
WORKING PAPER**Yellowfin stock status - examination and follow-up of the Resolution 17/01 on an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence****SUBMITTED BY: EUROPEAN UNION**

Resolution 17/01 *on an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence* replaced the Resolution 16/01, may result in an increase of the Yellowfin level of catches, departing from the Scientific Committee recommendation to substantially decrease the Yellowfin catches from the reference year 2014 because of the new reference years used.

The Scientific Committee and the Working Party on Tropical Tunas are requested to undertake in 2018 an evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures detailed in the Resolution 17/01, taking into account all sources of fishing mortality and possible alternatives aiming at returning and maintaining biomass levels at the Commission's target level as stipulated by Res. 15/10.

After consideration of the results of this evaluation, the Commission should consider the need to take corrective measures, as appropriate, with a view to reducing as soon as possible and not later than 2023, the fishing mortality F at or below the interim target reference point of F_{msy} as a precondition to reconstitute the spawning biomass at or above the interim target reference point of SB_{msy} .

The Scientific Committee at its 2017 meeting confirmed the Yellowfin stock status determination of 2016. Although the 2016 updated assessment provided a more optimistic estimate than the 2015 one, the stock is considered to be overfished and subject to overfishing. The current stock status is determined by unsustainable catches of yellowfin tuna over the last 5 years and the relatively low recruitment levels in recent years.

In light of the above, the EU would like to ask the Commission to request the Scientific Committee and the Working Party on Tropical Tunas, at their respective 2018 sessions, to provide the scientific basis to the Commission, taking into account the results of next Yellowfin Tuna stock assessment, for options to improve the effectiveness of the current conservation measure.

In particular, the EU would like the Commission to request the Scientific Committee to provide advice on:

- management options likely to achieve the interim target reference point of F_{msy} by 2023, with levels of probability ranging from 60 to 90%;
- options to reduce fishing mortality and improve the exploitation pattern, including via spatial measures and possible limitations of fishing effort, overall and by fishing gears.