

Korean Proposal on Setting Historical Reference Year and Other Considerations

Introduction

At the meeting of the IOTC technical Committee on the quota allocation, being held in Nairobi, Kenya, 16-18, February 2011, in accordance with Resolution 10/01, 4 proposals and 1 information document were submitted for discussion which aims to put forward the recommendation for the adoption by the Commission in its plenary meeting in 2012.

From the point of Korea, it is deemed that one of challenges in discussion on the proposals is how to address the interests of distant water fishing nations such as the Republic of Korea that has fished and invested in the area of IOTC competence with much longer history than suggested in all proposals, while fully supporting the legitimate sovereign rights and aspirations of coastal states, in particular small island developing coastal states and territories and small and vulnerable economies.

Fishing History as Traditional Distant Fishing Nation

Korean tuna fishery has operated its longline fleet in the Indian Ocean since 1957. Tropical tunas in the Pacific and Indian Ocean have been the most important target species for Korean distant-water fishery since then. The traditional fishing grounds of Korean tuna longline fishery were mainly formed in the central tropical area between 20°N and 20°S. From 1991 onward some longliners moved to the south (43°N) of the Indian Ocean where they target southern bluefin tuna and yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna. The number of tuna longline vessels peaked at 185 in 1975 and then has been gradually decreasing. The catches culminated in 71,100 mt in 1978 and have also been gradually decreasing.

Historical Catch Reference Year

The 13th Scientific Committee adopted the best estimates of average catches, for 2005-2009 and for 1960-2009, of the species fished in the area of the IOTC competence, where Korean Yellowfin tuna catches were 2,500mt and 7,300mt respectively, and Bigeye tuna 1,700mt and 8,400mt respectively. The estimates indicate that the catch was high in the middle of 1970s but has been decreasing since

1980s. Such a historical pattern of Korean catch has been driven, in particular by the effective exploitation strategy over the oceans, shifting from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean for the sake of reducing the fishing pressure on the stocks concerned, and due to Somali Piracy problem in recent years. If the IOTC is to adopt a proposed fixed reference period of recent years such as the last 10 years without taking into account of the Korean fishing practice above, the Korean tuna fisheries will be limited and have a severe condition. However, as shown in figure below from the 13th Scientific Committee Report, the amounts of catch and fishing pressure from other main longline fishing countries have increased since 2000. In this regard, the Korean delegation would like to propose that the best estimated historical catch of 1960-2009 be used for the Korean case as the baseline reference period for the quota allocation criteria.

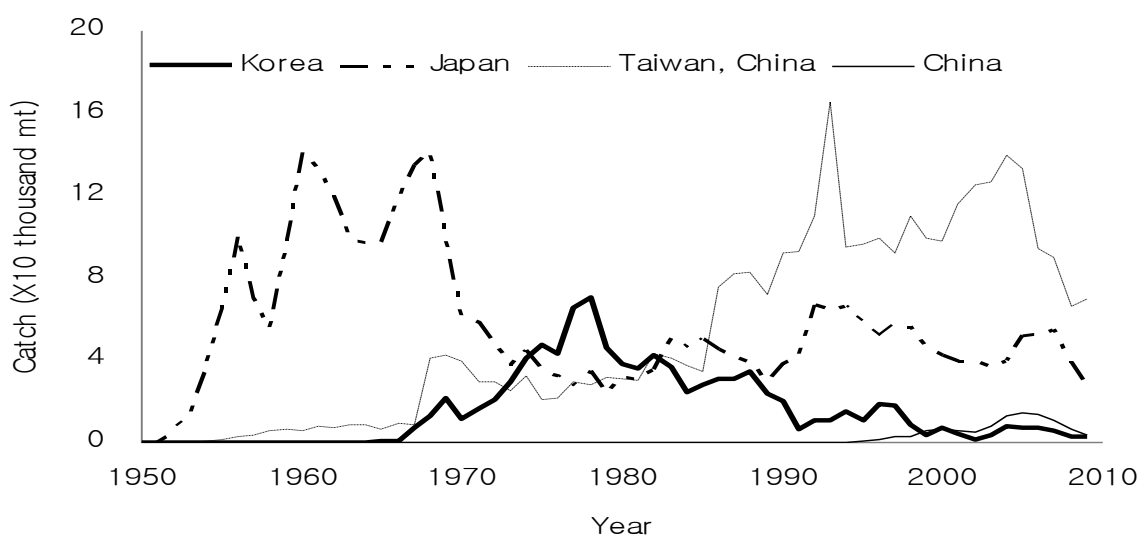


Fig. 1. Trend of historical catches of tropical tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean by longline flag states

Proposed Option for Conservation and Management Measure for tropical tunas

All proposals are dealing with longline and purse seine fishery without any differentiation in terms of supposed quota allocation calculation. In real fishing practice, longline vessels target yellowfin and bigeye tuna which are more valued in the sashimi markets and purse seine does less valued species such as skipjack for cannery market. It is well known that it is difficult to identify those high valued species from the purse seine catch composition. Thus, Korea has a view that it is desirable to separate the conservation and management measures, including quota allocation system for those two sorts of fisheries as practiced in the other RFMOs.

Conclusion

Korea considers the baseline nominal catch proportion as the backbone of the calculation of quota for the fixed reference years. In terms of setting historical reference year, it should be taken into account of the historical Korean fishery situation which is indicating decreasing amount of catch since especially 2000. Therefore, Korea would like to propose historical catch of 1960-2009 be used for the Korean case as the baseline reference period. In addition, Korea would like to fully support the importance of correction factors as one of quota allocation criteria in some proposals. In addition, Korea would like to propose to consider and adopt separate conservation and management measures for longline and purse seine as practiced by other RFMOs.