OUTCOMES OF THE 26th SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 11 AUGUST 2022

PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 20th Working Party on Billfish (WPB20) of the decision and requests made by the Commission at its 26th, held from 16–20 May 2022, specifically relating to the work of the WPB.

BACKGROUND

At the 26th Session of the Commission, 4 Conservation and Management Measures were adopted (consisting of 4 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), as detailed below

Resolutions

- Resolution 22/01 *On climate change as it relates to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission* [download here].
- Resolution 22/02 *On establishing a programme for transhipment by large-scale fishing vessels* [download here].
- Resolution 22/03 *On a Management Procedure for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence* [download here].
- Resolution 22/04 *On a Regional Observer Scheme* [download here]

Conservation and Management Measures become binding 120 days after their distribution to all CPCs. The final versions of the newly agreed CMMs will be made available in due course at http://iotc.org/cmms

DISCUSSION

The Commission also made a number of general comments on the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee in 2021 (SC24), which have relevance for the WPB (IOTC–2022–S26–R):

Status of billfish

Swordfish A new assessment was undertaken in 2020 using stock synthesis with fisheries data up to 2018. On the weight-of-evidence available in 2020, the stock is determined to be not overfished and not subject to overfishing.
Striped Marlin In 2021 a stock assessment was conducted based on two different models: JABBA, a Bayesian state-space production model (age-aggregated); and SS3, an integrated model (age-structured). On the weight-of-evidence available in 2021, the stock status of striped marlin is determined to be overfished and subject to overfishing
Blue Marlin No new stock assessment for blue marlin was carried out in 2021 so the stock status is based on the 2019 assessment conducted using the Bayesian State-Space Surplus Production model JABBA which suggests that there is an 87% probability that the Indian Ocean blue marlin stock in 2017 is in the red zone of the Kobe plot, indicating the stock is overfished and subject to overfishing.
Black Marlin A stock assessment based on JABBA, a Bayesian state-space production model (age-aggregated), was conducted in 2021 for black marlin. Since 2018, there has been no discernable improvement in the data

available for black marlin and the subsequent assessment outputs remain uncertain and should be interpreted with caution. As such, there is no reasonable justification to change the stock status from "Not assessed/Uncertain".
Indo-Pacific sailfish No new stock assessment for Indo-Pacific sailfish was carried out in 2021, thus, the stock status is determined on the basis of the 2019 assessment using the C-MSY model. The data poor stock assessment techniques indicated that F was above FMSY (F/FMSY=1.22) and B above BMSY (B/BMSY=1.14). On the weight-of-evidence available in 2019, the stock status cannot be assessed and is determined to be uncertain.

The complete report of the 26th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available for download from the IOTC website: https://iotc.org/meetings/26th-session-indian-ocean-tuna-commission

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the WPB

1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2022–WPB20–04 which outlined the outcomes of the 26th Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPB and **AGREE** to consider how best to provide the SC with the information it needs, in order to satisfy the Commission's requests, throughout the course of the current WPB meeting.
2) **NOTE** that 4 new Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) were adopted at the 26th Session of the Commission (consisting of 4 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations).