

Indian Ocean tuna FIP Position Statement

IOTC Annual Meeting 2024

Drafted with agreement from all FIP Participants

April 2024

The FIP aims to meet the rising global demand for tuna and other large pelagics in a sustainable manner. This can be achieved by assuring sustainable stock status for all the target tunas that is consistent with the maximum sustainable yield (MSY). Through overall strengthening of management systems at the national and international levels, improvements can be made to ensure sustainable and equitable management of target and vulnerable species, habitats, and fishery ecosystems by utilising best scientific information available. The fishery aims to achieve certification under the [Marine Stewardship Council](#) (MSC) Fisheries Standard.

As a FIP, we are concerned with the status of certain tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean and their effective management. We operate in this region and the sustainability of these stocks is integral to not only our business, but also to the overall marine environment.

IOTC must ensure the uninterrupted, sustainable management of the tuna stocks and marine ecosystems under its purview. There are several critical measures and issues that require immediate attention by IOTC this year. We therefore strongly urge that the IOTC acts at its May 2024 annual meeting of the IOTC Commission to:

1. Address CPC non-compliance with the provision of mandatory fishery and FAD data, catch and FAD limits and use of gillnets.
2. Require CPCs to submit action plans that address identified non-compliance.
3. Adopt amendments to Res. 21/01, including enhanced management measures, such as seasonal fishery closures for all gear types, give full effect to IOTC Scientific Committee advice to reduce yellowfin tuna catches by at least 22%, and ensure all CPCs abide by the Resolution.
4. Prevent skipjack catches from exceeding the limit set by Harvest Control Rule (HCR) Res.21/03.
5. Ensure bigeye catches do not exceed limit set by Management Procedure in Res 22/03 and 23/04.
6. Amend Res. 17/05 to require shark fins to be naturally attached for all landings.
7. Amend Res. 12/04 and Res.23/06 to include scientifically proven mitigation measures and devices recommended by the IOTC SC for sea turtles and cetaceans and require identification of sea turtles at species level.
8. Adopt measures to begin increasing observer coverage (human and/or electronic) from 5% as progress toward 100% coverage, in step-wise process in industrial tuna fisheries, including all vessels engaged in at sea transshipment as an immediate priority
9. Adopt a binding measure that will ensure the safety of human observers, including those on supply and carrier vessels.
10. Adopt a comprehensive Management Procedure for skipjack.
11. Accelerate the adoption of robust management procedures for yellowfin tuna.
12. In order to improve compliance with tuna conservation measures, such as seasonal closures for all gear types, adopt amendments to Res. 15/03 to strengthen the IOTC VMS, including by requiring that simultaneous near real-time position reporting and ensuring systems are tamper-proof.

The FIP looks forward to the continued leadership of the IOTC in the Indian Ocean, a region rich in tuna resources that are in need of continued science-based conservation and management. Many thanks for taking time to read our position statement.