

OUTCOMES OF THE 23rd SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 04 NOVEMBER 2019

PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 15th Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS15) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 23rd Session, held from 17 - 21 June 2019, specifically relating to the work of the WPDCS.

BACKGROUND

At the 23rd Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 7 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (consisting of 7 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), as detailed below:

Resolutions

- Resolution 19/01 *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC Area of competence.*
- Resolution 19/02 *Procedures on a fish aggregating devices (FADs) management plan, including a limitation on the number of fads, more detailed specifications of catch reporting from fad sets, and the development of improved fad designs to reduce the incidence of entanglement of non-target species.*
- Resolution 19/03 *On the conservation of mobulid species caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence.*
- Resolution 19/04 *Concerning the IOTC Record of Vessels Authorised to operate in the IOTC Area of Competence.*
- Resolution 19/05 *On a ban on discards of bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna, and non-targeted species caught by purse seine vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence.*
- Resolution 19/06 *On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels.*
- Resolution 19/07 *On vessel chartering in the IOTC Area of Competence.*

Pursuant to Article IX.4 of the IOTC Agreement, the above-mentioned Conservation and Management Measures shall become binding on Members, 120 days from the date of the notification communicated by the Secretariat.

DISCUSSION

The Commission also made a number of general comments on the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee in 2018, which have relevance for the WPDCS (IOTC–2019–S23–R):

Report of the 21st Session of the Scientific Committee (SC21)

(Para 28) The Commission NOTED that 7 Contracting Parties and 1 Cooperating Non-Contracting Party did not submit a National Report to the Scientific Committee in 2018, and issues with lack of data and poor-quality data persist. The Commission REITERATED its concerns about the lack and poor quality of data, and again, strongly ENCOURAGED CPCs to take immediate steps to review, and where necessary, improve their performance with respect to the provision of data through improved compliance with Resolutions 15/01 On the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence, and 15/02 Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties.

(Para. 29): The Commission NOTED the stock status summaries for species of tuna and tuna-like species under the IOTC mandate, as well as other species impacted by IOTC fisheries (Appendix 6) and considered the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee to the Commission. The Commission ENDORSED the Scientific Committee's 2018 list of recommendations as its own.

(Para 31) The Commission NOTED the complications inherent in data collection and analysis for several coastal fisheries and species and in particular, those for neritic tunas. This affects the Scientific Committee's ability to provide management advice for these species and fleets. Coastal states were ENCOURAGED to reflect on the problems they have in data collection so that they can be addressed. The Commission also NOTED the advice from the WPNT and the need to make management decisions based on this advice.

The status of tropical and temperate tunas

(Para 38). The Commission **NOTED** the considerable use of estimated data in the yellowfin tuna assessment due to the unavailability of data from CPCs, as is the case for all species. The Commission **URGED** all CPCs to improve their data collection and reporting.

Matters related to ecosystems, bycatch and the status of sharks

(Para 41) The Commission **NOTED** that the submission of complete, accurate and timely catch records disaggregated by species for sharks and other bycatch species remains low and that this reduces the ability of the Scientific Committee to provide informed management advice for these species.

The status of neritic tunas

(Para 43). The Commission **NOTED** that catch of neritic species amounts to around 35% of the total catch of IOTC species, and almost all the catch of neritic species is estimated to be taken by coastal States. The Commission **NOTED**, that around 80% of the catch data available to the Commission on neritic species has to be estimated i.e. only around 20% of the catch data is derived from catch sampling processes and reported to the IOTC Secretariat.

(Para 44) The Commission **NOTED** that neritic tuna are vital resources for the coastal States. The Commission **EXPRESSED** concern about the overall lack of information on neritic tunas, and **ENCOURAGED** CPCs to improve data collection and reporting, and develop measures to underpin sustainable management of IOTC neritic species

The complete report of the 23rd Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available for download from the IOTC website: <http://www.iotc.org>

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the WPDCS:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2019–WPDCS15–04 which outlined the **provisional** outcomes of the 23rd Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPDCS and **AGREE** to consider how best to provide the SC with the information it needs, in order to satisfy the Commission’s requests, throughout the course of the current WPDCS meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** the 7 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) adopted at the 23rd Session of the Commission (consisting of 7 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), which have a direct impacts on the work of the WPDCS.