

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES THAT INCLUDE A REFERENCE TO THE YEAR 2023

PREPARED BY: SECRETARIAT

PURPOSE

To draw the attention of the Commission to the IOTC Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) that include a reference to the year 2023.

BACKGROUND

The Commission has the following 9 CMMs that make references to the year 2023.

1. Resolution 22/01 On climate change as it relates to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

Para 7. The IOTC Executive Secretary shall propose for endorsement by the Commission, for its 2023 session, options and alternatives to reduce the environmental impacts of the IOTC activities related to headquarters' operation and meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. In particular, the Secretariat is requested to propose guidelines to reduce the impact of in person meetings, including a list of meetings to be held virtually.

Comment:

Current headquarters operations

- the Secretariat's offices use LED lighting with automatic (sensor) light switches in common areas;
- air conditioners are switched off during after-hours;
- drinking water is provided in the form of a water fountain;
- the offices use and produce minimal paper products;
- carpooling is encouraged.

Proposed actions to reduce environmental impacts of the IOTC for endorsement by the Commission

1. Reducing the number of vehicles used by the Secretariat from 2 to 1.
2. Reducing the number of paper products: IOTC manuals and the CMM Compendium will not to be produced as hardcopies.
3. The hosts of IOTC meetings are encouraged to provide sustainable table-water solutions;
4. When appropriate, hold online training and develop/use online learning tools for capacity development.
5. Reducing IOTCs travel footprint:
 - Working Groups and Data Preparatory meetings are to be held virtually.
 - While physical participation by Members at Commission and Committee meetings is strongly preferred, hybrid meetings will continue to enable broader participation. Delegations with fewer persons travelling to meetings are strongly encouraged.
 - Observers are invited to participate virtually in IOTC meetings.
 - The hosts of IOTC meetings are encouraged to provide sustainable table water solutions.
 - The Secretariat will consider the benefits of using remote interpretation for sessions of committees and the Commission.
 - Meeting Participation Fund support to both scientific and non-scientific meetings shall be limited to one person per eligible Member; and Members are encouraged to send one person to participate in back-to-back meetings.

Para 4 (progress to-date in 2023 — for information). The IOTC Scientific Committee shall consider how climate change and fishing activities may be related and provide advice to the Commission on the potential implications for these relationships for the conservation and management of tuna and associated stocks.

Comment:

- *Within the IOTC Scientific bodies, climatic effects are being analyzed in the context of ecosystem-based assessments and being considered for stock assessments.*
- *Objective 2.5 of the IOTC Strategic Science plan 2019-2024 is to Advance ecosystems-based management advice by developing a work plan to advance ecosystem-based fisheries management by 2024 taking climate change into account.*
- *The Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch will provide advice to the Scientific Committee on what climate change issues and messages are relevant to IOTC at its meeting in 2023.*

Para 5 (progress to-date in 2023 — for information). The IOTC Executive Secretary, with the advice of the IOTC Scientific Committee, upon the availability of supplementary funds, shall undertake capacity-building programs in particular in the developing coastal States among them the Least Developed States and Small Island Developing States, to improve climate change science and the understanding of climate change impacts on tuna stocks, bycatch and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent on or associated with the tuna stocks.

Comment:

- *The Scientific Committee is yet to provide the aforementioned advice to the Executive Secretary.*
- *The Secretariat will communicate climate change messages (as provided by the Scientific Committee) when relevant during capacity development activities.*

Para 6 (progress to-date in 2023 — for information). The IOTC Executive Secretary shall seek funding for the implementation of climate change related scientific works and capacity building programs through various funding mechanisms such as the Global Environmental Facility, World Bank and others for the implementation of this resolution.

Comment:

- *Extra budgetary funded work currently focuses on stock assessment and data collection. Once IOTC climate change objectives are identified by the Scientific Committee and agreed by the Commission, the Executive Secretary will reach out to prospective donors.*
- *In the meantime, the Executive Secretary will contact FAO to ascertain whether it has introductory materials or training available on climate change that can be provided to IOTC Members*

2. Resolution 22/02 On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels

Para 26. The provisions in paragraph 25 will be rescheduled in consultation with the IOTC Secretariat as a two-year pilot project that started in 2021. The results of the project, including data collection, reports and the effectiveness of the project shall be examined in 2023 by the IOTC Compliance Committee on the basis of a report prepared by Indonesia and analysis by the IOTC Secretariat. This review shall include whether the programme offers the same level of assurances as those provided by the ROP. It shall also explore the feasibility of obtaining an IMO number for the vessels concerned. The extension of the project or the integration of the project into the ROP shall be subject to a new decision of the Commission.

