

**Position Statement of China on Conservation and Management of
Yellowfin Tuna in IOTC Area
May 2021**

The delegation of China participated 4th Special Session of IOTC, and made its contribution in the deliberation of draft resolution on an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellow Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence. It regretted that no consensus can be reached during the session. It is our wish that the new conservation and management can be adopted at 25th Session of IOTC, therefore, the delegation of China would like to state the following position on some important issues, so that the position can be better understood by other CPCs of IOTC:

1. It is view of this delegation that the new conservation and management measures for yellowfin tuna shall be applicable to the stock across their distribution range in the IOTC area of competence, and it is key element for IOTC to manage yellowfin tuna stock.

2. Consider the large amount of overharvested yellowfin tuna by some CPCs, It is view of this delegation that the current issue of conservation and management of yellowfin tuna in the Indian Ocean is not one of new measures but of compliance with existing measures, namely the need for

the CPCs subject to the limit to comply with the limit, for the CPCs not subject to the limit to refrain from exceeding the threshold in their catch and for strict compliance with the requirement for pay back for overharvested catch.

3. If the agreement of the above two points can be reached at 25th Session of IOTC, the reference year(s) for longline fleet that had yellowfin tuna catch less than 5000 mt in 2014 will be discussed. The following table shows the tropical tuna catch by China’s mainland fleet since 1995 to 2019:

Tropical Tuna Catch by China’s Mainland Fleet in IOTC Area from 1995 to 2019 (mt)

Year\Species	Bigeye Tuna	Yellowfin Tuna
1995	140	138
1996	466	494
1997	1652	750
1998	2,164	402
1999	2,182	2335
2000	2699	2362
2001	2994	1771
2002	2792	1325
2003	4569	2279

2004	8321	3781
2005	8867	4259
2006	8702	3857
2007	7167	2825
2008	4963	897
2009	2661	453
2010	1398	496
2011	240	191
2012	2405	538
2013	4311	922
2014	3862	1078
2015	4730	1793
2016	4086	1812
2017	4918	2962
2018	4055	4641
2019	1837	3212

From the table, it is easy to understand why this delegation cannot accept 2014-2019 average as a basis, and it is even harder to accept 2014 as a reference year for longline fleet that had yellowfin tuna catch less than 5000 mt in 2014, although this delegation agrees that 2014 shall be a

reference year for fleet that had yellowfin tuna catch higher than 5000 metric tons in 2014.

4. Catch reporting frequency. It is the view of this delegation that timely reporting the catch is necessary. However, for the sake of usefulness, the same report frequency shall apply to all CPCs that have yellowfin tuna catch, partial catch reported by month, and partial catch reported by quarter will be meaningless to understand the whole situation of yellowfin tuna catch.

5. FAD management. It is view of this delegation that FAD management is part of agreement to have new conservation and management measures on yellowfin tuna. This delegation wishes the CPCs that have purse seiner fisheries can show their flexibility in terms of number of deployed FAD, number of FAD set and duration and area of prohibition of using FAD.

Lastly, the new conservation and management measures on yellowfin tuna if adopted at 25th session of IOTC shall be reviewed and adjusted based on new SC recommendations after a new stock assessment completed before implementing the new measures in 2022.