

RESOLUTION 02/08
ON THE CONSERVATION OF BIGEYE AND YELLOWFIN TUNA IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

Recognising the need for action to ensure the achievement of IOTC objectives to conserve and manage bigeye tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence;

Recalling that the 5th Session of the Scientific Committee reiterated the recommendation that a reduction in catches of bigeye tuna from all gears should be implemented as soon as possible;

Concerned that about 70% by number of the total bigeye catch is taken by the purse-seine fleet, and consist mainly by juvenile fish, and that 80% of the catch in weight is taken by the longline fleet.

Recalling the conclusion of the 5th Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee that catches of yellowfin tuna are close to or possibly above MSY, that catches by all main gears have been increasing in recent years and that the increase in the fishing pressure on juvenile yellowfin by purse seiners fishing on floating objects is likely to be detrimental to the stock if it continues;

Recalling that the FAO International Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity (IPOA) provides in its Objectives and Principles that “States and regional fisheries organisations confronted with an overcapacity problem, where capacity is undermining achievement of long-term sustainability outcomes, would endeavour initially to limit at present and progressively reduce the fishing capacity applied to affected fisheries”;

Resolves to seek technical advice from the Scientific Committee for the next session of the Commission on:

- Potential management measures designed to reduce the fishing mortality on juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna. The measures to be investigated should include, but not be restricted to, time and/or area closures on purse seine fishing on floating objects, and other forms of effort reduction or alternative fishing strategies.
- Other potential management measures aimed at maintaining or reducing the effective fishing effort and catches of yellowfin and bigeye tunas by all gears.
- The likely effect of these measures on the future productivity of the stocks of bigeye and yellowfin tunas and their consequences on catches of skipjack tuna.

On the basis of the updated scientific advice, the Commission will seek to adopt appropriate measures to address the recommendations of the Scientific Committee at the 2003 Session of the Commission.