

COMMENTS ON THE TUNA SAMPLING PROGRAMME INDONESIA

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As we all know well, recent Indonesian production of tuna and tuna-like species is the highest in the Indian Ocean. However, it has been difficult to estimate the accurate catch statistics because the collection system of the national fisheries statistics have been unchanged nearly for thirty years which does not reflect the current situation of the fisheries.

In case of tuna and tuna-like species, the national fisheries statistics have only three species group categories, i.e., TUN (all tuna and billfish species), SKJ (skipjack) and TONKOL (all small neritic tunas). Under such circumstances, the Indonesian catch statistics is the one of the most serious uncertainties in the stock assessments. Hence, this problem should be eased urgently.

To solve this problem, the Indonesian tuna-sampling program needs to be initiated as soon as possible under the IOTC (its member countries)'s involvement and supervision. The information collected by the sampling program will be utilized primarily by the IOTC member countries. Especially, such information will become one of key elements of the stock assessment for tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean.

Hence, all the sampling activities such as the sampling methods (design, coverages etc), actual samplings, data processing and reports need to be well understood and agreed by all the IOTC member countries as they are the primary users of the information. Thus, these matters need to be freely discussed by the IOTC member countries and 'transparency' of all the activities needs to be secured. We believe that nobody will oppose this view.

Hence, any forms of sampling programs in Indonesia need to be supervised by the IOTC (and its member countries). But, if the sampling programs were conducted bilaterally with Indonesia or the framework without the IOTC (and its member countries)'s involvement, it will become difficult for the opinions and views of the IOTC member countries to be reflected in the actual sampling programs. Hence, such framework should be avoided.

In this connection, it is hoped that the bilateral tuna-sampling plan between Indonesia and CSIRO-ACIAR (Australia) will put efforts to consider and reflect opinions and views from the IOTC member countries, although it is well understood that such bilateral activities cannot be intervened by other countries.