

RESOLUTION 13/09

ON THE CONSERVATION OF ALBACORE CAUGHT IN THE IOTC AREA OF COMPETENCE

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

CONSIDERING that albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) is one of the most important species regulated by IOTC;

NOTING that the Working Party on Temperate Tunas and the Scientific Committee recognized that the current level of catches is likely to result in further declines in albacore biomass, productivity and catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE);

FURTHER NOTING that the impacts of the piracy in western Indian Ocean has resulted in the displacement of a substantial portion of longline fishing effort into the traditional albacore fishing grounds in the southern and eastern Indian Ocean and therefore it is likely that catch and effort on albacore will decline in the future unless management action is taken;

BEARING IN MIND that the albacore stock in the Indian Ocean is currently subject to overfishing (current fishing mortality > fishing mortality allowing the stock to deliver MSY) and that the fishing mortality rate needs to be reduced below the 2010 level to ensure that fishing mortality in 2020 does not exceed fishing mortality allowing the stock to deliver MSY;

CONSIDERING the recommendations of the 15th Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee held in Mahé, Seychelles from 13–15 December 2012;

ADOPTS in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, that the Commission shall request the Scientific Committee:

1. To compile, review, discuss and assess, during the year 2014 and with the support of all the concerned CPCs, the coverage and the quality of all available data on catches and fishing effort related to albacore fisheries in the IOTC area of competence;
2. Through its Working Party on Temperate Tunas (WPTmT), to examine in relevant 2014 sessions the state of albacore stock, by considering even common working sessions with the ICCAT scientific community to improve the knowledge on the interrelation between the Indian Ocean and Atlantic albacore populations; and
3. To advise the Commission, by end of 2014 at the latest:
 - a) On Target Reference Points (TRPs) and Limit Reference Points (LRPs) used when assessing the albacore stock status and when establishing the Kobe plot and Kobe matrices.
 - b) On potential management measures having been examined through the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process. These management measures will therefore have to ensure the achievement of the conservation and optimal utilization of stocks as laid down in article V of the Agreement for the establishment of the IOTC and more particularly to ensure that, in as short a period as possible and no later than 2020, (i) the fishing mortality rate does not exceed the fishing mortality rate allowing the stock to deliver MSY and (ii) the spawning biomass is maintained at or above its MSY level.