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## PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 22<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT AND SC CHAIRPERSON, 28 OCTOBER 2020

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### PURPOSE

To provide participants at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Scientific Committee (SC) with an update on the progress made in implementing the recommendations from the previous SC meeting, and to provide alternative recommendations for the consideration and potential endorsement by participants as appropriate given any progress.

### BACKGROUND

At the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the SC, participants agreed on a series of actions to be taken by participants, CPCs, and the IOTC Secretariat on a range of issues. The subsequent table developed and agreed to by the SC was endorsed at its December 2019 meeting.

### DISCUSSION

The Rules of Procedure of the Scientific Committee include the following seven core tasks, which are to be supported by the various Working Parties.

- a) recommend policies and procedures for the collection, processing, dissemination and analysis of fishery data;
- b) facilitate the exchange and critical review among scientists of information on research and operation of fisheries of relevance to the Commission;
- c) develop and coordinate cooperative research programmes involving Members of the Commission in support of fisheries management;
- d) assess and report to the Commission on the status of stocks of relevance to the Commission and the likely effects of further fishing and of different fishing patterns and intensities;
- e) formulate and report to the sub-commission, as appropriate, on recommendations concerning conservation, fisheries management and research, including consensus, majority and minority views;
- f) consider any matter referred to by the Commission;
- g) carry out other technical activities of relevance to the Commission.

Recalling that the SC, at its 16<sup>th</sup> Session adopted a set of reporting terminology SC16.07 (para. 23), which was subsequently endorsed by the Commission at its 18<sup>th</sup> Session in 2014 (S18, para 10), to further improve the clarity of information sharing from, and among the science bodies, the following two term levels should be noted when interpreting the Reports and [Appendix I](#) to this paper:

**Level 1:** From a subsidiary body of the Commission to the next level in the structure of the Commission:

**RECOMMENDED, RECOMMENDATION:** Any conclusion or request for an action to be undertaken, from a subsidiary body of the Commission (Committee or Working Party), which is to be formally provided to the next level in the structure of the Commission for its consideration/endorsement (e.g. from a Working Party to the Scientific Committee; from a Committee to the Commission). The intention is that the higher body will consider the recommended action for endorsement under its own mandate, if the subsidiary body does not already have the required mandate. Ideally this should be task specific and contain a timeframe for completion.

**Level 2:** From a subsidiary body of the Commission to a CPC, the IOTC Secretariat, or other body (not the Commission) to carry out a specified task:

**REQUESTED:** This term should only be used by a subsidiary body of the Commission if it does not wish to have the request formally adopted/endorsed by the next level in the structure of the Commission. For example, if a Committee wishes to seek additional input from a CPC on a particular topic, but does not wish to formalise the request beyond the mandate of the Committee, it may request that a set action be undertaken. Ideally this should be task specific and contain a timeframe for the completion.

The Recommendations endorsed by the SC at its 21<sup>st</sup> Session are contained in [Appendix I](#) for the consideration, review of progress, and revision/reiteration as necessary by the SC22. The SC participants are also encouraged to review the

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Progress on the Recommendations of Working Parties prepared by the Secretariat and presented to each Working Party for their consideration and revision (IOTC-2020-WPNT10-06, IOTC-2020-WPEB16-06, IOTC-2020-WPB18-06, IOTC-2020-WPM11-06, IOTC-2020-WPTT22(DP)-06, IOTC-2020-WPDCS16-06, IOTC-2019-WPTmT07(AS)-06).

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the SC:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2020–SC23–10 which detailed the progress made in implementing the recommendations and the requests of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Scientific Committee (SC22);
- 2) **AGREE** to consider and revise as necessary, the recommendations, and for these to be combined with any new recommendations arising from SC23.

