



ATTN: Heads of IOTC Delegation

17 June 2019

Dear Delegates,

The vessel owners, their associations, and industry participants of fishery improvement projects (FIPs) in the Indian Ocean would like to communicate what they consider to be priority actions and objectives discussed at the next IOTC Commission meeting, beginning on June 17, 2019.

These actions are included in their FIP which is addressing precautionary harvest strategies, effective FAD management, and continued improvements in information, management and strategy. These priorities also reflect ISSF's position statement and top asks.

### **Effective Rebuilding & Harvest Strategies**

The commission needs to take decisive action to end overfishing of yellowfin tuna and implement the agreed harvest control rule for skipjack to ensure the long-term sustainability of these resources.

- IOTC to adopt an effective rebuilding plan for yellowfin tuna that gives full effect to the advice of the IOTC Scientific Committee, and also revise the overall catch reductions continued in Resolution 18/01 to ensure rebuilding and address the current circumstances that allow for growth in some fishery sectors
- Adopt species-specific harvest strategies as soon as possible, particularly for yellowfin tuna, and conduct a review of the Limit Reference Points in Resolution 15/10 to allow for the adoption of harvest control rules by 2020.
- Urgently monitor catches of skipjack to ensure catches in 2018-2020 do not exceed the limit set by Resolution 16/02, as recommended by the IOTC Working Party on Tropical Tunas

### **Observer Coverage**

Comprehensive observer coverage is a critical component of monitoring and management for sustainable tropical tuna fisheries

- Amend Res. 11/04 to require 100% observer coverage on large-scale purse seine vessels; adopt the ROS Standards for national programs; and develop EM/ER standards so that EM can be used to ultimately achieve 100% observer coverage in purse seine and longline fisheries.
- Adopt the minimum Regional Observer Scheme Standards presented in Circular 2019-08 to provide minimum standards, including related to observer training, for all national observer programs operating in the IOTC.
- Amend Resolution 11/04 to increase the minimum observer coverage levels for large-scale purse seine vessels to 100% and to require all national observer programs to be audited against the minimum requirements.



- Develop minimum standards for EMS and an e-reporting information system (e-Maris), including for logbooks, as part of the Pilot Project for the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme (Resolution 16/04) and endorsed framework (IOTC-2017-S21-10) that are applicable to different gear types, particularly for longline and purse seine so that EM can be used to ultimately achieve 100% observer coverage in those fisheries as a priority.
- Adopt a binding measure that will ensure the safety of human observers, including those on carrier vessels

### **Commission Contracting Parties Compliance**

Continue to strengthen the IOTC compliance assessment process.

- Implement the recommendations from the Working Party on the Implementation of CMMs in accordance with the MCS-related recommendations from the 2nd IOTC Performance Review and as agreed in Resolution 16/03.
- Require CPCs to submit a compliance action plan that demonstrates each CPC's actions to improve their implementation of new and existing measures, address identified areas of non-compliance and implement their flag State duties.
- Consider how to respond to repeated, significant instances of ongoing and/or severe non-compliance

### **Fish Aggregating Devices (FAD) Management**

It's time for a concerted effort to better monitor FAD usage and to establish a sound basis for FAD management in every ocean region. In the Indian Ocean this includes:

- Using mandatory data collected by CPCs in accordance with Resolution 18/08, analyze FAD usage patterns and catch per unit effort (CPUE) to determine changes in fishing capacity and possible impacts on IO stocks.
- Task the FAD Working Group to continue coordinating and collaborating on research and advice presented at other RFMOs when defining management for drifting and anchored FADs.
- Amend Resolution 17/08 to include a date by which non-entangling FADs shall be fully implemented, as recommended by the IOTC Science Committee.
- Request the Scientific Committee provides advice on the maximum number of active instrumented buoys per purse seine vessel provided in Resolution 17/08.
- Implement the recommendations on the development of a revised form for reporting FAD activity data and clear definitions to ensure consistency in FAD data submission that are harmonized with other tuna RFMOs.
- Support and collaborate with any projects on developing biodegradable FADs and urge CPCs visiting or fishing on FADs clearly identified as experimental to report to their national scientists the status of the FAD (and devices) and their activities on this FAD (including any catch data).
- Develop a FAD marking scheme, as called for in Resolution 17/08.