

2 February 2021

IOTC CIRCULAR 2021-09

Dear Sir/Madam

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RECOMMENDED SKIPJACK TUNA CATCH LIMIT FOR 2021-2023

Under IOTC Resolution 16/02 *On harvest control rules for skipjack tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence*, the Commission adopted the use of a pre-agreed harvest control rule (HCR) to maintain the skipjack tuna stock at, or above, the target reference point, and well above the limit reference point.

The Commission also agreed that after a review of a model based assessment of skipjack tuna by the Scientific Committee, the result of the assessment will be used by the Scientific Committee in the calculation of an annual catch limit using the adopted harvest control rule. The IOTC Secretariat would then notify CPC's of the new catch limit that will apply for the following three years.

A stock assessment of skipjack tuna was reviewed by the IOTC Scientific Committee in December 2020. **The annual catch limit calculated applying the skipjack tuna HCR specified in Resolution 16/02 is 513,572 tonnes for the period 2021 -2023.** The Scientific Committee noted that this catch limit is higher than for the previous period. This is attributed to the new stock assessment which estimates a higher productivity of the stock and a higher stock level relative to the target reference point, possibly due to skipjack life history characteristics and favourable environmental conditions. Thus, it is likely that the recent catches that have exceeded the limits established for the period 2018-2020 have been sustained by favourable environmental conditions. Therefore, the Commission needs to ensure that catches of skipjack tuna during this period do not exceed the agreed limit.

For comparison:

The annual catch limit, calculated by applying the HCR, for 2018 to 2020	470,029 t
The average catch for the period 2018-2020	568,378 t
The annual catch in 2019	590,467 t
The annual catch limit, calculated by applying the HCR, for 2021 to 2023	513,572 t

Yours sincerely



Christopher O'Brien
Executive Secretary

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