
PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 24th SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

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PURPOSE

To provide participants at the 25th Scientific Committee (SC) with an update on the progress made in implementing the recommendations from the previous SC meeting, and to provide alternative recommendations for the consideration and potential endorsement by participants as appropriate given any progress.

BACKGROUND

At the 24th Session of the SC, 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 SC was endorsed 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.

The Recommendations endorsed by the SC at its 24th Session are contained in [Appendix I](#) for the consideration, review of progress, and revision/reiteration as necessary by the SC24. The SC participants are also encouraged to review the Progress on the Recommendations of Working Parties prepared by the Secretariat and presented to each Working Party for their consideration and revision (IOTC-2022-WPNT12-06, IOTC-2022-WPEB18-06, IOTC-2022-WPB20-06, IOTC-2022-WPM13-06, IOTC-2022-WPTT24(DP)-06, IOTC-2022-WPDCS18-06, IOTC-2022-WPTmT08-06).

RECOMMENDATION

That the SC:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2022–SC25–10 which detailed the progress made in implementing the recommendations and the requests of the 24th Session of the Scientific Committee (SC24);
- 2) **AGREE** to consider and revise as necessary, the recommendations, and for these to be combined with any new recommendations arising from SC25.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Progress made on the Recommendations of SC24

SC24 Report	SC recommendations	Update/Progress
<p>SC24.08 Para. 26</p> <p>SC24.09 Para. 27</p>	<p>National Reports from CPCs</p> <p>NOTING that the Commission, at its 25th Session (in 2021), noted that there was an improvement in submission of National reports in 2020 over the previous year, it also reiterated its concerns about the lack and poor quality of data, and again, strongly encouraged CPCs to take immediate steps to review, and where necessary, improve their performance with respect to the provision of data through improved compliance with Resolutions 15/01 and 15/02. The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission note that there was a decrease in the Submission of National reports in 2021, as only 21 reports were provided by CPCs (25 in 2020, 23 in 2019, 26 in 2018, 23 in 2017 and 23 in 2016 (Table 2).</p> <p>The SC RECOMMENDED that the Compliance Committee and Commission note the lack of compliance by 9 Contracting Parties (Members) and 1 Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CNCPS) that did not submit a National Report to the Scientific Committee in 2021, noting that the Commission agreed that the submission of the annual reports to the Scientific Committee is mandatory</p>	<p>Update: Ongoing. “(Para 26) The Commission NOTED that 21 National Reports were submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2021 by CPCs. Of the 21 National Reports submitted, 6 were submitted after the deadline.” CPCs are encouraged to provide national reports whether or not they are attending the SC meeting and that the provision of national reports is a mandatory requirement for all CPCs</p> <p>Update: The SC chair presented the report of the S24 to the Commission in May 2022. The Commission noted this issue.</p>
<p>SC24.10 Para. 42</p> <p>SC24.11 Para. 56</p>	<p>Report of the 19th Session of the Working Party on Billfish (WPB19)</p> <p>RECALLING that one of the Indian Ocean billfish species (shortbill spearfish, <i>Tetrapturus angustirostris</i>) is currently not listed among the species managed by IOTC and considering the ocean-wide distribution of this species, its highly-migratory nature, and that it is a common bycatch in IOTC managed fisheries, the SC reiterated its previous RECOMMENDATION that shortbill spearfish be included as an IOTC species.</p> <p>Revision of catch levels of Marlins under Resolution 18/05</p> <p>The SC NOTED that catches in recent years for black marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish have exceeded all recent MSY estimates and catch limits set by Resolution 18/05 (para 3), and that the current catch trends for the two species show no signs of decline - these catch limits will likely be exceeded again in 2021. Furthermore, results from the 2021 assessment of striped marlin provided certainty that the stock is overfished and subject to overfishing (100% probability) and that biomass has been below that which would produce MSY for over a decade. The biomass of striped marlin is considered severely depleted. As such, the SC NOTED the inadequacy of Resolution 18/05 in limiting the catches of billfishes and RECOMMENDED the Commission to review the Resolution to update catch limits and provide mechanisms to ensure these limits are adhered to.</p>	<p>Update: Ongoing (Para 4 of IOTC-2022-WPB19-R) - The WPB NOTED that a recommendation to include shortbill spearfish in the IOTC list of species had been made for several consecutive years with no progress to date. As such the WPB AGREED that it would be more productive to provide some additional justification for this request before making it again, including feedback on catches and the necessity for this inclusion. The WPB also NOTED that there may be a need to revise the IOTC agreement to accommodate this request.)</p> <p>Update: Ongoing. To date no new CMMs have been adopted by the Commission for Billfish.</p>

