

PROGRESS MADE ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUESTS OF WPB18 AND SC23

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PURPOSE

To provide participants at the 19th WPB with an update on the progress made in implementing those recommendations from the previous Working Party on Billfish (WPB) meeting which were endorsed by the Scientific Committee (SC), and to provide alternative recommendations for the consideration and potential endorsement by participants as appropriate given any progress.

BACKGROUND

At the 18th Session of the WPB, 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 WPB was provided to the SC for its endorsement at its December 2020 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 16th Session adopted a set of reporting terminology SC16.07 (para. 23), which was subsequently endorsed by the Commission at its 18th 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.

In addition to the Recommendations endorsed by the SC at its 22nd Session, the SC also made several requests which, although are not passed to the Commission for its endorsement, are considered actions which the Scientific Committee has the mandate to issue. The revised recommendations are contained in [Appendix I](#) for the consideration and potential endorsement by the WPB18.

RECOMMENDATION

That the WPB **NOTE** the progress made in implementing the recommendations and requests of the 18th Session of the WPB, and consider whether revised recommendations need to be sent to the SC for its consideration.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: [Progress made on the Recommendations and Requests of WPB18](#)

APPENDIX I

Progress made on the recommendations and requests of WPB18 and SC23

WPB18 Rec. No.	Recommendation from WPB17	SC23 Rec. No.	Recommendation adopted by the SC23	Progress/Comments
WPB18.01	<p><i>IOTC Resolutions</i></p> <p>(para 5): RECALLING that one of the Indian Ocean billfish species (shortbill spearfish, <i>Tetrapturus angustirostris</i>) is currently not listed among the species managed by IOTC, and considering the ocean-wide distribution of this species, its highly-migratory nature, and that it is a common bycatch in IOTC managed fisheries, the WPB reiterated its previous RECOMMENDATION that the Scientific Committee consider requesting the Commission to include it in the list of species to be managed by the IOTC</p>		<p>Update: No progress</p>	<p>Update: Ongoing.</p> <p>To date no decision has been taken to include short bill spearfish (<i>Tetrapturus angustirostris</i>) as an IOTC species.</p>
WPB 18.02	<p><i>Revision of the WPB Program of work (2021–2025)</i></p> <p>(para 112): The WPB RECOMMENDED that the SC consider and endorse the WPB Program of Work (2021–2025), as provided at Appendix XII.</p>		<p><i>Program of Work (2021–2025) and assessment schedule</i></p> <p>(para. 157) The SC NOTED the proposed Program of Work and priorities for the SC and each of the working parties and AGREED to a consolidated Program of Work as outlined in Appendix 35a-g. The Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of each working party will ensure that the efforts of their respective working party is focused on the core areas contained within the appendix, taking into account any new research priorities identified by the Commission at its next Session</p>	<p>Update: Completed</p>
WPB18.03	<p><i>Date and place of the 19th and 20th Sessions of the Working Party on Billfish</i></p> <p>(para 115) The WPB NOTED that the global Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in international travel being almost impossible and with no clear end to the pandemic in sight, it was impossible to finalise arrangements for the meeting in 2021. The Secretariat will continue to liaise with CPCs to determine their interest in hosting these meetings in the future when this once again becomes feasible. The WPB RECOMMENDED the SC consider early September 2021 as</p>		<p><i>Final Meeting schedule</i></p> <p>(para 166) The SC REQUESTED that the schedule of Working Party and Scientific Committee meetings for 2021 and 2022 provided at Appendix 37 be communicated by the IOTC SC Chairperson to the Commission for its endorsement.</p>	<p>Update: Completed/Ongoing</p> <p>The meeting schedule was adopted with the meeting to be held in September, back-to-back with the WPEB.</p> <p>Due to the covid pandemic, all meetings in 2021 are online.</p>

	<p>a preferred time period to hold the WPB19 in 2021. As usual it was also AGREED that this meeting should continue to be held back-to-back with the WPEB, with the WPEB taking place before the WPB in 2021.</p>			
<p>WPB18.04</p>	<p>Review of the draft, and adoption of the Report of the 18th Session of the Working Party on Billfish</p> <p>(para. 116): The WPB RECOMMENDED that the Scientific Committee consider the consolidated set of recommendations arising from WPB18, provided at Appendix XII, as well as the management advice provided in the draft resource stock status summary for each of the five billfish species under the IOTC mandate, and the combined Kobe plot for the five species assigned a stock status in 2020 (Fig. 9):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Swordfish (<i>Xiphias gladius</i>) – Appendix VI ○ Black marlin (<i>Makaira indica</i>) – Appendix VII ○ Blue marlin (<i>Makaira nigricans</i>) – Appendix VIII ○ Striped marlin (<i>Tetrapturus audax</i>) – Appendix IX ○ Indo-Pacific sailfish (<i>Istiophorus platypterus</i>) – Appendix X 	<p>SC23.02 (para. 133)</p>	<p>Billfish</p> <p>The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission note the management advice developed for each billfish species under the IOTC mandate, as provided in the Executive Summary for each species, and the combined Kobe plot for the five species assigned a stock status in 2020 (Fig. 3):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Swordfish (<i>Xiphias gladius</i>) – Appendix 12 ○ Black marlin (<i>Makaira indica</i>) – Appendix 13 ○ Blue marlin (<i>Makaira nigricans</i>) – Appendix 14 ○ Striped marlin (<i>Tetrapturus audax</i>) – Appendix 15 ○ Indo-Pacific sailfish (<i>Istiophorus platypterus</i>) – Appendix 16 	<p>Update: Completed</p>

