

## OUTCOMES OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> SPECIAL SESSION AND 27<sup>TH</sup> SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 3 AUGUST 2023

### PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 21<sup>st</sup> Working Party on Billfish (WPB21) of the decision and requests made by the Commission at its 6<sup>th</sup> Special Session and 27<sup>th</sup> session held from 3-5 February 2023 and 8–12 May 2023 respectively, specifically relating to the work of the WPB.

### BACKGROUND

At the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the Commission 2 Conservation and Management Measures were adopted (consisting of 2 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), while at the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission, 9 Conservation and Management Measures were adopted (consisting of 8 Resolutions and 1 Recommendations), as detailed below

### Resolutions

#### SS6

- [Resolution 23/01](#) *On management of Anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (AFADs)* [[Download here](#)].
- [Resolution 23/02](#) *On Management of Drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (DFADs) in the IOTC area of competence* [[Download here](#)].

#### S27

- [Resolution 23/3](#) *On Establishing a Voluntary Fishing Closure in the Indian Ocean for the Conservation of Tropical Tunas* [[Download here](#)]
- [Resolution 23/4](#) *On Establishing Catch Limits for Bigeye Tuna in the Area of IOTC Competence* [[Download here](#)]
- [Resolution 23/5](#) *On Establishing a Programme for Transshipment by Large-scale Fishing Vessels* [[Download here](#)]
- [Resolution 23/6](#) *On the Conservation of Cetaceans* [[Download here](#)]
- [Resolution 23/7](#) *On Reducing the Incidental Bycatch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries* [[Download here](#)]
- [Resolution 23/8](#) *On Electronic Monitoring Standards for IOTC Fisheries* [[Download here](#)]
- [Resolution 23/9](#) *On a Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) Working Group* [[Download here](#)]
- [Resolution 23/10](#) *Terms of Reference for a Working Party on Socio-Economics* [[Download here](#)]

### Recommendations

- [Recommendation 23/11](#) *To Enhance Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission Decision Making Process* [[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 2022 (SC25), which have relevance for the WPB (IOTC–2023–S27–R):

### Status of billfish

Swordfish
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An 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**

In 2022 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) (using data up to 2020). Both models were consistent with regards to stock status. On the weight-of-evidence available in 2022, the stock is determined to be **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**

In 2022 a new stock assessment was conducted based on JABBA, a Bayesian state-space production model (using data up to 2019). On the weight-of-evidence available in 2022, the stock status of Indo-Pacific sailfish is determined to be **not overfished nor subject to overfishing**.

The complete report of the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available for download from the IOTC website: <https://iotc.org/meetings/27th-session-indian-ocean-tuna-commission>

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the WPB

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2023–WPB21–04 which outlined the outcomes of the 27<sup>th</sup> 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 11 new Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) were adopted at the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Session and 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission (consisting of 10 Resolutions and 1 Recommendation).