

REVIEW OF CURRENT CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES RELATING TO NERITIC TUNA SPECIES

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PURPOSE

To encourage participants at the 15th Working Party on Neritic Tunas (WPNT15) to review some of the existing Conservation and Management Measures (CMM) relating to neritic tunas, noting the CMMs contained in document IOTC–2025–WPNT15–04; 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

In addition to the new CMMs outlined in document IOTC–2025–WPNT15–04, neritic tunas in the Indian Ocean are currently subject to several other Conservation and Management Measures adopted by the Commission. In an attempt to focus the efforts of the WPNT, it is our aim for participants to annually review some of the key CMMs, based on scientific advice and any focussed on any specific requests from the Commission.

Resolution 15/01: *On the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence.*

This Resolution sets out the detailed data recording requirements for all gears and CPCs operating in IOTC fisheries. The Resolution applies to vessels over 24m LOA and those under 24m LOA operating outside the EEZs of their flag states.

Resolution 15/02: *Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CPCs).*

This Resolution sets out the detailed requirements for reporting statistical data to the IOTC Secretariat for all gears and CPCs operating in IOTC fisheries as well as the deadlines for submitting these data. Data required for submission include catch and effort data, size data and data on fishing activities on FADs for all IOTC species as well as non-target species such as sharks, seabirds, marine turtles and cetaceans.

Resolution 18/07: *On measures applicable in case of non fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC*

This Resolution sets out the requirements for CPCs to provide information in their annual reports on actions to implement their reporting obligations for all IOTC fisheries, in particular steps taken to improve their data collection for direct and incidental catches. These actions will be reviewed by the Compliance commission.

Resolution 24/04: *On a regional observer scheme*

This Resolution sets out the requirements for all CPCs to implement a scientific observer scheme to collect verified catch data and other scientific data related to the fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species in the IOTC area of competence. The Resolution sets out the minimum observer coverage of 5% as defined by the number of operations/sets and notes that EMS can be used in order to complement onboard observer coverage in order to meet the required 5% coverage. This Resolution applies to vessels over 24m LOA in all areas and vessels under 24m LOA operating outside the EEZ of their CPC. The Resolution will be superseded by Resolution 25/06 when it comes into force, 120 days after its distribution to all CPCs.

Resolution 24/06: *On a ban on discards of bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna, and non-targeted species caught by purse seine vessels in the IOTC area of competence*

This Resolution sets out the requirement for purse seine vessels to retain onboard and land tropical tunas as well as non-targeted species including other tunas with the exception of fish considered unfit for human consumption (where fish have been meshed or crushed, damaged due to depredation or has died and spoiled in the net where gear failure has prevented the normal retrieval of the net and catch). There are no exceptions for fish that are

considered undesirable in terms of size, marketability or species composition or fish that have been spoiled or contaminated as the result of an act or omission of the crew of the fishing vessel. If the captain of the vessel determines that fish should not be retained on board, the captain shall record the event in a relevant logbook including estimated tonnage and species composition of the discarded fish, and estimated tonnage and species composition of retained fish from that fishing operation.

DISCUSSION

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

RECOMMENDATION

Noting the information contained in working paper IOTC–2025–WPNT15–04, the WPNT should aim to provide recommendations to the SC that clearly outline whether further changes to Resolutions 15/01 and 15/02 are required, and/or to recommend whether other CMMs may be required.