



Sustainable Indian Ocean Tuna Initiative

A Fishery Improvement Project for the Indian Ocean Purse Seine Tuna Fishery

104 avenue du Président Kennedy, 75016 Paris, France

<https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/indian-ocean-tuna-purse-seine-sioti>

SIOTI Position for the 26th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

Approved by the SIOTI Executive Board

May 9th 2022

The **Sustainable Indian Ocean Tuna Initiative (SIOTI)** submits this statement in support of the adoption of conservation and management measures for tropical tunas at the 26th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) beginning on 16th May 2022.

SIOTI¹ is a large-scale Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) comprising major purse seine fishing fleets and tuna processors in the Indian Ocean.

- We are science led organisations and see the clear need for stock rebuilding for the long-term benefit of all Indian Ocean stakeholders, businesses – including our own – and thousands of workers that make up the seafood economy.
- The latest Scientific Committee report has noted that Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) estimated for the YFT Indian Ocean stock is 349,000 t with a range between 286,000 and 412,000 t and that the 2016-2020 average catches (434,235 t) were above the estimated MSY level.
- We note that the scenarios presented by the Scientific Committee indicate that a 30% reduction in catches from 2020 gives a 70% chance of recovery within two generations (i.e. by 2030) whereas a 20% reduction gives a 50% chance. Clearly, we are now in the position where a collective, equitable, science-based reduction in catch is urgently required.
- The Commission has an interim plan for rebuilding the yellowfin stock, with catch reductions based on 2014/2015 levels (Resolution 21/01 which superseded resolutions 19/01, 18/01 and 17/01). Some of the fisheries subject to catch reductions have achieved a decrease in catches in accordance with the levels of reductions specified in the Resolution; however, these reductions were offset by increases in the catches from both exempt CPCs and some CPCs subject to reductions. SIOTI partners remain committed to achieve the limits imposed on their CPCs by the Commission.
- We appreciate the effort that most CPCs are already making to achieve their reductions of yellowfin catches in line with Resolution 21/01. It is, however, unreasonable for those CPCs to go further than their current reduction targets if those objecting to Resolution 21/01 continue to refuse to play their part in delivering catch reductions.
- Therefore, CPCs that have refused to agree to reductions must realise the vital role they now need to play in yellowfin rebuilding. There can be no excuse for opting out of the responsibility to ensure Indian Ocean tuna stock health and the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of workers. Now is the time for political leadership and long-term thinking.

¹ SIOTI is an association registered in Paris, France.



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- This long-term thinking should also seek to define clear science-based management objectives. In order to implement equitable catch reductions, CPCs should make efforts to provide data of sufficient quality to support the work of the Scientific Committee.
- If this IOTC meeting fails to deliver real progress by CPCs on an effective and consensual yellowfin rebuilding plan, we expect to face growing end-customer criticism of Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna. Trust in the performance and credibility of IOTC will also be further undermined by a failure to deliver at the 26th Session.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Lazazzara', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tony Lazazzara, SIOTI President