

OUTCOMES OF THE FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 30 JUNE 2011

PURPOSE

To inform the Working Party on Tropical Tuna (WPTT) of the decision and requests made by the Commission at its Fifteenth Session, held from 18–22 March 2011, specifically relating to the work of the WPTT.

BACKGROUND

At the 15th Session of the Commission, Members considered a range of topics related to the work of the Working Party on Tropical Tuna (WPTT). Although no species specific proposals for new or revised Conservation and Management Measures were made in 2011, several proposals related to data collection and catch documentation were considered. Of these proposals one was adopted as a recommendation rather than as a binding resolution:

- 1) The Commission **adopted** Recommendation 11/06 *Concerning the Recording of Catch by Fishing Vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence* (provided at [Attachment A](#)). This Recommendation consolidates Resolution 08/04 *Concerning the Recording of Catch by Longline Fishing Vessels in the IOTC Area* and Resolution 10/03 *Concerning the Record of Catch by Fishing Vessels in the IOTC Area*, but does not supersede them, as well as setting agreed minimum standards for data requirements for all pole-and-line and gillnet fleets operating in the IOTC area of competence, in order to harmonize data gathering and provide a common basis for scientific analysis for all IOTC CPCs. Some CPCs indicated that they would not be in a position to implement the proposal (para. 116 of the S15 report).

In addition, the Commission considered the following proposals as Conservation and Management Measures relating to the work of the WPTT, but consensus could not be reached:

- 1) The Commission considered a proposal *on a catch documentation scheme* (provided at [Attachment B](#)), but no consensus could be reached. The proposal aimed to support the implementation of the IOTC Conservation and Management Measures by providing a scheme to identify the origin of tunas and tuna-like species and other species of fish taken by vessels fishing for tunas and tuna-like species within the IOTC area of competence (para. 118 of the S15 report).
- 2) The Commission considered a proposal *on a catch documentation programme* for tropical tuna (provided at [Attachment C](#)), but no consensus could be reached. Several Members noted that this proposed programme was different from the programme that they have recently implemented to comply with the EU–IUU regulations (notably Council Regulation (EC) No. 1005/2008), and applying only to the three tropical tuna species, therefore creating difficulties and confusion in the CPCs currently exporting fish to the EU market. Some Members expressed their interest in discussing an IOTC Catch Documentation Scheme draft Resolution modelled in the EU IUU regulation and certification, considering their familiarity with this system. The EU will likely propose in 2012 a draft Resolution along these lines, including a section addressing the concerns expressed for artisanal fisheries (para. 119 of the S15 report).

DISCUSSION

At the 15th Session of the Commission, Members also made several requests to CPCs, the Scientific Committee and directly to the Working Party on Tropical Tuna (WPTT), which participants are asked to consider:

- 1) The Commission expressed concern that data and statistics for gillnet fisheries are still poor, while those fisheries are catching approximately 14% of the total catch in the Indian Ocean. The Commission **noted** that these fisheries are also believed to have substantial impacts on bycatch species and associated ecosystems (para. 33 of the S15 report).
- 2) The Commission **reminded** CPCs of the importance of timely reporting of data and **requests** that each CPC review the data reporting requirements contained in IOTC Conservation and Management Measures (para. 34 of the S15 report).
- 3) The Commission **requests** that all CPCs improve compliance with the various statistical reporting requirements and deadlines in order for the necessary analyses and assessments to be completed, on which the advice of the Scientific Committee will be based (para. 35 of the S15 report).

- 4) The Commission **noted** that stock assessments for some species rely on longline fisheries standardized CPUE series, in particular from Japan. Due to the decreasing effort of this fleet during the last few years, the Commission **requests** that alternative CPUE series for other fleets are used by the Scientific Committee and its Working Parties in stock assessments (para. 36 of the S15 report).
- 5) The Commission **noted** the provision by the Scientific Committee of the Kobe II matrix for bigeye tuna and swordfish, and recognized that it is a useful and necessary tool for management. The Commission **requests** that such matrices be provided for all stock assessments by the species Working Parties, in particular for yellowfin tuna, and for these to be included in the report of the Scientific Committee in 2011 and all future reports (para. 38 of the S15 report).
- 6) The Commission recognized the added value of the Indian Ocean Tuna Tagging Programme, and expressed its satisfaction that the data were used for both the assessment of yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna in 2010. However, the Commission expressed its concern regarding the low reporting rate of the tags by the longline and pole-and-line fleets (para. 39 of the S15 report).
- 7) The Commission recognized that piracy activities in the western Indian Ocean, have had substantial negative consequences on the activities of some fleets, as well as the level of observer coverage in these areas. The Commission **requests** that the Scientific Committee assess the effect of piracy on fleet operations and subsequent catch and effort trends (para. 40 of the S15 report).
- 8) The Commission **endorsed** the development of a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) in the framework of IOTC and **requests** that this process be continued in 2011 (para. 43 of the S15 report).
- 9) The Commission **requests** the Scientific Committee in its 2011 Session, to evaluate the data provision needs for longline, purse seine, gillnet and pole-and-line gear types, notably regarding information relating to the vessel characteristics and the definition of the pole-and-line ‘fishing event’. The evaluation is requested in order to ensure that consistent and uniform information is collected to assist the IOTC to fulfil its mandate. The Scientific Committee should make appropriate recommendations to the 2012 Commission meeting (para. 45 of the S15 report).
- 10) The Commission **reiterates the request** that the Scientific Committee should evaluate the time-area closure established in Resolution 10/01 *for the conservation and management of tropical tunas stocks in the IOTC area of competence*, in terms of its impacts on the stocks of tuna and tuna-like species (para. 47 of the S15 report).
- 11) The Commission **requests** that the Scientific Committee provide advice to the Commission that adds to the information currently available or already requested of the Scientific Committee regarding the take of juvenile yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna and other species, and on alternative management measures, including an assessment of the impact of current purse seine activities, including the size/fishing capacity (and gear types i.e. mesh size etc.) of vessels, and the potential implications that may arise for tuna and tuna-like species. Such advice should include options for capping purse seine effort and use in conjunction with drifting FADs in the Indian Ocean (para. 105 of the S15 report).

Of particular interest for the WPTT are points 7, 9, 10 and 11 above, which should be discussed and responded to by the WPTT during the current meeting so that the Scientific Committee can respond appropriately to the Commission’s requests.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Working Party on Tropical Tuna **NOTE** the outcomes of the Fifteenth Session of the Commission, and consider how best to provide the Scientific Committee with the information it needs, in order to satisfy the Commission’s requests.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Recommendation 11/06 *Concerning the Recording of Catch by Fishing Vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence*

Attachment B: Proposal by the Japan *on a catch documentation scheme*

Attachment C: Proposal by the EU *on a catch documentation programme for tropical tuna*