



ON ENDANGERED SPECIES

SUBMITTED BY: EUROPEAN UNION, 26 MARCH 2015

Explanatory Memorandum

According to the IOTC Working Parties on Billfish and on Neritic Tunas, and as confirmed by the IOTC Scientific Committee (SC), the situation of some stocks is very problematic with clear indications of depletion or overfishing.

For billfish the situation is worse since 3 out of the 5 species were considered to be outside the green phase of the Kobe plot: Striped marlin in red (overfishing is occurring and the stock is overfished); black marlin in orange (overfishing is occurring but the stock is not overfished); and blue marlin in yellow (overfishing is not occurring but the stock is overfished).

For neritic tunas, only 3 species were assessed using data poor stock assessment models and while kawakawa and narrow-barred Spanish mackerel were considered to be in the green phase of the Kobe plot, the Longtail tuna is considered to be subject to overfishing but not overfished. No quantitative assessments were provided for bullet tuna, frigate tuna, and Indo-Pacific king mackerel.

The lack of data is especially important, but not exclusive, for gillnet fisheries for which very few data exists on catch and effort, length frequencies and bycatch/discards. Countries employing gillnet fisheries should make a special effort to collect such data.

This Resolution encourages Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) to reduce the current level of catches for striped marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*), black marlin (*Makaira indica*), blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*) and longtail tuna (*Thunnus tonggol*). In addition, CPCs are encouraged to request their operators/fishing vessels to release any fish of the above mentioned species brought alive onboard or alongside for taking on-board the vessel. IOTC scientific bodies are requested to continue their work, i.e. assessing and monitoring the status of the above mentioned species.



RESOLUTION 15/XX
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Keywords: striped marlin; black marlin; blue marlin; longtail tuna; catch trends; bycatch; discards

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

RECOGNISING Resolution 12/01 *On the implementation of the precautionary approach* calls on IOTC Contracting Parties (Members) and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (collectively CPCs) to apply the precautionary approach in accordance with Article V of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement;

CONCERNED by the continued failure of IOTC CPCs to submit complete, accurate and timely catch records in accordance with existing IOTC Resolutions;

CONSIDERING scientific advice provided by the IOTC Scientific Committee as the cornerstone for establishing an effective management framework for stocks and fisheries under the purview of the IOTC;

FURTHER CONSIDERING the recommendations made in the 2014 sessions of Working Party on Billfish, the Working Party on Neritic Tunas and the Scientific Committee on the status of some billfish and neritic tuna stocks indicating that fishing pressure or catches should decrease;

RECALLING the recommendations adopted in accordance with the KOBE II workshop on bycatch in 2010 that regional fisheries management organisations should consider adopting binding measures or strengthen existing mitigation measures, including the development of mandatory reporting requirements;

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

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) shall make any possible effort to reduce the 2014 level of catches of its vessels for the following species: striped marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*), black marlin (*Makaira indica*), blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*) and longtail tuna (*Thunnus tonggol*).
2. CPCs are encouraged to request their operators/fishing vessels to release any fish which belongs to any of the above mentioned species brought alive onboard or alongside for taking onboard the vessel.
3. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall request that the Working Party on Billfish and Working Party on Neritic Tunas continue their work on assessing and monitoring the status of the above mentioned species until such time as comprehensive assessments are possible. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall also evaluate the catches trends of the mentioned species and recommend conservation and management measures as appropriate.
4. CPCs, in particular those employing gillnet fisheries, for which very few data exists on catch and effort, length frequencies and bycatch/discards, should make an effort to collect and report such data to the IOTC Secretariat.
5. The Scientific Committee shall annually review the information reported by CPCs on these species and, as necessary, provide recommendations to the Commission on ways to strengthen the conservation and management of these species.
6. The Commission shall consider appropriate assistance to developing CPCs for the collection of data on the above mentioned species.