WWF POSITION for the 29th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

IOTC-2025-S29-NGO04b

La Reunion Island

7- 17 April 2025

Introduction

The Indian Ocean[1] is considered the second-most productive ocean, supporting the second-largest tuna fishery in the world, characterized by the significant role of artisanal fisheries. These fisheries account for over half of total tuna catches in the Indian Ocean, with 96.5% of neritic tuna and 40.3% of tropical tuna (yellowfin, skipjack, and bigeye) catches originating from small-scale operations. Unlike in other oceans, **artisanal fisheries contribute to more than half (55%) of total tuna catches in the Indian Ocean.** In some countries, particularly in Small-Island developing States (SIDs) tuna holds immense significance due to protein from sea-based sources, processing for international markets, revenue generation through foreign fisheries access agreements and/or Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs), and employment, all of which ultimately depend on tuna populations being healthy, resilient, and sustainably managed in accordance with science-based targets and consideration of socio-economic and social indicators. These fisheries underpin the economies of numerous coastal and small-island developing states, including Indonesia, Maldives, Islamic Republic of Iran, Sri Lanka, India, Seychelles, Mauritius among others. **Despite the significance and importance of Indian Ocean tuna fisheries, their future remains at risk.** WWF urges **all CPCs, as a matter of urgency, to address** the alarming state management of tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean. As such, CPCs must adopt the following priorities at the 29th session of the Commission in April 2025:

WWF's Key Priorities:

1. **Adopt a Management Procedure (MP) for the Indian Ocean Yellowfin tuna by 2026.**
   Recommendation: *Maintain a precautionary approach during the interim period (following the 2024 stock assessment) and to expedite the MSE/MP process to ensure the adoption of a robust Management Procedure for Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna by 2026.*
2. **Continue to monitor skipjack and bigeye tuna catches, address overcatch scenarios through the Management Procedure, and work towards the development of a multi-species harvest strategy for tropical tuna by 2030.**
   Recommendation: *Address deficiencies in the harvest control rules (Res 21/03) to avoid overshooting of skipjack total allowable catch (TAC) determined through Resolution 24/07 and adhere to catch limits for bigeye tuna based on Resolution 23/04.*

[1] In the Indian Ocean, gillnets (28%) contribute the highest amount of catch followed by purse seine (26%), longline (19%), line (14%), baitboat (8%) and others (3.5%)

3. **Strengthen, as a matter of urgency, the conservation and management of bycatch species caught in association with tuna fisheries with key focus on sharks and rays, cetaceans and sea turtles in the IOTC area of competence**

   Recommendation: *Adopt a binding requirement must be agreed which asks for fins naturally attached for all sharks without exceptions, and immediately adopt bycatch mitigation measures for longline fleets (adopt a ban on the use of wire traces, and/or shark lines, or both) and on fleets with bycatch of sharks, including longline, gillnets/driftnets[2], hand lines and purse seine.*

Detailed WWF Position

Adopt a Management Procedure (MP) for the Indian Ocean Yellowfin tuna by 2026.

In 2024, a new stock assessment indicated that spawning biomass is now above the overfished threshold (BMSY), with fishing mortality estimated to be 25% below FMSY. However, significant uncertainties remain, particularly regarding CPUE standardization and underreporting of artisanal fisheries, making future projections highly sensitive to recruitment variability and environmental changes. The assessment also highlighted a substantial increase in biomass estimates, raising concerns about the robustness of the underlying methodologies. Recent analyses suggest that stock assessments face fundamental challenges, including biases in biomass projections and uncertainties in the CPUE indices. According to **Hoyle[3] (2024),** inconsistencies in CPUE standardization methods, particularly changes in analytical approaches between 2021 and 2024, may have resulted in an overly optimistic portrayal of stock recovery. Furthermore, **Froese[4] (2024)** critiques the stock assessment models, arguing that their assumptions overestimate productivity and stock recovery trajectories, which could lead to misguided management decisions. While WWF remains concerned about these uncertainties, we emphasize the urgent need for the Commission to prioritize the work on Management Strategy Evaluation and move towards the adoption of a Management Procedure (MP) that incorporates these data limitations, stock structure complexities, and recruitment variabilities, ensuring a long-term, science-based approach to sustainable management. Relying solely on annual negotiations for new or revised measures is inadequate to address the long-term sustainability challenges of Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna. Given that some CPCs require extended periods to implement regulatory changes, a robust, precautionary, and science-driven management procedure is essential to ensure sustainable stock recovery.

