

Report of Implementation for the year 2012

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF THE REPORT 7 MARCH 2013

Reporting CPC: Australia

Date: 6 March

Please NOTE: this document is composed of 3 sections to report on the implementation of IOTC resolutions

Part A. *Describe the actions taken, under national legislation, in the previous year to implement conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission at its sixteenth Session.*

1. Resolution 12-01 On The Implementation Of The Precautionary Approach

Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), which establishes the application of the precautionary approach as a general principle for sound fisheries management. Australian fisheries implement the precautionary approach through the Fisheries Management Act 1991 and the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines 2007.

2. Resolution 12-02 Data Confidentiality Policy And Procedures

This resolution supersedes 98/02, which Australia previously reported against. This Resolution introduced amendments including incorporating certain data collected under the IOTC Regional Observer program as well as tagging data held at the Secretariat. Australia complies with the Data Confidentiality Policy and Procedures.

3. Resolution 12-03 On The Recording Of Catch And Effort By Fishing Vessels In The IOTC Area Of Competence

As outlined in Australia's National Report (as submitted to the IOTC Secretariat), it is a condition of fishing concessions that Australian vessels licensed to fish for IOTC species use and submit logbooks. An aggregated data set based on the logbook data requirements outlined in this Resolution is submitted to the IOTC annually.

Australia requires operators to provide accurate and timely catch and effort information on a "shot-by-shot" basis from purse-seine and longline tuna fisheries. Australian vessels fishing for IOTC managed species do not generally use handline, trolling, gillnets or pole and line fishing methods. Logbooks record information on fishing operations such as location, time, method of fishing, gear and vessel details and the catch and bycatch for each fishing operation. Operators are required to provide information on any changes to vessel details and gear configuration. The logbook program is managed by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), with all data maintained in a central database. Copies of the logbooks can be found on AFMA's website. Trials using electronic submission of logbooks is currently underway in some Australian fisheries.

All relevant scientific data was provided to the IOTC by 30 June 2012.

4. Resolution 12-04 On The Conservation Of Marine Turtles (Including in accordance with Article X of the IOTC Agreement, their progress of implementation of the FAO Guidelines and this Resolution)

This Resolution supersedes 09/06, which Australia has previously reported against. As this Resolution only removed the ambiguity regarding the status of the leatherback turtle, Australia's previous submission remains current. Australia's turtle bycatch arrangements have always included leatherback turtles.

Australia's current turtle bycatch management and mitigation measures fulfil Australia's obligations under the FAO-Sea turtles Guidelines. All marine turtles found in Australian waters are protected under Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, with a recovery plan implemented in 2003. AFMA requires the operators of all longline vessels to carry at least one line cutter and one de-hooker on board at all times to facilitate the handling and prompt release of turtles caught or entangled, consistent with para 8 of this Resolution. In addition to the compulsory carriage of line cutters and de-hookers, a video entitled 'Crossing the line: sea turtle handling guidelines for the longline fishing industry' has been produced to educate the Australian longline fishing industry on methods to minimise fishing impacts on turtle populations. Consistent with the IOTC Marine Turtle Identification Cards, it shows how to safely bring turtles aboard and handle them on the deck of a fishing vessel, how to use de-hooking devices on turtles in the water and on deck, and how to help comatose turtles recover and how to release them back into the water.

5. Resolution 12-05 On Establishing A Programme For Transshipment By Large-Scale Fishing Vessels

Australia prohibited at-sea transshipment in the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (WTBF) and the Western Skipjack Fishery (WSF) by Australian-flagged vessels within the IOTC area of competence in 2011. There were no transshipments in the IOTC area of competence in 2012.

6. Resolution 12-06 On Reducing The Incidental Bycatch Of Seabirds In Longline Fisheries
In force in July 2014

7. Resolution 12-07 Concerning A Record Of Licensed Foreign Vessels Fishing For IOTC Species In The IOTC Area Of Competence And Access Agreement Information

Australia has not issued any licenses to any foreign vessels to fish for IOTC species in 2012. Australia submitted a nil report to the Secretariat.

8. Resolution 12-08 Procedures On A Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) Management Plan

Australia is developing a Fish Aggregation Device (FAD) Management Plan for Australian Commercial Tuna fisheries that operate purse-seining as a fishing method. The FAD management plan will cover aspects of FAD registration, deployment, retrieval, loss, replacement, marking, design, construction, operation and maintenance, location. It will also cover closed areas, bycatch mitigation and reduction, catch and effort reporting, monitoring of use and implementation of the plan, as well as the duration and review of the plan. Initial stakeholder consultation concerning the plan has been undertaken. Australia expects to submit the plan to the IOTC and implement the plan by the end of 2013.

