



PROPOSED SCHEDULE AND PRIORITIES OF IOTC WORKING PARTY AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2012 AND 2013

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 25 NOVEMBER 2011

PURPOSE

To provide the Scientific Committee (SC) with the proposed list of dates, locations and research priorities for each Working Party and Scientific Committee meeting to be held in 2012 and tentatively for 2013, for its consideration.

BACKGROUND

The number of IOTC working party meetings has increased in recent years and the current length and timing of these meetings continues to stretch the limited resources of the IOTC Secretariat and CPCs alike. As such, there is a clear need to increase the level of efficiency (e.g. monetary and time) of the IOTC scientific process.

DISCUSSION

In recent months, there has been substantial discussion among participating IOTC scientists aimed at encouraging, wherever it is logical/feasible, the consolidation of IOTC meetings thereby reducing the financial and logistical burden upon the IOTC. Discussion has revolved around what would be the most sensible combination of working party meetings and the timing of those meetings, taking into account data reporting deadlines and other timing demands. It has been suggested that where feasible meetings should be held in localities most relevant to the participating CPCs. This would help increase the profile of the work that the IOTC is undertaking by exposing scientists from the region to fisheries matters most relevant to their own fleets.

The need for forward planning is highlighted by the fact that many of those invited to attend IOTC meetings as Invited Experts have indicated that their schedules are often planned more than 12 months in advance. As such, there is a clear need to secure meeting dates and locations well in advance.

In identifying potential venues and dates for IOTC meetings, other key international meetings in 2012 should also be considered:

IOTC Meetings:

- 2nd Technical Committee Meeting on Allocation Criteria: 4–6 March, 2012 (Maldives)
- 9th Session of the Compliance Committee: 18–20 April, 2012 (Australia)
- 16th Session of the Commission: 22–26 April, 2012 (Australia)
- Tagging symposium – 29–31 October, 2012 (Mauritius)

Other tuna Meetings:

- ICCAT SCRS meeting early October, 2012
- 17th Meeting of the CCSBT Scientific Committee 27–31 August, 2012
- 8th WCPFC SC meeting 7–15 August, 2012

RECOMMENDATION

That the Scientific Committee:

- 1) **AGREE** to finalise the schedule of IOTC Working Party meetings and the Scientific Committee meeting for 2012 and tentatively for 2013 (Appendix A).
- 2) **RECOMMENDS** that the Commission endorse the schedule of IOTC Working Party meetings and the Scientific Committee meeting to be held in 2012, and tentatively endorse the 2013 schedule.
- 3) **AGREE** to a schedule of priorities for IOTC Working Party meetings in 2012, and tentatively endorse the 2013 schedule.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: DRAFT: Schedule of IOTC Working Party and Scientific Committee meetings for 2012 and 2013.

Appendix B: Research recommendations and priorities for IOTC Working Party meetings.

APPENDIX A

DRAFT: Schedule of IOTC Working Party and Scientific Committee meetings for 2012 and tentatively for 2013.

Meeting	2012		2013 (tentative)	
	Date	Location	Date	Location
Working Party on Temperate Tunas	??–?? Aug (3d)	TBD (China?)	??–?? Aug (3d)	TBD (ICCAT SAA)
Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch	20–24 Sept (5d)	Bali, Indonesia ‘OR’ Cape town, South Africa	25–29 Sept (5d)	TBD (La Réunion?)
Working Party on Billfish	26–30 Sept (5d)	Bali, Indonesia ‘OR’ Cape town, South Africa	19–23 Sept (5d)	TBD (La Réunion?)
Working Party on Methods	20–21 Oct (2d)	Port Luis, Mauritius	??–?? Oct (8d)	TBD
Working Party on Tropical Tunas	22–27 Oct (6d)	Port Luis, Mauritius	??–?? Oct (8d)	TBD
Working Party on Neritic Tunas	??–?? Nov (3d)	Penang, Malaysia	??–?? Nov (3d)	TBD (Oman?)
Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics	31 Nov–1 Dec (2d)	Victoria, Seychelles	30–31 Nov (2d)	TBD
Scientific Committee	3–7 Dec (5d)	Victoria, Seychelles	2–7 Dec (6d)	TBD

APPENDIX B

Research recommendations and priorities for IOTC Working Party meetings

Working Party on Billfish (WPB)

(Extracts from IOTC–2011–WPB09–R)

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES

(para. 151) The WPB **AGREED** that there was no urgent need to carry out stock assessments for the swordfish resources in the Indian Ocean in 2012, and **RECOMMENDED** that efforts over the coming year be focused on the other billfish species, in particular on striped marlin.

