IOTC Activity

March-August 2021

Meetings held:

| March 08  | Special Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (SS4) |
| --- | --- |
| March 30  | 18TH Session of the Compliance Committee |
| May 10 | 23rd Working Party on Tropical Tuna (WPTT23): Data Preparatory meeting |
| June 02 | 18th Session of the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance |
| June 04 | 4th Session of the Technical Committee on Management Procedures (TCMP) |
| June 07  | 25th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission |
| June 28 | TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON ALLOCATION CRITERIA (TCAC08) |
| July 05 | 11th Working Party on Neritic Tunas (WPNT11) |

IPNLF’s engagement in IOTC has been essentially through the G16 Group of Coastal States ([www.io-g16.org](http://www.io-g16.org)) and via individual coastal states. The most important issue IPNLF paid attention to was supporting coastal states on submitting and adoption of proposals (actually revisions to the existing proposal) relating to the rebuilding of yellowfin tuna.

Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna has been overfished and subjected to over-fishing since 2016 and is subjected to reduction of catch by the type of gear, but with the exemption of catches from vessels <24m fishing inside the EEZs. Several countries have not been able to fully comply with the reduction measure imposed since 2016.

Due to Covid-pandemic and resulting worldwide travel bans in 2020, the Commission meeting (S24) in May 2020, had a severely restricted agenda and did not fully address the yellowfin issue. Several coastal states with commercial fisheries faced challenges from developed markets of the EU with boycotting of imports of yellowfin tuna from the Indian Ocean blaming IOTC for being irresponsible. The pressure from EU retailers backed by NGOs called for a special session specifically to deal with the yellowfin rebuilding.

The Special Session of the IOTC (SS03) was held in March. The meeting addressed essentially rebuilding of yellowfin. The Maldives submitted a revision to the existing Res 19/01. IPNLF supported the development of an allied proposal from Kenya on management of dFADs which indirectly attempted to cap the fishing effort on dFADs. IPNLF also supported and worked very closely with the Sri Lankan officials on their proposal on minimum conservation reference size for the Indian Ocean yellowfin. IPNLF was also supporting Indonesia with mattress rating to their data.

Prior to the SS03, and S24, G16 meetings were held to align views of the coastal states on the proposals; understanding issues/positions of different countries. IPNLF supported resource personnel (Chair of the G16) and was available at the meetings for support; in terms of providing interventions and encouraging for effective participation.

S25 - Annual Meeting:

IPNLF worked very closely with Kenya to revise and improve FAD proposals submitted to SS03 for re-submitting to S25, the annual meeting of the Commission. Again IPNLF played an important role in the G16 meeting to prepare for the S25.

IPNLF engaged with the Ocean Mind, in developing a paper on an analysis of publicly available nominal catch and effort data which shows fishing activities by flag states on the boundaries and inside of EEZs of coastal states.the paper was presented at the Compliance committee meeting and brought awareness of the issues. At Least one coastal state was willing to take up the issues the compliance committee and followed up separately with the IOTC.

IPNLF continues to support Kenya and Indonesia on IOTC matters

IPNLF also assisted the Maldives delegation in the TCMP (Technical Committee on the Management Procedure) and help comment on the issue of expediting the development of the harvest strategies, especially of the yellowfin and skipjack tuna