

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION TO AMEND ICCAT RECOMMENDATION 19-02

(Document presented by Japan)

Explanatory note

Bigeye tuna

The Kobe 2 Strategy Matrix (K2SM) produced by the SCRS indicates the relatively optimistic stock status, whereas the SCRS recommends the K2SM *'should be interpreted with caution'* and *'the Commission should consider adopting a TAC that would shift the stock status of BET towards the green zone of the Kobe plot with a high probability'* (2021 Report of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics, SCRS, p.27) as the K2SM does not properly take into account several uncertainties.

Japan considers that a TAC of 70,000 t is consistent with the SCRS advice since the forecast of TAC at 70,000 t will sustain the probability of maintaining the BET stock in the green zone more than 80% and that probability will not decrease until 2034, while Paragraph 2 of Rec. 19-02 stipulates that the probability shall be more than 50%. Consideration should also be given to the fact that the total catch in 2020 was below the TAC and whether this tendency will continue in 2021.

Japan has been advocating that allocation should be gradually transferred from developed CPCs to developing CPCs and this should be done when the TAC increases. Based on this idea, Japan considers that all the increase should go to developing CPCs, particularly coastal developing CPCs. Japan recognizes that allocation would be very difficult even among developing CPCs and this requires a certain time for negotiation.

With these considerations, Japan proposes the following:

1. The TAC for 2022 be maintained at 61,500.
2. The TAC for 2023 be increased to 70,000 t and if the total catch in 2021 exceeds 61,500 t, the excess be subtracted from 70,000 t.
3. Developing CPCs decide on how to distribute the increase beyond 61,500 t and submit it at the 2022 annual meeting for endorsement by the Commission.

Japan recognizes that this TAC increase will not accommodate all the development aspirations of developing countries and further allocation is necessary. For this purpose, the TAC should be increased without imposing unnecessary risks on the stock recovery or maintenance. This could be achieved by increasing the MSY level of the stock through the reduction of juvenile catch, which requires more effective FAD management measures such as the limitation on the number of FAD sets. Unfortunately, the SCRS could not provide its advice on the effects of the FAD set limitation this year due to lack of data to be submitted by CPCs, thus the Commission is not in a position to introduce such a new FAD management measure. Japan believes, however, that the Commission should establish a clear workplan, including submission of historical data to the SCRS, to make sure that the SCRS will be able to conduct necessary analysis and provide its advice on this matter to the Commission in 2022.

Yellowfin tuna

According to the 2021 SCRS report, the 2020 catch of YFT was 148,894 t, 9% higher than the average of the previous three years and the highest since 2016. This significant excess catch of 2020 over TAC (110,000 t) is a concern for the SCRS as the 2019 Stock Assessment indicates that constant catches from 2020 onwards above 120,000 t are expected to further degrade the condition of the yellowfin stock.

Para 19 of Rec. 19-02 says 'If the total catch exceeds in any year the TAC in paragraph 17, the Commission shall consider additional management measures for yellowfin tuna.' Logically speaking, the Commission must discuss additional management measures to keep the total catch within the TAC, including allocation of TAC. However, as already made it clear in the Panel 1 intersessional meeting in September, this year's priority is put on bigeye, and there would be no sufficient time for CPCs to discuss and agree on additional measures for yellowfin tuna. Given this situation, it would be realistic to defer a substantive discussion on yellowfin tuna to the 2022 Commission meeting while drawing a clear road map toward the 2022 Commission meeting including holding of an intersessional Panel 1 meeting.

Proposed Text

Rec. 19-02 be amended as below:

“3. The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for bigeye tuna shall be 61,500 t in 2022 and 70,000 t in 2023. Notwithstanding this, if the total catch of bigeye tuna in 2021 exceeded 61,500 t, the 2023 TAC shall be adjusted by subtracting such excess from 70,000 t.