Comment:

- *Indonesia has yet to submit the required report. Document IOTC-2023-CoC20-04c provides the information available to the IOTC Secretariat for consideration by the 20th Session of the Compliance Committee.*

3. Resolution 22/03 On a management procedure for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence

Para 6. The first TAC derived from the MP shall apply in 2024 and 2025. After 2025, the TAC shall apply in each of the subsequent three years following the year it is set by the Commission⁴. (4. E.g. the Scientific Committee runs the MP in 2022, the TAC is set by the Commission in 2023, the TAC applies in 2024 and 2025. The Scientific Committee runs the MP in 2024, the TAC is set by the Commission in 2025, the TAC applies from 2026-2028.)

Comment:

- *The Scientific Committee Chair will present the Committee's recommendation on the TAC during his presentation to S27.*

4. Resolution 22/04 on a Regional Observer Scheme

Para 4. The IOTC Scientific Committee, in collaboration with the Compliance Committee, shall develop and agree on minimum standards for the use of EMS for purse seine, longline, bait boat (pole and line), handline, and gillnet fleets by 2023 at the latest, including on modalities of the substitution of the human observer coverage by an EMS, taking into account factors such as, the principles and regulations regarding minimum safe manning requirements. The Commission may consider and adopt these standards by 2024 in a separate Resolution.

Comment:

- *The minimum standards were discussed by the WGEMS in 2022. They were endorsed by the Scientific Committee in 2022 and will be presented for the Compliance Committee's consideration in 2023, through document IOTC-2023-CoC20-15.*

Para 14. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall adopt by 2023 the IOTC ROS Observer Manual and the IOTC Observer Forms used for reporting (including minimum data fields) and provide advice on a training program.

Comment:

- *On track. These manuals were developed during a project funded by the EU. Training was also provided for countries that participated in the pilot study.*

Para 21 The elements of the Observer Scheme, notably those regarding its coverage and the adoption of EMS standards, are subject to review and revision, as appropriate, for application in 2023 and subsequent years.

Comment:

- *On track. This was discussed and presented to the WGEMS in 2021 and 2022. This forms part of the information that will be presented to the CoC in 2023 as noted above.*

5. Resolution 21/01 On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence

Para 22. CPCs shall set their gillnets at 2m depth from the surface in gillnet fisheries by 2023 to mitigate ecological impacts of gillnets.

Comment:

- *For para 22, this information has been passed on to CPCs. Current data collection mechanisms do not facilitate the reporting of this information to the Secretariat.*

Para 23. CPCs are encouraged to increase their observer coverage or field sampling in gillnet fishing vessels by 10% using alternative data collection methodologies (electronic or human) verified by the IOTC Scientific Committee by 2023.

Comment:

- *For Para 23, this is ongoing and under discussion at both the WGEMS and other scientific working parties.*

6. Resolution 21/03 On harvest control rules for skipjack tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence.

Para 6. The skipjack tuna stock assessment shall be conducted every three (3) years, with the next stock assessment to occur in 2023. Estimates of 7(a–c) shall be taken from a model-based stock assessment that has been reviewed by the Working Party on Tropical Tunas and endorsed by the Scientific Committee via its advice to the Commission.

Comment:

- *On track. The skipjack tuna assessment will be conducted in 2023 as planned.*

7. Resolution 19/01 On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence — binding on Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Madagascar, Oman and Somalia only

Para 21. CPCs shall set their gillnets at 2m depth from the surface in gillnet fisheries by 2023 to mitigate ecological impacts of gillnets.

Para 22. CPCs are encouraged to increase their observer coverage or field sampling in gillnet fishing vessels by 10% using alternative data collection methodologies (electronic or human) verified by the IOTC Scientific Committee by 2023.

Comment:

- *See Res 21/01 above.*

8. Resolution 19/03 On the conservation of mobulid rays caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence.

Para 13 The IOTC Scientific Committee shall review the status of *Mobula spp.* in the IOTC Area of Competence and provide management advice to the Commission in 2023 also to identify possible hot-spots for conservation and management of mobulids within and beyond EEZs. Moreover, the IOTC Scientific Committee is requested to provide, whenever considered adequate on the basis of evolving knowledge and scientific advice, further improvements to the handling procedures detailed in Annex 1.

Comment:

- *The progress on this requirement has been limited due to the lack of data and information available for these species.*

9. Resolution 17/07 On the prohibition to use large-scale driftnets in the IOTC area (does not apply to Pakistan)

Para 7. The Commission shall periodically assess whether additional measures should be adopted and implemented to ensure that large-scale driftnets are not used in the IOTC area of competence and to take into account the latest advice of the Scientific Committee. The first such assessment shall take place in 2023.

Comment:

- *The Scientific Committee has not addressed this issue. Estimating the current level of large-scale driftnet use is a task best suited to fisheries compliance experts.*

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Commission:

- a) **NOTE** paper IOTC-2023-S27-04 which lists the references to the year 2023 made in existing CMMs.
- b) **CONSIDER** any actions to be taken in response to the above CMMs.
- c) **CONSIDER** endorsing the above proposed options requested in Resolution 2022/01 to reduce the environmental impacts of the IOTC activities related to headquarters' operation and meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.