

## OUTCOMES OF THE 22<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT<sup>1</sup>, 17 AUGUST 2018

### PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 14<sup>th</sup> Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB14) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 22<sup>nd</sup> Session, held from 21 – 25 May 2018, specifically relating to the work of the WPEB.

### BACKGROUND

At the 22<sup>st</sup> Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 10 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (consisting of 10 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations), as detailed below:

### Resolutions

- Resolution 18/01 *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC Area of Competence*
- Resolution 18/02 *On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries*
- Resolution 18/03 *On establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the IOTC Area of Competence*
- Resolution 18/04 *On bioFAD experimental project*
- Resolution 18/05 *On management measures for the conservation for the conservation of billfish, striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish*
- Resolution 18/06 *On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels*
- Resolution 18/07 *On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC*
- Resolution 18/08 *Procedures on a fish aggregating devices (FADs) management plan, including a limitation on the number of FADs, more detailed specifications of catch reporting from FAD sets, and the development of improved fad design to reduce the incidence of entanglement of non-target species*
- Resolution 18/09 *On a scoping study of socio-economic indicators of IOTC fisheries*
- Resolution 18/10 *On vessel chartering in the IOTC Area of Competence.*

Pursuant to Article IX.4 of the IOTC Agreement, the above-mentioned Conservation and Management Measures shall become binding on Members, 120 days from the date of the notification communicated by the Secretariat.

### DISCUSSION

The Commission also made a number of general comments on the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee in 2017, which have relevance for the WPEB.

### Status of sharks

The Commission noted the current status of the following sharks:

#### Blue shark

A stock assessment for blue shark was carried out in 2017. Even though the blue shark in 2017 is assessed to be not overfished nor subject to overfishing, maintaining current catches is likely to result in decreasing biomass and the stock becoming overfished and subject to overfishing in the near future. A precautionary approach to the management of blue shark should be considered by the Commission, by ensuring that future catches do not exceed current catches.

#### Oceanic whitetip shark

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No quantitative stock assessment is currently available for oceanic whitetip shark. The population status remains uncertain. A precautionary approach to the management of oceanic whitetip shark should be considered by the Commission, noting that recent studies suggest that longline mortality at haulback is high (50%) in the Indian Ocean, while mortality rates for interactions with other gear types such as purse seines and gillnets may be higher.

The Commission **NOTED** that IOTC–2018–S21–PropL *On the conservation of mobula and manta rays caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC Area of competence* was deferred. The Commission also **NOTED** that there is no specific research that indicates an association of mobula and manta rays with surface fisheries. One CPC highlighted the need for data be collected in order for the SC to provide potential management advice on the conservation of this species.

The Commission **REQUESTED** the SC to review the status of manta and mobula rays and their interaction with IOTC fisheries and to report this to the Commission in 2020. This work should include an evaluation of data availability and data gaps. Where data is insufficient, the SC should propose options for strengthening data collection.

The Commission **NOTED** the high uncertainty of catch history estimates used in the stock assessment of blue shark and the estimation method to derive blue shark catch history accounting for reported zero catches for certain fleets and certain areas.

The Commission **NOTED** the information provided by the SC that there continues to be catches of oceanic whitetip shark in the IOTC Area, although prohibited as per Resolution 13/06.

The Commission **NOTED** the working paper IOTC-2018-S22-06 by the EU, which requested a follow-up of the Resolution 17/05 on the conservation of sharks caught in the IOTC fisheries. The Commission **NOTED** there are existing limitations in current observer coverage, shortcomings in the provision of complete, accurate and timely catch records for sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC.

The Commission **REQUESTED** the Scientific Committee to identify possible means to improve the submission of complete, accurate and timely catch records for sharks, as well as the collection of species-specific data on catch, biology, discards and trade.

The Commission **AGREED** to the requests made to the Compliance Committee and Scientific Committee in working paper IOTC-2018-S22-06Rev1:

to analyse and document, wherever possible, whether the practice of shark finning still takes place in IOTC and to what extent, despite the adoption of Resolution 17/05, and to review the compliance with the requirements contained in Res 17/05, including the shark finning prohibition and the fins naturally attached requirement adopted by IOTC (Compliance Committee);

to identify possible means to improve the submission of complete, accurate and timely catch records for sharks, as well as the collection of species-specific data on catch, biology, discards and trade. (Scientific Committee).

The Commission **WELCOMED** financial support from the European Union, ABNJ Tuna Project, and ISSF in mitigating potentially negative effects of FADs on the ecosystem and contributing to addressing the issue of marine litter.

The Commission **WELCOMED** the pledge by IPLNF, ABNJ Tuna Project, SWIOFISH1 Project and WWF to provide financial support for the scoping study on socio-economic indicators.

#### **Consideration of management measures related to ecosystems, bycatch and sharks**

The Commission **ADOPTED** IOTC Resolution 18/02 *On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries*. As a consequence, the Commission **REQUESTED** the SC to carry out stock assessment on blue shark in 2020.

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 18/04 *On bioFAD experimental project*.

The Commission **ADOPTED** Resolution 18/09 *On a scoping study of socio-economic indicators of IOTC fisheries*.

The complete report of the 22nd Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available for download from the IOTC website: <http://www.iotc.org/sites/default/files/documents/2018/06/IOTC-2018-S22-RE.pdf>

#### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the WPEB:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2018–WPEB14–04 which outlined the outcomes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPEB and **AGREE** to consider how best to provide the SC with the information it needs, in order to satisfy the Commission’s requests, throughout the course of the current WPEB meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** the 10 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) adopted at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission (consisting of 8 Resolutions and 0 Recommendations).