



LDAC OPINION IN PREPARATION OF IOTC ANNUAL MEETING (2-6 November 2020)

Date of adoption: 30 October 2020

Reference : R-14-20/WG1

Background:

For efficiency reasons, it was decided that the LDAC concentrates efforts in addressing the questions posed by IOTC Secretariat on its note IOTC-2020-S24-05 in relation to Conservation and Management Measures that include a reference to the year 2020. This is linked to priority issues for decision given the extraordinary circumstances of this year (online meeting due to COVID-19 pandemic).

IOTC Proposal no 1

- 1. Resolution 19/01 *On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence.***

Para 2. The measures contained within this Resolution shall be considered as interim measure and will be reviewed by the Commission no later than at its annual Session in 2020.

Comment: Resolution 19/01 remains in place. The Heads of Delegations agreed not to consider new or revised CMMs in 2020.

LDAC Response to IOTC Proposal no 1

The approach is agreeable taking into account the exceptional circumstances.

The LDAC fishing industry (including both EU purse seine fleet and supply chain from pole and line and longline fleets) supports a roll-over of the CMM in 2020 for 2021 with the condition that an inter-sessional meeting happens in early 2021.

Minority Statement from WWF

WWF does not support a roll-over of the CMM in 2020. On the contrary, WWF asks CPCs to act immediately to adopt a robust rebuilding plan for recovery of the yellowfin tuna stock, including at least an overall 25-30% reduction of yellowfin catches. WWF agrees that pending issues should be discussed through inter-sessional meetings in 2021.



The LDAC recommends that in 2021 the following actions should be defended by the EU to be completed by IOTC:

1. To evaluate the efficiency of 19-01 in 2021, identify possible solutions to the shortcomings of Resolution 19-01 and contemplate the implementation of alternative or additional measures, in particular for CPCs or fleets for which YFT catches remain over the limits set by the Commission and/or if such catch levels are too uncertain and likely to undermine stock status in the future;
2. To achieve this, IOTC to convene a Special Session in early 2021 (February-March) to start with work proceedings to review Res. 19-01 in order to allow stock rebuilding in 2021. This meeting might also want to explore the feasibility of a global and holistic approach that looks at combined management measures covering the three species of tropical tuna (YFT, SKJ, BET) based on science for ensuring a sustainable exploitation of the three stocks in the medium and long term. The LDAC calls to the IOTC Commission (Scientific Committee/Compliance Committee) for undertaking a review on the effective implementation of the Resolution, in particular FAD provisions, and that scientific, management and compliance objectives are met.
3. To consider measures to ensure that future catches of SKJ will not overshoot the TAC estimated using the HCR (16-01) and BET catches remain in accordance with the scientific advice.
4. To strongly support the proposal from IOTC WPTT to conduct a full scientific assessment of the stock of YFT in 2021; and for such assessment to incorporate indices of abundance other than the joint-Asian LL index, for example Maldives BB/HAND and/or PS indices (large YFT free-school index, buoy echo-sounder indices, etc). We acknowledge that indices of abundance are a key input to stock assessment and should be based on the best data available.
5. To speed the Management Strategy Evaluation process, which is ongoing for tropical tunas, towards the implementation of Control Rules for tropical tunas, no later than 2022.
6. The EU to provide more clarity regarding the discrepancies between data from sale slips/notes and T3 catch estimates, noting that Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 [EU Fisheries Control Regulation] states clearly the EU Member States shall control quota utilisation through the use of sales notes. The EU should consider whether the system in place is sufficiently robust to obtain accurate catch data of tropical tunas, by species, and inform in a transparent manner to IOTC and stakeholders regarding findings and actions taken.
7. To progress towards the identification and implementation of sanctions for CPC with a history of repeated non-Compliance and to promote effective measures for ensuring level playing field amongst CPCs.
8. To consider reviewing provisions in 19-02 for the feasibility of implementation of 100% biodegradable FADs by 2022, taking into consideration the available knowledge, state of the art of materials and components and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



The EU is asked to lead by example by supporting further research on biodegradable FADs. Although we acknowledge there has been over a decade of proactive research into the development of biodegradable FADs, efforts should be increased as some FAD materials still contribute to plastic pollution. The IOTC should consider strengthening legal provisions to reduce unwanted ecosystem impacts from FADs, ensuring that such provisions are in line with relevant international instruments in force.

IOTC Proposal no 2

Para 10. Exceptionally for 2019 and 2020, Small Island Developing States CPCs that contributed less than 4 % of the total yellowfin catch of the Indian Ocean in 2017, shall reduce their purse seine catch by 7.5 % of 2018 levels.

Comment: This measure was intended to expire after 2020.

LDAC response to IOTC Proposal no 2

The LDAC understands that this provision was intended for the fishery of Mauritius.

The LDAC understands that its expiration means that the Mauritius PS fleet will be subject to a 15% reduction in catch of YFT (using 2018 as reference year) as from 2021.

The LDAC notes that the catch in 2019 exceeds the limit set in Resolution 19-01, acknowledging that the implementation of the national quota in Mauritius could only start at the end of 2019, and therefore understands that the procedures set in such resolution shall apply to Mauritius.

IOTC Proposal 3

Para 16. CPCs shall gradually reduce supply vessels by 31 December 2022 as specified below in (a), (b), and (c). Flag States shall submit the status of reducing the use of supply vessel as part of the report of Implementation to the Compliance Committee. **b)** From 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020 : 2 supply vessels in support of not less than 5 purse seiners, all of the same flag State.

Comment: This measure was intended to be ongoing.

LDAC response to IOTC Proposal no 3

The LDAC agrees with this ongoing measure to continue in 2021 as indicated above.

-END-