
PROGRESS MADE ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF WPTT23

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 18 MAY 2022

PURPOSE

To provide participants at the 24th WPTT(DP) with an update on the progress made in implementing those recommendations from the previous Working Party on Tropical Tunas (WPTT) 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 23rd Session of the WPTT, 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 WPTT was provided to the SC for its endorsement at its December 2021 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 24th 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 WPTT24(DP).

RECOMMENDATION

That the WPTT:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2022–WPTT24(DP)–06 which detailed the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the WPTT23, and the requests of the 24th Session of the Scientific Committee (SC24), taking into consideration the recommendations from the SC and decisions of the Commission;
- 2) **AGREE** to consider and revise as necessary, the recommendations, and for these to be combined with any new recommendations arising from the WPTT24(DP), noting that these will be provided to the SC for its endorsement.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Progress made on the Recommendations and Requests of WPTT23

APPENDIX I

Progress made on the recommendations of WPTT23

WPTT23 Rec. No.		SC24 Rec. No.	Recommendation adopted by the SC25
WPTT23.01 (para 184)	<p><i>Revision of the WPTT Program of Work (2022–2026)</i></p> <p>The WPTT RECOMMENDED that the SC consider and endorse the WPTT Program of Work (2022–2026), as provided in Appendix VII.</p>	(paras. 175-176)	<p><i>Program of Work (2022–2026) and assessment schedule</i></p> <p>The SC NOTED IOTC–2021–SC24–08 which provided the SC with a proposed Program of Work for each of its working parties, including prioritisation of the elements requested by each working party.</p> <p>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 and in accordance with the IOTC Strategic Science Plan 2020-2024. The Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of each working party will ensure that the efforts of their respective working parties are 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>
WPTT23.02 (para 191)	<p><i>Date and place of the 24th and 25th Sessions of the WPTT</i></p> <p>The WPTT 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 2022. 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 WPTT RECOMMENDED the SC consider late October 2022 as a preferred time period to hold the WPTT24 Assessment meeting in 2022 with a Data Preparatory meeting to be held in the first half of 2022 to prepare for the BET assessment.</p>	(para 185)	<p>The SC REQUESTED that the schedule of Working Party and Scientific Committee meetings for 2022 and 2023 provided at Appendix 37 be communicated by the IOTC SC Chairperson to the Commission for its endorsement.</p>

WPTT23 Rec. No.		SC24 Rec. No.	Recommendation adopted by the SC25
WPTT23.03 (para. 193)	<p>Review of the draft, and adoption of the Report of the 23rd Session of the WPTT</p> <p>The WPTT RECOMMENDED that the Scientific Committee consider the consolidated set of recommendations arising from WPTT23, provided at Appendix VIII, as well as the management advice provided in the draft resource stock status summary for each of the three tropical tuna species under the IOTC mandate, and the combined Kobe plot for the three species assigned a stock status in 2021 (Figure 2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bigeye tuna (<i>Thunnus obesus</i>) – Appendix IV ○ Skipjack tuna (<i>Katsuwonus pelamis</i>) – Appendix V ○ Yellowfin tuna (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>) – Appendix VI 	SC24.01 (para. 154)	<p>Tuna – Highly migratory species</p> <p>The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission note the management advice developed for each tropical and temperate tuna species as provided in the Executive Summary for each species, and the combined Kobe plot for the four species assigned a stock status in 2021 (Fig. 1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Albacore (<i>Thunnus alalunga</i>) – Appendix 8 ○ Bigeye tuna (<i>Thunnus obesus</i>) – Appendix 9 ○ Skipjack tuna (<i>Katsuwonus pelamis</i>) – Appendix 10 ○ Yellowfin tuna (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>) – Appendix 11

WPTT23 Report	WPTT23 REQUESTS	Update/Progress
Para. 11	<p>Update of Any New Data Available at the Secretariat for Tropical Tuna Species Since the Data Preparatory Meeting</p> <p>Furthermore, the WPTT ACKNOWLEDGED that the current classification of coastal longlines within the “line” fishery group might not accurately reflect the characteristic of the gear, that might be more properly categorized under the “longline” fishery group, and REQUESTED that this issue is brought to the attention of the WPDCS for further discussion</p>	Update: Ongoing. This will be further discussed in 2022.
Para. 15	Therefore the WPTT REQUESTED that Oman further liaises with the IOTC Secretariat to ensure that all currently missing statistical information be provided according to the existing reporting requirements	Update: Ongoing. Data support missions to Oman are being organised.
Para. 24	The WPTT CONSIDERED the possibility that a similar behaviour might also be one of the factors explaining the recent increase in catches reported by the handline fishery of Oman, that could potentially include catches originally taken by Yemeni vessels offloading in the country, and for this reason REQUESTED the IOTC Secretariat to investigate this matter further with support of national scientists from the countries involved.	Update: Ongoing. Data support missions to Oman are being organised.
Para 26	The WPTT RECALLED that the Scientific Committee recommendation that both unraised (raw) and raised (catch-at-size) size frequency data be reported to the IOTC, and REQUESTED all concerned CPCs to liaise with the Secretariat to ensure that historical and new submissions of size data including both types of information are provided for incorporation into the IOTC databases.	Update: Ongoing. The Secretariat is liaising with CPCs to provide this information.