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix I:** Progress made on the Recommendations of SC22

SC22 Report	SC recommendations	Update/Progress
SC22.08 Para. 17	<p><b>Science Related Activities of the IOTC Secretariat In 2019</b></p> <p>The SC <b>NOTED</b> the recent departure of two scientific staff at the Secretariat and <b>ACKNOWLEDGED</b> that the Secretariat is in the process of recruiting two replacement staff members. Notwithstanding this replacement of staff, the SC <b>RECALLED</b> that in 2018 the Commission deferred the recruitment of a P4 officer for the IOTC Data and Science Section until 2020. Given the increased workload of the Secretariat, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission confirm the reinstatement of this position at its next meeting, so it can be advertised and filled as soon as possible</p>	<p><b>Update:</b> In 2019 the Commission deferred the recruitment of the Scientific Coordinator until 2021 in response to concerns regarding the financial impact that filling this position would have on annual contributions. The main role of the Scientific Coordinator would be to manage the research projects being implemented by the Secretariat. However, as this largely involves dealing with administrative and contract matters (compared to dealing with technical matters), it has been found that IOTC's projects can be delivered by the Secretariat's existing science team, with increased input from the Administrative Officer. The Secretariat therefore proposed that the recruitment of a Scientific Coordinator is again deferred</p>
SC22.09 Para. 23  SC22.10 Para. 24	<p><b>National Reports from CPCs</b></p> <p>Noting that the Commission, at its 15th Session (in 2011), expressed concern regarding the limited submission of National Reports to the SC, and stressed the importance of providing the reports by all CPCs, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission note that in 2019, 23 reports were provided by CPCs (26 in 2018, 23 in 2017, 23 in 2016, 26 in 2015) (Table 2).</p> <p>The SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Compliance Committee and Commission note the lack of compliance by 9 Contracting Parties (Members) and 2 Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CNCPS) that did not submit a National Report to the Scientific Committee in 2019, noting that the Commission agreed that the submission of the annual reports to the Scientific Committee is mandatory</p>	<p><b>Update:</b> Ongoing. CPCs are encouraged to provide national reports whether or not they are attending the SC meeting and that the provision of national reports is a mandatory requirement for all CPCs</p> <p><b>Update:</b> The SC chair presented the report of the S22 to the Commission in November 2020. The Commission noted this issue with concern although the official report was not available at the time of drafting this document.</p>
SC22.11 Para. 42	<p><b>Report of the 17th Session of the Working Party on Billfish (WPB17)</b></p> <p>The SC reiterated its previous <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> that on the next revision of the IOTC Agreement, that short bill spearfish (<i>Tetrapturus angustirostris</i>) be included as an IOTC species.</p>	<p><b>Update:</b> No progress</p>
SC22.12 Para. 47	<p><b>Revision of catch levels of Marlins under Resolution 18/05</b></p> <p>The SC <b>NOTED</b> that catches in recent years for Black Marlin, Blue Marlin, Striped Marlin and Indo-Pacific Sailfish have all exceeded the catch limits set by Resolution 18/05, and that current catch trends for all four species show no signs of decline in line with meeting the catch limits by 2020. As such, the SC urgently reiterates its <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> that</p>	<p><b>Update:</b> The Commission discussed the stock status of the tuna and tuna-like species and noted the need to take action to prevent further declines in stock status. No new CMMs were discussed or adopted at the meeting.</p>

