



DRAFT: REVISION OF THE WPNT PROGRAM OF WORK (2019–2023)

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 26 JUNE 2019

PURPOSE

To ensure that participants at the 9th Working Party on Neritic Tunas (WPNT09) revise the Program of Work for the WPNT by taking into consideration the specific requests of the Commission and Scientific Committee.

BACKGROUND

Scientific Committee

At the 21th Session of the SC:

- (Para. 219) The SC **NOTED** paper IOTC–2018–SC21–09 which provided the Scientific Committee (SC) with a proposed Program of Work for each of its Working Parties (WP), including prioritisation of the elements requested by each WP.
- (Para. 220) The SC **NOTED** the proposed Program of Work and priorities for the Scientific Committee and each of the Working Parties and **AGREED** to a consolidated Program of Work as outlined in [Appendix 35a-g](#). The Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of each working party shall ensure that the efforts of their working party are focused on the core areas contained within the appendix, taking into account any new research priorities identified by the Commission at its next Session.
- (Para. 241) The SC noted the serious issues with data limitations faced by the WPNT and the difficulty in progressing with the planned assessment schedule. Results produced based on the limited data are highly uncertain and, hence, progress in providing appropriate advice to the Commission has been relatively slow. The SC noted that low information stock assessments for six species in 2020 may be challenging but that they should be retained in the schedule. The SC **AGREED** to maintain the assessments using a triennial cycle with capacity building/data mining workshops to be held in the intermediate years, focussing on a particular priority topic as per the assessment schedule outlined in [Appendix 36](#).

Commission

The Commission has made a number of requests that call on the Scientific Committee, via the WPNT, to undertake specific tasks. These requests need to be incorporated into the Program of Work for the WPNT:

Resolution 18/07 On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in The IOTC

- (para. 4) To facilitate the reporting of zero catches as required under paragraph 1 of Annex I of this Resolution, the following procedure shall apply:
- a) as part of the IOTC 1RC electronic form used to report nominal catches, the Secretariat shall include a matrix by IOTC species as well as the most commonly caught elasmobranch species according to records of catches and incidents as established in Resolution 15/01 *on the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence (or any subsequent superseding Resolution)* and main IOTC gear groups on the basis of the format set out in Annex II of this Resolution;
 - b) CPCs, as part of their total catch data reporting, shall complete the cells in the matrix with either a value of 'one' (1) to indicate where that CPC had catches (positive catch) for a particular species/gear combination or a value of 'zero' (0) to indicate where that CPC had no catches (zero landings + zero discards) for a particular species/gear combination;
 - c) The "Catch columns" section of the electronic Form 1RC shall only include reports of positive catches

Resolution 17/07 *On the prohibition to use large-scale driftnets in the IOTC area*

(para. 2) The use of large-scale driftnets¹ on the high seas within the IOTC area of competence shall be prohibited. The use of large-scale driftnets in the entire IOTC area of competence shall be prohibited by 1 January 2022.

(para. 7) The Commission shall periodically assess whether additional measures should be adopted and implemented to ensure that large-scale driftnets are not used in the IOTC area of competence and to take into account the latest advice of the Scientific Committee. The first such assessment shall take place in 2023.

Resolution 11/04 *On a regional observer scheme*

(para. 2) In order to improve the collection of scientific data, at least 5 % of the number of operations/sets for each gear type by the fleet of each CPC while fishing in the IOTC area of competence of 24 meters overall length and over, and under 24 meters if they fish outside their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) shall be covered by this observer scheme. For vessels under 24 meters if they fish outside their EEZ, the above mentioned coverage should be achieved progressively by January 2013.

(para. 4) The number of the artisanal fishing vessels landings shall also be monitored at the landing place by field samplers. The indicative level of the coverage of the artisanal fishing vessels should progressively increase towards 5% of the total levels of vessel activity (i.e. total number of vessel trips or total number of vessels active).

(para. 15) The elements of the Observer Scheme, notably those regarding its coverage, are subject to review and revision, as appropriate, for application in 2012 and subsequent years. Basing on the experience of other tuna RFMOs, the IOTC Scientific Committee will elaborate an observer working manual, a template to be used for reporting (including minimum data fields) and a training program.

DISCUSSION

Participants at the WPNT09 are requested to consider the priorities set by the Commission and the Scientific Committee, via Conservation and Management Measures, and revise its Program of Work (previously outlined in paper IOTC–2018–WPNT08–04) to match those priorities.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the WPNT:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2019–WPNT09–08, which encouraged the WPNT to further develop and refine its Program of Work for 2019–2023 to align with the requests and directives from the Commission and Scientific Committee.
- 2) **RECOMMEND** a revised Program of Work for 2019–2023 to the Scientific Committee for its consideration and potential endorsement.

