

ON INTERIM TARGET AND LIMIT REFERENCE POINTS

SUBMITTED BY: MALDIVES, 06 APRIL 2013

Explanatory Memorandum

The proposal was originally submitted to S16 where it was adopted by the Commission as a Recommendation (Recommendation 12/14). Recommendation 12/14 established the general principles that would guide the application of the precautionary approach in the context of IOTC, including the adoption of provisional reference points that would apply until such time as the Commission decides to update the reference points after considering the advice of the Scientific Committee following the management strategy evaluation exercise. The MSE work programme proposed by the Working Party on Methods was endorsed by the Scientific Committee in 2012.

This current Proposal outlines the provisional target and limit reference points for the principal market species of tuna and for swordfish, based on the recommendations of the 14th Session of the Scientific Committee and reinforced at the 15th Scientific Committee. The proposed targets are, as it has been the norm in the decisions of the Commission, the levels that are compatible with the achievement of the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). The limit reference points (that indicate high risk to the conditions of the stocks) are set at a biomass reduction to 40%–50% of the MSY level, or a fishing pressure that exceeds by 30–50% the level that would produce the MSY. These levels may be updated by the Commission in the future following due consideration of the advice of the Scientific Committee. This advice will follow from the progress expected from the Management Strategy Evaluation process, to be carried out by the Scientific Committee, and will be complimented by Harvest Control Rules, which will need to consider a range of biological, social, economic and environmental issues of importance to CPCs.

RESOLUTION 13/XX
ON INTERIM TARGET AND LIMIT REFERENCE POINTS

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

RECALLING that Article 6, paragraph 3, of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea of December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA), establishes the application of precautionary reference points as a general principle for sound fisheries management;

FURTHER RECALLING that Annex II, of UNFSA provides guidelines for the application of precautionary reference points in the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, including the adoption of provisional reference points when information for establishing reference points is absent or poor;

NOTING that Article 7.5.3 of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries also recommends the implementation of stock specific target and limit reference points, *inter alia*, on the basis of the precautionary approach;

NOTING that recommendations 37 and 38 of the Performance Review Panel, adopted by the Commission as Resolution 09/01, indicate that pending the amendment or replacement of the IOTC Agreement to incorporate modern fisheries management principles, the Commission should implement the precautionary approach including, *inter alia*, precautionary reference points, as set forth in the UNFSA;

NOTING Resolution 12/01 *On the implementation of the precautionary approach* that recommends adoption of provisional reference points, and that the Scientific Committee proposed provisional values at its 14th Session;

ADOPTS in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, that: RECOMMENDS, in accordance with paragraph 8 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, to the following:

- When assessing stock status and providing recommendations to the Commission, the Scientific Committee should apply the following interim target and limit reference points for the species of tuna and tuna-like species listed in [Table 1](#). B_{MSY} refers to the biomass level for the stock that would produce the Maximum Sustainable Yield; F_{MSY} refers to the level of fishing mortality that produces the Maximum Sustainable Yield.

Table 1. Interim target and limit reference points.

Stock	Target Reference Point	Limit Reference Point
Albacore tuna	B_{MSY} ; F_{MSY}	40% of B_{MSY} ; 40% above F_{MSY}
Bigeye tuna	B_{MSY} ; F_{MSY}	50% of B_{MSY} ; 30% above F_{MSY}
Skipjack tuna	B_{MSY} ; F_{MSY}	40% of B_{MSY} ; 50% above F_{MSY}
Yellowfin tuna	B_{MSY} ; F_{MSY}	40% of B_{MSY} ; 40% above F_{MSY}
Swordfish	B_{MSY} ; F_{MSY}	40% of B_{MSY} ; 40% above F_{MSY}

- These interim target and limit reference points shall remain in effect until the Commission adopts updated, species-specific reference points and harvest control rules, considering the scientific advice supplied by the Scientific Committee.
- In implementing harvest control rules, the Commission, taking into account the advice of the Scientific Committee, shall act to ensure that there is a high probability of target reference points being reached and a low probability of limit reference points being breached. This may be achieved by managing fishing mortality at levels which will allow stock biomass to be maintained above its limit reference points and around its target reference points.