(para 152) The WPB **RECOMMENDED** the following core areas as priorities for research over the coming year;

- Swordfish stock structure and migratory range – using genetics
- Swordfish stock structure and movement rates – using tagging techniques
- Billfish species growth rates
- Size data analyses
- Stock status indicators – exploration of indicators from available data
- CPUE standardization – swordfish, marlins and sailfish
- Stock assessment – Istiophorids
- Depredation – focus on the southwest

Working Party on Temperate Tunas (WPTmT)

(Extracts from IOTC–2011–WPTmT03–R)

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES***CPUE standardisation***

(para. 89) The WPTmT **AGREED** that there was an urgent need to investigate the CPUE issues as outlined in paragraph 61 and for this to be a high priority research activity for the albacore resource in the Indian Ocean in 2012.

Stock assessment

(para. 90) The WPTmT **AGREED** that there was an urgent need to carry out revised stock assessments for the albacore resource in the Indian Ocean in 2012, and **RECOMMENDED** that the Scientific Committee consider recommending that the Commission consider approving funds for this purpose.

Stock structure

(para. 91) Noting that at present very little is known about the population structure and migratory range of albacore in the Indian Ocean, other than the possible connectivity with the southern Atlantic, the WPTmT **RECOMMENDED** that the Scientific Committee develop a research plan that includes the determination of albacore stock structure, migratory range and movement rates in the Indian Ocean as a high priority research project, at its 2011 annual meeting.

Additional core topics for research

(para. 92) The WPTmT **RECOMMENDED** that the Scientific Committee add the following core topic areas as priorities for research over the coming year:

- Size data analyses
- Growth rates and ageing studies
- Stock status indicators – exploration of indicators from available data
- Collaborate with SPC-OFP to examine their current simulation approach to determine priority research areas.

Working Party on Tropical Tunas (WPTT)

(Extracts from IOTC–2011–WPTT13–R)

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES

(para. 278) The WPTT discussed various research priorities and **AGREED** to the following workplan and priorities for 2012:

CPUE standardisation

(para. 279) Noting the importance of the various CPUE indices for stock assessment of the tuna tropical species, the WPTT **AGREED** that there was an urgent need to investigate the CPUE issues as outlined in sections 8–10, for bigeye tuna,

skipjack tuna and yellowfin tuna, and for these to be a high priority research activity for the tropical tuna resources in the Indian Ocean in 2012.

(para. 280) The WPTT **NOTED** that there are various levels of needs for each fleet. For example, while for pole-and-line and purse seine fleets, the data and methodological approach are considered key issues to be resolved before any attempt of CPUE standardization; longline CPUE standardization constraints (differences between fleets, spatial structure, materials, etc.) can be resolved and reviewed in a dedicated workshop with the presence of other tRFMO CPUE experts.

(para. 281) The WPTT **NOTED** the [para. 272](#) above, outlining the need for a longline CPUE standardization workshop where operational data, under IOTC confidentiality rules, will be jointly analysed.

(para. 282) The WPTT **RECOMMENDED** that the Secretariat and Maldivian scientists continue the joint effort to standardize the Maldivian pole-and-line CPUE in preparation for assessment in 2012.

(para. 283) The WPTT **RECOMMENDED** that standardization of purse seine CPUE be made where possible using the operational data on the fishery, and that participants working on CPUE for the main fleets, attend the CPUE standardization workshop being organized by ISSF in Honolulu, Hawaii in 2012.

Stock assessment

(para. 284) Noting the difficulty of carrying out stock assessments for three tropical tuna species in a single year, the WPTT **RECOMMENDED** to a revised assessment schedule on a two- or three-year cycle for the three tropical tuna species as outlined in [Table 13](#). Following the uncertainty remaining in the yellowfin tuna assessment the WPTT **AGREED** that priorities for stock assessments in 2012 would be yellowfin tuna (Multifan-CL and SS3, and possibly others) with an update of fishery indicators for the other two species.

Table 13. New schedule proposed for tropical tuna species stock assessment to be recommended to the SC:

Species/Assessment year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Yellowfin tuna	Full	Update	Update	Full	Update	Update
Skipjack tuna	Update	Full	Update	Update	Full	Update
Bigeye tuna	Update	Update	Full	Update	Update	Full

Note: the schedule may be change depending on the situation of the stock from various sources such as fishery indicators, Commission requests, etc.