	measures are agreed to reduce current catches to the limits set for all four species covered by Resolution 18/05 as per the management advice given in the Executive Summaries.	
SC22.13 Para. 54	<p><b>Report of the 15th session of the working party on ecosystems and bycatch (WPEB15)</b></p> <p><b>Status of development and implementation of national plans of action for seabirds and sharks, and implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations</b></p> <p>The SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission note the current status of development and implementation of National Plans of Action (NPOAs) for sharks and seabirds, and the implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations, by each CPC as provided in Appendix 5, recalling that the IPOA-Seabirds and IPOA-Sharks were adopted by the FAO in 1999 and 2000, respectively, and recommended the development of NPOAs.</p>	<b>Update:</b> Ongoing
SC22.14 Para. 55	<p><b>Resolution 17/05 and the conservation of sharks in IOTC fisheries</b></p> <p>The SC <b>ENDORSED</b> the advice of the WPEB regarding the need to improve data collection and reporting for shark species. To this end, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that several initiatives be implemented, including: (i) holding regional workshops to improve shark species identification, shark data sampling and collection (fisheries and biological) and IOTC data reporting requirements; (ii) data mining to fill historical data gaps; (iii) developing alternative tools to improve species identification (e.g. genetic analyses, machine learning, and artificial intelligence)</p>	<b>Update:</b> Ongoing
SC22.15 Para. 76	<p><b>Report of the 21st Session of the Working Party on Tropical Tunas (WPTT21)</b></p> <p><b>Review of the statistical data available for skipjack tuna</b></p> <p>The SC <b>NOTED</b> that total catches in 2018 (607,701 t) were 30% higher than the catch limit generated by the Harvest Control Rule (470,029 t) which applies to the years 2018–2020, and that catches have increased over the past 3 years. The SC reiterated its <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> that the Commission urgently consider the need to monitor catches of skipjack in the 2019–2020 period to ensure catches do not exceed the limit.</p>	<b>Update:</b> The Commission noted the high catches of Skipjack in the IO and that these have surpassed the levels advised by the HCR.
SC22.16 Para. 80	<p><b>Report of the 7th Session of the Working Party on Temperate Tunas (WPTmT07)</b></p> <p><b>Albacore Tuna stock assessment</b></p> <p>The SC <b>NOTED</b> that the 2020 and draft 2021 calendars of working party meetings were approved by the Commission in June 2019, and the WPTmT is not scheduled to meet in either of these years. The SC <b>NOTED</b> the request by the chairs of the WPTmTs to hold an assessment meeting in April 2020 but <b>AGREED</b> that this would not be appropriate as the SC</p>	<b>Update:</b> Ongoing.

	would not have an opportunity to review the WPTmT outputs prior to the Commission meeting in June 2020. The SC <b>AGREED</b> that it would be beneficial to hold an assessment preparatory meeting in 2020 or 2021; and to this end, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission consider approving an assessment preparatory meeting for the WPTmT in either of these years	
SC22.17 Para. 97	<b>Report of the 15th Session of the Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS15)</b>  <b>NOTING</b> that the WPDCS highlighted several issues still affecting the quality of the information available for stock assessment purposes of tropical tunas, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that a data preparatory meeting be held prior to the Working Party on Tropical Tunas.	<b>Update:</b> A data preparatory meeting was held for the WPTT in 2020.
SC22.18 Para. 104	<b>Invited Expert(s) at the WP meetings</b>  Given the importance of external peer review for working party meetings, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission continues to allocate sufficient budget for an invited expert to be regularly invited to all scientific WP meetings.	<b>Update:</b> Ongoing. The Commission has provided budget for invited experts for 2020 and 2021.
SC22.19 Para. 105	<b>Meeting participation fund</b>  The SC reiterated its <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> 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.	<b>Update:</b> No Progress
SC22.20 Para. 106	<b>IOTC species identification guides: Tuna and tuna-like species</b>  The SC reiterated its <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> 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.	<b>Update:</b> Ongoing. Budget has been made available through the IOTC main budget and an EU grant to continue the printing of ID cards,
SC22.21 Para. 107	<b>General - Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the SC and its subsidiary bodies</b>  The SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> 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.	<b>Update:</b> Completed

SC22.22 Para. 127	<p><b>Implementation of the Regional Observer Scheme</b></p> <p>The SC <b>ACKNOWLEDGED</b> 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 <b>AGREED</b> that this information, which is particularly useful to assess the performance of Resolution 11/04, should be further standardized. As such, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>Update:</b> The Commission noted that this requirement is already encapsulated in Resolutions 15/01 and 15/02 and that the recommendation is redundant. The Commission urged members to conform with these 2 Resolutions.</p>
SC22.23 Para. 133	<p><b>General - Progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the performance review panel</b></p> <p>The SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission note the updates on progress regarding Resolution 16/03, as provided at Appendix 33.</p>	<p><b>Update:</b> Completed.</p>
SC22.24 Para. 150	<p><b>General - Consultants</b></p> <p>Noting the highly beneficial and relevant work done by IOTC stock assessment consultants in previous years, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>Update:</b> Ongoing. Several consultants were contracted in 2019.</p>