



Implications on data collection and reporting for IOTC CPCs subject to catch reductions according to Resolution 16/01

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Background

The Indian Tuna Ocean Commission, at its 20th Session held in La Reunion, France, on 23-27 May 2016, adopted [Resolution 16/01](#) – *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence* – with the purpose of fulfilling the objectives of the Commission to maintain stocks in perpetuity and with high probability at levels not less than those capable of producing their maximum sustainable yield.

This Resolution came into force on 27th September 2016, explicitly stating that (para. 12) “*the measures contained within this Resolution shall come into force from 1st January 2017; it shall be considered as interim measure and will be reviewed by the Commission no later than at its annual Session in 2019*”.

It applies to: (para. 1) “*all fishing vessels targeting tuna and tuna like species in the Indian Ocean of 24 meters overall length and over, and those under 24 meters if they fish outside the EEZ of their flag State, within the IOTC area of competence*” and expects involved CPCs to reduce their catch of yellowfin tuna as follows:

- **Purse seine:** 15% reduction from 2014 catch levels if these were exceeding **5,000 MT**
- **Longline:** 10% reduction from 2014 catch levels if these were exceeding **5,000 MT**
- **Gillnet:** 10% reduction from 2014 catch levels if these were exceeding **2,000 MT**
- **Other gears:** 5% reduction from 2014 catch levels if these were exceeding **5,000 MT**
- **Artisanal fisheries:** No action taken: (para. 11) “*The Commission shall, based on the improved artisanal fishery data and the assessment of the state and impact of the artisanal fishery on the yellowfin stocks, take appropriate measures on the management of the artisanal yellowfin tuna fishery, at its Commission meeting in 2018*”

Furthermore, Resolution 16/01 also states that: (para. 8) “*CPCs shall monitor the yellowfin tuna catches from their vessels in conformity with Resolution 15/01 “On the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence” and Resolution 15/02 “Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)” and will provide a summary of most-recent yellowfin catches for the consideration of the IOTC Compliance Committee.”*

Considering the statements above, Resolution 16/01 is posing two distinct challenges to CPCs:

- First and foremost, CPCs should properly identify their 2014 yellowfin catch levels to be used as baseline, considering the vessels and fisheries target of the resolution;
- Additionally, CPCs should ensure that yellowfin catches are effectively monitored, in order to provide up-to-date summary of the most recent catch levels as requested.

Current status

Total catches submitted to the Secretariat by CPCs are spatially aggregated by large areas (Eastern or Western Indian Ocean) and by fleet/gear, with little information about vessel sizes that might be used to determine the catch, separated by eligible/ non-eligible components.

With the assumption that the industrial fleets (purse seiners and longliners) from the distant water fishing nations are all subject to the terms of the Resolution, the determination of the catch limits applicable to other fleets should be the responsibility of the concerned CPCs.

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Based on the [reported total catches available for 2014](#) and on the consolidated knowledge of the fisheries specific to the involved coastal countries, the current status by fleet and fishery for what concerns Resolution 16/01 has been assessed as follows:

Reported data			Resolution 16/01		
Flag	Gear	YFT catches 2014 (MT)	Threshold (MT)	Reduction %	New limit (2017+)
European Union	PS	91,409	5,000	15	77,698
Indonesia	LL	16,714	5,000	10	15,043
Indonesia	PS	5,452	5,000	15	4,634
India	GILL	5,153	2,000	10	4,638
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	GILL	41,326	2,000	10	37,193
Korea, Republic of	PS	8,847	5,000	15	7,520
Sri Lanka	LL	16,985	5,000	10	15,287
Sri Lanka	GILL	2,867	2,000	10	2,580
Maldives	BB	18,481	5,000	5	17,557
Maldives	HL	30,246	5,000	5	28,734
Mauritius	PS	5,186	5,000	15	4,408
Pakistan	GILL	7,533	2,000	10	6,780
Seychelles	PS	23,449	5,000	15	19,932
Taiwan, Province of China	LL	12,285	5,000	10	11,057
Tanzania	GILL	3,210	2,000	10	2,889

It is possible that some of the fleets listed above might contain vessels under 24 metres overall length (LOA) fishing only in the EEZ of the flag State. However, no information has been received by the Secretariat on the catches separated by component.

Required actions

2014 Yellowfin catches breakdown

IOTC Circular 2016-077 was already submitted, inviting all CPCs with fleets that might need a separate 2014 catch report to submit the information requested at their earliest convenience, so that it could be used to complete the table of catch limits to apply for each gear and CPC.

Acknowledging that some of the involved CPCs may not have this information readily available, the WPDCS expects that discussions are taken during its 12th session to assess, among participant CPCs, to what extent and by which CPC the revised catches breakdown could already be provided in the shortest term as possible.

All other CPCs that are currently unable to report the yellowfin tuna catches breakdown for 2014 should be aware that according to Resolution 16/01 text (para. 12), the specified catch limits should become effective as of January 1st 2017.

Monitoring of yellowfin tuna catches

The second challenge that calls for proper action by all involved CPCs is the monitoring of current and future yellowfin tuna catches throughout the year, with the goal of determining when the catch limit is reached by their fleets.

Although the Resolution text (para. 8) is recalling Resolution 15/01 and 15/02 - that already specify the extent and frequency of mandatory data submissions to the Secretariat - it is expected that additional support may come from a new project specifically incorporated in the revised WPDCS program of work.

This should be aimed at supporting CPCs, to the extent possible, in the improvement and extension of their data collection and reporting processes, to ensure that countries subject to yellowfin catch limitations could assess, in a timely manner, whether the set limit is about to be exceeded during the course of the year.

The existing IOTC nominal catches data collection form, currently available for download from the IOTC website, is only partially suited to accommodate for the required information: while it allows the submission of data with a resolution up to a quarter of a year, its current format does not yet include proper fields for the specification of the different catch components.

The supporting project and its plan of action should be driven by the need of those CPCs that might require an update of their statistical systems, ensuring that efforts and resources are mobilized accordingly and only when strictly necessary.

References

- ❖ [IOTC-2016-WPDCS12-INF01](#) – *Resolution 16-01 – On interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence.* 20th Session of the IOTC Commission, La Reunion, France, May 2016.
- ❖ [IOTC-2016-WPTT18-DATA03](#) – *Nominal catches per fleet, year, gear, IOTC area and species.* 17th Session of the Working Party on Tropical Tunas, Victoria, Seychelles, November 2016.
- ❖ G Moreno and M Herrera. [IOTC-2013-SC16-INF04](#) – *Estimation of fishing capacity by tuna fishing fleets in the Indian Ocean.* 16th Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee, Busan, Republic of Korea, December 2013.