
ON A MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE FOR SWORDFISH IN THE IOTC AREA OF COMPETENCE

SUBMITTED BY: AUSTRALIA

Explanatory Memorandum

In accordance with Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, Australia submits this proposal to support the Commission to adopt a management procedure for swordfish at the 28th Session of the IOTC.

We have taken a very similar approach to the Commission’s process to adopt the Management Procedure for Bigeye Tuna. The outline of this proposal follows the same outline as resolution 22/03 on a Management Procedure for Bigeye Tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence. Some areas of the proposal have been left blank to be filled in after discussions and recommendations from the 8th Session of the Technical Committee on Management Procedures which will be presented as a rev1 for the Commission.

The IOTC, at its 15th Session in 2011, endorsed the development of a management strategy evaluation (MSE) process for the development and testing of candidate management procedures (MP). In addition, a meeting of all the tuna RFMOs (i.e., Kobe III) also in 2011 decided on a general move towards the use of management procedures for setting catch limits. In 2016, the IOTC established the Technical Committee on Management Procedures (TCMP) specifically to “enhance the decision-making response of the Commission in relation to management procedures”, including MSE.

In 2017 the Commission adopted the ‘Schedule of work for the development of management procedures for key species in the IOTC Area’ (IOTC-2017-S21-R, Appendix 9) and has updated this in the period since. The current work plan for swordfish sets out the following tasks for 2024:

- TCMP: Provide advice to Commission on elements of MPs, and any proposed Resolutions for an MP, that require a decision by the Commission, including the performance of candidate MPs against Commission objectives.
- Commission: Consider work and advice from subsidiary bodies. Decision and adoption of a single MP.
- Working Parties/Scientific Committee: Consider recommendations from the Commission.

The 14th Session of the Working Party on Methods and 26th Session of the Scientific Committee, agreed that the technical work for swordfish was substantially progressed and, pending some final technical work, it may be ready to inform a Commission decision on an MP for this stock.

We welcome feedback on the proposal and invite all CPCs to engage in discussions at the upcoming TCMP and Commission meetings in May 2024.

RESOLUTION 24/XX
ON A MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE FOR SWORDFISH IN THE IOTC AREA OF COMPETENCE.

Keywords: *Swordfish, Management Procedure, Harvest Strategy, Target reference point, MSY.*

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

HAVING responsibility for the conservation and optimum utilization of tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean;

RECOGNISING the need for action to ensure the achievement of IOTC objectives to conserve and manage tuna resources in the IOTC area of competence;

RECOGNISING the adopted management objectives of the Commission set out in Resolution 15/10 are to: 1) maintain the biomass at or above levels required to produce MSY or its proxy, 2) maintain the fishing mortality rate at or below F_{MSY} or its proxy, and 3) avoid the biomass being below B_{LIM} and the fishing mortality rate being above F_{LIM} ;

MINDFUL of Article XVI of the IOTC Agreement regarding the rights of Coastal States and of Articles 87 and 116 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea regarding the right to fish on the high seas;

RECOGNISING the special requirements of developing States, particularly Small Island developing States, in Article 24 of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA);

RECOGNISING *Resolution 12/01 On the implementation of the precautionary approach* calls on the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission to implement and apply the precautionary approach, in accordance with Article 6 of UNFSA;

RECALLING *Resolution 15/10 On Target and Limit Reference Points and a Decision Framework*, which identifies objectives of the Commission to maintain stocks in perpetuity and with high probability, at levels not less than those capable of producing their maximum sustainable yield as qualified by relevant environmental and economic factors including the special requirements of developing States in the IOTC area of competence; and identifies reference points for IOTC stocks including swordfish;

RECOGNIZING the intent of the Commission to adopt management procedures aimed at achieving the objectives of the IOTC Agreement (Resolution 15/10) aided by advice of the Technical Committee on Management Procedures, as established in *Resolution 16/09* and as further expounded in the *Schedule of work for the development of management procedures for key species in the IOTC Area*;

ACKNOWLEDGING the Scientific Committee advice that the most recent stock assessment in 2023 determined swordfish is not overfished or subject to overfishing;

FURTHER CONSIDERING the advice from the 26th Session of the Scientific Committee that the key technical work (management strategy evaluation) required to test the performance of candidate management procedures for swordfish may be completed in time for the Commission to consider adopting a management procedure in 2024;

FURTHER CONSIDERING the advice and recommendations of the 7th and 8th Session of the Technical Committee on Management Procedures regarding a management procedure for swordfish which ...;

ADOPTS in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement:

Commented [A1]: To be filled in after TCMP during Commission meeting

1. A management procedure for the swordfish stock managed by the IOTC with a view of maintaining the stock biomass in the green zone of the Kobe plot (not overfished and not subject to overfishing) [while promoting stability in the total allowable catch (TAC) between management periods].

