

REVIEW OF CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES RELATING TO TROPICAL TUNAS

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 17 MAY 2025

PURPOSE

To encourage participants at the Working Party on Tropical Tunas (WPTT27) Data Preparatory Meeting to review the existing Conservation and Management Measures (CMM) relevant to the three tropical tuna species; and as necessary to 1) provide recommendations to the Scientific Committee on whether modifications may be required; and 2) recommend whether other CMMs may be required.

BACKGROUND

Tropical tunas in the Indian Ocean are currently subject to several CMMs adopted by the Commission, including:

Resolution 03/01 *On the limitation of fishing capacity of Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties.* This Resolution requires Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) which have more than 50 vessels on the 2003 IOTC Record of Vessels, shall limit in 2004 and following years, the number of their fishing vessels larger than 24 meters length overall (hereafter LSFVs) to the number of its fishing vessels registered in 2003 in the IOTC Record of Vessels.

Resolution 14/02 *For the conservation and management of tropical tunas stocks in the IOTC area of competence.* This Resolution removes obsolete and ineffective elements from the previous Resolution 12/13, in particular the month-long closed area following advice from the Scientific Committee that the current closure is likely to be ineffective, as fishing effort will be redirected to other fishing grounds in the Indian Ocean. The positive impacts of the moratorium within the closed area would likely be offset by effort reallocation, as they will result in similar catch rates and total annual catches. In addition, the area closure includes not only the high seas but also part of the EEZ of Somalia, which may be detrimental to the aspirations of Somalia with respect to granting of fishing rights within its EEZ. The revised Resolution retains only those elements related to the already established process for an allocation system or any other relevant measures to be developed to manage tropical tuna stocks.

Resolution 21/01 *On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence.* This Resolution requires CPCs to reduce their catch of yellowfin tuna. For CPCs whose catches of yellowfin reported for 2014 were above 5000t must reduce their catches of yellowfin by 21 % from the 2014 levels. Coastal states are required to reduce catches by 12% and Small Island Developing States or Least Developed States by 10% compared to 2014 levels. For CPCs with catches of yellowfin tuna in 2014 less than 5000t and their average catches of yellowfin tuna for the period from 2017 to 2019 inclusive, were above 5000t, shall reduce their catches of yellowfin tuna by 21% compared to 2014 yellowfin tuna catch. Exceptions apply to the aforementioned limits as stipulated in the Resolution. The Resolution further stipulates conditions for over catches of the annual limits, reduction in the number of supply vessels and additional requirements for gillnets.

Resolution 22/03 *On a Management Procedure for Bigeye Tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence.* This Resolution provides a management procedure for the bigeye tuna 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 maximizing the average catch from the fishery and reducing the variation in the total allowable catch (TAC) between management periods.

Resolution 23/01 *On Management of Anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (AFADs).* This Resolution provides criteria for the management of Anchored FADs in the Indian Ocean. The Resolution provides a definition for AFAD, outlines the application of the CMM, and then provides specific measures for management. These include the submission of

AFAD management plans, reporting of deployment, inspections at sea, location data sharing, and data elements. The Resolution further covers the site selection and construction of AFADs.

Resolution 24/02 *On Management of Drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (DFADs) in the IOTC Area of Competence.* This Resolution provides criteria for the management of Drifting FADs in the Indian Ocean. The Resolution provides a list of definitions associated with DFADs. It then specifies the requirement for a DFAD register (what data should be collected and included) and tasked the IOTC Secretariat to develop and maintain such a register. Specific regulations for DFAD management (such as limits on numbers, deployments, activations etc) are provided as well as the requirement for the submission of DFAD management plans. The Resolution further outlines; a DFAD monitoring system; measures for recovery and reporting of lost, discarded and abandoned DFADs; use of non-entangling and biodegradable DFADs; DFAD marking; Data reporting and analysis and lastly; limits on supply and support vessels.

Resolution 24/06 *On a Ban on Discards Of Bigeye Tuna, Skipjack Tuna, Yellowfin Tuna, and Non-Targeted Species Caught by Vessels in the IOTC Record Of Authorisation that Operate in the IOTC Area Of Competence.* This Resolution requires all purse seine vessels to retain on board and then land, to the extent practicable, all bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, and yellowfin tuna caught, except fish considered unfit for human consumption. It encourages vessels using other gears to implement the same retention measures to the extent practicable. The Resolution also tasks the SC via relevant working parties to undertake work to examine the benefits of retaining non-targeted species catches, other than those prohibited via IOTC Resolution, and present its recommendations to the 29th Session of the Commission.

Resolution 24/07 *On a Management Procedure for Skipjack in the IOTC Area Of Competence.* This Resolution provides a management procedure for the *skipjack* stock managed by the IOTC with a view of maintaining the stock above the biomass target (BTARG = 0.4B0) while maximizing the average catch from the fishery and reducing the variation in the total allowable catch (TAC) between management periods.

Resolution 25/03 *On establishing catch limits for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence.* This Resolution sets out the total allowable catch (TAC) for skipjack tuna for the first management period in 2025 and 2026 for all CPCs within the IOTC area of competence in accordance with Management Procedure in Resolution 24/07. CPCs are categorised into two categories based on their average catch levels of the years 2021 to 2023 and catch limits are determined for the CPCs in each category according to the rules specified. The resolution also provides provisions on the underage of catch, and on the administration of catch limits by the IOTC Secretariat.

Resolution 25/04 *On establishing catch limits for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence.* This Resolution established the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for bigeye tuna shall be 92,670 t in 2026, 2027, and 2028 in accordance with the Management Procedure established by Resolution 22/03 and also sets the annual catch limits to be applied in 2026, 2027, and 2028 to major fleets that catch bigeye tuna (Indonesia, Seychelles, EU, Sri Lanka, Japan, China, Iran, etc). The resolution also provides provisions on the underage of catch, and on the administration of catch limits by the IOTC Secretariat. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 23/04.

Resolutions 25/03, 25/04 were adopted during the 29th Session of the Commission (the report of S29 has yet to be finalised).

DISCUSSION

As part of best practice, the WPTT is obliged to review existing CMMs and consider whether their science-based components need to be updated. If this is the case, then the WPTT should provide clear, science-based recommendations for the Scientific Committee's consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

That the WPTT **NOTE** paper IOTC–2025–WPTT27–05 which aims to encourage the WPTT to review the existing Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) relevant to tropical tunas, and as necessary to 1) provide recommendations to the Scientific Committee on whether modifications may be required; and 2) recommend whether other CMMs may be require

APPENDIX A

Links to the current compendium of active CMMs (<https://iotc.org/cmms>)

[Resolution 03/01](#) *On the limitation of fishing capacity of Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties.*

[Resolution 05/01](#) *On Conservation and Management Measures for bigeye tuna.*

[Resolution 14/02](#) *For the conservation and management of tropical tunas stocks in the IOTC area of competence*

[Resolution 19/02](#) *Procedures on a Fish Aggregating Devices (FADS) Management Plan.*

[Resolution 21/01](#) *On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence*

[Resolution 22/03](#) *On a Management Procedure for Bigeye Tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence.*

[Resolution 23/01](#) *On Management of Anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (AFADs).*

[Resolution 24/02](#) *On Management of Drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (DFADs) in the IOTC Area of Competence*

[Resolution 24/07](#) *On a Management Procedure for Skipjack in the IOTC Area Of Competence*

[Resolution 24/08](#) *On a Management Procedure for Swordfish in the IOTC Area of Competence*

[Resolution 25/03](#) *On establishing catch limits for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence*

[Resolution 25/04](#) *On establishing catch limits for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence*