



# 2022 IOTC Position Statement

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GLOBAL TUNA ALLIANCE

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# TOP LEVEL ASKS

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## Yellowfin Rebuilding

IOTC agrees a resolution that specifies how the yellowfin stock could be rebuilt within two generations

## Harvest Strategies

Accelerate development and implementation of a comprehensive, precautionary Harvest Strategies, including precautionary Reference Points and Harvest Control Rules.

## Observer Coverage

1. Where lacking, adopt minimum standards for Electronic Monitoring (EM) data, and a work plan with milestones and deadlines for the implementation of best practice EM and e-reporting, with necessary mechanisms to ensure compliance.
2. 100% observer coverage requirement (human and/or electronic) in industrial tuna fisheries, including all those engaged in at sea transshipment, by 2024.

## Port State Measures Agreement

IOTC adopts port state measures (PSMs) that are aligned with PSMA requirements.

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# YELLOWFIN REBUILDING

## *What is the issue?*

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- Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna is overfished with overfishing occurring.
- At the 25th Session of the IOTC, delegates agreed an interim rebuilding plan for overfished yellowfin tuna. The agreed measure set a total catch limit of 401,011mt.
- Six countries formally objected, and these put the interim rebuilding plan at serious risk of failure.
- A new stock assessment was published in October 2021 and Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) estimate for the Indian Ocean stock was recalculated as 349,000t.
- The scientific advice noted that catches need to be significantly reduced:
  - If catches are reduced to 60% of 2020 levels\* there is >50% probability of being above Bmsy levels by 2023.
  - If catches are reduced to <80% of 2020 levels there is a >50% probability of being above BMSY in 2030.
  - If catches are reduced to less than 80% of 2020 levels there would be a >50% probability of ending overfishing ( $F < F_{msy}$ ) by 2023 and also by 2030.

## *What are we calling for?*

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- We request the IOTC secretariat schedules adequate time to discuss yellowfin rebuilding proposals.
- CPCs should agree a resolution that specifies how the yellowfin stock could be rebuilt in two generations
- The resolution should apply to all fishing vessels targeting tuna and tuna like species in the Indian Ocean regardless of the length of the vessel and area of operation.
- We encourage CPCs to discuss proposals in advance of the meeting.
- If catches are reduced to <70% of 2020 levels there is a >67% probability of being above BMSY in 2030.
- If catches are reduced to <70% of 2020 levels there would be a >67% probability of ending overfishing ( $F < F_{msy}$ ) by 2023 and also by 2030.
- Accordingly, reduce yellowfin catches to below 302,837t.
- In addition to the reduction in catch as set out above, the IOTC must ensure that all CPCs must comply with the resolution.
- GTA recognises that as far as possible, all CPCs and gear types are now required to play their part in delivering catch reductions going forwards.