4. As an interim measure for 2022 and 2023, the following provisions shall apply:

a) CPCs with catch limits greater than 10,000 t in para. 3 of Rec. 16-01, shall apply a 21% reduction to those catch limits.

b) CPCs that are not captured by (a) that have a recent average catch of greater than 3,500 t, shall apply a catch limit that is 17% less than their recent average catch or their catch limit in para. 3 of Rec. 16-01.

c) CPCs that have a recent average catch of between 1,000 and 3,500 t shall apply a catch limit that is 10% less than their recent average catch.

d) Those CPCs with recent average catch of less than 1,000 t are encouraged to maintain catch and effort at recent levels.

4bis. For 2023, in addition to paragraph 4, all the increase in TAC from 2022 to 2023 in accordance with paragraph 3 shall be allocated to developing CPCs, particularly coastal developing CPCs. Developing CPCs shall decide on and submit allocations among themselves to the 2022 annual meeting for endorsement by the Commission.

5. The provisions of paragraphs 4 and 4bis of this Recommendation shall not prejudice the rights and obligations under international law of those developing coastal CPCs in the Convention Area whose current fishing activity for bigeye tuna is limited or non-existent, but that have a real interest in fishing for the species, that may wish to develop their own fisheries targeting bigeye tuna in the future. CPCs shall implement robust monitoring, control and surveillance measures, as applicable in relation to their capacity and resources.

Underage or overage of catch of bigeye tuna

10. Overage of an annual catch limit for CPCs listed in paragraph 4 for bigeye tuna shall be deducted from the annual catch limit of the following year:

<i>Year of catch</i>	<i>Adjustment Year</i>
[...]	[...]
[...]	[...]
2020	2022
2021	2023
<u>2022</u>	<u>2024</u>
<u>2023</u>	<u>2025</u>

18. Based on the stock assessment and SCRS advice, the Commission shall adopt additional conservation measures for yellowfin tuna at the 2022 annual meeting, which may include a revised TAC, closures or allocated catch limits. To this end, an intersessional meeting of Panel 1 will be held in 2022 to discuss, *inter alia*, allocation of TAC for yellowfin tuna.
27. In order to reduce the fishing mortality of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tunas, purse seine and baitboat vessels fishing for, or vessels supporting activities to fish for, bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack tunas in association with FADs in the high seas or EEZs shall be prohibited during three-month period, as indicated in paragraph 28 below:
28. 1 January to 31 March, throughout the Convention area. This should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised based on advice by the SCRS taking into account monthly trends in free school and FAD-associated catches and the monthly variability in the proportion of juvenile tuna in catches. SCRS should provide this advice to the Commission in 2022.
30. CPCs shall ensure that, for vessels flying their flag, the following limits shall apply on the number of FADs with operational buoys at any one time according to definitions given in paragraph 26. The number of FADs with operational buoys will be verified through the verification of telecommunication bills. Such verifications shall be conducted by the competent authorities of the CPCs:

[...]

a) 2022: 300 FADs per vessel
31. With a view to establishing FAD set limits to keep the catches of juvenile tropical tunas at sustainable levels, in 2022 SCRS should inform the Commission about the maximum number of FAD sets which should be established in the purse seiner fishery, per vessel or per CPC, as appropriate, to maintain the stock in the green quadrant of the Kobe plot with high probability while contributing to increase the productivity of the stock of bigeye tuna. To support this analysis, CPCs with purse seine vessels shall report to the SCRS without delay the required historical FAD set data including for 2020. CPCs that do not report these data in accordance with this paragraph shall be prohibited from setting on FADs until such data have been received by the Secretariat.

In addition, each CPC with purse seine fishing vessels is encouraged not to increase its total fishing effort on FADs from its 2018 level. CPCs shall report the difference between the 2018 level and the 2021 level to the 2022 Commission meeting.
33. Further analysis shall be conducted by the SCRS on the impact of support vessels on the catches of juvenile yellowfin and bigeye tuna to be considered in 2022.”