

## **UK (British Indian Ocean Territory) National Report to the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, 2011**

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### **INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS**

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| <p>In accordance with IOTC Resolution 10/02, final scientific data for the previous year was provided to the Secretariat by 30 June of the current year, <b>for all fleets other than longline</b> [e.g. for a National report submitted to the Secretariat in 2010, final data for the 2009 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2010)</p>  | <p>YES<br/><br/>Recreational fishery only (30/06/2011)</p> |
| <p>In accordance with IOTC Resolution 10/02, provisional <b>longline data</b> for the previous year was provided to the Secretariat by 30 June of the current year [e.g. for a National report submitted to the Secretariat in 2010, preliminary data for the 2009 calendar year was provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2010).</p> <p><b>REMINDER:</b> Final longline data for the previous year is due to the Secretariat by 30 Dec of the current year [e.g. for a National report submitted to the Secretariat in 2010, final data for the 2009 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 December 2010).</p>   | <p>NO</p>  |
| <p><i>If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions:</i></p> <p>The BIOT Authorities do not operate a flag registry, BIOT does not have a fleet of fishing vessels, and there is no commercial port in BIOT. The waters of the Territory were declared a Marine Protected Area (MPA) on 1 April 2010 and from 1 November 2010 became a no-take MPA to commercial fishing. An MPA exclusion zone covering Diego Garcia and its territorial waters exists where pelagic and demersal recreational fisheries are permitted. The recreational fishery catches some tuna and tuna like species.</p> <p>Data on vessels licensed to fish in BIOT waters was provided to the Secretariat as required under Resolution 10/07 on 03/03/2011 for foreign vessels licensed to fish in the British Indian Ocean Territory in 2009 and up to 31 October 2010.</p> |  |

## Executive Summary

On 1 April 2010 the BIOT Commissioner proclaimed a Marine Protected Area (MPA) in the British Indian Ocean Territory [UK (BIOT)]. No fishing licences have been issued since that date and the last foreign fishing licences expired on 31 October 2010. Diego Garcia and its territorial waters are excluded from the MPA and include a recreational fishery. The United Kingdom National Report summarises fishing in its recreational fishery in 2010 and provides details of research activities undertaken.

BIOT does not operate a flag registry and has no commercial tuna fleet or fishing port. 28.4t of tuna and tuna like species were landed by recreational fishers on Diego Garcia in 2010. Length frequency data were recorded for a sample of 738 yellowfin tuna from this fishery. The mean length was 74cm. Sharks caught in the recreational fishery are released alive. There was no BIOT observer programme during 2010 on the licensed foreign fishery. IUU fishing remains the greatest threat to the BIOT ecosystem. Research was undertaken into the impact of the network of Indian Ocean MPAs. A Science Advisory Group has been formed to define a science strategy for BIOT and future research priorities, including those relevant to the pelagic ecosystem and IOTC fisheries. Recommendations of the Scientific Committee and those translated into Resolutions of the Commission have been implemented as appropriate by the BIOT Authorities and are reported.

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## 1. Background/General fishery information

The BIOT Authorities do not operate a flag registry, BIOT does not have a fleet of fishing vessels, and there is no commercial port in BIOT. The waters of the Territory were declared a Marine Protected Area (MPA) on 1 April 2010 and from 1 November 2010 became a no-take MPA to commercial fishing. An MPA exclusion zone covering Diego Garcia and its territorial waters exists where pelagic and demersal recreational fisheries are permitted. Recreational fishing is permitted with hooks and lines only and some tuna and tuna like species are caught.

Licensed foreign fishing was permitted prior to the declaration of the MPA on 1st April 2010 and since that day no further fishing licenses were issued. The last longline licence expired on 18th June 2010 and the last purse seine licences expired on 31st October 2010.

