
**Provisional agenda
for the
1st meeting of the IOTC Working Party on Bycatch
20 July 2005, Phuket Thailand**

1. REVIEW OF THE DATA

- Conduct an overview of the bycatch data available for the Indian Ocean as obtained from responses to the Secretariat's call for information
- Data from other sources: e.g. BirdLife Global Seabird Programme; IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU, Traffic
- Identification of data needs and the methods that are needed to collect and store the data

2. IDENTIFY MAJOR BYCATCH SPECIES

- While acknowledging the limits of the available data, develop a first list of major bycatch species

3. REVIEW OF REGIONAL POA-Sharks

- Review of the NPOAs (see 2002 SC recommendation below)
- Examine how these can be extended to create a Regional POA

4. RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES

In particular to:

- Improve data availability
- Investigate means to monitor and assess bycatch in general with initial emphasis on sharks
- Develop work plan for Working Group on Bycatch

5. OTHER BUSINESS

For information:

From the Scientific Committee 2002

Creation of a Working Party on Bycatch

1. The Committee recognized the importance of considering the impact of fishing on the ecosystems associated with the target tuna species and that this issue would be advanced most effectively through the establishment of a Working Party on Bycatch. The Committee identified several potential issues with a range of bycatch species in both artisanal and industrial tuna fisheries and highlighted the issue of shark bycatch due to the level of catch of these species, the high vulnerability of some shark stocks to mortality from fishing and their top position in oceanic ecosystems.

2. The Committee recommends the following:

3. that each Member develops a National Plan of Action on Sharks as identified by the FAO International Plan of Action on Sharks;
4. that the IOTC develops and presents a Regional Plan of Action on Sharks to the FAO;
5. the establishment of a Working Party on Bycatch; and,
6. that Members are reminded that all retained catch and any discards associated to tuna fisheries should be reported to the Secretariat, as practical as possible.

7. The Working Party on Bycatch, in the first instance, should consider the following issues:

8. Identify major bycatch species in Indian Ocean tuna fisheries;
9. Investigate means to monitor and assess bycatch in general with initial emphasis on sharks;
10. Exchange information on bycatch and identify methods to carry out assessments of bycatch;
11. Liaise with groups investigating bycatch issues for other regional bodies (e.g. CCSBT, IATTC[1], ICCAT, CCSBT) involved with the management of tunas; and
12. Propose measures to reduce unsustainable bycatch, as appropriate.
13. Encourage the conduct of research on ecosystems.

14. It was recommended that a small group be created to facilitate communication on bycatch issues among Members and that, in the first instance, the discussions should focus on issues relevant to shark species. A Chairperson should be identified to facilitate exchange of information through the small group, coordination of future activities and reporting to the Scientific Committee. It is recommended that the group meet briefly during the next meeting of the Working Party on Tropical Tunas and plan future activities, as appropriate.
