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**ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF IOTC SPECIES**

**SUBMITTED BY: EUROPEAN UNION, 13 APRIL 2016**

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*Explanatory Memorandum*

According to the Scientific Committee the Yellowfin tuna stock, as well as other IOTC species as Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Indo-Pacific Sailfish, Longtail Tuna and Spanish Mackerel, have been overexploited in recent years.

In this context, the Scientific Committee recommended that the Yellowfin catches should be reduced by 20% of current 2014 levels (427,440 tons at the time of the assessment/projections) but subsequently 2014 catches were corrected to 414,000 tonnes which will require a reduction of 17% of the 2014 catch levels.

Furthermore the Scientific Committee also recommended implementing management measures or significantly reducing the catches of:

- Striped Marlin: to recover the stock to a level above MSY based reference points with 50% probability by 2024, the Scientific Committee recommends that catches should not exceed 4,000 tonnes.
- Black Marlin: a precautionary approach to the management of black marlin should be considered by the Commission, to reduce catches below MSY estimates (~10,000 t) from current catch levels of around 18,000 tons, thereby ensuring the stock does not fall below  $B_{MSY}$ .
- Blue Marlin: a precautionary approach to the management of blue marlin should be considered by the Commission, to reduce catches below MSY estimates (~11,000 t) from current catch level of around 14,500 tons, thereby ensuring the stock does not recover above  $B_{MSY}$ .
- and Indo-Pacific Sailfish: a precautionary approach to the management of I.P. sailfish should be considered by the Commission, to reduce catches below MSY estimates (~25,000 t) from current catch level of around 25,000 tons, thereby ensuring the stock does not fall below  $B_{MSY}$ , and become overfished.
- Longtail Tuna: if the Commission wishes to recover the stock to levels above the MSY reference points, the Scientific Committee recommends catches should be reduced by 30% of 2013 levels (around 25% from 2014 levels) which corresponds to catches slightly below to MSY in order to recover the status of the stock in conformity with the decision framework described in Resolution 15/10.
- Narrow-based Spanish Mackerel: If the Commission wishes to recover the stock to levels above the MSY reference points, the Scientific Committee recommends that catches should be reduced by 20-30% of 2014 levels which corresponds to catches below to MSY in order to recover the status of the stock.

It is therefore proposed to implement alternative conservation measures: i) a temporary closure on IOTC fisheries or ii) a bidding reduction of the 2014 level of fisheries for the indicated over-exploited species.

In addition in order to reduce global fishing effort it is also proposed to reduce the number of FADs and to forbid transshipments at sea.

**RESOLUTION 16/XX**  
**ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF IOTC SPECIES**

**The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),**

RECOGNISING that based on past experience in the fishery, the potential production from the resource can be negatively impacted by excessive fishing effort;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the available scientific information and advice, in particular the IOTC Scientific Committee conclusions whereby the Yellowfin tuna stock, as well as other IOTC species as notably Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Indo-Pacific Sailfish, Longtail Tuna and Spanish Mackerel, have been overexploited in recent years;

RECOGNISING that during the 18<sup>th</sup> IOTC Scientific Committee meeting held in Bali, Indonesia, from 23 to 27 November 2015, the Scientific Committee recommended that “if the Commission wishes to recover the stock to levels above the interim target reference points with 50% probability by 2024, the Yellowfin catches be reduced by 20% of current 2014 levels (427,440 tons at the time of the assessment/projections)”;

NOTING, that subsequent corrections of preliminary 2014 catches (427,440 tons at the time of the assessment) are now estimated to be 414,000 tonnes which will request a reduction of 17% of the 2014 catch levels”;

FURTHER RECOGNISING that the 18<sup>th</sup> IOTC Scientific Committee meeting also recommended implementing management measures or significantly reducing the catches of:

- Striped Marlin: to recover the stock to a level above MSY based reference points with 50% probability by 2024, the Scientific Committee recommends that catches should not exceed 4,000 tonnes.
- Black Marlin: a precautionary approach to the management of black marlin should be considered by the Commission, to reduce catches below MSY estimates (~10,000 t) from current catch levels of around 18000 tons, thereby ensuring the stock does not fall below  $B_{MSY}$ .
- Blue Marlin: a precautionary approach to the management of blue marlin should be considered by the Commission, to reduce catches below MSY estimates (~11,000 t) from current catch level of around 14,500 tons , thereby ensuring the stock does not recovers above  $B_{MSY}$ .
- and Indo-Pacific Sailfish: a precautionary approach to the management of I.P sailfish should be considered by the Commission, to reduce catches below MSY estimates (~25,000 t) from current catch level of around 25,000 tons, thereby ensuring the stock does not fall below  $B_{MSY}$ , and become overfished.
- Longtail Tuna: if the Commission wishes to recover the stock to levels above the MSY reference points, the Scientific Committee recommends catches should be reduced by 30% of 2013 levels (around 25 % from 2014 levels) which corresponds to catches slightly below to MSY in order to recover the status of the stock in conformity with the decision framework described in Resolution 15/10).
- Narrow-based Spanish Mackerel: If the Commission wishes to recover the stock to levels above the MSY reference points, the Scientific Committee recommends that catches should be reduced by 20-30% of 2014 levels which corresponds to catches below to MSY in order to recover the status of the stock.