[2] WWF further encourages the IOTC to consider a progressive phase-out of the use of large-scale driftnets on the high seas, in alignment with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/215 and in recognition of the gear's well-documented ecological impacts on sharks, marine mammals, and sea turtles.

[3] Hoyle, S. (2024). Longline CPUE Analysis for Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna: Standardization and Trends. IOTC-2024-SC27-INF01. Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, Scientific Committee, 27th Session.

[4] Froese, R. (2024). Analysis of the 2024 IOTC Yellowfin Tuna Stock Assessment: Uncertainties and Challenges. IOTC-2024-SC27-INF02. Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, Scientific Committee, 27th Session.

For this purpose, **WWF recommends the following**;

- CPCs must continue to adhere to the catch limits outlined in Resolution 21/01. Increased catches by exempted and non-compliant CPCs must be monitored closely so as to not undermine conservation efforts and adopt stricter enforcement mechanisms.

- WWF recommends the Commission, at its 29th session, prioritise and task its Scientific Committee to expedite the establishment of a comprehensive management procedure for yellowfin tuna for adoption by 2026.

- CPCs must agree to supporting continued research and refinements in stock assessment modelling and adopt a multi-annual (three-year cycle) conservation and management plan to improve the short-comings in science, data, and modelling approaches.

- Moreover, through innovation in research, the implementation of a full 5-year CKMR study and other sources of fishery-independent data, could play a pivotal role in shaping science-driven management strategies for the Indian Ocean.

WWF urges the Commission to approach the yellowfin tuna stock assessment with caution and to incorporate the latest scientific findings on stock structure—particularly emerging evidence from otolith chemistry and genomic studies—which challenge the current single-stock assumption and highlight the importance of local nursery areas in the western Indian Ocean (Artetxe-Arrate et al.[5]) . Additionally, genome scan research by Feutry et al.[6] (2024) reveals significant population structure in neritic tuna species, demonstrating the need for finer-scale stock assessments. Recognising this spatial population structure is critical to improving stock assessments, avoiding overexploitation, and ensuring sustainable management. WWF encourages all CPCs to work collaboratively and show the political will necessary to safeguard the future of the Indian Ocean yellowfin fishery.

Continue to monitor skipjack and bigeye tuna catches, address overcatch scenarios through the Management Procedure, and work towards the development of a multi-species harvest strategy for tropical tuna by 2030.

The skipjack tuna Management Procedure (MP), originally adopted under Resolution 16/02 and superseded by Resolution 23/03, has been in place for several years, yet catch limits continue to be exceeded. While the 2023 stock assessment placed skipjack tuna in the green Kobe quadrant, total catches surpassed the Harvest Control Rule (HCR) limits for 2021–2023. The TAC was exceeded by 23% in 2021, 31% in 2022, and 34% in 2023—raising serious concerns over sustainability. Increased skipjack catches have direct ecosystem impacts, particularly on overfished yellowfin and bigeye stocks, reinforcing the need for an ecosystem-based approach.

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[5] Artetxe-Arrate, I., Fraile, I., Lastra-Luque, P., Farley, J., Clear, N., Shahid, U., Razzaque, S. A., Ahusan, M., Vidot, A., Parker, D., Marsac, F., Murua, H., Merino, G., & Zudaire, I. (2024). *Otolith stable isotopes highlight the importance of local nursery areas as the origin of recruits to yellowfin tuna (Thunnus albacares) fisheries in the western Indian Ocean*. Fisheries Research, [Available online 30 November 2024]. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2024.106998

[6] Pierre Feutry, Scott Foster, Peter M Grewe, Jorden Aulich, Matt Lansdell, Naomi Clear, Scott Cooper, Ashley Williams, Grant Johnson, Thilini Dilrukshi, Wudianto, Umair Shahid, Mohamed Ahusan, Pratiwi Lestari, Muhammad Taufik, Asep Priatna, Achmad Zamroni, Hamid Badar Usmani, Jessica Farley, Hilario Murua, Francis Marsac, Campbell R Davies, Genome scans reveal extensive population structure in three neritic tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean, *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, Volume 82, Issue 2, February 2025, fsae162, https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsae162

