



ON A MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE FOR BIGEYE TUNA IN THE IOTC AREA OF COMPETENCE

SUBMITTED BY: AUSTRALIA

Explanatory Memorandum

In accordance with Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, Australia submits this proposal to support the Commission to adopt a management procedure for bigeye tuna at the 26th Session of the IOTC.

The IOTC, at its 15th Session in 2011, endorsed the development of a management strategy evaluation (MSE) process for the development and testing of candidate management procedures (MP). In addition, a meeting of all the tuna RFMOs (i.e., Kobe III) also in 2011 decided on a general move towards the use of management procedures for setting catch limits. In 2016, the IOTC established the Technical Committee on Management Procedures (TCMP) specifically to “enhance the decision-making response of the Commission in relation to management procedures”, including MSE.

In 2017 the Commission adopted the ‘Schedule of work for the development of management procedures for key species in the IOTC Area’ (IOTC-2017-S21-R, Appendix 9). The work plan for bigeye tuna sets out the following tasks for 2022:

- Technical Committee on Management Procedures (TCMP): Provide advice to Commission on elements of MPs, and any proposed Resolutions for an MP, that require a decision by the Commission, including the performance of candidate MPs against Commission objectives.
- Commission: Consider work and advice from subsidiary bodies. Decision and adoption of an MP.
- Working Parties/Scientific Committee: Process for, and application of, the adopted MP.

The 24th Session of the Scientific Committee, in December 2021, agreed that the technical work for bigeye tuna had progressed sufficiently to inform a Commission decision on an MP for this stock.

We welcome feedback on the proposal and invite all CPCs to engage in discussions at the upcoming TCMP and Commission meetings in May 2022.

RESOLUTION XX/XX
ON A MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE FOR BIGEYE TUNA IN THE IOTC AREA OF COMPETENCE.

Keywords: Bigeye tuna, Management Procedure, Harvest Strategy, Target reference point, MSY.

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

HAVING responsibility for the conservation and optimum utilization of tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean;

RECOGNISING the need for action to ensure the achievement of IOTC objectives to conserve and manage tuna resources in the IOTC area of competence;

MINDFUL of Article XVI of the IOTC Agreement regarding the rights of Coastal States and of Articles 87 and 116 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea regarding the right to fish on the high seas;

RECOGNISING the special requirements of developing States, particularly Small Island developing States, in Article 24 of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of December 1982, relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA);

RECOGNISING Resolution 12/01 *On the implementation of the precautionary approach* calls on the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission to implement and apply the precautionary approach, in accordance Article 6 of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea of December 1982 relating to the UNFSA;

RECALLING *Resolution 15/10 On Target and Limit Reference Points and a Decision Framework*, which identifies objectives of the Commission to maintain stocks in perpetuity and with high probability, at levels not less than those capable of producing their maximum sustainable yield as qualified by relevant environmental and economic factors including the special requirements of developing States in the IOTC area of competence; and identifies reference points for IOTC stocks including bigeye tuna;

RECOGNIZING the intent of the Commission to adopt management procedures aimed at achieving the objectives of the IOTC Agreement (Resolution 15/10) aided by advice of the Technical Committee on Management Procedures (TCMP), as established in *Resolution 16/09* and as further expounded in the *Schedule of work for the development of management procedures for key species in the IOTC Area*;

ACKNOWLEDGING the Scientific Committee advice that the most recent stock assessment in 2019 determined bigeye tuna is not overfished but subject to overfishing;

FURTHER CONSIDERING the endorsement of the bigeye tuna operating model by the 24th meeting of the Scientific Committee (December 2021, SC24) and the SC24's advice that the key technical work (management strategy evaluation) required to test the performance of candidate management procedures had been completed;

FURTHER CONSIDERING the advice and recommendations of the [5th Session] of the Technical Committee on Management Procedures regarding a management procedure for bigeye tuna ... [insert advice and recommendations].

ADOPTS in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement:

Management procedure

1. The Commission adopts the management procedure for bigeye tuna known as [MP1 Harvest/MP2 Target] and described in the technical document [IOTC-2022-TCMP05-xx], as recommended by the TCMP at its meeting in May 2022 (MP).
2. The MP settings shall be:
 - a) that the MP be tuned to a [60/70%] probability that the bigeye tuna spawning stock biomass achieves the target reference point of SB_{MSY}^1 by 2034-2038;
 - b) the bigeye tuna spawning stock biomass avoids breaching the interim limit reference point specified in Resolution 15/10 with a high probability; and
 - c) the maximum increase or decrease in the TAC shall be 15% relative to the previous TAC.

Total Allowable Catch setting

3. The Scientific Committee shall run the MP and advise the Commission of the outcome, including a recommended TAC and any advice on exceptional circumstances in accordance with the Scientific Committee endorsed Guidelines for the Provisions of Exceptional Circumstances for IOTC MPs as documented in IOTC-2021-SC24-R[E].
4. The Commission shall set the TAC based on the outcome of the MP, unless the Commission decides otherwise based on exceptional circumstances.
5. The TAC shall apply in each of the subsequent three years following the year it is set by the Commission².
6. The repeating schedule for setting and applying the TAC, beginning the calendar year immediately following adoption of this Resolution, is shown in Annex I.

TAC allocation

7. Allocation of the TAC among CPCs will take place according to a process agreed external to this measure.
8. The Commission will develop a mechanism to constrain catch to the MP derived TAC for bigeye tuna in 2026, if an allocation scheme has not yet been agreed and implemented by the Commission.



Review of the MP

9. A review of performance of the MP by the Commission and its subcommittees is to occur in 2033. The aim of the review is to ensure the MP is performing as expected and whether there are any conditions that warrant reconditioning the operating models, retuning the existing MP, or consideration of alternate candidate MPs and a new full management strategy evaluation.

¹ The spawning stock biomass associated with achieving maximum sustainable yield.

² E.g. the Scientific Committee runs the MP in 2022, the TAC is set by the Commission in 2023, the TAC would apply in 2024, 2025 and 2026.

ANNEX I – SCHEDULE FOR MP IMPLEMENTATION

IOTC COMMITTEE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Commission (June)	Select and adopt BET MP							
	Annual Review of SC advice 							
		Set TAC (2024-2026)			Set TAC (2027-2029)			Set TAC (2030-2032)
WPTT and WPM (Oct)	Collate catch data and CPUE series used in MP			Collate data used in MP		Collate data used in MP		
	Consider exceptional circumstances (EC), advise SC			Consider EC		Consider EC		
SC (Dec)	Run MP		Run MP			Run MP		
	Assess* stock status		Assess stock status			Assess stock status		
	Annual Review of Exceptional Circumstances 							
	Provide TAC advice to the Commission			Provide TAC advice			Provide TAC advice	

- The assessment of stock status has a distinct role and purpose from the management procedure and is not used for TAC advice. It is included in this schedule to identify best practice in the timing of running of the assessment, i.e. in the year after MP TAC decisions have been made.