Commented [A2]: Will be determined by the selection of the MP and the Commission objective.

Management procedure

2. The adopted management procedure for swordfish known as [x] is described in Annex I (MP).
3. Consistent with the adopted management objectives of the Commission, the management procedure is designed to achieve:
 - a) a [60/70%] probability that the swordfish spawning stock biomass achieves the target reference point of SB_{MSY}^1 by 2034-2038;
 - b) the swordfish spawning stock biomass avoids breaching the interim limit reference point specified in Resolution 15/10 with a high probability;
 and operates with the following constraint:
 - c) the maximum increase or decrease in the TAC shall be [x%] relative to the previous TAC.

Total Allowable Catch setting

4. The Scientific Committee shall run the MP and advise the Commission of the outcome, including a recommended TAC and any advice on exceptional circumstances in accordance with the Commission endorsed Guidelines for the Provisions of Exceptional Circumstances for IOTC MPs as documented in Appendix 6a of IOTC-2021-SC24-R.
5. The Commission shall adopt the TAC based on the outcome of the MP, unless the Scientific Committee identifies exceptional circumstances that require consideration of alternate management actions to be taken by the Commission.
6. If exceptional circumstances are triggered, then the pre-existing TAC shall remain in place until a new TAC is agreed.
7. The first TAC derived from the MP shall apply in [2026-2028]. The TAC shall apply in each of the subsequent three years following the year it is set by the Commission².
8. The schedule for setting and applying the TAC, beginning the calendar year immediately following adoption of this Resolution, is shown in Annex II.

TAC allocation

9. Allocation of the TAC among CPCs will take place according to a process agreed external to this measure no later than the end of its 29th session in 2025.
10. The Commission will develop a mechanism to constrain catch to the MP derived TAC for swordfish no later than 2025, if an allocation scheme has not yet been agreed and implemented by the Commission.

Review

11. A review of performance of the MP by the Commission and its subcommittees is to occur in 2031. The aim of the review is to ensure the MP is performing as expected and whether there are any conditions that warrant

¹ The spawning stock biomass associated with achieving maximum sustainable yield.

² E.g. the Scientific Committee runs the MP in 2024, the TAC is set by the Commission in 2025, the TAC applies in 2026 - 2028. The Scientific Committee runs the MP in 2027, the TAC is set by the Commission in 2028, the TAC applies from 2029-2031.

reconditioning the operating models, retuning the existing MP, or consideration of alternate candidate MPs and a new full management strategy evaluation.

ANNEX I – MP



DESCRIPTION AND FORMULAE FOR CALCULATING TACs FOR MP

Commented [A3]: To be updated after selection of a candidate Management Procedure during TCMP and/or the Commission.

DATA SPECIFICATION

The input data for MP are:

ANNEX II – SCHEDULE FOR MP IMPLEMENTATION

IOTC COMMITTEE	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	
Commission (May/June)	Select and adopt SWF MP		Annual Review of SC advice 						
		Set TAC (2026-2028)			Set TAC (2029-2031)			Set TAC (2032-2034)	
WPB and WPM (Oct)	Collate data used in MP			Collate data used in MP			Collate data used in MP		
	Annual Consideration of exceptional circumstances (EC), advise SC	Consider EC	Consider EC	Consider EC	Consider EC	Consider EC	Consider EC	Consider EC	
SC (Dec)	Run MP		Run MP			Run MP			
		Assess stock status			Assess stock status			Assess stock status	
	Annual Review of Exceptional Circumstances 								
		Provide TAC advice to the Commission			Provide TAC advice			Provide TAC advice	

- The assessment of stock status has a distinct role and purpose from the management procedure and is not used for TAC advice. It is included in this schedule to identify best practice in the timing of running of the assessment, i.e. in the year after MP TAC decisions have been made.