



ON A REGIONAL OBSERVER SCHEME

SUBMITTED BY: European Union

Explanatory memorandum

Resolution 11/04 requires CPCs to have observers on at least 5% of the number of operations/sets for each gear type by the fleet of each CPC while fishing in the IOTC Area of Competence for vessels of 24 meters overall length and over, and under 24 meters if they fish outside their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

However, several scientific studies and IOTC SC (14th session of the SC) suggest that sampling coverages of only 5 % of the number of operations/sets for each gear type is insufficient to provide reasonable estimates of total bycatch and the by-catch of common species.

Taking into consideration several IOTC resolutions, including resolution 18/01 On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence, a significant increase of observer coverage is needed to ensure a better understanding over the activities taking place on board fishing vessels such as a stronger reporting of catch, by-catch and discards.

Given the successes of Electronic Monitoring System (EMS) in other oceans and fisheries and the difficulties of some fleets and/or gears to implement an onboard observer scheme, the possibility of developing the use of EMS in the IOTC area of competence should be encourage, also taking into account, and considering resolution of Resolution 16/04 On the implementation of a pilot project in view of promoting the regional observer scheme of IOTC.

Finally, at its 20th session, the Scientific Committee recommended that on the next revision of Resolution 11/04 On a Regional Observer Scheme, the submission of a report after each trip should be amended to request the submission of data in an electronic format suitable for automated data extraction (including historic data) with a given deadline so that information from multiple trips can be provided.

The EU therefore considers that increasing observer coverage from current levels would enhance the provision of scientific data to improve robustness of scientific advice and propose the relevant amendments to Resolution 11/04.

Keywords: Regional Observer Scheme, Scientific Observer, Electronic Monitoring System

RESOLUTION XX/XX
ON A REGIONAL OBSERVER SCHEME

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the need to increase the scientific information, in particular to provide the IOTC Scientific Committee working material in order to improve the management of the tuna and tuna-like species fished in the Indian Ocean;

REITERATING the responsibilities of flag States to ensure that their vessels conduct their fishing activities in a responsible manner, fully respecting IOTC Conservation and Management Measures;

CONSIDERING the need for action to ensure the effectiveness of the IOTC objectives;

CONSIDERING the obligation of all IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (hereinafter CPCs) to fully comply with the IOTC Conservation and Management Measures;

AWARE of the necessity for sustained efforts by CPCs to ensure the enforcement of IOTC's Conservation and Management Measures, and the need to encourage Non-Contracting Parties (NCPs) to abide by these measures;

UNDERLINING that the adoption of this measure is intended to help support the implementation of Conservation and Management Measures as well as scientific research for tuna and tuna-like species;

CONSIDERING the provisions set forth in Resolution 10/04 *On A Regional Observer Scheme* ~~[superseded by Resolution 11/04, then by Resolution 19/xx]~~, adopted by the Commission;

CONSIDERING Resolution 16/04 On the implementation of a pilot project in view of promoting the regional observer scheme of IOTC;

CONSIDERING Resolution 18/06 On Establishing a Programme for Transshipment by Large-Scale Fishing Vessels;

~~CONSIDERING the deliberations of the 12th Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee held in Victoria, Seychelles from 30 November to 4 December 2009~~ FURTHER CONSIDERING the deliberation of the 21st Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee held in Seychelles, from 3 to 7 December 2018;

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

Objective

1. The objective of the IOTC ~~Regional Observer Scheme~~ Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) shall be to collect verified catch data and other scientific data related to the fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species in the IOTC area of competence.

Observer Scheme

~~1. In order to improve the collection of scientific data, at least 5 % of the number of operations/sets for each gear type by the fleet of each CPC while fishing in the IOTC area of competence of 24 meters overall length and over, and under 24 meters if they fish outside their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) shall be covered by this observer scheme. For vessels under 24 meters if they fish outside their EEZ, the above mentioned coverage should be achieved progressively by January 2013.~~

2. CPCs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag operating in the IOTC area of competence comply with the following obligations:

a) all purse seine vessels shall ensure at least 20% observer coverage of all fishing trips by 1st of January 2021, and 100% observer coverage by 1st January 2025. The observer coverage can be supported either by a human observer or by means of an Electronic Monitoring System (EMS), with a minimum level of 20% human observer coverage.

