

OUTCOMES OF THE 23rd SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 03 OCTOBER 2019

PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 21st Working Party on Tropical Tunas (WPTT21) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 23rd Session, held from 17-21 June 2019, specifically relating to the work of the WPTT.

BACKGROUND

At the 23rd Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 7 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (consisting of 7 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), as detailed below:

Resolutions

- Resolution 19/01 *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC Area of competence.*
- Resolution 19/02 *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 19/03 *On the conservation of mobulid species caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence.*
- Resolution 19/04 *Concerning the IOTC Record of Vessels Authorised to operate in the IOTC Area of Competence.*
- Resolution 19/05 *On a ban on discards of bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna, and non-targeted species caught by purse seine vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence.*
- Resolution 19/06 *On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels.*
- Resolution 19/07 *On vessel chartering in the IOTC Area of Competence.*

These Conservation and Management Measures shall become binding 120 days after their distribution to all CPCs. The final versions of the newly agreed CMMs will be made available here in due course: <http://iotc.org/cmms>.

DISCUSSION

The Commission also made a number of general comments on the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee in 2018, which have relevance for the WPTT (IOTC–2019–S23–R):

Report of the 21st Session of the Scientific Committee (SC21)

(Para. 29): The Commission **NOTED** the stock status summaries 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 Scientific Committee to the Commission. The Commission **ENDORSED** the Scientific Committee's 2018 list of recommendations as its own.

On the status of tropical and temperate tunas

(Para. 36) The Commission **NOTED** that the current status of tropical and temperate tunas is as follows (full details are provided in Appendix 6):

Bigeye tuna

The stock status is determined on the basis of the 2016 assessment and other indicators presented in 2018. On the weight-of-evidence available, the bigeye tuna stock has been determined to be not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. If catch remains below the estimated MSY levels, then immediate management measures are not required.

Yellowfin tuna

On the weight-of-evidence available in 2018, the yellowfin tuna stock has been determined to be overfished and subject to overfishing. As a precautionary measure, the Commission should ensure that catches are reduced to

end overfishing and allow the SSB to recover to SSB _{MSY} levels. At this stage, specific catch limits are not provided.
Skipjack tuna Stock status is determined on the basis of the 2017 assessment and other indicators presented in 2018. On the weight-of-evidence available, the skipjack tuna stock has been determined to be not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. The Commission needs to ensure that catches of skipjack in the 2018–2020 period do not exceed the agreed limit.
Albacore tuna On the weight-of-evidence available, the albacore tuna stock has been determined to be not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. A precautionary approach to the management of albacore tuna should be applied by capping total catch levels to MSY levels (38,800 t).

(Para. 37) The Commission **NOTED** the uncertainty in the yellowfin tuna assessment and that the Scientific Committee had not recommended any concrete catch advice due to the uncertainty in the projections and the associated Kobe II strategy matrix (K2SM). The Commission was informed that uncertainty is inherent in all assessments, and is not specific to yellowfin tuna. The Commission **NOTED** that the Scientific Committee has developed a yellowfin tuna workplan which aims to address and reduce many of the uncertainties in the 2019 assessment. This is expected to result in the provision of more robust advice on stock status and catch forecasts for this species in the future.

(Para. 38) The Commission **NOTED** the considerable use of estimated data in the yellowfin tuna assessment due to the unavailability of data from CPCs, as is the case for all species. The Commission **URGED** all CPCs to improve their data collection and reporting.

Development of management procedures

Report of the Technical Committee on Management Procedures

Overview of the TCMP03 report

(Para. 65) The Commission **NOTED** the report (IOTC-2019-TCMP-03-R) from the 3rd meeting of the Technical Committee on Management Procedures (TCMP) and **ENDORSED** its recommendation.

(Para. 66) The Commission **NOTED** that further work is required on understanding the determination of stock status relative to Reference Points, and endorsed the TCMP request to form an ad-hoc working group to continue to work on this matter intersessionally in preparation for the TCMP in 2020.

(Para. 67) The Commission **NOTED** that a range of tuning criteria have been specified by the TCMP for the management procedures of key IOTC stocks (refer to Appendix V of the TCMP03 report). The Commission **NOTED** the success of the TCMP in engaging discussions on Management Procedures through the use of interactive tools.

10.2 Review of the need for a continuation of the TCMP

(Para. 68) The Commission **AGREED** that the TCMP should continue to meet in order to progress its work on management procedure matters and advise the Commission on management procedure-related issues, including MSE. The Commission also **AGREED** that while the TCMP should continue to educate participants on MSE processes, it should concentrate on advancing the development of Management Procedures for presentation to the Commission. To this end, capacity building should also continue intersessionally, and the Commission **REQUESTED** the Secretariat to explore possible external sources of funding to undertake this.

(Para. 69) The Commission **NOTED** that the management advice arising from the Yellowfin tuna management strategy evaluation was of concern, and if implemented would require major catch reductions to recover the stock. The Commission **AGREED** that more information on the options to reduce catches was required and **REQUESTED** the Scientific Committee and the TCMP to investigate the possibility of including an additional parameter, namely the reduction of juvenile catch, in future tunings of the management procedure in order to determine plausible ranges of juvenile catch reduction. If this parameter proves to be difficult to be included as a tuning criteria, it should be presented as a summary performance statistic. The Commission **REQUESTED** that the TCMP provide further advice on this issue in 2020.

The complete report of the 23rd Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available for download from the IOTC website: <https://www.iotc.org/meetings/23rd-session-indian-ocean-tuna-commission>

RECOMMENDATION

That the WPTT

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2019–WPTT21–04 which outlined the main outcomes of the 23rd Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPTT and **AGREE** to consider how best to provide the SC with the information it needs, in order to satisfy the Commission’s requests, throughout the course of the current WPTT meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** the 7 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) adopted at the 23rd Session of the Commission (consisting of 7 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), and in particular those Resolutions which have a direct impact on the work of the WPTT.