
**AN IOTC RESOLUTION FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT
OF THE YELLOWFIN TUNA AND BIGEYE TUNA STOCKS IN THE IOTC
AREA OF COMPETENCE**

SUBMITTED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Explanatory Memorandum

EC PROPOSAL FOR

**AN IOTC RESOLUTION FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE
YELLOWFIN TUNA AND BIGEYE TUNA STOCKS IN THE IOTC AREA OF COMPETENCE**

The IOTC Scientific Committee, has repeatedly pointed out that fishing levels of yellowfin tuna stock have exceeded MSY in recent years.

In interpreting the high catches of yellowfin over the period from 2003 to 2006, the Scientific Committee noted that if the hypothesis of one or two high recruitments entering the adult stock is correct, the increased catches from these year classes are unlikely to be detrimental to the stock, but these catches would not be sustainable in the longer term unless supported by continued high recruitments.

Concerning bigeye tuna, the results of the last stock assessments conducted in 2006 were more optimistic than the previous one and indicated that the 2005 catch is close to the MSY.

However, the current outlook could revert to a more pessimistic one, if the exploitation pattern is to return to the pre-2003 levels, as expected. Changes in the fishery occurred in 2003 and 2004, but these were due to the exceptional catches of yellowfin, which seem to be the result of anomalous conditions.

In view of the most current assessment, the SC recommended that bigeye catches should not exceed the MSY.

Taking account the evaluations of the stock status of the two major tuna species in the IOTC area of competence and the IOTC Scientific Committee advice, the EC considers that further measures to ensure the conservation and the long term sustainability of IOTC main fisheries are needed, in line with the internationally recognised application of the precautionary approach. This is despite the adoption of the IOTC Resolution 06/05, freezing the fishing effort in terms of number of vessels and corresponding GT on highly migratory species in international waters.

In order to ensure coherence with the practice already implemented in other RFMOs, and with the view of protecting the resources as well as to ensure the long stand profitability of the industrial fishing activities in the Indian Ocean, the EC is proposing catch restrictions for Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non Contracting Parties as recommended by the Scientific Committee on the basis of the CPCs catch figures indicated in the IOTC Scientific Committee report 2008.

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the available scientific information and advice, in particular the IOTC Scientific Committee conclusions whereby the yellowfin stocks might have been overexploited during the years 2003-2006;

CONSIDERING that yellowfin tuna stocks are evaluated at levels near or below the maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the recommendation of the IOTC Scientific Committee to keep the catches of Bigeye tuna at or below the levels of maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

RECOGNISING the importance of applying the precautionary approach for the management of the tropical tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean;

ADOPTS, in accordance with the provisions of Article IX, paragraph 1 of the Agreement establishing the IOTC, the following:

1. The Contracting Party and Co-operating Non-contracting Party (hereinafter CPCs) catches of yellowfin tuna should not exceed the average catch for the period 1998-2002 (i.e; 251,000 tonnes caught by CPCs as indicated by the 2008 IOTC Scientific Committee report).

2. The CPCs catches of bigeye tuna should not exceed the MSY (i.e. 110,000 tonnes).

3. The catch limit per CPC is indicated in the annex I (yellowfin) and annex II (bigeye), on the basis of the catch figures indicated in the 2008 Scientific Committee report (reference year 2007 for bigeye CPCs catches and the average of the period 1998-2002 for yellowfin CPCs catches).

4. CPCs shall report, at end of each quarter, their yellowfin (YFT) and bigeye (BET) catch (whole weight in kilograms) for the quarter, to the IOTC Secretariat. If any previously reported catch has been revised, the revised figures should also be provided to the Secretariat. CPCs shall also report the total annual catch at the end of each calendar year.

5. All unused portion or excess of the annual quota/catch limit shall be deducted from/may be added to, according to the case, the respective quota/catch limit during or before the adjustment year, in the following way:

<i>Catch year</i>	<i>Adjustment year</i>
2009	2011
2010	2012
2011	2013

6. This resolution shall enter into force immediately and will be revised, as appropriate, according to the forthcoming advice of the IOTC Scientific Committee on the status of the yellowfin and bigeye tuna stocks.

Annex I
Yellowfin

IOTC CPCs	1998-2002 average CATCHES (in thousands of tonnes)
EC (Spain – France)	80.5
Seychelles	11.7
Iran, Islamic Republic	21.6
China (including Taiwan, Province of China)	23.7
Japan	15.0
Indonesia	32
Korea, Republic of	1.5
Sri Lanka	32.6
Oman	7.4
Pakistan	4.5
Comoros	5.7
Other Fleets	14.8
Total	251

Annex II
Bigeve

FLEET	2007 CATCHES (in thousands of tonnes)
EC (Spain – France)	15.9
Seychelles	3.9
Thailand	1.7
China (including Taiwan, Province of China)	43.3
Japan	19.2
Indonesia	7.2
Seychelles	5.6
Korea, Republic of	3.1
Philippines	2.1
Other Fleets	7.9
Total	109.9