

ON A REGIONAL OBSERVER SCHEME

SUBMITTED BY: EUROPEAN UNION

Explanatory Memorandum

The Scientific Committee (SC20) recommended that on the next revision of Resolution 11/04 On a Regional Observer Scheme, the submission of a report after each trip should be amended to request the submission of data in an electronic format suitable for automated data extraction (including historic data) with a given deadline so that information from multiple trips can be provided.

The transposition of this recommendation into the IOTC legislation will facilitate the work of biologists participating in IOTC scientific Working Parties and Scientific Committee and will contribute to an enhanced outcome of these bodies, which will enable the Commission to make decisions on an improved science advice.

This draft resolution is addressing this recommendation from the Scientific Committee by proposing the relevant amendments to Resolution 11/04.

In addition, Resolution 11-04 requires CPCs to have observers on 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 for vessels of 24 meters overall length and over, and under 24 meters if they fish outside their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

However, several scientific studies suggest that sampling coverages of, at least, 20% would be necessary to provide reasonable estimates of total bycatch and the by-catch of common species. In the case of rare species, this percentage would need to be much higher at least 50%. Thus, based on these work and previous analysis, IOTC SC agreed in the past, as well as ICCAT SCRS, that current level of scientific observers coverage of 5% set out by Resolution 11/04 is below the minimum necessary coverage estimated by simulations (Paragraph 221 of 14th IOTC SC Report – 2012). Similarly, ICCAT SCRS in 2016 concluded that 5 % coverage seems to be inappropriate to provide reasonable estimates of total by-catch and recommended increasing the minimum level to 20%.

The EU therefore considers that increasing observer coverage from current levels would enhance the provision of scientific data to improve robustness of scientific advice.

RESOLUTION 18/XX
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Keywords: Observer Scheme, Observer, Field sampler, confidentiality rules, catch data

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the need to increase the scientific information, in particular to provide the IOTC Scientific Committee working material in order to improve the management of the tuna and tuna-like species fished in the Indian Ocean;

REITERATING the responsibilities of flag States to ensure that their vessels conduct their fishing activities in a responsible manner, fully respecting IOTC Conservation and Management Measures;

CONSIDERING the need for action to ensure the effectiveness of the IOTC objectives;

CONSIDERING the obligation of all IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (hereinafter CPCs) to fully comply with the IOTC Conservation and Management Measures;

AWARE of the necessity for sustained efforts by CPCs to ensure the enforcement of IOTC's Conservation and Management Measures, and the need to encourage Non-Contracting Parties (NCPs) to abide by these measures;

UNDERLINING that the adoption of this measure is intended to help support the implementation of Conservation and Management Measures as well as scientific research for tuna and tuna-like species;

CONSIDERING the provisions set forth in Resolution 10/04 *On A Regional Observer Scheme* [superseded by [Resolution 11/04](#)], adopted by the Commission;

CONSIDERING the deliberations of the 12th Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee held in Victoria, Seychelles from 30 November to 4 December 2009

ADOPTS, in accordance with the provisions of Article IX, paragraph 1 of the IOTC Agreement, the following:

Objective

1. The objective of the IOTC observer scheme shall be to collect verified catch data and other scientific data related to the fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species in the IOTC area of competence.

Observer Scheme

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.~~
3. The coverage rate shall be progressively increased to a minimum of 20% for purse seine gear and 10% for other gears by 2020. For vessels under 24 meters fishing outside their EEZ, such coverages rate shall be achieved progressively by January 2022.
4. When purse seiners are carrying an observer¹ as stated in paragraph 1, this observer shall also monitor the catches at unloading to identify the composition of [tuna catches \(e.g. Bigeye tuna catches\)](#). The requirement for the observer to monitor catches at unloading is not applicable to CPCs already having a sampling scheme, with at least the coverage set out in paragraph 2.

¹ Observer: a person who collects information on board fishing vessels. Observer programmes can be used for quantifying species composition of target species, bycatch, by-products and dead discards, collecting tag returns, etc.

5. The number of the artisanal fishing vessels landings shall also be monitored at the landing place by field samplers². 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).
6. CPCs shall:
 - a) Have the primary responsibility to obtain qualified observers. Each CPC may choose to use either deployed national or non-national of the flag State of the vessel on which they are deployed;
 - b) Endeavour that the minimum level of coverage is met and that the observed vessels are a representative sample of the gear types active in their fleet;
 - c) Take all necessary measures to ensure that observers are able to carry out their duties in a competent and safe manner;
 - d) Endeavour to ensure that the observers alternate vessels between their assignments. Observers are not to perform duties, other than those described in paragraphs 10 and 11 below;
 - e) Ensure that the vessel on which an observer is placed shall provide suitable food and lodging during the observer's deployment at the same level as the officers, where possible. Vessel masters shall ensure that all necessary cooperation is extended to observers in order for them to carry out their duties safely including providing access, as required, to the retained catch, and catch which is intended to be discarded.
7. The cost of the observer scheme in paragraph 2 and 3 shall be met by each CPC.
8. The sampling scheme referred in paragraph 4 will be covered by the Commission's accumulated funds and voluntary contribution on a provisional basis. The Commission will consider an alternative for the financing of this scheme.
9. If the coverage referred in paragraphs 2 and 3 is not met by a CPC, any other CPC may, subject to the consent of the CPC who has not met its coverage, place an observer to fulfil the tasks defined in the paragraphs 1 and 2 until that CPC provides a replacement or the target coverage level is met.
10. CPCs shall provide to the IOTC Executive Secretary and the IOTC Scientific Committee annually a report of the number of vessels monitored and the coverage achieved by gear type in accordance with the provisions of this Resolution.
11. Observers shall:
 - a) Record and report fishing activities, verify positions of the vessel;
 - b) Observe and estimate catches as far as possible with a view to identifying catch composition and monitoring discards, by-catches and size frequency;
 - c) Record the gear type, mesh size and attachments employed by the master;
 - d) Collect information to enable the cross-checking of entries made to the logbooks (species composition and quantities, live and processed weight and location, where available); and
 - e) Carry out such scientific work (for example, collecting samples), as requested by the IOTC Scientific Committee.
12. The observer shall, within 30 days of completion of each trip, provide a report to the CPCs of the vessel. The CPCs shall ~~send-submit to the IOTC Executive Secretary collected observer data, following IOTC observer reporting templates, for the previous year not later than 30 June., within 150 days at the latest each report, as far as continuous flow of report from observer placed on the longline fleet is ensured~~ which is recommended to be Such data shall be provided with 1°x1° format

² Field sampler: a person who collects information on land during the unloading of fishing vessels. Field sampling programmes can be used for quantifying catch, retained bycatch, collecting tag returns, etc.

to the IOTC Executive Secretary and in an electronic format suitable for automated data extraction (including historic data). The IOTC Executive Secretary, who shall make the report available to the IOTC Scientific Committee upon request. In a case where the vessel is fishing in the EEZ of a coastal State, the report shall equally be submitted to that coastal State.

13. The confidentiality rules set out in the Resolution 98/02 [superseded by [Resolution 12/02](#)] *Data confidentiality policy and procedures* for fine-scale data shall apply.
14. Field samplers shall monitor catches at the landing place with a view to estimating catch-at-size by type of boat, gear and species, or carry out such scientific work as requested by the IOTC Scientific Committee.
15. The funds available from the IOTC balance of funds may be used to support the implementation of this programme in developing States, notably the training of observers and field samplers.
16. 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.
17. This Resolution supersedes Resolution [101/04](#) *On A Regional Observer Scheme*.