Similarly, the TAC set for bigeye tuna for 2024–2025 is being challenged by catch levels remaining in the high MSY range. In 2023, IOTC reported total catches of 2.03 million tonnes, 58% of which comprised tropical tuna. From 2019 to 2023, these species accounted for around 60% of the catch, averaging 1.22 million tonnes annually. Skipjack contributed most (630,000 tonnes), followed by yellowfin (423,000 tonnes) and bigeye (95,000 tonnes). Despite management measures, consistent overharvest—driven by weak compliance, inadequate monitoring, and poor enforcement—continues to undermine stock rebuilding efforts and jeopardizes the long-term viability of the Indian Ocean tuna fishery. To address these challenges, the IOTC should:

- Strengthen the HCR framework (Resolution 21/03) to prevent continued overshooting of skipjack catch limits and enforce TAC compliance for bigeye tuna under Resolution 23/04.
- Ensure effective monitoring and timely HCR application to maintain skipjack catches within the 2024-2026 TAC of 628,606 t and for bigeye tuna does not exceed the TAC limit.
- Initiate technical work towards development of a multi-species MP for tropical tunas, recognising the interdependence of stocks and cascading ecological impacts from unilateral overharvest.

Strengthen, as a matter of urgency, the conservation and management of bycatch species caught in association with tuna fisheries with key focus on sharks and rays, cetaceans and sea turtles in the IOTC area of competence

Sharks are caught as bycatch in tuna fisheries and remain poorly managed in the IOTC. The level of reporting varies significantly by CPCs, with gillnets accounting for 47.7% of total shark catches, followed by line fisheries (27.4%) and longlines (15.4%). Due to data deficiencies, the stock status of many shark and ray species remains uncertain, with several lacking any management advice. Given the critical status of certain species, IOTC CPCs must urgently develop recovery plans—prioritizing globally recognized conservation measures, such as CITES listings, even in the absence of IOTC stock assessments. The IOTC and its Contracting Parties (CPCs) have a clear responsibility to align with international conservation commitments, including the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Target 6, both of which call for the development and implementation of recovery plans for depleted species. However, CPC compliance with the National Plans of Action (NPOAs) for sharks and rays remains limited and inconsistent. This is particularly concerning in light of recent CITES listings, which place additional legal obligations on member states to ensure the sustainable management of listed species. The IOTC must urgently adopt the following at its 29th Session:

- Adopt a mandatory "fins naturally attached" policy for all sharks caught in association with tuna fisheries, without any exceptions.
- Ban the use of wire tracers and/or shark lines in longline fisheries to reduce bycatch and improve post-release survival.
- Prioritise and implement science-based recovery plans for vulnerable species—such as scalloped hammerhead, oceanic whitetip, and shortfin mako—by 1 January 2026.
- Conduct the Management Strategy Evaluation for blue sharks as recommended by the Commission in 2024 and establish a TAC for short-fin mako aiming to reduce fishing mortality from all fishing gears.

Other Priority Areas of Action:

1. **Accelerate the adoption of a comprehensive dFAD management plan to allow recovery of depleted tuna stocks.**
   Recommendation: *Accelerate the adoption of a comprehensive drifting FAD[7] management plan, including the development of science-based limits on deployments, operationalisation of the FAD register (aligned with Resolution 24/02), robust tracking and recovery mechanisms, clear ownership and verification protocols, and a phased transition to biodegradable FADs to reduce ecological impacts and support the recovery of tuna stocks.*
2. **Ensure human and labour rights and safety for crew and observers**
   Recommendation: *Adopt a CMM for Observer Safety and Security similar to WCPFC (CMM 2017-01 and, building on the Resolution 2018-01). Develop binding Labour Standards for Crew on industrial tuna fishing Vessels to ensure safe, fair and humane working conditions.*
3. **Accelerate the adoption of spatio-temporal closures, including the identification of high-risk areas (hot spots), by 2026 to support recovery of depleted tuna stocks**
   Recommendation: *Commit to adopting a science-based spatio-temporal closure of at least three months by 2026 to reduce fishing mortality on key tropical tuna stocks (yellowfin, bigeye and skipjack) without reallocation of catch to other gear types or vessels during the closure period.*
4. **Continue the development and adoption of management procedures for both tuna and non-tuna species**
   Recommendation: *Continue the development of MPs for both tuna and non-tuna species, and proceed with the adoption of those identified as priorities by the Commission. This includes monitoring the implementation of the swordfish MP and assessing localized depletion risks, particularly from the gillnet fleets. .*
5. **Improve onboard observer coverage (human or electronic, or a combination of both) to 100% by 2026 in the industrial tuna fisheries.**
   Recommendation: Adopt measures to achieve 100% observer coverage (human, electronic, or both) in industrial tuna fisheries by 2026 to improve data quality, ensure compliance and enhance transparency. *Encourage CPCs to develop implementation plans and alternative data collection mechanisms that enable participation of small-scale fisheries in monitoring and reporting efforts.*
6. **Improve the state of bycatch in the Indian Ocean through scientific and rigorous data collection programmes.**
   Recommendation: *Ensure compliance with Resolution 17/07 by enforcing the 2.5 km length limit on driftnets, and prioritise the adoption of bycatch mitigation measures for gillnet and driftnet fisheries. Authorise LED/artificial light trials for scientific purposes under Resolution 16/07 to explore their*

