



2005 Market Street, Suite 2800, Philadelphia, PA 19103-7077 P +1.215.575.9050 F +1.215.575.4939
901 E Street NW, 10th Floor, Washington, DC 20004 P +1.202.552.2000 F +1.202.552.2299
Avenue des Arts 40, 1040 Brussels, Belgium P +32.2.274.1620 F +32.2.274.1630
The Grove, 248A Marylebone Road, London, NW1 6JZ P +44 (0) 20.7535.4000

Statement to the Special Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission 8-12 March 2021, online

The Pew Charitable Trusts welcomes the opportunity to participate as an observer in the 4th Special Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). We appreciate the work of the Secretariat, Chair, and members to convene a special session that affords additional negotiation time to address continuing challenges for management of tropical tunas. Yellowfin tuna has been classified as overfished since 2015 yet overfishing continues. Furthermore, the skipjack catch limit based on the harvest control rule has been exceeded in every year since its adoption. The pandemic has highlighted the need for healthy, resilient food systems, and management that can function even in the absence of in-person meetings. The Commission must therefore address both of these issues in 2021. The rebuilding of the yellowfin tuna stock and well-functioning, enforced management procedures for both skipjack and yellowfin are more important than ever.

To comply with IOTC's mandate, including its commitment to the precautionary approach outlined in Resolution 12/01, **the Commission should seek to revise Resolution 19/01 in a manner that will immediately end overfishing and promote the development and adoption of a management procedure for yellowfin tuna no later than 2022.** Management procedures provide a pre-agreed framework to facilitate efficient, science-based decision-making to achieve a long-term vision for the stock and fishery. A yellowfin management procedure will provide IOTC with the tools necessary to rebuild the population and eventually maintain a sustainable, profitable, and predictable fishery.

The Commission must also provide clarity on how CPCs can comply with the HCR-based skipjack catch limit of 513,572 t for 2021-2023. This catch limit represents a 9% increase from the 2018-2020 limit, but recent catches still well exceed this limit. Addressing this disconnect is critical for skipjack but also has future implications for all IOTC managed stocks to be managed with management procedures. **The Commission should resolve this implementation issue and provide a pathway for compliance with future IOTC management procedures and other measures.**