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## OUTCOMES OF THE 22<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 25 SEPTEMBER 2020

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### PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 11<sup>th</sup> Working Party on Methods (WPM11) of the recommendations arising from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Scientific Committee (SC22) held in December 2019, specifically relating to the work of the WPM.

### BACKGROUND

At the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the SC, the SC noted and considered the recommendations made by the WPM in 2019 that included updates on the MSE process for various IOTC species.

Based on the recommendations arising from the WPM10, the SC22 adopted a set of recommendations, provided in [Appendix A](#) of this paper.

The recommendations contained in [Appendix A](#) will be provided to the Commission for consideration at its 24<sup>th</sup> Session to be held in November 2020. A separate paper, IOTC–2020–WPM11–04 addresses the responses and actions of the Commission from its 23<sup>rd</sup> session in 2019.

In addition, the SC22 reviewed and endorsed a Program of Work for the WPM, including a revised MSE schedule, as detailed in [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#) respectively. A separate paper (IOTC–2020–WPM11–07) will outline the review and development process for a *Program of Work* for the WPM for the next five years.

### DISCUSSION

In addition to the recommendations outlined in [Appendix A](#), [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#), the following extracts from the SC22 Report (IOTC–2019–SC22–R) are provided here for the consideration and action of the WPM11:

#### *Report of the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Party on Methods (WPM10)*

137. The SC noted the report of the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Party on Methods (IOTC–2019–WPM10–R), including the consolidated list of recommendations provided as an appendix to the report. The meeting was attended by 37 participants (cf. 23 in 2018), including 7 recipients of the MPF (cf. 2 in 2018).
138. The SC **NOTED** the good progress made in Management Strategy Evaluations exercises for IOTC species in 2019. The SC **NOTED** the results of the MSE development were extensively discussed and endorsed by TCMP and Commission in 2019.
139. The SC **NOTED** that the 8th workshop on MSE of IOTC WPM Scientists was held in ISPRA at the European Joint Research Centre in March 2019. The SC **NOTED** that the expert MSE workshops were very constructive and effective in discussing technical matters and the outcomes of the meetings were reflected in the MSE development.

#### *Management Strategy Evaluation Progress*

140. The SC **NOTED** paper IOTC–2019–SC22–14 which provided a proposal on a management procedure for yellowfin tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence.
141. The SC **ENCOURAGED** the proponents of the management procedure to resubmit the proposal to the TCMP and the Commission in 2020 for their consideration, with a view to adoption of a management procedure for yellowfin tuna by 2021 as per the proposed updated schedule of work in paper IOTC-2019-SC22-15.
142. The SC **NOTED** paper IOTC–2019–SC22–15 which provided an updated schedule of work for the development of management procedures for key species in the IOTC Area. The SC **AGREED** to the schedule of work ([Appendix 6](#)), noting it is a living document to provide an indicative timeframe to guide the IOTC MSE development and may subject to change. The SC **ENCOURAGED** the schedule to be resubmitted to TCMP and Commission for final endorsement.

#### *Albacore MSE*

143. The SC **NOTED** that the 2019 albacore stock assessment results fall outside the range of uncertainty captured by the current operating model (OM) and therefore reconditioning of the OM is required based on the 2019 assessment. The SC **AGREED** that if the proposed update of the assessment can be achieved in 2020, the new OMs may be conditioned on the new assessment.

#### ***Skipjack tuna MSE***

144. The SC **NOTED** that catches of skipjack in 2018 and 2019 have both exceeded the catch limit established under Resolution 16/02 using the harvest control rule (HCR). The SC recalled that Resolution 16/02 included a provision to review the skipjack tuna harvest control rule. The SC **NOTED** that an MSE expert has been contracted to undertake review of the skipjack tuna harvest control rule with a view towards developing the management procedures. It is anticipated that current HCR will be replaced by the alternative MP subject the result of the review.

#### ***Yellowfin tuna MSE***

145. The SC **NOTED** the attempt to conduct a full assessment of the yellowfin tuna has not been achieved this year and the current yellowfin OM is based on the 2018 yellowfin assessment. However, the SC **AGREED** that further OM development may take into consideration the progress made so far in addressing the yellowfin workplan.

#### ***Bigeye tuna MSE***

146. The SC **NOTED** that the 2019 bigeye assessment results are more pessimistic than in previous assessments and that there were changes in the fishery characteristics, which are likely to have an impact on the evaluation of the management procedures performance. The SC **AGREED** that the bigeye OMs may need reconditioning on the new assessment.

#### ***Swordfish MSE***

147. The SC **NOTED** that the initial OM conditioning and preliminary testing of MP performance have been started. The SC **ACKNOWLEDGED** the good progress made in the MSE exercises for swordfish.

