

Indian Ocean tuna - longline (Bumble Bee & FCF) FIP Position Statement Ahead of the IOTC Annual Meeting 2022

Drafted with agreement from all Indian Ocean tuna - longline (Bumble Bee & FCF) FIP
Participants
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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 EEZ's of Mauritius, Seychelles, and Madagascar. The fishery is managed regionally by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

This Fishery Improvement Project 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 region. The end goal is to achieve certification under the [Marine Stewardship Council](#) Fisheries Standard by the latest 2024.

As a FIP, we are concerned with the status of the 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.

The impacts of COVID-19 continue to present challenges to regional fisheries management organizations in conducting meetings. Even under these challenging circumstances, 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 in May 2022 at the annual meeting of the IOTC Commission to:

1. Adopt without delay in amendments to Resolution 21/01 to ensure an effective rebuilding plan for yellowfin tuna that gives full effect to the advice of the IOTC Scientific Committee, which, if implemented effectively, would recover the stock to SSBMSY by 2030 (around 2 generation times) with 50% probability if catches are reduced by at least 22 % (i.e., down to 336,145 tons) relative to the 2020 catch level (430,956 tons).
2. Ensure that catches of skipjack in 2022 do not exceed the limit set by the adopted Harvest Control Rule (513,572 tons).
3. Accelerate action on developing comprehensive, precautionary Management Procedures, adopt a bigeye tuna management procedure and agree on permanent Limit and Target Reference Points for tropical and temperate tunas, particularly yellowfin and conduct Management Strategy Evaluations (MSE) for albacore, skipjack and yellowfin tuna stocks.
4. Develop and implement science-based limits on FAD deployments and/or FAD sets consistent with management objectives for the tropical tunas; and require the use of biodegradable materials in the construction of FADs to minimize use of synthetic/plastic materials in FAD construction and establish a timeline for transitioning to 100% biodegradable.
5. Endorse the terms of references and workplan developed by the IOTC ad-hoc Working Group and accelerate work on the EM Program Standards so that these program minimum standards are adopted in 2023.

6. Amend Resolution 17/05 to require fins naturally attached for sharks, irrespective of how they are landed.
7. Ensure CPC compliance with the prohibition on the use of large-scale driftnets on the high seas and urge accelerated implementation of Res. 17/07 that prohibits the use of such driftnets in the entire IOTC area of competence.

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 are in need of 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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