/08 *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*
- Resolution 15/09 *On a fish aggregating devices (FADs) working group*
- Resolution 15/10 *On target and limit reference points and a decision framework*
- Resolution 15/11 *On the implementation of a limitation of fishing capacity of Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties*

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 IOTC Secretariat in IOTC Circular 2015–049 (i.e. **10 September 2015**).

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 10 September 2015:

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 19th Session of the Commission, which have most relevance to the IOTC science process:

1) *On the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence*

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 15/01 *On the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence*. This Resolution introduced amendments to Resolution 13/03 *on the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence* by including the mandatory recording of silky shark

(*Carcharhinus falciformis*) in Annex II (Record once per set/shot/operation) paragraph 2.3 (SPECIES) for longline and purse seine gears. It also proposed minor technical adjustments as recommended by the IOTC scientific community. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 13/03.

2) *On mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)*

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 15/02 *On mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)*. This Resolution introduced amendments to Resolution 10/02 *On mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)* in order to clarify existing statistical information requirements under the scope of the Resolution. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 10/02.

3) *On conservation measures for striped marlin, black marlin and blue marlin*

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 15/05 *On conservation measures for striped marlin, black marlin and blue marlin*. This Resolution encourages Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) to reduce the level of catch having as reference the average in the period between 2009 and 2014, for striped marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*), black marlin (*Makaira indica*) and blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*). In addition, CPCs are encouraged to request their operators/fishing vessels to release any fish of the above mentioned species brought alive onboard or alongside for taking on-board the vessel. IOTC scientific bodies are requested to continue their work of assessing and monitoring the status of the above mentioned species.

4) *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 15/06 *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. It also encourages all purse seine vessels to retain on board and then land all non-targeted species as far as the vessel can ensure appropriate fishing operation (including but not limited to other tunas, rainbow runner, dolphinfish, triggerfish, billfish, wahoo, and barracuda) except fish considered unfit for human consumption. This latest revision replaces the words “well space” by “storage capacity”. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 13/11.

5) *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*

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 15/08 *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 introduces amendments to 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*, by including a limitation on the number of FADs deployed by each purse seine vessel, provisions for monitoring of the FADs, and more detailed specifications for reporting from FAD sets. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 13/08.

6) *On a FADs Management Working Group*

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 15/09 *On a FADs Management Working Group*. This Resolution details terms of reference for an ad hoc working group on fish aggregating devices (FADs). The ad hoc working group will assess the consequences of the increasing number and technological developments of FADs in tuna fisheries and their ecosystems, in order to inform and advise on future FAD-related management options. This ad hoc working group

will be of multi-sectorial nature, involving various stakeholders such as scientists, fishery managers, fishing industry representatives, administrators and fishers.

7) *On target and limit reference points and a decision framework*

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 15/10 *On target and limit reference points and a decision framework*. This Resolution introduces amendments to Resolution 13/10 by including a possibility for the IOTC Scientific Committee to use possible alternatives to MSY-based reference points when they are considered as insufficiently robust. In line with material made available in the last IOTC Scientific Committee report (SC17), the proposal refers to B_0 -based reference points. B_0 is generally considered either as the historical biomass before the beginning of the fishing activities or as the biomass under the assumption of a termination of any fishing activities. In addition, considering these reference points, the Resolution introduces management objectives and a work program which would allow the IOTC Scientific Committee to discuss projections and outlooks associated to possible management options, more particularly when implementing Management Strategy Evaluations. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 13/10.

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 sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by the IOTC*

The Commission **CONSIDERED** two proposals on the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by the IOTC (IOTC–2015–S19–PropC and PropD), but agreement could not be reached and the proposals was deferred until the next meeting of the Commission. The proposals were to introduce amendments to Resolution 05/05 *On the conservation of sharks*, to address the impact on shark mortality as a result of finning. The proposals aimed to promote full utilisation of sharks and facilitate the collection of critical data required to undertake rigorous assessments of the impact of fishing on these populations. The proposal requires that sharks be landed with their fins attached to their respective carcass when caught in association with fisheries targeting tuna and tuna-like species throughout the IOTC area of competence. Some CPCs indicated that the fin cutting issue has no relationship with stock management of sharks and that fishermen use their carcasses in totality. (S19 Report, para. 137)

2) *On harvest controls rules for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence*

The Commission **CONSIDERED** a proposal on harvest controls rules for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence (IOTC–2015–S19–PropI), but agreement could not be reached and the proposal was deferred until the next meeting of the Commission. The proposal intended to set a biomass limit reference point at 20% of the unfished level ($B_{LIM} = 0.2B_0$) and a target biomass reference point at 40% of the unfished level ($B_{TARG} = 0.4B_0$). A key feature of the proposal was the explicit harvest control rule, or HCR to achieve the objectives of maintaining the stock at, or above, the TRP and above the LRP with a high probability. The scope of the discussions indicated CPCs have a desire to move towards a harvest control rules. Some CPCs suggested that inaction on the part of other CPCs following a catch limit being reached may reduce the effectiveness of the HCR. Other CPCs indicated the frequency of reporting should be increased to monthly intervals if the catch limits were to be effectively implemented. (S19 Report, para. 138)

The Commission **AGREED** that the proposal was premature given that MSE work on skipjack tuna is progressing and assessment of management procedures is not fully complete. (S19 Report, para. 139)

The Commission **NOTED** that a road map has been proposed under the MPD02 meeting which may be an effective means to advance the development of harvest control rules to be further discussed by the Commission. Results of such sub-groups will nevertheless be shared among all CPCs and will be compiled and consolidated, as appropriate, in recommendations to the Commission on management objectives and on management procedures. (S19 Report, para. 140)

Requests from the Commission

Finally, at the 19th Session of the Commission, Members made several comments regarding the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee, which participants are asked to **NOTE** (extracts from the S98 report):

- 1) The Commission **CONSIDERED** the list of recommendations made by the SC17 ([Appendix VI](#)) from its 2014 report (IOTC–2014–SC17–R) that related specifically to the Commission. The Commission **ENDORSED** the list of recommendations as its own, while taking into account the range of issues outlined in this Report (S19) and incorporated within Conservation and Management Measures adopted during the Session and as adopted for implementation as detailed in the approved annual budget and Program of Work. (S19 Report, para. 10)

Consultants

- 1) **NOTING** the Scientific Committee's attempts to prioritise the various projects and consultancies which it had requested funding for in 2016, in particular, that the High priority projects were those which it felt must be undertaken in 2016, the Commission **REQUESTED** that only those High priority projects listed in the Scientific Committee budget be funded by the Commission's regular budget, with exceptions detailed in other areas of the S19 report. (S19 Report, para. 40)

Report of the 19th Session of the IOTC

The complete report of the 19th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available for download from the IOTC website:

- English: www.iotc.org/documents/report-19th-session-indian-ocean-tuna-commission
- French: www.iotc.org/fr/documents/rapport-de-la-19e-session-de-la-commission-des-thons-de-1%E2%80%99oc%C3%A9an-indien

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Scientific Committee:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2015–SC18–03 which outlined the main outcomes of the 19th 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 11 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) adopted at the 19th Session of the Commission (consisting of 11 Resolutions and 0 Recommendation).