The FAD Management Plan for Australia will meet the Guidelines set out in Annex 1 of Resolution 12-08, and will include initiatives or surveys to investigate, and to the extent possible minimise, the

capture of small bigeye and yellow fin tuna and non-target species associated with fishing on FADs.

9. Resolution 12-09 On The Conservation Of Thresher Sharks (Family Alopiidae) Caught In Association With Fisheries In The IOTC Area Of Competence

This Resolution supersedes 10/12, which Australia has previously reported against. This resolution has allowed scientific sampling of thresher sharks retrieved dead at haulback. There were no thresher sharks reported as caught in by Australia's commercial fisheries in 2012.

10. Resolution 12-10 To Promote Implementation Of Conservation And Management Measures Already Adopted By IOTC

Australia's current implementation of conservation and fisheries management measures already meets those adopted by the IOTC.

Australia has undertaken to support the implementation of measures adopted by the Commission by other members with the chairing of the Working Group on Conservation and Management Measures. This work has undertaken to review the collection of Resolutions and Recommendations and remove any redundancies and inconsistencies.

The Management Option Workshop, held in Oman on the 16-17 February 2013 was led by Australia as part of the Fishery Support Unit (FSU). The workshop focussed on capacity building efforts in order to maximise implementation of conservation and management measures by members of the IOTC. Australia provided technical expertise to discuss the best practice of conservation and management measures to be implemented by fisheries.

11. Resolution 12-11 On The Implementation Of A Limitation Of Fishing Capacity Of Contracting Parties And Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties

This Resolution supersedes 09/02, which Australia has previously reported our historical capacity in accordance with this Resolution (15 January 2012). Australia's previous submission remains current. This Resolution extends the applicability of Resolution 09/02 for an additional two year period. In accordance with paragraph 6 and 7 of this Resolution, Australia has submitted the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery Management plan as Australia's fleet development plan. Australia's management plan highlights the total allowable catches that Australia has set for our domestic fishing fleet.

12. Resolution 12-12 To Prohibit The Use Of Large-Scale Driftnets On The High Seas In The IOTC Area (Including a summary of monitoring, control, and surveillance actions related to large-scale driftnet fishing on the high seas in the IOTC Area of Competence)

This Resolution supersedes 09/05, which Australia has previously reported against. Australia's previous submission remains current. Australia prohibits the use of large-scale driftnets within the Australian exclusive economic zone and on the high seas in the convention areas of all RFMOs to which Australia is a Member, as well as in the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources conservation area.

13. Resolution 12-13 For The Conservation And Management Of Tropical Tuna Stocks In The IOTC Area Of Competence (Including a summary of VMS records related to their fleet operation in the previous year for the consideration of the Compliance Committee)

The Resolution supersedes 10/01, which Australia has previously reported against. Australia implemented permit conditions prohibiting the fishing by Australia vessels according to the Resolution in 2011.

An operational VMS is mandatory for all Australian Commonwealth fishing vessels, including those vessels authorised to fish in the IOTC Area of Competence. AFMA monitors VMS data to ensure compliance with IOTC Resolution 10/01. No Australian-flagged vessels entered the IOTC closure area in 2012. For further information on Australia's VMS please refer to the response for IOTC Resolution 06/03. Figure 1 (Attachment 1) displays the VMS footprint of all activities of Australian vessels that actively fished within the IOTC Area of Competence in 2012.

14. Recommendation 12/15 On The Best Available Science

Australia's approach to fisheries management aims to manage fisheries based on the best available science. Australia meets the requirements of this Recommendation through the relevant fisheries legislation, regulations and policies, including the Fisheries Management Act 1991 (FM Act), Fisheries Administration Act 1991 (FA Act) and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), together with the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Management of Australian fisheries requires an understanding of the biological status of stocks, the economic status of fisheries and the state of marine environments that support fisheries.

Part B. *Describe the actions taken, under national legislation, to implement conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission in previous Sessions, and which have not been reported previously.*

Australia has provided detailed report against all previous Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the IOTC.

Part C. Data and information reporting requirements for CPCs to be included in this report (please refer to the *section March 2013 of the Guide on data and information reporting requirements for Members and Cooperating Non-contracting Parties*).

