

## Indian Ocean tuna FIP Position Statement

### IOTC Annual Meeting 2025

Drafted with agreement from all FIP Participants

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, FADs, habitats, and fishery ecosystem 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 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.

We strongly urge your government to take positions to ensure the IOTC acts at the 2025 Annual Meeting of the IOTC Commission on these top priorities:

#### **Compliance**

- Fully implement the revised IOTC compliance assessment process adopted in 2023 to ensure robust and transparent assessment of CPC accountability, particularly for CPC non-compliance with the provision of mandatory fishery and FAD data, catch and FAD limits and use of large-scale gillnets.
- Ensure all CPCs provide a detailed plan of action to address non-compliance - when they are assessed as non-compliant category 2 - within the three-month period following the Compliance Committee.

#### **Tuna Stock Conservation**

- Adopt precautionary, science-based catch limits, in line with the Scientific Committee's advice, for yellowfin tuna to maintain the rebuilding of the stock and task the Scientific Committee with confirming the status of yellowfin as determined by the 2024 assessment.
- Implement effective measures to ensure that skipjack and bigeye tuna catches do not exceed the catch limits established by the Harvest Control Rule for skipjack and the Management Procedure for bigeye.

#### **FAD Management**

In line with ISSF's established approach to strengthening FAD management:

- Further strengthen FAD management measures and provisions, including by fully implementing Res. 24/02.
- Require vessels to report complete FAD position data and acoustic biomass records from echosounder buoys for scientific use with appropriate time-lags to protect confidentiality.

#### **Bycatch Mitigation and Shark Protections**

- Amend Res. 17/05 to require shark fins to be naturally attached for all landings, as well as to consider additional mitigation measures, such as limitations on the use of wire leader and shark lines.
- Adopt best practices for shark, mobulids, and cetaceans safe handling and release, including use of safe release devices, as recommended by the SC and those adopted in WCPFC and IATTC.
- Amend Res. 12/04 to include scientifically proven mitigation measures and safe handling and release devices recommended by the IOTC SC for sea turtles and require identification of sea turtles at species level.

#### **Electronic Monitoring and Reporting and Observer Coverage**

- More fully embrace the use of electronic monitoring to increase observer coverage from the minimum 5% level for all gear types.
- Adopt measures to begin increasing observer coverage (human and/or electronic) from the minimum 5% and progress toward 100% coverage in industrial tuna fisheries.

#### **Effective Management Procedures (Harvest Strategies)**

- Adopt a comprehensive Management Procedure for albacore.
- Accelerate the adoption of robust management procedures for yellowfin tuna.

#### **Vessel Monitoring Systems and Port State Measures**

- Strengthen Res. 16/11 to be consistent with the FAO Port State Measures Agreement, including by adopting provisions for prioritizing vessels for inspection and including ports of CPCs outside the IOTC Agreement Area.
- To improve compliance with tuna conservation measures, adopt amendments to Res. 15/03 to strengthen the IOTC VMS, including by requiring simultaneous near real-time position reporting and ensuring systems are tamper-proof.

#### **Labor and Social Issues in Tuna Fisheries**

- Adopt a binding measure that will ensure the safety of human observers, including those on supply and carrier vessels.

The 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.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.