

## OUTCOMES OF THE 25<sup>th</sup> SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 19 NOVEMBER 2021

### PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 17<sup>th</sup> Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS17) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 25<sup>th</sup> Session, held by videoconference from 7 - 11 June 2021), specifically relating to the work of the WPDCS.

### BACKGROUND

At the 25<sup>th</sup> Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 3 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (consisting of 3 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), as detailed below:

#### Resolutions

- Resolution 21/01 *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence.*
- Resolution 21/02 *On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels.*
- Resolution 21/03 *On harvest control rules for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence.*

Pursuant to Article IX.4 of the IOTC Agreement, the above-mentioned Conservation and Management Measures shall become binding on Members, 120 days from the date of the notification communicated by the Secretariat.

### DISCUSSION

The Commission also made a number of general comments on the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee in 2020, which have relevance for the WPM (IOTC-2021-S25-R):

#### Report of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Scientific Committee (SC23)

*(Para 16). The Commission **NOTED** that although all scientific meetings had been successfully held virtually in 2020, they were shortened to facilitate the virtual platform. The virtual platforms, however, did result in increased participation to the meetings which the Commission **AGREED** was beneficial. The Commission further **NOTED** that the SC proposed that in the future virtual meetings may still be conducted for certain meetings (such as data preparatory meetings) in order to reduce the expenses travel imposes on CPCs as well as the IOTC Meeting Participation fund (MPF), but for those meetings requiring closer, in-person, collaborations, physical meetings will be continued as required. The Commission **NOTED** that the MPF was not used for science-related meetings in 2020 because they were all convened by videoconference.*

*(Para 17). The Commission **NOTED** that 6 Contracting Parties and 2 Cooperating Non-Contracting Party did not submit a National Report to the Scientific Committee Meeting in 2020, and issues with lack of data and poor-quality data persist. The Commission **NOTED** that this was an improvement over the previous year, but also **REITERATED** its concerns about the lack and poor quality of data, and again, strongly **ENCOURAGED** CPCs to take immediate steps to review, and where necessary, improve their performance with respect to the provision of data through improved compliance with Resolutions 15/01 *On the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence*, and 15/02 *Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties*.*

#### **The status of tropical and temperate tunas**

*(Para 19). The Commission again **NOTED** with concern, the current status of yellowfin tuna. The Commission also **NOTED** that an updated stock assessment for yellowfin tuna is due for October 2021 and that this updated assessment is anticipated to address many of the issues identified in the past assessments for the species, and in particular errors associated with the projections and Kobe II Strategy Matrix (K2SM) developed in 2018. The Commission **AGREED** on the critical importance of this new assessment and the updated management advice that will be produced at that time and **URGED** the SC to address this task as a priority.*

The complete report of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available for download from the IOTC website: <http://www.iotc.org>

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the WPDCS:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2021–WPDCS17–04 which outlined the outcomes of the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPDCS and **AGREE** to consider how best to provide the SC with the information it needs to satisfy the Commission’s requests throughout the course of the current WPDCS meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** the 3 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) adopted at the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission (consisting of 3 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations) which have a direct impact on the work of the WPDCS.