- Resolution 01/06 *Concerning the IOTC bigeye tuna statistical document programme*

CPCs which export bigeye tuna shall examine export data upon receiving the import data from the Secretary, and report the results to the Commission annually.

Australia has previously reported on the existing IOTC Recommendation 01/06, concerning the IOTC big eye tuna statistical document programme. The Australian Government has implemented a uniform Statistical Document Programme to meet statistical document requirements implemented by the IOTC (IOTC Resolution 03/03) and other RFMOs and import markets.

Australia submitted data pertaining to this Resolution on 22 August 2012.

- Recommendation 05/07 *Concerning a management standard for the tuna fishing vessels*

The CPC flag states which issues licenses to their AFVs should report annually to the Commission all measures taken to meet the minimum management standards when they issue fishing licenses to their “authorised fishing vessels”.

Australia has previously reported on the existing IOTC Recommendation 05/07 concerning a management standard for tuna. Australia takes measures to meet the minimum management standard for all authorised fishing vessels. The fishery is managed under a management plan, determined under the Fisheries Management Act 1991. The plan manages the fishery under a quota regime. Australia monitors vessel activity through VMS, catch and effort logbooks and in-port and at-sea inspections (see IOTC Resolution 06/03).

Australian vessels are required to complete a daily report of all catches in an AFMA logbook and aims to maintain a minimum target of five percent scientific observer coverage. All catch data is required to be verified by a licensed fish receiver by completing an AFMA Catch Disposal Record. Paper based audits may be used to verify compliance with requirements.

Australian-flagged vessels fishing for tuna and tuna-like species are not permitted to tranship at sea within the IOTC Area of Competence.

- Resolution 10/06 *On Reducing the Incidental Bycatch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries*

CPCs shall provide to the Commission, as part of their annual reports, information on how they are implementing this measure and all available information on interactions with seabirds, including bycatch by fishing vessels carrying their flag or authorised to fish by them. This is to include details of species where available to enable the Scientific Committee to annually estimate seabird mortality in all fisheries within the IOTC Area of Competence.

Australia has previously reported on the existing IOTC Resolution 10/06 on reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longlines. Australia has implemented fishing permit conditions aimed at

reducing seabird mortality, consistent with and exceeding the minimum requirements as prescribed under IOTC Resolution 10/06.

It is mandatory for Australian longline licence holders to carry and use tori lines. Design specification for tori lines are consistent with world's best practice. All long line operators fishing south of 25 S are required to; deploy tori lines, use non-frozen bait, and use a line weighting system. In addition, all longline operators are; banned from discharging offal while setting the long line, banned from discharging offal discharge during hauling the long line, unless impractical.

- Resolution 10/10 Concerning market related measures

For CPCs that import tuna and tuna-like fish products, or in whose ports those products are landed or transhipped, should report, a range of information (e.g. information on vessels / owners, product data (species, weight), point of export) annually.

Australia has previously reported on the existing IOTC Resolution 10/10 concerning market related measures. Landings of fisheries products into Australia by foreign-flagged vessels are prohibited, except where ministerial approval has been granted. No such approval was granted in 2012. No transhipments were performed by Australian vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence in 2012.

Australia has reported its tuna imports to the Secretariat. Australia's fresh tuna import is small with only 378 tonnes imported in 2012, brought into Australia using container ships and chilled air freight. As required by section 1 of the resolution, Australia currently provides as much information as possible on the imported products and associated vessels. There are a number of data sets that Australia does not currently collect.

- Resolution 11/04 On a Regional observer scheme

CPCs shall provide to the Executive Secretary and the Scientific Committee annually a report of the number of vessels monitored and the coverage achieved by gear type in accordance with the provisions of this Resolution.

Australia has previously reported on the existing IOTC Resolution 11/04 concerning a regional observer scheme. Australia provides information on observer coverage achieved including the number of vessels monitored and the coverage rates by gear type. Australia has placed observers on vessels in the Eastern and Western Tuna and Billfish Fisheries since 2003 and aims to achieve five per cent observer coverage each year. Australia aims to undertake seven days of observer coverage on the high seas per year which equates to around three trips a year.

In the 2011 calendar year, around 0.66 million hooks were set by Australian boats in the IOTC area, of this 17.2% of the hooks were observed. In the southern bluefin tuna fishery, 13.9% observer catch was observed. This data was reported to Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna. There was no effort in the skipjack fishery by Australian boats.