

PROGRESS MADE ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF WPEB17 AND SC24

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PURPOSE

To provide participants at the 18th Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB) with an update on the progress made in implementing those recommendations from the previous WPEB 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 17th Session of the WPEB, 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 WPEB was provided to the SC for its endorsement at its December 2021 meeting. This paper provides a summary of the progress made on this list of requests so that the working party can evaluate progress made and to agree on the next steps to be taken for each issue.

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 22nd 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 WPEB16.

RECOMMENDATION

That the WPEB **NOTE** the progress made in implementing the recommendations and requests of the 17th Session of the WPEB, and consider whether revised recommendations need to be sent to the SC for its consideration.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Progress made on the Recommendations and Requests of WPEB17

APPENDIX I

Progress made on the recommendations and requests of WPEB17 and SC24

WPEB17 Rec. No.	Recommendation from WPEB17	SC24 Rec. No.	Recommendation adopted by the SC24	Endorsed at S25/6	Progress/Comments
WPEB17 (AS).01 (para 92)	Therefore, the WPEB RECOMMENDED that the SC endorse the use of subsurface gillnetting in the Indian Ocean as an effective mitigation measure. The WPEB reminds the SC that Resolution 19/01 already requests the utilization of subsurface gillnets by 2023 to mitigate ecological impacts of this gear. The WPEB RECOMMENDED that the SC is kept informed about the current status of implementation of the relevant clause of Resolution 19/01.	SC24.14 (para. 77)	The SC NOTED the use of subsurface gillnetting in the Indian Ocean may be an effective mitigation measure to reduce bycatch of cetaceans, sharks and sea turtles and that Resolution 19/01 already requests the utilization of subsurface gillnets by 2023 to mitigate ecological impacts of this gear. The SC RECOMMENDED that it be kept informed by the Commission on the current status of implementation of the relevant clause of Resolution 19/01.		Update: Ongoing
WPEB17 (AS).02 (para 121)	The WPEB RECOMMENDED that the SC endorse a workshop on multi-taxa bycatch mitigation measures dedicated to drift/gillnet fisheries in the Indian Ocean to be conducted in 2022, in order to develop recommendations for consideration by the WPEB. The WPEB further AGREED to review in 2022 the need to address multi-taxa mitigation measures for additional gear types in future years.	SC24 (para 76)	The SC AGREED with the recommendation from the WPEB that a multi-taxa bycatch mitigation workshop focused on drift gillnet fisheries in the Indian Ocean should be held, NOTING that bycatch is thought to be significant with this gear. The SC NOTED paper IOTC-2021-SC24-INF09 which provides a draft terms of reference for this workshop and NOTED that the expected results of such a workshop would be to provide a mitigation toolbox which can help to reduce bycatch in gillnet fisheries ensuring that these are replicable for gillnet fleets across all CPCs and to develop recommendations for consideration by the WPEB.		This workshop was held at the end of August 2022. Outcomes and recommendations from the workshop will be presented to the WPEB18.
WPEB17 (AS).03 (para 157)	One of the key discussions during this meeting was for the WPEB to endorse the draft Letter of Intent intended to formalise the collaboration between IOTC and IWC (paper IOTC-2021-WPEB17(AS)-INF03). The WPEB NOTED that this letter is based on the language used in the Letter of Intent between IOTC and ACAP which has been accepted by the Commission. The WPEB NOTED that there was dissent during discussions of this proposal but finally the WPEB	SC24.13 (para. 74)	The SC ACKNOWLEDGED the proposed Letter of Intent between the IWC and IOTC and NOTED that this letter is based on the language used in the Letter of Intent between IOTC and ACAP which has been accepted by the Commission. The SC RECOMMENDED that the letter is presented at the Commission for further consideration.	S26 (para 209)	The Letter of Intent was revised then adopted by the Commission and is now in the process of being approved by IWC and FAO.

	ACKNOWLEDGED the Letter of Intent and RECOMMENDED that the letter is discussed at the SC.				
WPEB17 (AS).04 (para 169)	<p>The WPEB RECOMMENDED that the Scientific Committee consider the consolidated set of recommendations arising from WPEB17, provided at Appendix XVIII, as well as the management advice provided in the draft resource stock status summary for each of the seven shark species, as well of those for marine turtles and seabirds:</p> <p>Sharks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue sharks (<i>Prionace glauca</i>) – Appendix VII Oceanic whitetip sharks (<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>) – Appendix VIII Scalloped hammerhead sharks (<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>) – Appendix IX Shortfin mako sharks (<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>) – Appendix X Silky sharks (<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>) – Appendix XI Bigeye thresher sharks (<i>Alopias superciliosus</i>) – Appendix XII Pelagic thresher sharks (<i>Alopias pelagicus</i>) – Appendix XIII <p>Other species/groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine turtles – Appendix XIV Seabirds – Appendix XV Marine mammals – Appendix XVI 	<p>SC24.04 (para. 158)</p> <p>SC24.05 (para. 159)</p> <p>SC24.06 (para. 160)</p>	<p>The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission note the management advice developed for a subset of shark species commonly caught in IOTC fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species:</p> <p>Blue shark (<i>Prionace glauca</i>) – Appendix 23</p> <p>Oceanic whitetip shark (<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>) – Appendix 24</p> <p>Scalloped hammerhead shark (<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>) – Appendix 25</p> <p>Shortfin mako shark (<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>) – Appendix 26</p> <p>Silky shark (<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>) – Appendix 27</p> <p>Bigeye thresher shark (<i>Alopias superciliosus</i>) – Appendix 28</p> <p>Pelagic thresher shark (<i>Alopias pelagicus</i>) – Appendix 29</p> <p>The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission note the management advice developed for marine turtles, as provided in the Executive Summary encompassing all six species found in the Indian Ocean:</p> <p>Marine turtles – Appendix 30</p> <p>The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission note the management advice developed for seabirds, as provided in the Executive Summary encompassing all species commonly interacting with IOTC fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species:</p> <p>Seabirds – Appendix 31</p> <p>The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission note the management advice developed for cetaceans, as provided in the newly developed Executive Summary encompassing all</p>	S26 (para 40)	Update: Completed