<p>SC24.12 Para. 60</p> <p>SC24.13 Para. 74</p> <p>SC24.14 Para. 77</p>	<p>Report of the 17th Session of the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB17)</p> <p>Status of development and implementation of national plans of action for seabirds and sharks, and implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations</p> <p>The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission note the current status of development and implementation of National Plans of Action (NPOAs) for sharks and seabirds, and the implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations, by each CPC as provided in Appendix 5, recalling that the IPOA-Seabirds and IPOA-Sharks were adopted by the FAO in 1999 and 2000, respectively, and recommended the development of NPOAs.</p> <p>Other matters</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Update: Ongoing. The SC chair presented the current status of development and implementation of National Plans of Action (NPOAs) for sharks and seabirds, and the implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations to the Commission in 2022.</p> <p>Update: Completed. The Commission approved an agreement to increase cooperation between the IOTC and IWC.</p> <p>Update: Ongoing. The SC will continue to liaise with the Commission to receive this information</p>
<p>SC24.15 Para. 103</p> <p>SC24.16 Para. 107</p>	<p>Report of the 23rd Session of the Working Party on Tropical Tunas (WPTT23)</p> <p>Yellowfin tuna Stock Assessment</p> <p>The SC NOTED the importance of the peer review process and its role in providing improved scientific advice for management. The SC therefore RECOMMENDED that the Commission endorse the process for a YFT stock assessment review as well as the BET MSE review and provide the financial resources to conduct the work planned.</p> <p>Update on the WGFAD02</p> <p>The SC RECOMMENDED the Committee endorse the process to improve current definitions of FAD and FAD activities used by the IOTC, to be conducted by the WPTT and WGFAD</p>	<p>Update: Approved. The Commission endorsed the process, and a yellowfin tuna stock assessment peer review meeting will be held in February 2023. The BET MSE expert will also be contracted in 2023.</p> <p>Update: Ongoing. The issues was once again discussed during the WGFAD03 meeting in 2022 and progress is being made in a small WG to advance the adoption of standardised definitions.</p>