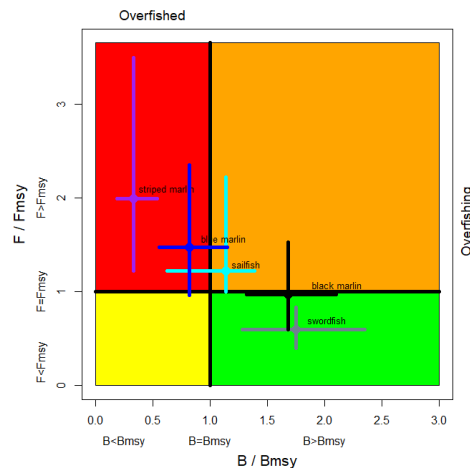


Fig. 4. Combined Kobe plot for swordfish (grey), Indo-pacific sailfish (cyan), black marlin (black), blue marlin (blue) and striped marlin (purple) showing the 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 assessments.

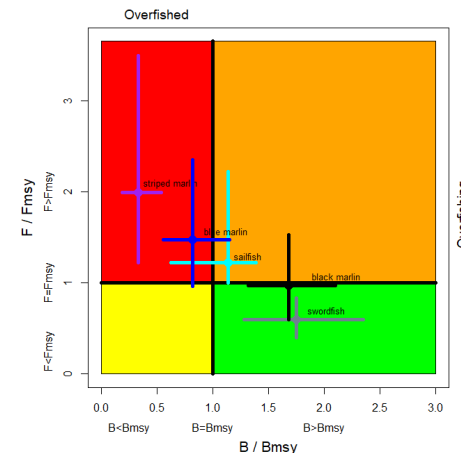


Fig. 3. Combined Kobe plot for swordfish (2018 with assessment conducted in 2020, grey), Indo-Pacific sailfish (2017 with assessment conducted in 2019, cyan), black marlin (2017 with assessment conducted in 2018, black), blue marlin (2017 with assessment conducted in 2019, blue) and striped marlin (2017 with assessment conducted in 2018, purple) showing the estimates of current stock size (SB or B, species assessment dependent) and current fishing mortality (F) in relation to optimal biomass and optimal fishing mortality. Cross bars illustrate the range of uncertainty from the model runs.

	2020 estimates of current stock size (SB or B, species assessment dependent) and current fishing mortality (F) in relation to optimal spawning stock size and optimal fishing mortality. Cross bars illustrate the range of uncertainty from the model runs.			
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WPB18 Report	WPB18 REQUESTS	Update/Progress
Para. 4	The WPB ACKNOWLEDGED and REITERATED the request from the Scientific Committee for full compliance with Resolutions 15/01 and 15/02 and REQUESTED that all involved CPCs take immediate action to overcome any issues preventing the timely and complete reporting of all mandatory statistical data to the IOTC Secretariat.	Update: Ongoing.
Para. 14	The WPB REQUESTED that the IOTC Secretariat continue to annually prepare a paper on the progress of the recommendations arising from the previous WPB, incorporating the final recommendations adopted by the Scientific Committee and endorsed by the Commission	Update: Completed
Para. 16	The WPB NOTED the main billfish data issues, by type of dataset and fishery, that are considered to negatively affect the quality of the statistics available at the IOTC Secretariat (provided in Appendix V) and REQUESTED that the CPCs listed in the Appendix make efforts to remedy the identified data issues – with support from the IOTC Secretariat, when required – and report back to the WPB at its next meeting.	Update: Ongoing
Para. 25	For this reason the WPB REQUESTED an explorative analysis be carried out by the Secretariat in collaboration with all concerned CPCs, to identify the most accurate and indicative source of information (logbooks vs. observers) for this specific data set, and to better inform future stock assessments for the species.	Update: Pending (no clear progress to date)
Para. 38	Also, the WPB RECALLED that reports of catches of aggregated billfish species are significant and common to several important fisheries, therefore REQUESTED that all concerned CPCs, in collaboration with the IOTC Secretariat, improve their own national data collection and reporting systems where required.	Update: Ongoing
Para. 77	<i>Review of new information on the status of swordfish</i> The WPB REITERATED the need to have abundance indices from every source of information. For instance, the EU,FRA longline fishery could be a valuable source of	Update: Ongoing. CPC to provide feedback

	information for the southwest Indian Ocean and REQUESTED EU,FRA to work on a standardized CPUE. EU,FRA ACKNOWLEDGED this request and mentioned a contract was supposed to initiate this work this year but has been postponed to next year due to the health situation which prevented a contractor to work in La Réunion.	
Para. 78	The WP NOTED that the fishing effort of the Portuguese longline fishery has been reported to the Secretariat in different effort units over the years (i.e. fishing days or number of hooks deployed) and REQUESTED EU,Portugal to assess the possibility of re-exporting the effort in number of hooks for the years 1998-2007 and 2013, NOTING also that the effort in number of operations is required to compute the observer coverage as per the IOTC Res. 11/04 and the IOTC form 3CE allows for an alternate effort to be reported.	Update: Ongoing. CPC to provide feedback
Para. 108	<p><i>Development of management advice for swordfish and update of swordfish Executive Summary for the consideration of the Scientific Committee</i></p> <p>The WPB REQUESTED that the IOTC Secretariat update the draft stock status summary for swordfish with the latest 2018 catch data, and for the summary to be provided to the SC as part of the draft Executive Summary for its consideration:</p> <p>Swordfish (<i>Xiphias gladius</i>) – Appendix VI</p>	Update: Completed