- b) all supply or support vessels of 24 meters overall length and over, and under 24 meters if they operate outside their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), shall ensure 20% observer coverage of all fishing trips by 1st of January 2021, and of 100% by 1st January 2025. The observer coverage can be supported either by a human observer or by means of an EMS.
- c) all other fishing vessels (longline, gillnet and any other gear) of 24 meters overall length and over, and under 24 meters if they fish outside their EEZ, shall ensure 20% of observer coverage by 1st of January 2021.
3. Before its adoption by the Commission, CPCs are encouraged to use the EMS standards for the purse seine fisheries presented in IOTC-2016-SC19-15 and agreed by the Scientific Committee. The Scientific Committee shall continue developing IOTC minimum standards for the implementation of an EMS for the longline fleets and the gillnet fleets to be adopted by the Commission by 2021 at the latest.
4. All human observers referred to in paragraph 2 shall be IOTC recognised observers in line with the IOTC ROS Observer Manual. CPCs shall provide a list of observers to the IOTC Secretariat constituting the basis for the development of a regional pool of observers trained according to IOTC standards who may be called upon by other flag states. Each observer shall be allocated an IOTC registration number that must be included on reported data.
- ~~2.5.~~ When purse seiners are carrying an observer¹ as stated in paragraph ~~2~~4, this observer shall also monitor the catches at unloading to identify the composition ~~of bigeye~~-tuna catches. The requirement for the observer to monitor catches at unloading is not applicable to CPCs already having a sampling scheme, with at least the coverage set out in paragraph 2.
- ~~3.6.~~ The number of the artisanal fishing vessels landings shall also be monitored at the landing place by field samplers. The indicative level of the coverage of the artisanal fishing vessels should progressively increase towards 5% of the total levels of vessel activity (i.e. total number of vessel trips or total number of vessels active). ~~Artisanal fishing vessels landings shall also be monitored at the landing place by field samplers². The indicative level of the coverage of the artisanal fishing vessels should progressively increase to 5 % of the total levels of vessel activity (i.e. total number of vessel trips or total number of active vessels) by 2021.~~
- 4.7. CPCs shall:
- Have the primary responsibility to obtain qualified observers. CPCs may choose to use either deployed national or non-national of the flag State of the vessel on which they are deployed;
 - ~~Endeavour~~ Ensure that the minimum level of coverage is met ~~and that the observed vessels are a representative sample of the gear types active in their fleet;~~
 - Take all necessary measures to ensure that observers are able to carry out their duties in a competent and safe manner;
 - Endeavour to ensure that the observers alternate vessels between their assignments. ~~Observers are not to perform duties, other than those described in paragraphs 10 and 11 below~~ Observers will perform duties described in paragraphs 5, 12, 13 and 14 below. If observers are entrusted with complementary tasks by the relevant CPC fisheries research institutes, this shall in no way affect their performance on the above-mentioned duties;
 - Ensure that the vessel on which an observer is placed shall provide suitable food and lodging during the observer's deployment at the same level as the officers, where possible. Vessel masters shall ensure

¹ Observer: a person who collects information on board fishing vessels. Observer programmes can be used for quantifying species composition of target species, bycatch, by-products and dead discards, collecting tag returns, etc.

² Field sampler: a person who collects information on land during the unloading of fishing vessels. Field sampling programmes can be used for quantifying catch, retained bycatch, collecting tag returns, etc.

that all necessary cooperation is extended to observers in order for them to carry out their duties safely including providing access, as required, to the retained catch, and catch which is intended to be discarded.