¹ “Large-scale driftnets” are defined as gillnets or other nets or a combination of nets that are more than 2.5 kilometres in length whose purpose is to enmesh, entrap, or entangle fish by drifting on the surface of, or in, the water column.

WORKING PARTY ON NERITIC TUNAS PROGRAM OF WORK (2019–2023)

The current Program of Work as approved by the SC consists of the following:

- **Table 1:** Priority topics for obtaining the information necessary to develop stock status indicators for neritic tunas in the Indian Ocean;
- **Table 2:** Stock assessment schedule.

This is to be reviewed, discussed and updated for the next 5 years by participants during the WPNT09 meeting to be put forward for consideration by SC23.

Table 1. Priority topics for obtaining the information necessary to develop stock status indicators for neritic tunas in the Indian Ocean

Topic	Sub-topic and project	Priority	Est. budget and/or potential source	Timing				
				2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
1. Data mining and collation	<p>Collate and characterise operational level data for the main neritic tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean to investigate their suitability to be used for developing standardised CPUE indices.</p> <p>The following data should be collated and made available for collaborative analysis:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) catch and effort by species and gear by landing site; 2) operational data: stratify this by vessel, month, and year for the development as an indicator of CPUE over time; and 3) operational data: collate other information on fishing techniques (i.e. area fished, gear specifics, depth, environmental condition (near shore, open ocean, etc.) and vessel size (length/horsepower)). 	High (1)	CPCs directly					
2. CPUE standardisation	Develop standardised CPUE series for the main fisheries for longtail, kawakawa, Indo-Pacific King mackerel and Spanish mackerel in the Indian Ocean, with the aim of developing CPUE series for stock assessment purposes.	High (2)						
	➤ <input type="checkbox"/> Sri Lanka (priority species: Frigate tuna, Kawakawa, bullet tuna)		Consultant with CPCs					
	<input type="checkbox"/> I.R. Iran (priority species: Longtail tuna, Kawakawa, narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, Frigate tuna)		Consultant with CPCs					

	<input type="checkbox"/> Indonesia (priority species: narrow-barred Spanish mackerel, Kawakawa, longtail tuna, Frigate tuna) <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistan (priority species: Longtail tuna, Kawakawa, narrow-barred Spanish mackerel)		Consultant with CPCs Consultant with CPCs					
3. Stock assessment / Stock indicators	<p>Explore alternative assessment approaches and develop improvements where necessary based on the data available to determine stock status for longtail tuna, kawakawa and Spanish mackerel</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The Weight-of-Evidence approach should be used to determine stock status, by building layers of partial evidence, such as CPUE indices combined with catch data, life-history parameters and yield-per recruit metrics, as well as the use of data poor assessment approaches.</p> <p>Improve the presentation of management advice from different assessment approaches to better represent the uncertainty and improve communication between scientists and managers in the IOTC.</p>	High (3)	IOTC Regular Budget/ EU grant 305					
4. Biological information (parameters for stock assessment)	<p>Quantitative biological studies are necessary for all neritic tunas throughout their range to determine key biological parameters including age-at-maturity, and fecundity-at-age/length relationships, age-length keys, age and growth, longevity which will be fed into future stock assessments.</p>	High (4)	CPCs directly					
5. Stock structure (connectivity)	<p>Genetic research to determine the connectivity of neritic tunas throughout their distributions (LOT, KAW, COM)</p> <p>➤ Determine the degree of shared stocks for all neritic tunas under the IOTC mandate in the Indian Ocean, so as to better equip the SC in providing management advice based on unit stocks delineated by geographic distribution and connectivity.</p> <p>➤ Genetic research to determine the connectivity of neritic tunas throughout their distributions</p>	High (5)	1.3 m Euro: European Union TBD					



Table 2. Proposed assessment schedule for the IOTC Working Party on 2019-2023

<i>Working Party on Neritic Tunas</i>					
Species	2019**	2020*	2021***	2022	2023*
Bullet tuna	Data preparation	Assessment	Data preparation	Data preparation	Assessment
Frigate tuna	Data preparation	Assessment	Data preparation	Data preparation	Assessment
Indo-Pacific king mackerel	Data preparation	Assessment	Data preparation	Data preparation	Assessment
Kawakawa	Data preparation	Assessment	Data preparation	Data preparation	Assessment
Longtail tuna	Data preparation	Assessment	Data preparation	Data preparation	Assessment
Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel	Data preparation	Assessment	Data preparation	Data preparation	Assessment

* Including data-limited stock assessment methods;

** Including species-specific catches, CPUE, biological information and size distribution;

*** Identification of data gaps and discussion of improvements to the assessments (stock structure);