[7] WWF promotes sustainable fishing by advocating for non-entangling, biodegradable dFADs and a comprehensive dFAD registry. This, along with fewer dFADs and protected areas, would cut bycatch and juvenile mortality, aiding stock recovery and ecosystem preservation, and ensuring economic balance for dependent nations.

potential in reducing bycatch, and initiate a phased approach to reduce and eliminate the use of large-scale driftnets by 2030, in line with international commitments and the objectives of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Details on Priority Areas of Action:

Accelerate the adoption a comprehensive dFAD management plan to allow recovery of depleted tuna stocks

Effective management of FADs[8] in the Indian Ocean has been historically weak. Drifting FAD measures under Resolution 19/02 remain inadequate, lacking robust provisions for scientific data transparency, fine-scale data resolution, and meaningful limits on buoy numbers. In 2024, the IOTC adopted a new measure on dFADs (Resolution 24/02), however, WWF remains deeply concerned about dFADs' ecological impacts, including high juvenile yellowfin and bigeye tuna mortality, with purse seine fisheries catching 25% juvenile yellowfin in the Indian Ocean—far exceeding global averages. WWF urges CPCs to strengthen dFAD measures, adopt tailored spatio-temporal closures for all gear types operating in the high seas aiming to reduce its environmental impact and enhance MCS systems to ensure effective compliance, complementing stock rebuilding efforts for yellowfin and bigeye tuna. Furthermore, WWF recommends and concludes the following:

- The Commission should task the Scientific Committee with determining and recommending an optimum limit on the number of operational drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (dFADs) per purse seine vessel, based on the best available scientific evidence. In the absence of such guidance, and where stock recovery is not evident, the Commission should apply the precautionary principle and establish an interim limit of 100 operational dFADs per vessel.
- Require that all dFADs be constructed using fully biodegradable materials by the end of 2025, with no netting permitted, to minimise impacts on endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species and reduce ghost fishing.
- Mandate CPCs to submit real-time data on dFAD deployments, retrievals, ownership, numbers, positions, species composition, and set-by-set reporting to an independent third party for verification and transparency.
- Accelerate the development of a comprehensive dFAD register covering all instrumented buoys, and ensure it is made publicly accessible by 2026, in accordance with Resolution 24/02.
- Instruct the Scientific Committee to develop cost-effective, robust, and standardised dFAD marking methods—excluding natural floating objects—to ensure traceability and operator accountability.
- Task CPCs and the Scientific Committee with evaluating the ecological impacts of excessive dFAD use, particularly the high mortality of juvenile tuna, and its implications for spawning stock biomass and broader ecosystem health.

Ensure human and labour rights and safety for crew and observers

WWF expresses deep concern over increasing reports of observer disappearances, intimidation, and labour rights violations aboard tuna fishing vessels.. These abuses persist due to weak legal oversight, lack of vessel accountability, and insufficient enforcement mechanisms, especially on vessels flagged to distant water fishing nations. Robust, rights-based governance is essential not only for transparency and accountability but to uphold the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of those who ensure the legal and sustainable management of ocean

[8] While 2023 saw the adoption of anchored and drifting FAD measures, the latter (Resolution 23/02) has faced 11 objections as of 01/01/2024, highlighting ongoing challenges.

resources.A human rights-based approach to fisheries management is urgently needed. The IOTC and CPCs must:

- Adopt a binding Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) on Observer Safety and Security, modelled on WCPFC CMM 2017-01 and Resolution 2018-01, ensuring safe working conditions for all observers aboard industrial tuna vessels.
- Develop and adopt Labour Standards for Crew on fishing vessels, including provisions on written contracts, fair wages, occupational safety, and access to grievance mechanisms, aligned with ILO C188 and the Cape Town Agreement.
- Require 100% transparency in reporting from vessel operators and fishery managers, especially concerning incidents involving observer safety and labour violations.
- Mandate vessel and crew registration by licensing authorities, with clear due diligence checks to prevent exploitation and abuse.
- Encourage CPCs to ratify and implement international legal instruments such as ILO C188 and the Cape Town Agreement, and reflect these commitments in national and regional fisheries access agreements.

