
OUTCOMES OF THE 21st SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 1 NOVEMBER 2017

PURPOSE

To inform the Scientific Committee (SC) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 21st Session, held from 22 to 26 May 2017, specifically relating to the IOTC science process.

BACKGROUND

At the 21st Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 8 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (consisting of 8 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), as detailed below:

Resolutions

- Resolution 17/01 *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC Area of Competence.*
- Resolution 17/02 *Working party on the implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM).*
- Resolution 17/03 *On establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the IOTC Area of competence.*
- Resolution 17/04 *On a ban on discards of Bigeye tuna, Skipjack tuna, Yellowfin tuna, and non-targeted species caught by vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence.*
- Resolution 17/05 *On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by the IOTC.*
- Resolution 17/06 *On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels*
- Resolution 17/07. *On the prohibition to use large-scale driftnets in the IOTC Area.*
- Resolution 17/08 *Proposal for amendment of 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.*

Pursuant to Article IX.4 of the IOTC Agreement, the above mentioned Conservation and Management Measures shall become binding on Members, 120 days from the date of the notification communicated by the Secretariat, i.e., 3 October 2017.

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:

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 21st Session of the Commission, which have most relevance to the IOTC science process:

Resolution 17/01 On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC Area of Competence.

This Resolution introduces a scheme for reduction of catches of yellowfin (from 2014 levels), by fishery, for 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. This Resolution supersedes IOTC Resolution 16/01 *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock*.

Resolution 17/02 Working party on the implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM)

This Resolution establishes a permanent Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM) which shall act as an advisory body to the Commission via the Compliance Committee. The objective of the (WPICMM) is to (i) Alleviate the technical discussions, workload and time pressures on the Compliance Committee, and permit it to focus on higher level compliance implementation strategies in its work for the Commission; (ii) Enhance the technical capacity of CPCs to understand and implement IOTC Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs); and (iii) Prioritise implementation issues and develop operational standards for use by CPCs. This Resolution supersedes IOTC Resolution 16/12 *Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM)*.

Resolution 17/03 On establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the IOTC Area of competence.

This Resolution sets out rules and procedures for the maintenance and updating by the Commission of the system of lists of vessels considered to be involved in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities and which comprises:

- a) the Draft IOTC IUU Vessel List (Draft IUU Vessel List);
- b) the Provisional IOTC IUU Vessel List (Provisional IUU Vessel List); and
- c) the IOTC IUU Vessel List (IUU Vessel List).

Resolution 11/03 *On Establishing A List Of Vessels Presumed To Have Carried Out Illegal, Unreported And Unregulated Fishing In The IOTC Area* is superseded by this Resolution.

Resolution 17/04 On a ban on discards of Bigeye tuna, Skipjack tuna, Yellowfin tuna, and non-targeted species caught by vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence.

This Resolution requires all CPCs purse seine vessels to retain on board and then land all bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, and yellowfin tuna caught and the following non-targeted species or species group; other tunas, rainbow runner, dolphinfish, triggerfish, billfish, wahoo, and barracuda, except fish considered unfit for human consumption. This Resolution supersedes 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 17/05 On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by the IOTC

This resolution prohibits the landing, retention on-board, transshipment and carrying of shark fins which are not naturally attached to the shark carcass until the first point of landing. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 05/05 *concerning the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by the IOTC*.

Resolution 17/06 On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels

This Resolution provides for the observer monitoring of all transshipment activities by large-scale longline vessels in the IOTC area of competence, and the use of authorised Carrier vessels on an IOTC register. Resolution 14/06 *On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels* is superseded by this Resolution.

