

## OUTCOMES OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 6 APRIL 2011

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### PURPOSE

To inform the Working Party on Billfish (WPB) of the recommendations arising from the Thirteenth Session of the Scientific Committee, held from 6–10 December 2010, specifically relating to the work of the WPB.

### BACKGROUND

At the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scientific Committee, the recommendations contained in Attachment A, that relate mainly to the data and research activities of the national scientists were endorsed by the Committee. The Committee considered the recommendations contained in Appendix A as priority items compared to the complete list of data and research activities recommended by the Working Party on Billfish at its meeting in July 2010.

### DISCUSSION

In addition to the recommendations outlined in Attachment A, the Scientific Committee recommended in 2010, that the Commission consider appropriate Conservation and Management Measures to control and/or reduce effort on the swordfish stock in the southwest Indian Ocean. In making this recommendation to the Commission, the Scientific Committee did not outline key elements required by the Commission to make an informed management decision, specifically relate to the area of the southwest Indian Ocean, an indication of the current and historical catch and effort from the area, and the amount of catch or effort that would need to be removed from the area to ensure swordfish in the southwest Indian Ocean would recover to sustainable levels.

The Scientific Committee adopted a revised Executive Summary for each of the key billfish species, and these will be discussed under Agenda item 8.

### RECOMMENDATION

That the Working Party on Billfish **NOTE** the recommendations of the Thirteenth Session of the Scientific Committee on data and research, and consider how to progress these issues at the present meeting.

### ATTACHMENTS

**Attachment A:** Summary of the Scientific Committee recommendations on data and research in 2010, relevant to the Working Party on Billfish.

EXTRACT: REPORT OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE  
(IOTC-2010-SC13-R; SECT. 16.1, PAGES 41-42)

## 16. SUMMARY OF THE SC RECOMMENDATION IN 2010

### 16.1. RECOMMENDATIONS – ON DATA AND RESEARCH

278. The following recommendations relate mainly to data and research activities of WPs and national scientists. They should be considered as priority items compared to the complete list of data and research activities recommended by the WPs (Appendix IV).

4. The SC encouraged that the EU develop CPUE standardization for its longline fleet targeting swordfish, and that such analysis should be presented at the next meeting of the WPB (paragraph 20).
8. The SC encouraged all CPCs to improve data collection and reporting for marlins, including catch data from artisanal and sport fisheries, as this information is crucial to the stock assessment process. (paragraph 35)
9. The SC reiterated previous concerns regarding the low level of participation of scientists to the WPB, in particular scientists from coastal states in the IOTC region, and urged CPCs, in particular Sri Lanka, Iran, Pakistan, India and Indonesia, to make necessary arrangements to attend the next WPB in 2011, particularly given current concerns over the status of the swordfish stock in the Indian Ocean. The SC noted that both Spain and Portugal have important fisheries for swordfish in the Indian Ocean and reiterated its concern that no scientists from these countries have participated in meetings in recent years (paragraph 36)
10. The SC encouraged CPCs to participate or contribute to both projects, in particular to the collection of samples for analysis by IOSSS. (paragraph 42)
11. The SC noted the WPB recommendations relating to data acquisition and availability, and agreed that the following issues have to be addressed as a matter of priority (paragraph 43):
  - Acquisition of catch-and-effort and size data from drifting gillnet fisheries in Iran and Pakistan
  - Identification of marlins by species and an increase in sampling coverage in the artisanal fisheries of Sri Lanka, especially offshore fisheries
  - Acquisition of catch-and-effort and size data from sport fisheries, including the preparation and dissemination of reporting forms to Sport Fishing Centres in the region
  - Acquisition of statistics on billfish not reported by longline fleets, by species, in particular from India, Philippines, Malaysia and Oman.
  - Fresh-tuna longline fishery of Indonesia for which estimated catches of swordfish and marlins may have been underestimated in recent years. Size frequency data have been collected, however the samples cannot be fully broken by month and fishing area (5°x5° grid) and refer mostly to the component of the catch that is unloaded fresh.
  - Artisanal fisheries of Indonesia where the catch levels reported in recent years are considerably higher than those reported in the past and for which the quality of the dataset is very poor:
  - Implementation of sampling for the collection of biological data for billfish, in particular sex-ratio by length, length-weight and non-standard size – standard length conversion relationships and resulting keys.
  - Japan and Taiwan,China: provide the entire size frequency data series for their longline fisheries as per the IOTC standards.
12. The SC endorsed the following research recommendations from the WPB and commended it for its work in 2010 (paragraph 44).
  - Based on recommendations last year and the assessments conducted in 2010, the WPB still considered determination of stock structure as a research priority as the information available tends to indicate localized depletion in certain areas, notably the south-west Indian Ocean. On-going initiatives, such as IOSSS and SWIOFP, should provide better information on the stock structure in 2011/2012.
  - The WPB welcomed the introduction of standardised CPUE series in 2010 from La Reunion and Seychelles but identified Spain and Portugal as potentially having useful series for inclusion in assessments in 2011, particularly to further explore the SW area. The WPB recommended the on-going development of the spatially disaggregated approach.
  - The WPB recommended investigation the historical coverage of logbooks for Taiwan,China.
13. The SC agreed that the WPB should examine inter-annual environmental anomalies to describe the inter-annual variability in CPUE and that this work should be pursued in the inter-sessional period. In addition, the effect of shifting effort distribution (e.g. cause by piracy) should be investigated. (paragraph 45).