Accelerate the adoption of spatio-temporal closures, including the identification of high-risk areas (hot spots), by 2026 to support recovery of depleted tuna stocks

WWF recommends that all CPCs agree to implement fisheries closures in the high seas based on Scientific Committee advice, with the objective of reducing fishing effort and mortality on key tropical tuna stocks. Spatio-temporal closures should be adopted as part of a broader strategy to ensure that Total Allowable Catches (TACs) are respected and that tropical tunas—including yellowfin, bigeye, and skipjack—and associated stocks are managed effectively. A science-based closure period would contribute to easing pressure on these stocks and support long-term sustainability objectives. No catch reallocation to other gear types or vessels should occur during the closure. Advanced VMS monitoring must ensure compliance, and the IOTC SC should analyze closure impacts across gear types to address uncertainties in stock recovery for depleted stocks, as follows;

- Adopt a three-month fishery closure, based on the best case scenario to reduce fishing mortality and pressure on key tropical tuna stocks (yellowfin, bigeye and skipjack) without reallocation of catch to any other gear type or vessel during the closure period.
- During any closure period, vessels and gear types must be strictly monitored for fishing activities through VMS, therefore strengthening the IOTC provisions for the use of VMS to be in real time and use advanced technologies.

Continue the development and adoption of management procedures for both tuna and non-tuna species

At the 28th session of the Commission, the swordfish MP was adopted, marking a milestone for fisheries management in the region. This represented the first application of a harvest strategy approach to a tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean, demonstrating a shift toward more science-based, transparent, and predictable decision-making for long-term stock sustainability. By integrating MPs across tuna and tuna-like species, the IOTC can enhance stock resilience, improve compliance, and align conservation measures with sustainability objectives, preventing suboptimal stock performance and ensuring the long-term health of Indian Ocean fisheries, therefore, WWF recommends the IOTC continues this approach by prioritising both tuna and non-tuna species and address concerns in a more focused manner. In this manner, the IOTC should:

- Adopt management procedure for Albacore tuna, and accelerate adoption of yellowfin tuna.
- Ensure swordfish MP implementation and monitor swordfish catches from gillnet fleets, given their disproportionate impact on non-target species.

- Revise Resolution 18/05 to align catch limits with updated stock assessments and projections for billfish species.
- Promote an ecosystem-based management approach that integrates species interdependencies and environmental considerations into MP frameworks.

Improve onboard observer coverage (human or electronic, or a combination of both) to 100% by 2026 in the industrial tuna fisheries.

WWF asks the Commission to require that all industrial fisheries, including supporting vessels and all those engaged in at sea transshipment are covered by **100% observer coverage** (human and/or electronic) and adopt electronic monitoring program standards and a timeline for implementation by 2025.

Improve the state of bycatch in the Indian Ocean through scientific and rigorous data collection programmes.

WWF is committed to the protection and conservation of sharks and rays, sea turtles, seabirds and marine mammals, and calls for more urgent action and funding to improve the protection and recovery of these key species. WWF supports the measures currently adopted by IOTC for sharks, however, the pace of management improvements is behind that required to address alarming declines in pelagic shark and ray populations in the Indian Ocean. Moreover, associated mortality of unwanted or bycatch species remains very high. It is estimated that over 100,000 cetaceans (dolphins, whales and porpoises) may be caught in the Indian Ocean tuna fisheries, whereas, for sharks and rays, sea turtles and seabirds, the associated impact from tuna fisheries remains to be undetermined.

i) For sea turtles

The IOTC CPCs are not compliant with data collection and reporting requirements for sea turtles and the interactions with fishing gears are not reported at the species level. It is recommended by the Scientific Committee that CPCs should declare all fisheries interactions of sea turtles at species level. The impact on sea turtle populations from fishing for tuna and tuna-like species is not assessed adequately and the available evidence indicates that sea turtles are at considerable risk in the Indian Ocean, given they have high mortality associated with gillnet fisheries. In order to improve the status of sea turtles and respond to the risk of high mortality, following is recommended:

