

OUTCOMES OF THE 16th SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND OF THE 18th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 25 NOVEMBER 2014

PURPOSE

To inform participants at the Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS10) of the recommendations arising from the 16th Session of the Scientific Committee (SC15), held from 2–6 December 2013, and the 18th Session of the Commission (S18) held from 1–5 June 2014, specifically relating to the work of the WPDCS.

BACKGROUND

Scientific Committee:

At the 16th Session of the SC, the SC noted and considered the recommendations made by the WPDCS in 2013 that included requests to address the deficiencies in data collection, monitoring and reporting by CPCs.

Based on the recommendations arising from the WPDCS10, the SC16 adopted a set of recommendations, provide at [Appendix I](#) of this paper.

In addition, the SC16 noted that not Program of Work had been developed by the WPDCS and made the following requests:

- (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 the 18th Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 7 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (7 in total consisting of 6 Resolutions and 1 Recommendation), as detailed below:

Resolutions

- Resolution 14/01 *On the removal of obsolete Conservation and Management Measures*
- Resolution 14/02 *For the conservation and management of tropical tunas stocks in the IOTC area of competence*
- Resolution 14/03 *On enhancing the dialogue between fisheries scientists and managers*
- Resolution 14/04 *Concerning the IOTC record of vessels authorised to operate in the IOTC area of competence*

- Resolution 14/05 *Concerning a record of licensed foreign vessels fishing for IOTC species in the IOTC area of competence and access agreement information*
- Resolution 14/06 *On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels*

Recommendations

- Recommendation 14/07 *To standardise the presentation of scientific information in the annual Scientific Committee report and in Working Party reports*

Pursuant to Article IX.4 of the IOTC Agreement, the above mentioned Conservation and Management Measures became binding on Members, 120 days from the date of the notification communicated by the Secretariat in IOTC Circular 2014–60 (10 June 2014, i.e. **8 October 2014**).

The updated *Compendium of Active Conservation and Management Measures for the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission* may be downloaded from the IOTC website at the following link, dated **8 October 2014**:

English: <http://iotc.org/cmms>

French: <http://iotc.org/fr/mcgs>

DISCUSSION

The Commission also considered a range of other proposals for CMMs on matters relevant to the WPDCS, but consensus could not be reached. The following is a brief discussion of those proposals which the WPDCS may wish to take into consideration when developing recommendations to the Scientific Committee:

1) On the implementation of a harmonized and coordinated scheme of IOTC observers

The Commission **CONSIDERED** a proposal on the implementation of a harmonized and coordinated scheme of IOTC observers (IOTC–2014–S18–PropM), but agreement could not be reached and the proposal was deferred until the next meeting of the Commission. According to the proposal, it aimed to promote the creation of an IOTC pool of scientific observers by facilitating CPCs monitoring of catches and other scientific related activities by fishing vessels ensuring the respect of Conservation and Management Measures and to improve the scientific assessment of those stocks. The proposal also aimed to seek synergies, given the limited space on board fishing vessels, as it is necessary to seek synergies for cooperation, accreditation and mutual recognition of observers. The proposal claimed that for CPCs that have difficulty in sourcing observers locally, the creation of a regional pool of IOTC scientific observers to be used by CPCs in the implementation of the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme, would facilitate the implementation of this scheme. (S18 Report, para. 144)

The Commission **NOTED** the concerns raised by several CPCs that the measure was proposed independently from the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme, and that a financial mechanism to support its provisions is not clearly specified. Some CPCs national laws do not allow the use of foreigners as observers onboard their vessels. The EU expressed its disappointment that its proposal for a pool of scientific observers to be established by the IOTC was not adopted and reminded CPCs that adoption of this proposal will only be beneficial for IOTC CPCs and ship owners, as it allows sharing of observers by CPCs, and would not require a significant increase of the IOTC budget. (S18 Report, para. 145)

2) Procedures on a fish aggregating devices (FADs) management plan, including more detailed specification of catch reporting from FAD sets, and the development of improved FAD designs to reduce the incidence of entanglement of non-target species

The Commission **CONSIDERED** a proposal to revise IOTC Resolution 13/08 *Procedures on a fish aggregating devices (FADs) management plan, including more detailed specification of catch reporting from FAD sets, and the development of improved FAD designs to reduce the incidence of entanglement of non-target species* (IOTC–2014–S18–PropL) but agreement could not be reached and the proposal was deferred until the next meeting of the Commission. The proposal included more detailed specifications of catch reporting from FAD sets, and calling for IOTC CPCs having fisheries on FADs to develop improved FAD designs to reduce the incidence of entanglement of non-target species. In addition, the proposal set the maximum number of DFADs or DFADs' beacon to be deployed by each individual purse seine vessel to the average of DFADs or DFADs' beacon deployed by the purse seiner and its supply vessel(s) (if any) during the years 2013 and 2014 as declared to the Commission according to the Resolutions 12/08 and 13/08. (S18 Report, para. 151)