Para 39	<p>Review any New Information on Yellowfin Biology, Stock Structure, Fisheries and Associated Environmental Data Since the Data Preparatory Meeting</p> <p>Regarding the major difference between the new growth curve and previous growth estimates of yellowfin tuna, the WPTT REQUESTED using the new results on growth as a sensitivity analysis run in the 2021 assessment</p>	<p>Update: The new growth curve was included as a sensitivity in the assessment and is noted in IOTC-2021-WPTT23-R.</p>
Para 117	<p>Stock Assessment Results</p> <p>The WPTT NOTED that the model that splits the longline CPUE in R1 before and after the piracy period suggested a reduction in catchability of 40%, further NOTING that there is little evidence to support this change and that the degree of change was considered to be somewhat unrealistic. The catchability change is largely driven by the model trying to fit large fish in the LL1 fishery at the end of the time series that were caught by non-Japanese fleets, which paper IOTC-2021-WPTT23-07 recommended should be removed. The WPTT NOTED that the issue of catchability change has been discussed in the past and that for the previous assessment in 2018, it was decided to adjust the catchability in this way to try to reflect the movement of vessels to other areas and the overall spatial contraction of the longline fleet, although the WPTT also NOTED that fishing location and vessel identity are included in the joint CPUE standardization model. The WPTT decided not to change this option due to lack of time to consider changes to the grid. The WPTT REQUESTED that further investigation should be carried out on the potential for catchability to have changed during this period</p>	<p>Update: Investigation on the change for catchability during this period shall be addressed in the joint CPUE standardizations analysis by examining changes in factors that influence fishing efficiency</p>
Para 128	<p>Selection of Stock Status Indicators for yellowfin</p> <p>The WPTT ADOPTED the stock status advice developed for yellowfin tuna as provided in the draft resource stock status summary and REQUESTED that the IOTC Secretariat update the draft stock status summary for yellowfin tuna with the latest 2020 catch data (if necessary), and for the summary to be provided to the SC as part of the draft Executive Summary, for its consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yellowfin tuna (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>) – Appendix VI 	<p>Update: Completed.</p>
Para 133	<p>Update of yellowfin tuna Executive Summary for the consideration of the Scientific Committee</p> <p>The WPTT NOTED that as the projections for the SS3 model had not been reviewed during the meeting, management advice would not be included in the Executive summary appended to this report. The WPTT REQUESTED that the Secretariat facilitate an intersessional meeting prior to the SC to discuss and agree on the Executive Summary to be presented</p>	<p>Update: Completed.</p>
Para 138	<p>External Peer Review</p> <p>The WPTT REQUESTED that the chairs and vice chairs of the WPTT, WPM and SC, along with the secretariat, develop Terms of Reference for the external peer review panel and present these, along with the suggested review framework, to the SC in 2021.</p>	<p>Update: Completed and presented to the SC in 2021. The SC Endorsed the proposed ToR and workplan.</p>
Para 169	<p>Bigeye age and growth</p> <p>The WPTT NOTED that the method used in this study to estimate the age of bigeye tuna from daily and annual increments in otoliths provides a good improvement on previous growth curve estimates and REQUESTED that this method for estimating growth are considered for use in future stock assessments, further NOTING that the study can be further discussed and validated during the next scheduled data preparatory meeting. The WPTT NOTED that it is</p>	<p>Update: Update to be provided during the WPTT(DP) meeting in 2022.</p>

	valuable to continue with this work, in particular with an increase in the size, sex ratios and spatial distribution of samples. The WPTT NOTED that further information that can be found on how growth varies between sexes and potentially spatially would also be valuable.	
Para 183	Revision of the WPTT Program of Work (2022-2026) The WPTT REQUESTED that the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the WPTT, in consultation with the IOTC Secretariat, develop Terms of Reference (TOR) for each of the high priority projects that are yet to be funded, for circulation to potential funding sources.	Update: Completed and included in the report of the SC24.