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# HARVEST STRATEGIES

## *What is the issue?*

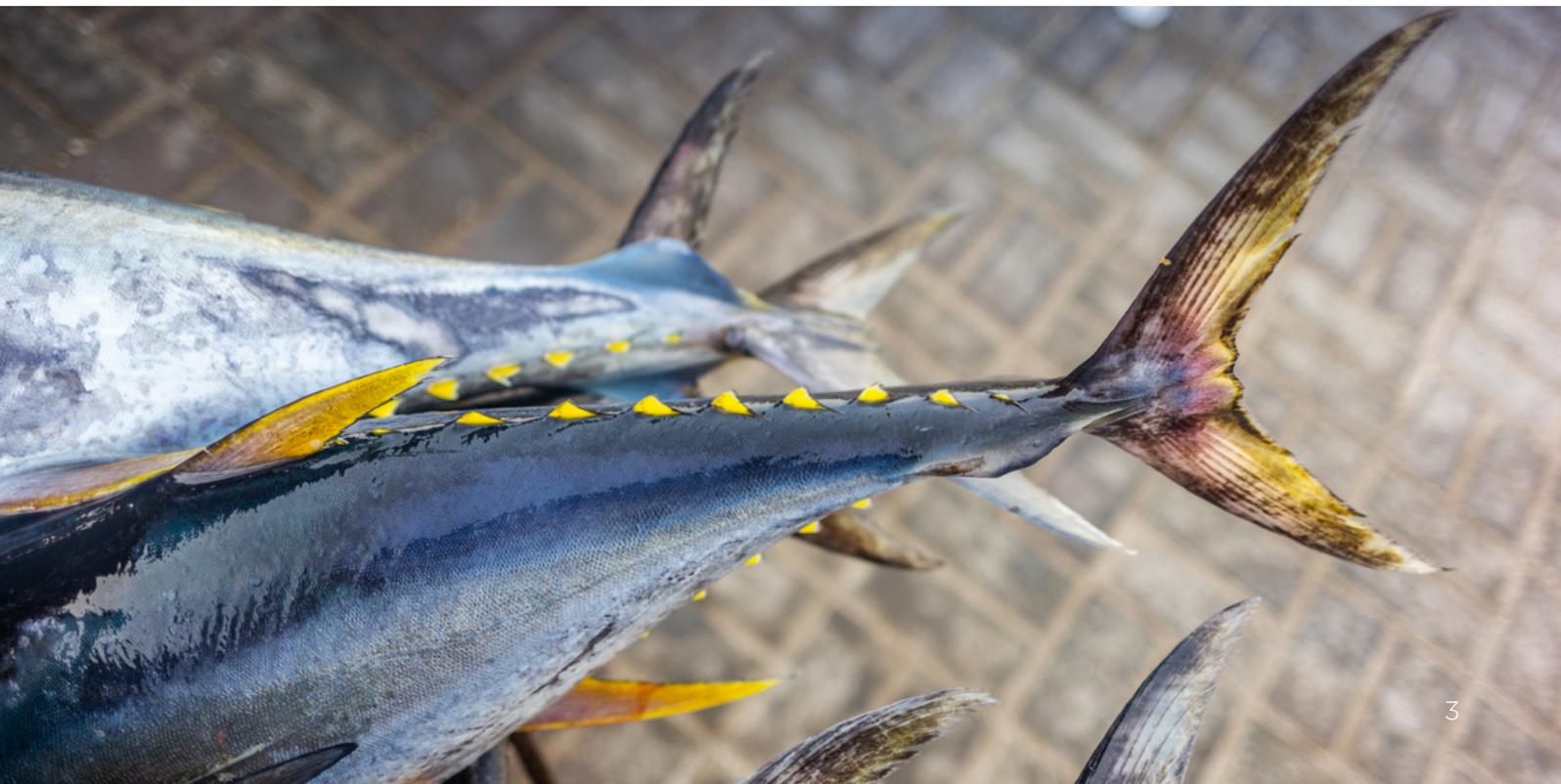
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- Harvest strategies (or management procedures) provide a pre-agreed framework to facilitate efficient, science-based decision-making to achieve a long-term vision for the stock and fishery.
- Although the IOTC has been slowly progressing the development of management procedures, it has not yet agreed on a complete management procedure for any of the key IOTC species.
- In addition, the skipjack catch limit based on the harvest control rule (HCR) has been exceeded in every year since its adoption.

## *What are we calling for?*

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- Adopt a comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategy for bigeye tuna.
- Adopt additional measures to prevent continued exceedance of the HCR-derived TAC for skipjack tuna.



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# OBSERVER COVERAGE

## *What is the issue?*

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- Comprehensive observer coverage is critical to effective fisheries management, compliance monitoring, and independent verification of catch, effort and species interactions.
- Low levels of observer coverage limit the availability of independent catch and operational data, reducing the accuracy of stock assessments and effectiveness of conservation management measures.
- The IOTC currently requires only 5% observer coverage for longline vessels larger than 24 meters operating within the Convention Area.
- While the IOTC has endorsed minimum electronic monitoring (EM) standards for purse seine vessels, it has not yet adopted them for all gear types or carrier vessels.
- At-sea transshipment continues to rise in the IOTC area and has been linked to IUU fishing activities and labour abuses when monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures are insufficient.

## *What are we calling for?*

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- In 2022 develop EM program minimum standards.
- Require 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) in industrial tuna fisheries, including all those engaged in at sea transshipment, by 2024.



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# PORT STATE MEASURES AGREEMENT

## *What is the issue?*

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- The PSMA, adopted in 2009 by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), requires parties to place tighter controls on foreign-flagged vessels seeking to enter and use their ports to land or transship fish.
- Tuna RFMOs also regulate member nations' port State controls as part of their management measures. This ensures that these governments have minimum standards in place, regardless of whether they are a party to the PSMA.
- The IOTC adopted a Resolution on Port State Measures in 2010, which was amended in 2016.
- However, the exclusion of ports by CPCs that are outside of the IOTC Convention Area undermine the global reach of Port State measures and provide potential safe havens for IUU vessels, operators and vessels that support IUU fishing activities.

## *What are we calling for?*

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- Amend Res. 16/11 to prioritize vessels for inspection in port and expand the measure to include ports of CPCs that are outside of the IOTC Convention Area.



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