NOTING the indication from the Chair of the Scientific Committee that it would be premature to adopt a measure of this nature due to a lack of information, and taking into consideration that the revised version proposed to put a freeze on the number of existing FADs being deployed, the Commission **AGREED** that in order to facilitate future

consideration of this measure, all CPCs that have not implemented FAD Management Plans to do so as a matter of priority and report data on FADs to the Commission, as specified in IOTC Resolution 13/08. Advice from the Scientific Committee shall include all those fleets/fisheries that use them (i.e. for DFADs and AFADs). (S18 Report, para. 152)

3) Mandatory statistical requirements for IOTC Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)

At its 17th Session (2013), the Commission also **CONSIDERED** a proposal to amend IOTC Resolution 10/02 *Mandatory statistical requirements for IOTC Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPC's) (IOTC-2013-S17-PropL¹)*, in line with recommendations from the IOTC Scientific Committee, via the WPDCS. The Commission deferred consideration of this proposal noting that requirements in this resolution had to be made consistent with those in IOTC Resolution 13/08 *Procedures on a fish aggregating devices (FADs) management plan, including more detailed specification of catch reporting from FAD sets, and the development of improved FAD designs to reduce the incidence of entanglement of non-target species*.

RECOMMENDATION

That the WPDCS **NOTE** paper IOTC–2014–WPDCS10–03 which outlined the main outcomes of the 16th Session of the Scientific Committee (SC16) and the 18th Session of the Commission (S18), specifically related to the work of the WPDCS, and consider how to progress outstanding issues at the present meeting so as to meet the Commission's requests.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: [Consolidated set of recommendations of the 16th Session of the Scientific Committee \(2–6 December 2013\) to the Commission, relevant to the Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics](#)

¹ This Proposal is presented as

APPENDIX I

CONSOLIDATED SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 16th SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (10–15 DECEMBER, 2012) TO THE COMMISSION RELEVANT TO THE WORKING PARTY ON DATA COLLECTION AND STATISTICS

Extract of the Report of the 16th Session of the Scientific Committee

(IOTC–2013–SC16–R; Appendix XXXVIII, PAGES 302–312)

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION, TO SPECIFIC CPCs AND/OR OTHER BODIES

Standardisation of IOTC Working Party and Scientific Committee report terminology

SC16.07 ([para. 23](#)) The SC **ADOPTED** the reporting terminology contained in [Appendix IV](#) and **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission considers adopting the standardised IOTC Report terminology, to further improve the clarity of information sharing from, and among its subsidiary bodies.

Report of the Ninth Session of the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB09)

Regional review of the current and historical data available for gillnet fleets operating in the Indian Ocean

SC16.14 ([para. 38](#)) The SC reiterated its previous **RECOMMENDATION** that the Commission considers allocating funds to support a regional review of the current and historical data available for gillnet fleets operating in the Indian Ocean. As an essential contribution to this review, scientists from all CPCs having gillnet fleets in the Indian Ocean, in particular those from I.R. Iran, Oman, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, should collate the known information on bycatch in their gillnet fisheries, including sharks, marine turtles and marine mammals, with estimates of the likely order of magnitude where more detailed data are not available. A consultant should be hired for 30 days to assist CPCs with this task (budget estimate: [Table 3](#)).

Length-age keys

SC16.34 ([para. 77](#)) The SC **RECOMMENDED** that as a matter of priority, CPCs that have important fisheries catching billfish (EU, Taiwan,China, Japan, Indonesia and Sri Lanka) to collect and provide basic or analysed data that would be used to establish length-age keys and non-standard measurements to standard measurements keys for billfish species, by sex and area.

Data collection and processing systems

SC16.40 ([para. 87](#)) The SC **THANKED** Japan and Taiwan,China for addressing some of the concerns raised by the WPTT in 2012 about data collection and length frequency processing, and **RECOMMENDED** that both Japan and Taiwan,China, as well as the IOTC Secretariat continue joint work, in cooperation with countries having longline fisheries, to address other issues identified by the WPTT, such as conflicting trends in the longline CPUE among the main longline fleets, the lack of specimens of small size from the samples for Taiwan,China longline fleet, and discrepancies in the average weights estimated using the available catch-and-effort and length frequency data for the Japanese longline fleet.

Length Frequency inter-sessional meeting guidelines

SC16.41 ([para. 88](#)) **NOTING** the size data issues (discrepancies in size data (low sampling rate, uneven distribution of sampling in regard to the spatial extent of the fishery) in the Japan and Taiwan,China tropical tuna data sets) identified by the WPTT in 2012 and 2013 and the Scientific Committee in 2012, the SC **RECOMMENDED** that the course of action outlined in [para. 105](#) of this report is undertaken.

Report of the Ninth Session of the Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS09)

Resolution 10/02 Mandatory statistical requirements for IOTC Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPC's).