## 2. Fleet structure

NA

## 3. Catch and effort (by species and gear)

NA

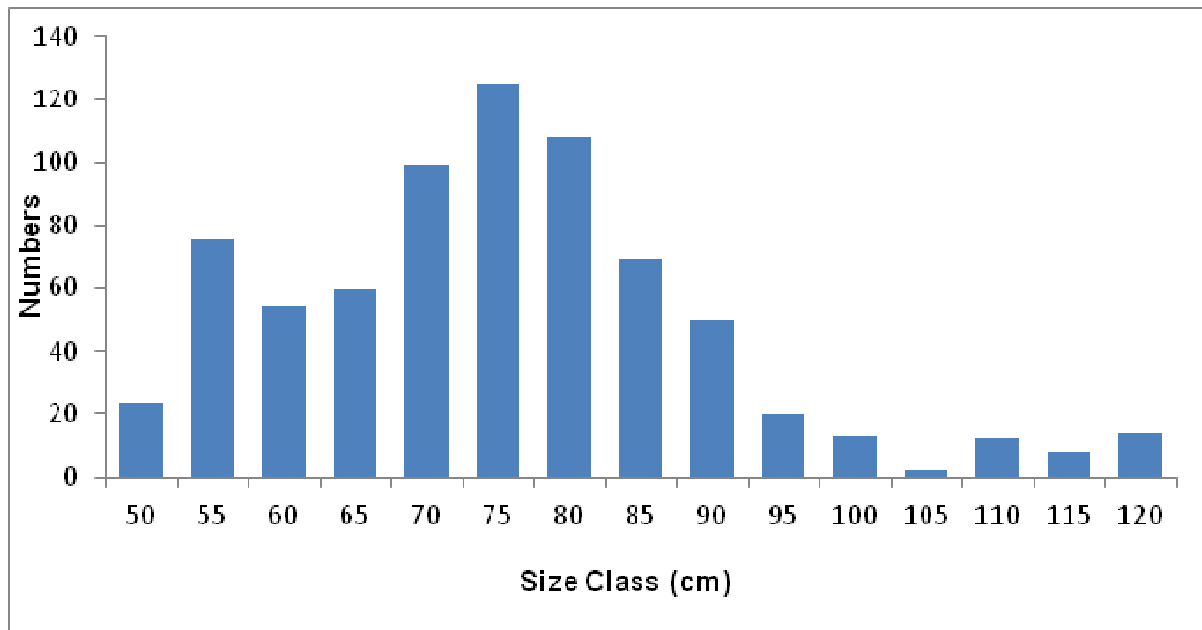
## 4. Recreational fishery

A small recreational (sports) fishery occurs under licence at Diego Garcia. 28.4 tonnes of tuna and tuna like species were caught in 2010 representing 67% of the recreational catch (the remainder are reef associated species). Principle target tuna species of the industrial fisheries (Yellowfin, bigeye, skipjack) contributed 30% of the total catch of tuna and tuna like species of the recreational fishery (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Catches of tuna and tuna like species landed from the BIOT recreational fishery during the period 2006-2009 (data for 2006 are estimated based on extrapolation of information for 6 months July-December 2006)

| Year | Estimated catch of tuna and tuna like species (Kg) |             |          |                |          |       |               |               |                |                | TOTAL (kg) |               |       |
|------|--|-------------|----------|----------------|----------|-------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------|---------------|-------|
|      | Blue Marlin  | Dolphinfish | Kawakawa | Rainbow runner | Sailfish | Wahoo | Dogtooth tuna | Skipjack tuna | Yellowfin tuna | Other tuna nei | Tunas      | Tuna like spp | All   |
| 2006 | 182  | 115         | 1601     | 301            | 41       | 8879  | 148           | 341           | 10220          | 142            | 10851      | 11120         | 21971 |
| 2007 | 199  | 125         | 1643     | 342            | 45       | 10144 | 162           | 415           | 11397          | 116            | 12090      | 12497         | 24587 |
| 2008 | 0  | 908         | 102      | 16755          | 29       | 5671  | 419           | 317           | 729            | 308            | 1774       | 23465         | 25239 |
| 2009 | 386  | 166         | 469      | 130            | 68       | 13661 | 64            | 90            | 17542          | 1284           | 18980      | 14879         | 33859 |
| 2010 | 91   | 88          | 1056     | 196            | 300      | 17847 | 150           | 100           | 8573           | 36             | 8859       | 19578         | 28438 |

Length data has been collected for Yellowfin Tuna (*T. albacares*) from the recreational fishery since June 2009 (Figure 1). A minimum landing size of 45 cm is imposed. A total of 738 fish were measured in 2010. 74% were below 85 cm and the mean length was 74cm. For comparison, observer programmes on purse seiners (2005/6) and longliners (2003/4) operating in BIOT recorded mean lengths of 98 cm (n=378) and 123 cm (n=2385) respectively.



**Figure 1:** Yellowfin tuna length frequency plot using data from the recreational fishery

## 5. Ecosystem and bycatch issues

Since 1 November 2010 the whole of BIOT is a no-take MPA to commercial fishing. The recreational fishery is currently permitted and is monitored. The remaining ecosystem threats relate significantly to illegal unreported and unregulated fishing of which a number of events have been detected by the BIOT Patrol Vessel and have resulted in successful prosecutions. This information is reported separately to the Compliance Committee. In particular IUU vessels target oceanic and reef associated sharks with gillnets. The surveillance strategy of the BIOT Patrol vessel is based on a combination of ecological risk assessment and intelligence on IUU activities. Beyond the blanket protection of all species through the declaration of the MPA, there are no separate national plans of action in place for individual species or species groups.

### Sharks

Sharks must be released alive when caught in BIOT's recreational fishery.