- ~~5.8.~~ The cost of the observer scheme in paragraph 2 ~~and 3~~ shall be met by each CPC.
- ~~6.9.~~ The sampling scheme referred in paragraph 4 ~~will 6~~ might be partially covered by the Commission's accumulated funds and voluntary contribution on a provisional basis. CPCs and the Commission will shall nevertheless consider alternatives for the financing of this scheme.
- ~~7.10.~~ If the coverage referred in paragraphs 2 ~~and 3~~ is not met by a CPC, any other CPC may, subject to the consent of the CPC who has not met its coverage, place an observer to fulfil the tasks defined in the paragraphs ~~1 and 2-5, 12, 13 and 14 below~~ until that CPC provides a replacement or the target coverage level is met.
- ~~8.11.~~ CPCs shall provide to the IOTC Executive Secretary ~~and the IOTC Scientific Committee~~ annually a report of ~~the number of vessels monitored and the coverage achieved by gear type in accordance with the provisions of this Resolution. describing protocols supporting their observer programmes and sampling schemes mentioned in paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 6, the number of fishing vessels and of operations, sets or trips sampled, the metrics used to determine the observer coverage by gear type, as well as the coverage achieved by gear type in accordance with the provisions of this Resolution. The IOTC Executive Secretary will provide the Scientific Committee with an abridged consolidated version resuming this information.~~
- ~~9.12.~~ Observers shall:
- a) Record and report fishing activities, verify positions of the vessel;
 - b) Observe and estimate catches as far as possible with a view to identifying catch composition, by-catches and monitoring discards including their fate (e.g. releases alive), ~~by-catches~~ and size frequency;
 - c) Record the gear type, mesh size and attachments employed by the master;
 - d) Collect information to enable the cross-checking of entries made to the logbooks (species composition and quantities, live and processed weight and location, where available); and
 - e) Carry out such scientific work (for example, collecting samples), as requested by the IOTC Scientific Committee.
- ~~13.~~ When carrying their duty, observers shall follow the IOTC Regional Observers Scheme (ROS) Observer Manual, the IOTC Observer Trip Report Template, the IOTC Observer Forms and the IOTC Species identification cards. In addition, observers shall use the IOTC ROS Minimum Standard Data Fields developed by IOTC Scientific Committee.
- ~~14.~~ The observer shall, within 30 days of completion of each trip, provide a report to the CPCs of the vessel. If the vessel was fishing in the EEZ of a Coastal State, the part of the observer report covering fishing activities in the EEZ shall be also submitted to that Coastal State.
- ~~15.~~ The CPCs shall send within 150 days at the latest each report, as far as continuous flow of report from observer placed on the longline fleet is ensured, which is recommended to be provided with 1°x1° format to the IOTC Executive Secretary, who shall make the report available to the IOTC Scientific Committee upon request. In a case where the vessel is fishing in the EEZ of a coastal State, the report shall equally be submitted to that coastal State. Each CPC shall provide to the IOTC Executive Secretary annually observer data, following IOTC observer reporting templates and standards, for the previous year by 30 June.
- ~~16.~~ Such data shall be provided with 1°x1° and month and in an electronic format suitable for automated data extraction. The IOTC Executive Secretary shall make the reports available to the IOTC Scientific Committee upon request.

- ~~10~~.17. The confidentiality rules set out in the ~~Resolution 98/02 [superseded by Resolution 12/02]~~ Resolution 12/02 *Data confidentiality policy and procedures* for fine-scale data shall apply.
- ~~11~~.18. Field samplers shall monitor catches at the landing place with a view to estimating catch-at-size by type of boat, gear and species, or carry out such scientific work as requested by the IOTC Scientific Committee.
- ~~12~~.19. The funds available from the IOTC balance of funds may be used to support the implementation of this programme in developing States, notably the training of observers and field samplers.
- ~~13~~.20. ~~The elements of the Observer Scheme, notably those regarding its coverage, are subject to review and revision, as appropriate, for application in 2012 and subsequent years. Basing on the experience of other Tuna RFMOs, the IOTC Scientific Committee will elaborate an observer working manual, a template to be used for reporting (including minimum data fields) and a training program. The IOTC Scientific Committee and its working parties shall continue developing ROS programme standards and will continue to evaluate the validity of alternative data collection tools to human observers for the collection of the minimum standard data fields for small-scale fisheries.~~
- ~~14~~.21. This resolution is without prejudice Resolution 18/06 On Establishing a Programme for Transshipment by Large-Scale Fishing Vessels. Largescale tuna longline fishing vessels and carrier vessels authorised to receive transshipments from these vessels at sea shall respect the provisions to monitor transshipment at sea as laid down in Resolution 18/06.
- ~~15~~.22. This Resolution supersedes Resolution ~~10/04~~11/04 *On A Regional Observer Scheme*.