		SC24.07 (para. 161)	species commonly interacting with IOTC fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species: Cetaceans – Appendix 32		
WPEB17 (AS).05 (para 164)	The WPEB RECOMMENDED that the SC consider and endorse the WPEB Program of Work (2022–2026), as provided in Appendix XVII .	SC24 (para. 176)	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.		Update: Completed

WPEB17 Report	WPEB REQUESTS	Update/Progress
WPEB17 (para 23 and 24)	<p>The WPEB NOTED that some of the CPCs indicated by the last Compliance Committee as <i>partially-compliant</i> or <i>non-compliant</i> with respect to size data reporting requirements for shark species (at least one fish measured by ton caught, as per paragraph 5 of Resolution 15/02) are not in a position to fulfil this requirement when individuals are discarded, either because of safety concerns, or because of retention bans at national level requiring immediate release of all caught individuals for the species.</p> <p>For this reason, the WPEB REQUESTED that the matter be further discussed at the next WPDCS, and that these constraints are properly taken into account when assessing the level of compliance of such CPCs with respect to size data reporting requirements.</p>	<p>Update: At the WPDCS meeting of 2021, the issue of fulfilling mandatory requirements of sampling 1 fish per metric ton of catch was discussed. The WPDCS NOTED the difficulty for some CPCs to fulfil the mandatory requirement of sampling at least 1 fish per metric ton of catch (by species and gear), particularly in the case of bycatch species that are brought onboard alive and whose handling might put the safety of crew members at risk (e.g., sharks). The WPDCS RECOMMENDED the Scientific Committee to further discuss this issue to ensure that CPCs are not penalized from a compliance perspective when the above circumstances arise in their fisheries.</p> <p>The SC did not endorse this recommendation. A proposal for a revised Resolution 15/02 was presented to the Commission and would have partially addressed this issue but the proposal was not adopted by the Commission.</p>
WPEB17 (para 30)	<p>The WPEB thanked those CPCs who had already submitted these documents and REQUESTED CPCs who had not yet done so to submit their NPOAs to the Secretariat to be uploaded onto the NPOA portal. The WPEB encouraged participants to view these documents.</p>	<p>Update: [Ongoing] The Secretariat continues to follow up with CPCs on the status of their NPOAs. Any new NPOAs brought to the attention of the secretariat have been included in document IOTC-2022-WPEB18-08</p>
WPEB17 (para 61)	<p>WPEB NOTED that when compared to ratio-based estimates, GAM's estimated catch explicitly takes into account the factors that affect blue shark catch reports. The estimate is consistent with the previous estimate and the annual change is small. The WPEB AGREED to use the GAM estimated catches in the blue shark stock assessment. The WPEB further REQUESTED standard errors of the catch estimates to be reported.</p>	<p>Update: This will be considered for the next blue shark stock assessment which is currently scheduled for 2025.</p>
WPEB17 (para 76)	<p>The WPEB ADOPTED the management advice developed for blue shark, as provided in the draft status summary and REQUESTED that the IOTC Secretariat update the draft stock status summary with the latest 2019 interaction data and the results from</p>	<p>Update: Complete.</p>

