

OUTCOMES OF THE 26th SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

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PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 18th Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS18) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 26th Session, held in Seychelles from 16 - 20 May 2022), specifically relating to the work of the WPDCS.

BACKGROUND

At the 26th Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 4 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (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.*
- Resolution 22/02 *On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels.*
- Resolution 22/03 *On a Management Procedure for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence.*
- Resolution 22/04 *On a Regional Observer Scheme.*

Pursuant to Article IX.4 of the IOTC Agreement, the above-mentioned Conservation and Management Measures shall become binding on Members, 120 days from the date of the notification communicated by the Secretariat.

DISCUSSION

The Commission also made a number of general comments on the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee in 2021, which have relevance for the WPDCS (IOTC–2021–S24–R):

Report of the Scientific Committee

(Para. 25) *The Commission **NOTED** that all scientific meetings had been successfully held in 2021, utilising videoconference platforms and a shortened format. The Commission also **NOTED** that the MPF was not used for science-related meetings in 2021 because they were all convened by videoconference.*

(Para. 27) *The Commission **ENDORSED** a data support mission to Oman, by the IOTC Secretariat. This visit would facilitate information sharing to better understand the development of Oman's fisheries which have shown a significant growth in recent years.*

(Para. 28) *The Commission **NOTED** the recommendation by the SC to endorse the continuation of the WGEMS 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 Commission also **NOTED** that the Terms of Reference and Plan of Work for the WGEMS as endorsed by the SC. The Commission **AGREED** that the WGEMS should continue to work under the WPDCS at this time.*

The status of tropical and temperate tunas

(Para. 31) *The Commission **REITERATED** its concern over the status of the yellowfin tuna stock and **NOTED** the SC observation that some of the fisheries subject to catch reductions have achieved a decrease in catches in 2020 in accordance with the levels of reductions specified in the Resolution; however, these reductions were offset by increases in the catches of yellowfin tuna by some CPCs, including some that were subject to limitations.*

(Para. 32) *The Commission **NOTED** that different fishing gears and fleets have differing impacts on the yellowfin tuna population. The Commission **REQUESTED** that the SC conduct a fisheries impact assessment to determine the individual gear/fleet effects on the yellowfin tuna stock status, and productivity.*

The complete report of the 24th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available for download from the IOTC website: <https://iotc.org/documents/report-26th-session-indian-ocean-tuna-commission>

RECOMMENDATION/s

That the WPDCS:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC-2022-WPDCS18-04 which outlined the outcomes of the 26th Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPDCS and **AGREE** to consider how best to provide the SC with the information it needs to satisfy the Commission's requests throughout the course of the current WPDCS meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** the 4 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) adopted at the 26th Session of the Commission (consisting of 4 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations) which have a direct impact on the work of the WPDCS.