Resolution 17/07 On the prohibition to use large-scale driftnets in the IOTC Area

This Resolution prohibits the use of large scale drift nets on the high seas within the IOTC area of competence. “Large-scale driftnets” are defined as gillnets or other nets or a combination of nets that are more than 2.5 kilometres in length

whose purpose is to enmesh, entrap, or entangle fish by drifting on the surface of, or in, the water column. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 12/12 *to prohibit the use of large-scale driftnets on the high seas in the IOTC area.*

Resolution 17/08 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 sets a limit of 350 instrumented buoys to be used by a purse seine vessel at any one time, a requirement for a FAD management plan to be implemented by each vessel, details of catch reporting from FAD sets and restrictions on FAD designs to reduce entanglement of non-target species. Resolution 15/08 *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* is superseded by this Resolution.

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 Mobula and Manta rays caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC Area of competence.*

(Para. 36) The Commission **AGREED** to defer IOTC–2017–S21–PropC *On the conservation of Mobula and Manta rays caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC Area of competence.* Three CPCs did not agree with this proposal. Those CPCs noted that there was no scientific recommendation from the SC to support this proposal and that there were practical difficulties associated with avoiding Mobula and manta rays during setting of the purse seine nets. Furthermore, the proposed measure also needed to consider the impact of others such as gillnets and longlines. These matters were not resolved during the session. One CPC highlighted the need for data to be collected and submitted to the SC.

2) *Working party on socio-economic aspect of the fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence.*

(Para. 119) The Commission **AGREED** to defer IOTC–2017–S21–PropG *Working party on socio-economic aspect of the fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence* (Seychelles). The Commission noted the dearth of information available on the social and economic aspects of tuna fisheries in general, and expressed its desire to begin to collect relevant social and economic information, and use it when both developing and evaluating IOTC management measures. To this end the Commission **REQUESTED** the Secretariat to implement a scoping study to identify what types of social and economic data are most relevant to CPCs and IOTC, and how these data can be obtained. This is expected to include information about the past and present socio-economic conditions and indicators in IOTC fisheries of CPCs including *inter alia* the socio-economic contribution to the fisheries, respective economic dependence on fish stocks, economic and social importance of the fishery, contribution to national food security needs, domestic consumption, income from exports and employment.

3) *Consideration of management measures related to Billfish*

(Para. 41) The Commission **NOTED** that IOTC–2017–S21–PropJ *On the conservation and management of IOTC Billfish* was withdrawn. There was only limited agreement with this proposal, even after a gear or management-based approach was explored. Some CPCs highlighted that implementation and effectiveness of this measure could be limited due to billfish being taken as bycatch by many CPCs; furthermore some billfish species are difficult to identify. Some CPCs expressed their concern that the proposal could set an unacceptable precedent for allocation by seeking to cap catches.

4) *On the conservation and management of IOTC Kawakawa, Longtail Tuna and Spanish Mackerel*

(Para. 38) The Commission **NOTED** that IOTC–2017–S21–PropL *On the conservation and management of IOTC Kawakawa, Longtail Tuna and Spanish Mackerel* was withdrawn. There was only limited agreement with this proposal,

due largely to the uncertainty on the status of the stocks as a result of a general lack of data on catches, as well as concern by one CPC that the proposal could set an unacceptable precedent for allocation by seeking to cap catches. The Commission encouraged CPCs to improve the data collection and submission. The Commission encouraged Coastal States catching neritic tunas to propose and present to next year's Commission meeting possible management measures to recover the over-exploited IOTC neritic stocks, in response to the recommendation of the SC.

5) *Consideration of management measures related to all species*

(Para. 42) The Commission **AGREED** to defer IOTC-2017-S21-PropN *On the Allocation of Fishing Opportunities for IOTC species*. This proposal included allocation principles and their criteria, that received support of the majority of coastal States. Some CPCs noted their concerns with elements of both the procedure and substance of the proposal. In particular, that the technical elements of the proposal were not discussed by the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria. There was debate on the extent to which the proposal reflected international legal principles.

(Para. 43) The invited experts informed the Commission that the distant-water fishing fleets they represent also shared the concerns of the CPCs as mentioned above.

