



Sustainable Indian Ocean Tuna Initiative

A Fishery Improvement Project for the Indian Ocean Purse Seine Tuna Fishery
104 avenue du Président Kennedy, 75016 Paris, France
<https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/indian-ocean-tuna-purse-seine-sioti>

Position Paper for the 24th Session of the IOTC

The vessel owners and industry participants of **Sustainable Indian Ocean Tuna Initiative (SIOTI) FIP** submit this paper in support of tuna conservation and management efforts at the IOTC Commission meeting beginning on 2 November, 2020.

COVID-19 presents unprecedented economic and social impacts on the fishery sector in the Indian Ocean. However, we do not believe that these current circumstances should prevent the IOTC from taking action to ensure sustainable management of tuna stocks and marine ecosystems.

The priorities reflected here are included to help this fishery be eligible to meet the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard for certification. SIOTI's contributions to date include best-practice examples of how this fishery is working to achieve conservation outcomes in the IOTC.

2020 Priorities

Management measures for tropical tunas

The commission needs to take decisive action as soon as possible to end overfishing of yellowfin tuna and implement the agreed harvest control rule for skipjack to ensure the long-term sustainability of those resources.

- Adopt measures that will ensure that precautionary harvest strategies for tropical tunas, including biological reference points and well-defined harvest control rules are successfully implemented, enforced, and monitored.
- Improve the rebuilding strategy for Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna, starting by identifying actions that will solve the observed shortcomings of the current resolution and improve its compliance and effectiveness before eventually adopting new catch limits based on the latest stock status on YFT.
- Compliance must be considered as a means of ensuring that all resolutions related to management of tropical tunas are met and, in case CPCs do not comply, that proper sanctions are duly applied.
- Adopt measures to ensure that the catch limit for skipjack is maintained, and IOTC reinforces CPC compliance.
- Adopt multi-species management measures that address how the over-catch of one species impacts others.

Reduce environmental impacts

Concerted effort is needed to better monitor FAD usage and to establish a sound basis for FAD management, including improvement of materials used, their risk of entanglement, FAD limits and marking.

- Adopt strategies and incentives that promote a transition to fully non-entangling biodegradable FADs, if possible, within the timeframe established by *Resolution 19/02* and consider possible improvements in FAD-management, including the development of a FAD marking scheme.
- IOTC should adopt measures to reinforce compliance to current resolutions for ETP species and specifically for sharks as well as reporting for sea turtles and cetacean mortality.



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Effective and fair enforcement

Continue to strengthen the IOTC compliance assessment process to ensure that all CPCs are held accountable for their actions.

- Review IOTC transshipment regulation and adopt substantive improvements to curtail opportunities for IUU fishing, trafficking, and labour abuses.
- IOTC should strengthen Port State Measures for every CPC and specifically for transshipment operations in port.
- Adopt measures that ensure a strong compliance process and contribute to transparent, fair, and effective enforcement within the IOTC.

Data quality and quantity

Comprehensive fishing data is a critical component of stock evaluation, monitoring and management for sustainable tropical tuna fisheries.

- Significantly improve data reporting by all CPCs and for all gears, both for nominal catch and for catch at length data.
- Develop electronic reporting standards, such as e-logbooks.

Additional data collected by the scientific observer coverage (human or electronic) is also critical.

- Adopt measures to ensure onboard observer safety, and encourage a binding measure, such as an amendment to *Resolution 11/04*, to include observer safety at sea.
- Establish a progressive program to increase levels of scientific observer coverage (human and/or electronic) to 100% for all vessels longer than 24m. Such a program should also establish minimum standards and best practices in electronic monitoring.



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Summary of SIOTI Contributions to IOTC

- SIOTI position statements to the 22nd and 23rd Commission on approaches for increasing compliance with CMMs and on rebuilding of yellowfin tuna.
- Submitted several reports to IOTC scientific bodies concerning industry perceptions of harvest strategies and harvest control rules, alternative approaches to stock assessment, FAD management and the ecosystem approach to fisheries management.
- Contributed to significant improvement in the primary, secondary, and ETP species information available in the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) database through cooperation in entering historical data and providing technical support and trainings to roll out e-reporting tools in Seychelles and Mauritius from 2018-2019.