



STATUS OF SEABIRDS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

PURPOSE

To encourage the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB) to develop a clear and concise draft Executive Summary for seabirds in the Indian Ocean, for the consideration of the Scientific Committee.

BACKGROUND

Each year the IOTC Scientific Committee (SC) provides status advice and recommendations on seabirds to the Commission in two main formats based on assessments or other stock status indicators determined by the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch. Firstly, advice is formulated in the body of the report as recommendations on ways to reduce interactions with seabirds. Secondly, advice is combined into an Executive Summary for all seabird species known to interact with fishing gear by IOTC registered vessels, during the SC meeting however, due to time limitations the SC places little emphasis on how the information is presented in the Executive Summaries.

In 2009, the IOTC performance review panel published a report outlining 75 recommendations to improve the functioning of the IOTC (Anon 2009¹). Recommendation 30 from the review states: "New guidelines for the presentation of more user friendly scientific reports in terms of stock assessments should be developed. ...".

The advice provided by the working parties and the SC has at times been unclear. As such, there is a clear need for the WPEB to provide the SC with a clear set of recommendations and advice concerning the status of seabirds in the IOTC area of competence.

DISCUSSION

The advice and recommendations provided to the Commission varies greatly among the reports of the various Working Parties, including the Executive Summaries, depending on the indicators used to determine stock status and the level of information available to the Working Parties and SC. Where possible, indicators should be standardised and a minimum level of information be contained in the Executive Summaries. To this aim, a small group of experts on seabirds, under the guidance of the Secretariat, have developed a revised draft Executive Summary for seabirds (Attachment A) so that the WPEB may more readily communicate its opinion on seabird status to the Scientific Committee (note that text in red or highlighted in yellow remain to be updated).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch:

- 1) **RECOMMEND** that the IOTC Secretariat update the draft 'Status of seabirds in the Indian Ocean' with the latest 2010 interaction data, and for these to be provided to the Scientific Committee for its consideration.
- 2) **RECOMMEND** that the Scientific Committee note and revise as necessary, the draft 'Status of seabirds in the Indian Ocean'.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A: Status of seabirds in the Indian Ocean.

¹ Anon. 2009, Report of the IOTC Performance Review Panel, January 2009, Indian Ocean Tuna Commission.