For the licensed foreign fishing fleets operating up to the end of October 2010, the removal of fins from sharks caught in BIOT was prohibited in 2006 and any sharks caught had to be retained whole or released. Targeted shark fishing was not permitted, and wire trace was banned to minimise shark bycatch. All sharks found on board during an inspection needed be accounted for in logbooks.

## **Seabirds**

No seabird bycatch was reported from the licensed fishery up to 31 October 2010. There are about 10 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Chagos with some of the Indian Ocean's most dense populations of several seabird species.

## **Marine Turtles**

No turtle bycatch was reported in the reporting period up to 31 October 2010. The BIOT area includes undisturbed and recovering populations of Hawksbill and Green Turtles.

## **Other ecologically related species (e.g. marine mammals, whale sharks)**

# **6. National data collection and processing systems**

## **6.1. Logsheet data collection and verification**

Logbook data collection for BIOT's recreational fisheries is completed by the vessel charterer. The system was introduced in June 2006 and provides 100% coverage of all boat based recreational fishing activity. Prior to that a system of logbooks to be completed by fishers was utilised but proved less effective and did not achieve 100% coverage.

Logbook data collection was a condition of licensing for foreign fishing vessels within BIOT and was implemented since 1991 with regular updates to meet IOTC resolutions. With the end of commercial fishing no logbooks have been received since October 2010.

## **6.2. Vessel Monitoring System**

A vessel monitoring system was introduced during 2009 for all licensed foreign fishing vessels. There have been no licensed vessels since 31 October 2010.

## **6.3. Observer programme**

Length frequency data collection was initiated for the recreational fishery on Diego Garcia in June 2009.

There was no scientific observer programme conducted on licensed foreign fishing vessels during 2010.

## **6.4. Port sampling programme**

NA

## **6.5. Unloading/Transshipment**

NA

# **7. National research programs**

Since the declaration of the MPA and up to the end of licensed fishing in October 2010 there were no observer programmes conducted on the licensed industrial fishing vessels. To date no fishery independent studies have been established within the MPA related to target and non target species. Research activities conducted this year that related to IOTC target species have included an

assessment of the impact of the network of Indian Ocean MPAs<sup>1</sup> on yellowfin tuna stocks in order to contribute to the requirement of IOTC Resolution 10/01 that the Scientific Committee provide at its 2011 plenary session an evaluation of the closures and impacts on yellowfin and bigeye stocks looking at catching of juveniles and spawners taken by all fisheries. This is presented as an Information Paper to the 2011 Science Committee.

A Science Advisory Group has been set up to make recommendations on a research strategy for BIOT. The islands, reef systems and waters of BIOT in terms of preservation and biodiversity are among the richest on the planet and contain about half of all the reefs of the Indian Ocean which remain in good condition. There are about 10 Important Bird Areas (IBAs), with some of the Indian Ocean's most dense populations of several seabird species. The area also includes undisturbed and recovering populations of Hawksbill and Green Turtles. The territory thus offers great scope for the future development of research in all fields of oceanography, biodiversity, aspects of climate change, in both the pelagic ecosystems relevant to the IOTC and the reef systems of the Chagos Archipelago.

## 8. Implementation of Scientific Committee Recommendations and Resolutions of the IOTC relevant to the SC.

**Table 9.** Scientific requirements contained in the Resolutions of the Commission, adopted from 2005 to 2011.

| No.   | Resolution   | Scientific requirement              | CPC progress   |
|-------|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 05/05 | Concerning the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC                                   | Paragraphs 1–12.                    | No commercial fishing is permitted in BIOT; sharks caught in the recreational fishery must be released alive.  |
| 08/04 | Concerning the recording of catch by longline fishing vessels in the IOTC area   | Paragraph 1–3.                      | NA   |
| 09/06 | On marine turtles  | Paragraphs 2, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 14. | NA   |
| 10/02 | Mandatory statistical requirements for IOTC members and cooperating non contracting parties                                  | Paragraphs 1–7.                     | BIOT has provided all mandatory statistical data, including null reports, according to the required deadlines. |
| 10/06 | On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries.  | Paragraph 7.                        | NA   |
| 10/12 | On the conservation of thresher sharks (family Alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of agreement | Paragraphs 6 and 7.                 | Sharks caught in the recreational fishery must be released alive.  |
| 11/04 | On a regional observer scheme  | Paragraph 9.                        | NA   |

## 9. Literature cited

IOTC, 2010. National Report: Maldives. IOTC Scientific Committee, Mahé, Seychelles, 4-6 December 2010. 15p.

<sup>1</sup> This includes the BIOT MPA, the IOTC area (Resolution 10/01) and the area of the Maldives EEZ from 75-200nm [The Maldivian government suspended all longline fishing licences from March 2010 (IOTC, 2010)]