(Para. 44) The Commission **AGREED** to continue its deliberations on allocation according to the following plan: (1) Feedback by CPCs on the latest version of IOTC-2017-S21-PropN is to be received by the IOTC Secretariat within 40 days of the end of S21, then to be provided to the proponents of proposal; (2) The Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC) will meet as soon as possible, preferably within three (3) months, to continue its deliberations on, inter alia, the above proposal; and (4) The IOTC Secretariat to consider requesting FAO legal support for the TCAC meeting.

(Para. 45) The coastal States in support of the proposal noted their preference for this proposal to be the basis for the discussions on allocation during the next TCAC meeting.

(Para. 46) The Commission noted the generous offer from South Africa to host the TCAC and TCPR meetings in the 3rd or 4th week of October 2017, with the final dates to be confirmed (after taking into account the existing commitments CPCs might have).

Requests from the Commission

Finally, at the 21st Session of the Commission, Members made several comments regarding the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee, which participants are asked to **NOTE** (extracts from IOTC–2017–S21-R):

1. The Commission noted the status summaries (2011-2015) for species of tuna and tuna-like species under the IOTC mandate, as well as other species impacted by IOTC fisheries (Appendix 6) and considered the recommendations made by the SC19 in its 2016 report (IOTC–2016–SC19–R, Appendix XXXVII) 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 (S21) 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 (para 22).

Pilot project for the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme

2. The Commission recalled that in 2016 it adopted Resolution 16/04 On the implementation of a pilot project in view of promoting the Regional Observer Scheme of IOTC and requested the Secretariat to develop a comprehensive plan for a Regional Observer Scheme Pilot project, as part of a long-term, holistic strategy for supporting the implementation of the Regional Observer Scheme (para. 48).
3. The Commission noted the presentation on the pilot project given by the Chair of the Scientific Committee and **ENDORSED** the framework as outlined in IOTC-2017-S21-10 (para. 49).
4. Furthermore the Commission accepted that the Project Steering Committee will be required to advise the Secretariat on a range of critical matters relating to the implementation of the project (para.50).
5. The Commission encouraged CPCs, especially those that are likely to be participating in and benefitting directly from the project, to support the initiative further with co-funding. The Commission also **AGREED**

that project activities would begin with the current funding available and that a budget for subsequent phases be prepared for the S22 (para. 51).

6. The Commission **REQUESTED** nominations from members that want to participate in the Pilot Project Steering Committee to be sent to the Secretariat (para 52).

Harvest control rules

7. The Commission **AGREED** that when establishing a catch limit for skipjack tuna using the Harvest Control Rule (HCR) adopted in Resolution 16/02, the following procedure will be applied: after the review of the assessment of skipjack tuna by the SC, the result of the assessment will be used by the SC in the calculation of a catch limit using the adopted HCR. The Secretariat will then notify to CPC's of the new catch limit for skipjack tuna that will apply for 2018 (para. 56).

Review of incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries

8. The Commission acknowledged that there was little information available in 2016 for the SC to fully review the effectiveness of the mitigation measures outlined in Resolution 12/06, and **AGREED** to extend the due date until such a time that more information is available (para. 140).

MSE schedule of work

9. The Commission noted the presentation by Australia on the schedule of work for the development of management procedures for key species in the IOTC Area (IOTC-2017-S21-14). The schedule provides information on when and how the Commission ought to be engaged in the management procedures process, and was developed with inputs from CPC's, relevant IOTC working parties, the Scientific Committee, and uses, as its basis, the work plan of the Scientific Committee (para. 58).
10. The Commission **ENDORSED** the schedule that was revised during S21 (provided in Appendix 9), noting it is a 'living document' to guide the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies in the future. The Commission also **REQUESTED** that a budget for implementation of the schedule be reviewed by the SCAF in 2018 (para. 59).

Report of the 21st Session of the IOTC

The report of the 21st Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available on the IOTC website.

<http://www.iotc.org/sites/default/files/documents/2017/07/IOTC-2017-S21-RE.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Scientific Committee:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2017–SC20–03 which outlined the main outcomes of the 21st 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 8 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) adopted at the 21st Session of the Commission (consisting of 8 Resolutions and 0 Recommendation).