

REVISION OF THE WPNT PROGRAM OF WORK (2014–2018)

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PURPOSE

To ensure that participants at the 4th Working Party on Neritic Tunas (WPNT04) revise the Program of Work for the WPNT by taking into consideration the specific requests of the Commission and Scientific Committee.

BACKGROUND

Scientific Committee

At the 16th Session of the SC:

- (Para. 192) The SC **NOTED** paper IOTC–2013–SC15–16 which outlined the proposed research priorities for each of the Working Party meetings held in 2013, with the aim of developing an IOTC Science Work Plan for 2014, and future years.
- (Para. 193) The SC **NOTED** the proposed work plans and priorities of each of the Working Parties and **AGREED** to the revised work plans as outlined in Appendix XXXIV [of the SC16 Report]. The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of each working party shall ensure that the efforts of their working party is focused on the core areas contained within the appendix, taking into account any new research priorities identified by the Commission at its next Session.
- (Para. 194) The SC **REQUESTED** that all Working Parties provide their work plans with items prioritised based on the requests of the Commission of the SC.
- (Para. 195) The SC **ADOPTED** a revised assessment schedule, ecological risk assessment and other core projects for 2014–18, for the tuna and tuna-like species under the IOTC mandate, as well as the current list of key shark species of interest, as outlined in Appendix XXXV [of the SC16 Report].
- (Para. 196) The SC **REQUESTED** that the IOTC Secretariat develop a template for each working party to use in developing their works plans in 2014, with the aim of standardising the way in which each working party presents a prioritised plan each year for the SC's consideration.

Commission

At Sessions of the Commission, Conservation and Management Measures adopted contained elements which call on the Scientific Committee, via the WPNT, to undertake specific tasks. These requests will need to be incorporated into a revised Program of Work for the WPNT:

Resolution 12/12 To prohibit the use of large-scale driftnets on the high seas in the IOTC area

- (para. 1) The use of large-scale driftnets¹ on the high seas within the IOTC area of competence shall be prohibited.
- (para. 6) The IOTC shall periodically assess whether additional measures should be adopted and implemented to ensure that large-scale driftnets are not used on the high seas in the IOTC area of competence. The first such assessment shall take place in 2013.

Resolution 11/04 On a regional observer scheme

- (para. 2) In order to improve the collection of scientific data, at least 5 % of the number of operations/sets for each gear type by the fleet of each CPC while fishing in the IOTC area of competence of 24 meters overall length and over, and under 24 meters if they fish outside their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) shall be covered by this observer scheme. For vessels under 24 meters if they fish outside their EEZ, the above mentioned coverage should be achieved progressively by January 2013.

¹ “Large-scale driftnets” are defined as gillnets or other nets or a combination of nets that are more than 2.5 kilometers in length whose purpose is to enmesh, entrap, or entangle fish by drifting on the surface of, or in, the water column.

- (para. 4) The number of the artisanal fishing vessels landings shall also be monitored at the landing place by field samplers². The indicative level of the coverage of the artisanal fishing vessels should progressively increase towards 5% of the total levels of vessel activity (i.e. total number of vessel trips or total number of vessels active).
- (para. 15) The elements of the Observer Scheme, notably those regarding its coverage, are subject to review and revision, as appropriate, for application in 2012 and subsequent years. Basing on the experience of other Tuna RFMOs, the IOTC Scientific Committee will elaborate an observer working manual, a template to be used for reporting (including minimum data fields) and a training program.

DISCUSSION

Participants at the WPNT04 are requested to consider the priorities set by the Commission and the Scientific Committee, via Conservation and Management Measures, and revise its Program of Work (previous outlined in paper IOTC–2014–WPNT04–04) to match those priorities.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the WPNT:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2014–WPNT04–08, which encouraged the WPNT to further develop and refine its Program of Work for 2014–2018 to align with the requests and directives from the Commission and Scientific Committee.
- 2) **RECOMMEND** a revised Program of Work for 2014–2018 to the Scientific Committee for its consideration and potential endorsement.

² Field sampler: a person who collects information on land during the unloading of fishing vessels. Field sampling programmes can be used for quantifying catch, retained bycatch, collecting tag returns, etc.