NOTING the importance of applying the precautionary approach for the management of all above mentioned stocks;

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



1. This Resolution is applicable until 31 December 2020.

2. With the main objective of decreasing the fishing pressure on Yellowfin Tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), which will also benefit the status of the following overfished stocks: Striped Marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*), Black Marlin (*Makaira indica*), Blue Marlin (*Makaira nigricans*), Indo-Pacific Sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*), Longtail Tuna (*Thunnus tonggol*) and Narrow-based Spanish Mackerel (*Scomberomorus Commerson*) in the IOTC area of competence, Contracting Parties and cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) shall apply one of the following alternative conservation measures:

#### Option I

Fishing closure to all inboard motored vessels with more than 9 metres overall fishing in the IOTC area of competence with the following gears/type: Purse seine (including supply vessels), longlines, pole and line, gillnets, handline and trolling vessels:

- a) Fisheries will be closed for all above mentioned fleet/gear for one month per year, in the IOTC area north of parallel 15° South.
- b) In order to avoid disruption in the processing industry and markets, ship-owners may be allowed by Flag CPCs authorities to choose the closure period of 30 consecutive days of their choice between 00.00 hours of 1 December to 24.00 hours of 31 January.
- c) All vessels as indicated in Paragraph 1 within the IOTC area of competence from 1 December 2016 to 31 January 2019, regardless of the flag under which they operate or whether they change flag during the year, shall therefore close the fishery for 30 days as indicated in I b) in 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.
- d) CPCs flag states applying this Option I shall monitor the compliance of their vessels with this Resolution, notably through VMS (Resolution 15/03), and will provide a summary of VMS records related to their fleet operation in the previous year for the consideration of the Compliance Committee. Alternatively CPCs flag States can also provide proof that vessels remained in port during the closure period.
- e) Fishing vessels that do not comply with IOTC Resolution 15/03 *on the vessel monitoring system (VMS) programme* shall monitor the closure proving that vessels remained in port during the closure period.
- f) Landings, transshipments and commercial transactions of all species, and their products, that have been positively identified as originating from fishing activities that contravene this resolution, are prohibited.
- g) Each CPC shall no later than 60 days before the date of entry into force of a closure:
  - i) take the necessary legal and administrative measures to implement the closure;
  - ii) inform all interested parties and their national tuna and tuna-like species industries of the closure;
  - iii) inform the IOTC Executive Secretary that these steps have been taken and notify on the closure period chosen by its ship-owners providing a table with identifying vessels and closure period selected.

#### Option II-



A CPC applies management measures that must lead to a reduction by 20% of its 2014 level of Yellowfin, all billfishes (excluding *Swordfish [Xiphias gladius]*), Longtail Tuna and narrow-based Spanish Mackerel catches in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The Scientific Committee will review in its annual sessions of 2018, 2019 and 2020 the level of catches of the species mentioned above for previous years.

If the quantity of fish caught by a CPC in a given year exceeds the 80 % of the 2014 catch level for that CPC, in the following year the catch of the species concerned shall be reduced by the excess catch in the subsequent year.

If for the second consecutive year the quantity of fish caught by one CPC exceeds the 80 % of the 2014 catch level, the CPC shall stop all its fisheries for the species covered in this Resolution for three months in the following year.

If for the third consecutive year the quantity of fish caught by one CPC exceeds the 80 % of the 2014 catch level, the CPC shall stop all its fisheries for the species covered in the Resolution for six months in the following year.

If the quantity of fish caught by a CPC exceeds the 80 % of the 2014 catch level in 2019, the CPC shall reduce its catch of the species concerned by the excess catch in 2020..

3. All CPCs shall annually and before the 31 October inform the Executive Secretary of the Option the CPC has decided to apply for the following period/year. A CPC may change their choice in following years provided the relevant provisions of the resolution have been observed and the catch limits under Option 2 have not been exceeded if relevant.

4. In addition to Options I and II, all CPCs shall apply the following conservation measures:

1. The number of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) as defined in Resolution 15/08, paragraph 7, will be no more than 470 active instrumental buoys and 940 acquired annually instrumental buoys.

2. All transshipments at sea will be forbidden.

5. The Scientific Committee will provide new stock assessments in 2017 and it should carry out an evaluation of the efficacy of the measures described in this Resolution in 2018, specifying in its advice if a modification is necessary, its basic scientific rationale with an assessment of the impact of such measures on the species identified in Paragraph 2. The efficacy of the measure will be subject to a comprehensive review by the Scientific Committee in 2020.