#### ***Stock status guide and other business***

148. The SC **NOTED** that many CPCs have regularly engaged in data preparation activities for IOTC stock assessment, such as CPUE standardizations; however, the level of their direct involvement in the assessment modelling has been relatively limited. The SC considered it to be a top priority to increase the level of participation of CPC scientists in the stock assessment process. The Secretariat informed the SC that specialized workshops have been held to build capacity amongst national scientists on fishery modelling techniques (e.g. CPUE standardizations, data-limited methods). The SC **NOTED** that the practice of stock assessment is highly technical in nature and requires years of experience to develop the necessary skills. As such, recent capacity building activities coordinated by IOTC have focused on enabling scientists to improve their understanding of stock assessment methodologies and outputs, with a view to increasing and further developing the skills and experiences to perform the actual assessments with ongoing training.
149. The SC **NOTED** the current research priority for neritic tunas is for CPUE standardisations and improvement of the stock assessment methods. The SC **SUGGESTED** that MSE framework can also be developed in the future to provide management advice for neritic tuna.
150. The SC **NOTED** that some CPCs are well advanced in the assessment and management of neritic tuna species in their coastal waters. The SC **ENCOURAGED** these CPCs to share their experience at the relevant IOTC working parties. The SC **AGREED** that improved knowledge and understanding of the stock structure of neritic species will enable the development of more appropriate assessment and management methods for these species.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the WPM:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2020–WPM11–03 which outlined the main outcomes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Scientific Committee, specifically related to the work of the WPM.
- 2) **CONSIDER** how best to progress these issues at the present meeting.

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A:** Consolidated set of recommendations of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Scientific Committee to the Commission, relevant to the Working Party on Methods.

**Appendix B:** Schedule of MSE for the WPM (2020–2024).

## APPENDIX A

**CONSOLIDATED SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 22<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (2 – 6 DECEMBER 2019) TO THE COMMISSION RELEVANT TO THE WORKING PARTY ON METHODS**

*Extract of the Report of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Scientific Committee  
(IOTC–2019–SC22–R; Appendix 38, Pages 200–204)*

**GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION**

**Summary discussion of matters common to Working Parties (capacity building activities – stock assessment course; connecting science and management, etc.)**

***Invited Expert(s) at the WP meetings***

SC22.18 (para. 104) Given the importance of external independent review for working party meetings, the SC **RECOMMENDED** the Commission continues to allocate sufficient budget for invited scientific experts to be regularly invited to scientific working party meetings.

***Meeting participation fund***

SC22.19 (para. 105) The SC reiterated its **RECOMMENDATION** that the IOTC Rules of Procedure (2014), for the administration of the Meeting Participation Fund be modified so that applications are due not later than 60 days, and that the full Draft paper be submitted no later than 45 days before the start of the relevant meeting. The aim is to allow the Selection Panel to review the full paper rather than just the abstract, and provide guidance on areas for improvement, as well as the suitability of the application to receive funding using the IOTC MPF. The earlier submission dates would also assist with visa application procedures for candidates.

***IOTC species identification guides: Tuna and tuna-like species***

SC22.20 (para. 106) The SC reiterated its **RECOMMENDATION** that the Commission allocates budget towards continuing the translation and printing of the IOTC species ID guides so that hard copies of the identification cards can continue to be printed as many CPCs scientific observers, both on board and port, still do not have smart phone technology/hardware access and need to have hard copies on board.

***Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the SC and its subsidiary bodies***

SC22.21 (para. 107) The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission note and endorse the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons for the SC and its subsidiary bodies for the coming years, as provided in [Appendix 7](#).

***IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL OBSERVER SCHEME***

SC22.22 (para. 127) The SC **ACKNOWLEDGED** that estimation of ROS coverage for the purse seine fleets is adversely impacted by the lack of uniformity in reporting effort data to the IOTC Secretariat, and **AGREED** that this information, which is particularly useful to assess the performance of Resolution 11/04, should be further standardized. As such, the SC **RECOMMENDED** that all purse seine fleets reporting effort as fishing hours or fishing days begin to submit this information as ‘number of sets’ instead, in particular when fulfilling the reporting requirements of Resolution 15/02.

***PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW PANEL***

SC22.23 (para. 133) The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission note the updates on progress regarding Resolution 16/03, as provided at [Appendix 33](#).

***PROGRAM OF WORK AND SCHEDULE OF WORKING PARTY AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEETINGS***

***Consultants***

SC22.24 (para. 150) Noting the highly beneficial and relevant work done by IOTC stock assessment consultants in previous years, the SC **RECOMMENDED** that the engagement of consultants be continued for each coming year based on the Program of Work. Consultants will be hired to supplement the skill set available within the IOTC Secretariat and CPCs.

**REVIEW OF THE DRAFT, AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE 22<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

SC22.25 (para. 160) The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission consider the consolidated set of recommendations arising from SC22, provided at [Appendix 38](#).

## APPENDIX B

### SCHEDULE OF STOCK ASSESSMENTS FOR IOTC SPECIES AND SPECIES OF INTEREST FROM 2020–2024, AND FOR OTHER WORKING PARTY PRIORITIES

The SC **NOTED** that the WPM has selected five species for MSE (albacore, yellowfin, bigeye, skipjack and swordfish).  
At the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Commission:

#### Schedule of work for the development of management procedures for key species in the IOTC Area

*(Para. 58): 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. 59): 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.*

The WPM11 should note however that at the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the SC, a revised schedule was presented

*(Para 87) The SC **NOTED** paper IOTC–2019–SC22–15 which provided an updated schedule of work for the development of management procedures for key species in the IOTC Area. The SC **AGREED** to the schedule of work (Appendix 6), noting it is a living document to provide an indicative timeframe to guide the IOTC MSE development and may subject to change. The SC **ENCOURAGED** the schedule to be resubmitted to TCMP and Commission for final endorsement.*

The revised schedule is available in IOTC-2020-WPM11-04 as Appendix B: Schedule of Work for TCMP (Schedule of work for the development of management procedures for key species in the IOTC area) although it is still pending approval by the Commission.