SC16.44 ([para. 98](#)) The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission amends IOTC Resolution 10/02 as follows:

- Adding the following definitions in order to clarify the type of fisheries, area and species covered by Resolution 10/02:
 - Longline fisheries: Fisheries undertaken by vessels in the IOTC Record of Authorized Vessels that use longline gear.
 - Surface fisheries: All fisheries undertaken by vessels in the IOTC Record of Authorized Vessels

- other than longline fisheries; in particular purse seine, pole-and-line, and gillnet fisheries.
- Coastal fisheries: Fisheries other than longline or surface, as defined above, also called artisanal fisheries.
- IOTC Area of Competence: as described in Annex A of the IOTC Agreement.
- Species: refers to all species under the IOTC mandate as described in Annex B of the IOTC Agreement, and the most commonly caught elasmobranch species, as defined by the Commission in IOTC Resolution 13/03 or any subsequent revisions of this Resolution.
- Support vessels: Any types of vessels that operate in support of the fishing activities of purse seine vessels.
- Specify the requirements for Nominal Catch data, including:
 - Changing the term Nominal by Total;
 - Change the time-period resolution of Total catch data from Year to Quarter, in order to be able to assess the seasonality of fisheries that do not report catch-and-effort data;
 - Request separate reports for retained catches (in live weight) and discards (in live weight or number), as per the above resolution.
- Specify the requirements for Catch and effort data, including:
 - Surface fisheries: Extend the requirements to report catch and effort data by type of fishing mode to other fisheries that use FADs, drifting or anchored; and ensure that the effort units reported are consistent with those requested in Resolution 13/03 or any subsequent revisions to such Resolution;
 - Coastal fisheries: Specify the time-period to be used to report this information, preferably Month.
- Specify that Size Frequency data shall be reported according to the procedures described in the IOTC Guidelines for the Reporting of Fisheries Statistics (instead of those set out by the IOTC Scientific Committee).
- Specify the requirements for data on supply vessels, including:
 - Change the term Supply to Support (Support Vessels);
 - Indicate that data on the activities of support vessels shall be reported by the flag country of the vessels that receive the assistance of the support vessel (and not by the flag country or other parties);
 - Request the name of the purse seiners that receive assistance from each support vessel;
- Recall Resolution 13/08 which contains provisions for CPCs to collect more detailed information on Fish Aggregating Devices

Resolution 11/04 On a regional observer scheme

SC16.45 ([para. 99](#)) The SC **NOTED** that the number of trips covered by observers over the total number of trips estimated for longliners have been used to estimate levels of coverage on longline fleets, further noting the difficulties that some countries have to use the number of sets/operations covered by observers over the total number of sets/operations by their fleets, as requested by the Commission. Using the number of trips as unit of effort to measure coverage by observers may not be appropriate as longline fishing trips can extend for more than one year and are usually not fully covered by scientific observers. For this reason, and acknowledging the difficulties that some countries have to estimate the total number of sets/operations for their fleets, the use of alternative units of effort may be appropriate to assess coverage, the SC **RECOMMENDED** that the total number of days-at-sea covered by observers versus the total number of days-at-sea for each fleet over a year is used instead of the number of sets/operations.

General discussion on data issues

SC16.46 ([para. 101](#)) The SC **NOTED** that India had reported very incomplete catches and effort, and no size data, for its commercial longline fleet. Over 60 longliners from India had operated in the Indian Ocean during 2006–07. The SC **RECALLED** the recommendation from the WPTT that scientists from Taiwan,China assist India in the estimation of catches of IOTC species and sharks for this fleet, with the majority of those vessels used the flag of Taiwan,China in the past. The SC thanked the scientists from Taiwan,China for offering assistance and **RECOMMENDED** that India reports a revised time-series of catch and effort for its longline fleet, where required, as soon as the review is finalised.

SC16.47 ([para. 102](#)) **NOTING** that to date, I.R. Iran has not reported catch and effort data to the IOTC Secretariat as per the IOTC Requirements; that the WPEB had previously recommended that I.R. Iran strengthen its monitoring of catches of sharks from both the logbook and observer programmes; and that I.R. Iran is setting procedures in its databases that will make it possible to report catch and effort data for its fisheries as per the IOTC standards in the future; the SC **RECOMMENDED** that I.R. Iran finalises this work and reports the available series of catch and effort data for its fisheries as a matter of priority.

IOTC Data Summary

SC16.48 ([para. 110](#)) The SC **NOTED** the plans from the IOTC Secretariat to resume publication of the IOTC Data Summary in electronic form, including work on the set-up of an online querying facility in the IOTC Web Site, which will allow site users to filter nominal catch and catch-and-effort data using a range of criteria and visualise the output in table or graphic format, including different types of charts, figures and maps. The work will facilitate the use of information in the IOTC Databases by the general public. The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the IOTC Secretariat carries out this work during 2014 and presents the new system to the next meeting of the WPDCS for suggested improvements.

Summary discussion of matters common to Working Parties**Capacity building activities**

SC16.56 ([para. 136](#)) The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission increase the IOTC Capacity Building budget line so that capacity building workshops/training can be carried out in 2014 and 2015 on the collection, reporting and analyses of catch and effort data for neritic tuna and tuna-like species. Where appropriate this training session shall include information that explains the entire IOTC process from data collection to analysis and how the information collected is used by the Commission to develop Conservation and Management Measures.