- Improve mandatory data collection and reporting for sea turtles at the species level by implementing the Scientific Committee advice and by making amendments to IOTC resolution 12/04.
- Call on all CPCs to investigate and urgently adopt means to reduce sea turtle bycatch at-vessels and post-release mortality in IOTC fisheries.

ii) For seabirds

- Encourage Contracting Parties to implement the measures adopted in Resolution 23/07 on seabird conservation, which include the use of hook-shielding devices as a possible mitigation measure and require that all seabirds are identified and reported at species level.

iii) For cetaceans

WWF is concerned about the state of marine mammals in the Indian Ocean, as inaction is resulting in ongoing declines in cetacean populations. It is estimated that over 100,000 (individuals) cetaceans may be caught in the Indian Ocean tuna fisheries each year. WWF urges CPCs to:

- Encourage CPCs to implement the measures adopted in Resolution 23/06 on the conservation of cetaceans.

- Report sighting data from observer or equivalent data collection programmes to ensure that any interactions with cetaceans are reported to the IOTC.
- Work with the International Whaling Commission Bycatch Mitigation Initiative to develop and implement bycatch prevention and mitigation options for small and large cetaceans that may interact with tuna vessels.

iv) Regulate and improve data reporting on driftnet fishery (less or equal to 2.5 km) in the Indian Ocean and adopt a phase out approach

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 46/215 called for a global moratorium on large-scale high seas driftnet fishing in 1992. Since then, UNGA regulations have been translated into an IOTC resolution 12/12 and further superseded by resolution 17/07, which prohibits the use of large-scale driftnets on the high seas and in the IOTC area of competence. However, some countries still use large-scale driftnets in both EEZ and high seas to target tuna. Based on the IOTC resolution 17/07, which came into effect on 1 January 2022, WWF calls for urgent action from developing coastal states using large-scale driftnets to show their commitment to change and to ensure that there are support systems in place for implementing the UNGA and IOTC resolutions through the national program or legislation.

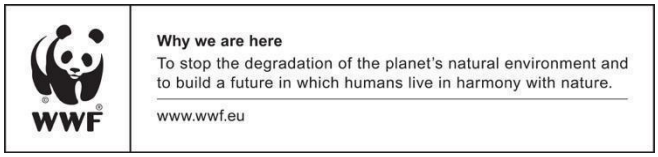
To support an effective transition, WWF urges the IOTC to undertake a socio-economic assessment to understand the drivers, economic implications, and selectivity of driftnet fisheries, thereby building a case for more selective alternatives. The Commission should also prioritise the development of standardised CPUE indices for gillnet fisheries, supported by robust, geo-referenced effort data. The Scientific Committee should fast-track this work by engaging expert support. In addition, WWF recommends that:

- All CPCs fishing primarily with large-scale driftnets in the IOTC area of competence reduce their net lengths to 2.5 km or less and ensure data collection and reporting to IOTC is improved significantly.
- Phase out or convert gillnet fishing vessels to other gears, considering the high ecological impact of these gears, and fast track the implementation of Resolution 17/07, “On the Prohibition to use large-scale driftnets in the IOTC.”
- All CPCs engaged in catching large pelagics using gillnets/driftnets, including tuna, are encouraged to have a time closure on the use of gillnets for at least two months, from 0000 hours, 1 June until 0000 hours, 30 July of each year.
- Clarify Restrictions on Artificial Lights in Longline Fisheries, ensuring that the use of artificial lights to attract tuna and tuna-like species are restricted, considering the clarity on Resolution 16/07 is intended to ensure that scientific trials to monitor reduction in bycatch in driftnet/gillnet fisheries can be undertaken given the high amount of bycatch associated with this gear.

Conclusion

WWF remains deeply concerned about the persistent weaknesses in the management of tropical and neritic tuna stocks and associated species in the Indian Ocean. Despite progress in adopting new CMMs, the Commission must urgently strengthen science-based, enforceable, and precautionary measures to secure the future of tuna fisheries. Critically, WWF reaffirms its commitment to support developing coastal states and

small-scale fisheries in improving data systems, reducing bycatch of ETP species, and phasing out unsustainable gears.



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