	<p>the projections in the Kobe II Strategy Matrix, and for the summary to be provided to the SC as part of the draft Executive Summary, for its consideration:</p> <p>Blue Shark (<u>Appendix VII</u>).</p>	
WPEB17 (para 93)	<p>In light of the above, and ACKNOWLEDGING that subsurface setting is becoming a common practice across Indian Ocean gillnet fisheries, the WPEB AGREED on the importance of updating the process for the provision of catch statistics (as per IOTC Resolution 15/02) so as to clearly distinguish catches from the two gear configurations, and REQUESTED the WPDCS to take the lead on this activity and eventually support CPCs in the revision of their historical gillnet catches in that sense.</p>	<p>Update: At the WPDCS meeting of 2021, the issue of data collection for sub-surface gillnets was discussed. The WPDCS NOTED that, in relation to gillnet fleets operating within the IOTC Area of Competence, the WPEB had discussed the possibility of updating the IOTC code list of gears to include surface and sub-surface gillnets in order to better understand and monitor the impacts of sub-surface gillnets and their interaction with bycatch – subject to confirmation of availability of this data by CPCs. The WPDCS did not discuss the issue in more detail and so did not endorse the updating of the IOTC code list of gears.</p> <p>This issue was discussed further during the multi-taxa bycatch mitigation workshop in August.</p> <p>The Secretariat intends to present a radically different approach for the classification of fisheries at the next WPDCS, which – among other things – has provisions for the reporting of catches (and any other fishery data) by specific gear configuration.</p>
WPEB17 (para 96 and 97)	<p>The WPEB inquired about the materials currently tested to build Jelly-FADs, NOTING that some of the materials were the same as those used in the frame of the <u>EU BIOFAD project</u> in 2018-2019, which did not meet fishers expectations in terms of resistance. The WPEB NOTED that since the Jelly-FAD is designed to reduce the structural stress, materials that were not appropriate for the BIOFAD designs used in the EU BIOFAD project, tend to last longer when used to build Jelly-FADs.</p> <p>The WPEB REQUESTED that this work is presented in the coming FAD WG meeting.</p>	<p>The paper was presented at the FAD WG as requested. Some related discussions included the following:</p> <p>The WGFAD NOTED that work is still required in order to find well-performing, suitable materials to eliminate the plastic materials used in the floating component of dFADs, meaning that reaching Category I (100% biodegradable dFADs) is currently not possible. The WGFAD NOTED a suggestion that the cost implication of the various categories of dFADs should be assessed as fleets have found that the lifespan of biodegradable dFADs can be very short due to degradation issues so they must be replaced often and this, along with the higher costs associated with the biodegradable materials, can become extremely expensive. The WGFAD NOTED that the feedback from fishers to ISSF on this FAD design has been good with them reporting good aggregations under the dFADs and that the jelly-dFADs drift slowly which is thought to aid in the aggregation of tunas. The WGFAD NOTED that data from the echosounder buoys attached to this design are currently being analysed to assess their tuna</p>

		<p>aggregation capacity and the results from this assessment should be available by the end of 2021.</p> <p>The WGFAD NOTED that experiments at sea will continue throughout 2022 to improve the jelly-FAD design in terms of further reducing its weight and level of floatation required which will therefore reduce the need for plastic buoys in the jelly-FAD design.</p>
WPEB17 (para 106 and 107)	<p>The WPEB NOTED the importance of understanding the role of the ecoregions in the context of providing the ecosystem reporting products (e.g., ecosystem and fishery overview reports, ecosystem risk assessments, etc.) and that the concrete example of ecosystem reporting products utilizing ecoregions would facilitate the discussion at the second ecoregion workshop as well as providing a clear picture of their benefits and potential uses.</p> <p>Therefore, the WPEB REQUESTED a modification to the Terms of Reference of the second IOTC eco-region workshop to add a task of providing an example of an ecosystem reporting product tailored to the ecoregions derived from the first workshop prior to the meeting and to be presented at the workshop.</p>	<p>Update: Following the WPEB request that ecosystem reporting products should be developed, this task was added to the TORs for the workshop. During the workshop, discussions were held regarding an ongoing pilot study to test the role and usefulness of ecoregions for developing ecosystem reporting products. However, this study is not yet complete due to a lack of funding and human resources required to complete the work. The continuation of this study was supported and the possibility of obtaining funds through the IOTC was discussed during the workshop and should be further discussed by the WPEB.</p>
WPEB17 (para 123)	<p>The WPEB NOTED the request for joint collaboration on organizing multi-taxa bycatch mitigation workshops with relevant organisations including but not limited to IWC, ACAP, IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU and CMS Sharks MOU.</p>	<p>Update: The series of workshops was endorsed by SC and Commission and the first workshop relating to gillnet bycatch was held in August 2022.</p>
WPEB17 (para 127 and 128)	<p>The WPEB NOTED the discrepancies between the data presented and the data submitted to the IOTC Secretariat, much of which has been aggregated, and REQUESTED the authors to review the differences and submit data to the required level of detail with the support of the Secretariat.</p> <p>The WPEB NOTED the drop in reported catches of sharks in 2018 in the data submitted to IOTC by India and the lack of information on the reasons for this (i.e., whether these are data reporting issues or reflect an actual decline in catches) and REQUESTED the authors to investigate this with the IOTC Secretariat and report back to WPEB.</p>	<p>Update: Ongoing</p>



WPEB17 (para 162)	The WPEB REQUESTED that IOSEA provide more information about its structure and functioning and the rationale for the need for collaboration. The WPEB NOTED that there were differing opinions during discussions of this proposal and therefore there was no agreement to pass the letter on to the SC at this stage.	Update: IOSEA plans to present a paper to this WPEB meeting which should provide more information on this issue.