

**February 23, 2021**

ATTN: ATTN: Heads of Delegation to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

During its virtual annual meetings late last year, the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) set a special session for 8-12 March 2021 to further discuss measures to rebuild the yellowfin tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean. The undersigned organizations expect that at this special session the Commission will:

***Adopt without delay an effective rebuilding plan for yellowfin tuna that gives full effect to the advice of the IOTC Scientific Committee and replaces the interim measure in Resolution 19/01.***

We see this issue as critical to address this year for three reasons:

- The current measure is interim and therefore must be renewed or revised this year.
- Resolution 19/01 does not provide for catch reductions that are aligned with management advice from the Science Committee to rebuild the stock to a sustainable level within the agreed timeframe. Moreover, poor compliance, and inability to detect non-compliance, with the measure further undermined the effectiveness of the measure.
- Further, overall catches of yellowfin tuna increased by 5.5% from 2014-2019 as the decrease in catches reported by some fisheries was more than offset by increases in the catches from fisheries that were exempt from catch limitations.

***We note that a proposal put forth by the Maldives delegation provides a minimum acceptable catch reduction that should give full effect to the advice of the IOTC Scientific Committee. As such, the signatories of this letter are supportive of this proposal being the primary proposal for discussion during Session negotiations.***

The undersigned organizations believe that further delay is both unnecessary and unacceptable. We urge the Commission to seize this opportunity to put in place an effective yellowfin rebuilding plan that puts the stock on the path to recovery as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.



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