

Indian Ocean tuna - longline (Bumble Bee & FCF) FIP Position Statement Ahead of the IOTC Special Session 2023 April 2023

The submission of this position statement is on behalf of the [Indian Ocean tuna - longline \(Bumble Bee & FCF\) FIP](#). The fishery targets albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), bigeye (*T. obesus*) and yellowfin (*T. albacares*). The pelagic longline vessels are flagged to China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Seychelles and Oman and fish on the high seas of the Indian Ocean and within the exclusive economic zones (EEZ's) of Mauritius, Seychelles, and Madagascar. The fishery is managed regionally by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

This Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) aims to meet the rising global demand for tuna and other large pelagics in a sustainable manner by assuring catches do not exceed sustainable levels, promoting the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and strengthening policy and governance systems in the Indian Ocean region. The end goal is to achieve certification under the [Marine Stewardship Council \(MSC\) Fisheries Standard](#) by t 2024.

As a FIP, we are concerned with the status of the tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean and their effective management. We have a real interest and operate in this region and the sustainability of these stocks is integral to not only our business, but also to the overall marine environment. We strongly urge the IOTC and its members take action in May at the Annual Meeting of the IOTC Commission on these top priorities for 2023:

1. The Compliance Committee must 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 to reduce yellowfin tuna catches by at least 22% (relative to the 2020 level) following latest IOTC Scientific Committee management advice;
4. Ensure skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) tuna catches in 2023 do not exceed limit set by Harvest Control Rule (HCR) in Res. 21/03 (513,572 t.);
5. Ensure bigeye tuna catches do not exceed limit set by Management Procedure in Res. 22/03;
6. Build upon the measures in Resolution 23/02 on Management of drifting Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) (provisions on FAD marking guidelines, a timeline for transition to biodegradable FADs, and access to FAD position data for science needs) by adopting the following:
 - i. Require the Scientific Committee to provide advice on FAD management options, including the efficacy of FAD closures, and expected reductions of juvenile and total catch of tropical tunas in comparison to the contribution of other gears ;
 - ii. A requirement to report complete FAD acoustic biomass records from echosounder buoys for scientific use;
 - iii. FAD tracking and recovery policies, as called for in Res.19/02;
 - iv. Clearer rules for FAD activation and deactivation of FAD buoys;
7. Amend Res. 17/05 to require shark fins to be naturally attached for all landings;



8. Adopt electronic monitoring (EM) terms and definitions, EM Program Standards and EM Data Standards as recommended by the Scientific Committee and come to agreement on a viable implementation schedule – in consultation with industry stakeholders.

As a member of Indian Ocean Tuna – Longline (Bumble Bee & FCF) FIP engaging in proactive tuna fisheries improvement activities in the Indian Ocean, we urge you to fully support action on the above issues at the May 2023 Annual Meeting of the IOTC.

The Indian Ocean tuna - longline (Bumble Bee & FCF) FIP looks forward to the continued leadership of the IOTC in the Indian Ocean, a region rich in tuna resources that need continued science-based conservation and management. Many thanks for taking time to read our position statement. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

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