Additional topics for research

(para.285) The WPTT **RECOMMENDED** that the Scientific Committee add the following core topic areas as priorities for research over the coming year in order of priority:

- An update of the Brownie-Peterson method for the 3 tropical tuna species (possible issue for the 2012 IO Tuna Tagging Symposium).
- An update YFT growth curve (work in progress to be presented to 2012 Tuna Tagging Symposium).

(para. 286) The WPTT **NOTED** that several analysis using tagging data will be carried out by external consultants for the Indian Ocean Tuna Tagging Symposium in 2012 and that this may affect the workplan of the WPTT (see [para. 248](#)). Therefore, the WPTT **URGED** the Steering Committee of the Tagging Symposium to present the core topics to be included in those analysis during next Scientific Committee meeting.

Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB)

(Extracts from IOTC–2011–WPEB07–R)

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES

Employment of a Fisheries Officer – duties to include issues of bycatch

(para. 286) The WPEB **NOTED** the lack of data being submitted by CPCs on bycatch, as detailed throughout this report (IOTC–2011–WPEB07–R), the lack of development and implementation of regional observer programs, the lack of CPCs developing NPOAs for sharks and seabirds, and the high risk of some bycatch species to IOTC fisheries.

(para. 287) The WPEB **NOTED** the Terms of Reference for a bycatch officer, developed by the Scientific Committee in 2010 (provided at Appendix XI of the report of the thirteenth session of the Scientific Committee: IOTC–2010–SC13–R), and **AGREED** that it should be revised to include priorities, as well as possible duties in areas other than Ecosystems and Bycatch.

(para. 288) The WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission agree for a new position to be created at the IOTC Secretariat (Fishery Officer), with duties to focus on bycatch issues.

Additional core topics for research

(para. 289) The WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that the Scientific Committee add the following core topic areas as priorities for research over the coming year, noting that the first step will be for the Scientific Committee to establish priorities, taking into account data gaps, capacity among CPCs, and areas for implementation:

- **Ecological Risk Assessment**
 - i. Sharks
 - ii. Marine turtles
- **Stock status analyses**
 - i. Oceanic whitetip shark
- **Depredation**
 - i. Longline fishery depredation
- **Bycatch mitigation**
 - i. Sharks
 - ii. Seabirds – line weighting
 - iii. Marine turtles
 - iv. Marine mammals
- **Capacity building**
 - i. Scientific assistance to CPCs and specific fleets considered to have the highest risk to bycatch species (e.g. gillnet fleets and longline fleets).

Working Party on Neritic Tunas (WPNT)

(Extracts from IOTC–2011–WPNT01–R)

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES**Stock structure**

(para. 89) Noting that at present very little is known about the population structure and migratory range of most neritic tunas in the Indian Ocean, the WPNT **RECOMMENDED** that the Scientific Committee develop a research plan that includes two separate research lines; i) genetic research to determine the connectivity of neritic tunas throughout their distributions, and ii) tagging research to better understand the movement dynamics, possible spawning locations, and post-release mortality of neritic tunas from various fisheries in the Indian Ocean. These should be considered high priority research projects for 2012 and 2013.

Biological information

(para. 90) The WPNT **RECOMMENDED** that quantitative biological studies are required to determine maturity-at-age and fecundity-at-age relationships, and age and growth for all neritic tunas throughout their range.

CPUE standardisation

(para. 91) The WPNT **AGREED** that there was an urgent need to develop standardised CPUE series for each neritic tuna species for the Indian Ocean as a whole or by sub-region as appropriate, once stock structure and management units have been determined.

(para. 92) The WPNT **RECOMMENDED** that where feasible, support should be provided by the IOTC Secretariat and other CPCs, to aid in the development of standardised CPUE series for each neritic tuna species.

(para. 93) The WPNT **ENCOURAGED** CPCs catching neritic tunas to participate in the CPUE standardisation workshop that will be organized by the IOTC Secretariat in 2012, pending approval by the Scientific Committee.

Stock assessment

(para. 94) The WPNT **AGREED** that there was an urgent need to carry out stock assessments for neritic tunas in the Indian Ocean, however at present the data held at the IOTC Secretariat would be insufficient to undertake this task. As such, the WPNT **RECOMMENDED** that the Scientific Committee consider recommending that the Commission consider allocating appropriate funds to further increase the capacity of coastal states to collect, report and analyse catch data on neritic tunas.