



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture

Ref: 2019/012856E

Ms Susan Imende  
IOTC Chairperson  
C/o Indian Ocean Tuna Commission  
PO Box 1011  
VICTORIA SEYCHELLES

*Susan*  
Dear Ms Imende

I refer to your letter of 21 June 2019 about Australia's outstanding compliance issues in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). Australia considers strengthening compliance with IOTC conservation and management measures fundamental for effective fisheries management and the integrity of the IOTC. Australia's responses to the matters set out in your letter are as follows:

Resolution 17/05 Submission of data regarding sharks – size frequency

As per previous advice, due to very low levels of effort in Australia's relevant fisheries, sampling is undertaken upon landing and is primarily focused on achieving effective sampling coverage for target species. Sharks are not a target species in these fisheries and Australia has a very low retained catch of sharks (many species cannot be landed and all live sharks must be released). Further, it is not practical to obtain size measurements of released sharks, as best practice guidelines for their release is to not remove them from the water. As a result, Australia is unable to meet the relevant sampling coverage and is unable to provide size frequency data for sharks.

Resolution 11/04 Observer reports

Australia's electronic monitoring program provides accurate fisheries data and is used as a tool to collect and verify data from Australia's fishing activity within the IOTC Area. Australia acknowledges that electronic monitoring does not collect the full suite of data required by the IOTC under Resolution 11/04. However, as a member of the IOTC Australia recognises that timely, accurate and verifiable data is important in supporting management decisions and considers that the electronic monitoring data provided to the IOTC supports this broader objective. Supplementary programs to efficiently collect the outstanding data fields are currently being considered.

My sincere thanks to you, as well as the Compliance Committee Chair and members, for your ongoing efforts to strengthen compliance with IOTC measures.

Yours sincerely

Melissa Brown  
Assistant Secretary  
Fisheries Branch  
17 August 2019

cc: Dr Chris O'Brien, Executive Secretary, IOTC