



01 March 2024

## IOTC CIRCULAR 2024-11

Dear Sir/Madam

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RECOMMENDED SKIPJACK TUNA CATCH LIMIT FOR 2024-2026

Under IOTC Resolution 21/03 *On harvest control rules for skipjack tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence*, the Commission adopted the use of a pre-agreed harvest control rule (HCR) to maintain the skipjack tuna stock at, or above, the target reference point, and well above the limit reference point.

The Commission also agreed that after a review of a model-based assessment of skipjack tuna by the Scientific Committee, the result of the assessment will be used by the Scientific Committee in the calculation of an annual catch limit using the adopted harvest control rule. The IOTC Secretariat would then notify CPC's of the new catch limit that will apply for the following three years.

A stock assessment of skipjack tuna was reviewed by the IOTC Scientific Committee in December 2023. **The annual catch limit calculated applying the skipjack tuna HCR specified in Resolution 21/03 is 628,606 tonnes for the period 2024 -2026.** The Scientific Committee noted that this catch limit is higher than for the previous period. This is attributed to the new stock assessment which estimates a higher productivity of the stock in recent years and a higher stock level relative to the target reference point, possibly due to skipjack life history characteristics and favorable environmental conditions. Noting that the environmental conditions are predicted to enter a less favorable period, it is important that the Commission ensures that catches of skipjack tuna during this period do not exceed the agreed limit, as occurred in recent years.

For comparison:

The annual catch limit, calculated by applying the HCR, for 2021 to 2023	513,572 t
The average catch for the period 2018-2022	613,061 t
The annual catch in 2022	666,408 t
The annual catch limit, calculated by applying the HCR, for 2024 to 2026	628,606 t

Paul de Bruyn  
Executive Secretary

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