<p>SC24.17 (para. 114)</p> <p>SC24.18 (para. 115)</p>	<p>Report of the 12th Session of the Working Party on Methods (WPM12)</p> <p>Management Strategy Evaluation Progress</p> <p>The SC NOTED the guidelines included as Appendix 6a to this report to deal with exceptional circumstances in the MSE process. The SC further NOTED that these guidelines are a living document and revisions may still be required in the future. The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission consider and endorse the guidelines.</p> <p>The SC NOTED the revised schedule of MSE work included as Appendix 6b to this report to provide the timeframe for the development of management procedures for key IOTC species. The SC NOTED that the revised MSE schedule is still ambitious but that the technical work could, in principle, be completed within the proposed timeframes with minor adjustments. The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission consider and endorse the revised timetable.</p>	<p>Update: Endorsed. The Commission endorsed the document, and it is included/referenced in Res 22/03.</p> <p>Update: Completed. The Commission endorsed the revised timetable.</p>
<p>SC24.19 (para. 136)</p> <p>SC24.20 (para. 139)</p> <p>SC24.21 (para. 140)</p> <p>SC24.22 (para. 143)</p>	<p>Report of the 17th Session of the Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS17)</p> <p>NOTING that the WPDCS identified aspects of several data-related resolutions that are either unclear or inconsistent (15/01, 15/02 and 19/02) the SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission consider how to best address these issues at the next revision of each resolution.</p> <p>ACKNOWLEDGING that the workload of the Secretariat data team has increased markedly in recent years to manage an increasing number of datasets, provide more data outputs, and improve data access, the SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission consider strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat’s Data Group with the addition of an extra staff member.</p> <p>The SC ACKNOWLEDGED the long-term relationship between the OFCF and the IOTC to improve the collection, management and reporting of fisheries statistics and RECOMMENDED the Commission consider the continuation of this collaboration through an appropriate arrangement.</p> <p>Update on WGEMS01</p> <p>The SC NOTED the outcomes of the 1st ad-hoc IOTC WGEMS and RECOMMENDED the Commission endorse its continuation in the future and for the Commission to discuss if the WGEMS should remain under the WPDCS or report directly to the SC or CoC. The SC ENDORSED the Terms of Reference and Plan of Work for the WGEMS.</p>	<p>Update: Ongoing. No revision to the relevant Resolutions were undertaken in 2021/22</p> <p>Update: Ongoing. The Commission endorsed the new position, but it has yet to be filled</p> <p>Update: Completed. The Commission endorsed and agreed to a Collaborative agreement with OFCF.</p> <p>Update: Completed. The WGEMS was endorsed by the Commission and held its second meeting in 2022.</p>
<p>SC24.23 Para. 145</p>	<p>Invited Expert(s) at the WP meetings</p> <p>Given the importance of external independent review for working party meetings, the SC RECOMMENDED the Commission continues to allocate sufficient budget for invited scientific experts to be regularly invited to scientific working party meetings.</p>	<p>Update: Ongoing. The Commission has provided budget for invited experts for 2023.</p>
<p>SC24.24 Para. 147</p>	<p>Meeting participation fund</p>	<p>Update: All meetings have been held online since 2019, apart from the 2022 SC and as such the MPF has not been significantly utilized recently. It is envisioned that hybrid meetings will be held in 2023 and as such the MPF will once again be utilised.</p>

	The SC reiterated its RECOMMENDATION that the IOTC Rules of Procedure (2014), for the administration of the Meeting Participation Fund be modified so that applications are due not later than 60 days, and that the full Draft paper be submitted no later than 45 days before the start of the relevant meeting. The aim is to allow the Selection Panel to review the full paper rather than just the abstract, and provide guidance on areas for improvement, as well as the suitability of the application to receive funding using the IOTC MPF. The earlier submission dates would also assist with visa application procedures for candidates.	
SC24.25 Para. 148	<i>IOTC species identification guides: Tuna and tuna-like species</i> The SC reiterated its RECOMMENDATION that the Commission allocates budget towards continuing the translation and printing of the IOTC species ID guides so that hard copies of the identification cards can continue to be printed as many CPC scientific observers, both on board and at port, need to have hard copies.	Update: Ongoing. Budget has been made available through the IOTC main budget and the OFCF project to continue the printing of ID cards and this has continued in 2022 and will do again in 2023.
SC24.26 Para. 150	<i>General - Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the SC and its subsidiary bodies</i> The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission note and endorse the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons for the SC and its subsidiary bodies for the coming years, as provided in Appendix 7.	Update: Completed
SC24.27 Para. 181	<i>General - Consultants</i> Noting the highly beneficial and relevant work done by IOTC stock assessment consultants in previous years, the SC RECOMMENDED that the engagement of consultants be continued for each coming year based on the Program of Work. Consultants will be hired to supplement the skill set available within the IOTC Secretariat and CPCs.	Update: Ongoing. Several consultants were contracted in 2022.