EUROPEAN UNION

Annual Report to the 11th meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG11)

1. Introduction
   - General comments on fishing methods by which southern bluefin tuna (SBT) is caught in party fisheries (by fleet, area and time).
   - General comments on type and magnitude of Ecologically Related Species (ERS) caught by fishery/method.

No SBT catches are to be reported by the EU in 2013 and 2014[1]. Consequently, the observed impact of fishing by the EU as a consequence of SBT fishing on by-catches such as seabirds, sharks, marine mammals or reptiles was zero.

The EU fleet does not target SBT. Any incidental EU catches of SBT, if and when existing, are the result of by-catches from long-liners targeting swordfish in the IOTC Convention Area. EU Purse Seiners do not harvest SBT as they fish in inter-tropical tuna fishing grounds.

Historically, the level of SBT catches by the EU fleet has been very limited and constrained to the IOTC Area. On average, in recent years, the level of catches has been maintained below the 10 tonnes TAC allocated to the EU for this purpose.

2. Review of SBT Fisheries
   - Fleet size and distribution (brief summary of trends)
   - Distribution of catch and effort (Summary of catch and effort by area and fleet)

Five Spanish surface long-liners began prospecting the swordfish fishery in the Indian Ocean in September 1993. These vessels regularly alternated between the Indian and other oceans in its fishing activities. Less than ten Spanish long-liners continued fishing during the period 1993-2001. In 2008, the total number of long-liners fishing in the Indian Ocean increased to 19. The figure dropped to 12 in 2010,rose to 18 in 2012 and to 22 in 2013.

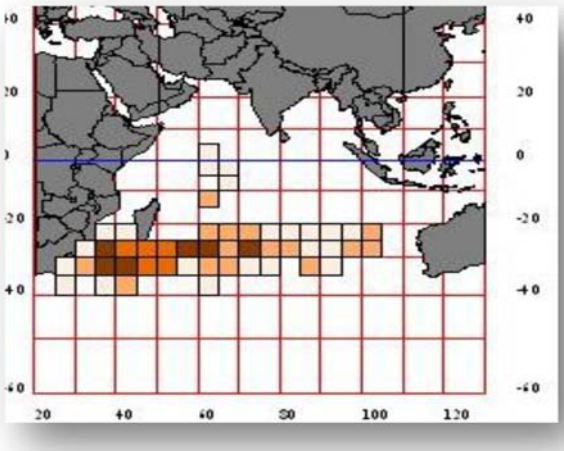
There were 5 long-liners operating in the WCPFC in 2012/13 and 18 in the IOTC ranging in length from 21 to 46 metres. Only the fleet operating in the IOTC reported past catches of SBT.

The evolution of the long-line fleet in IOTC is as follows:

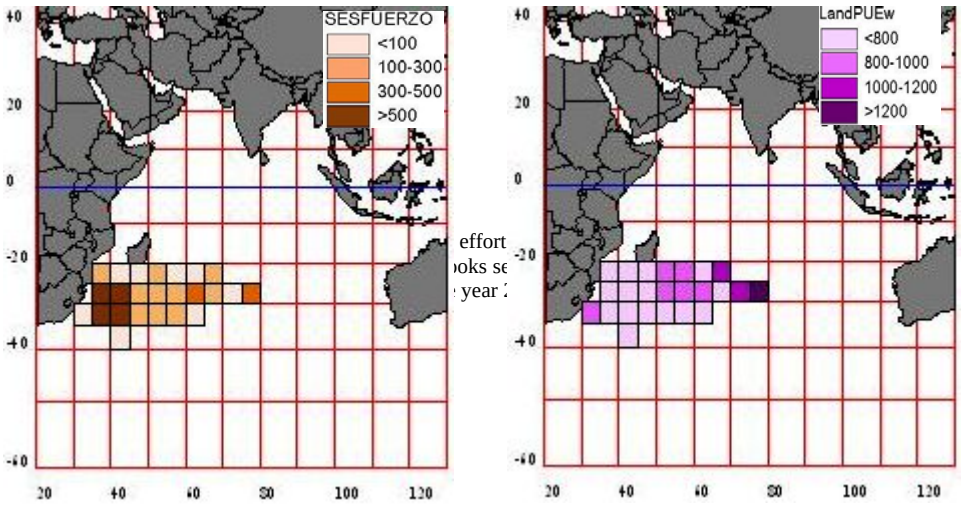
Year	Number of vessels
2008	19
2009	15
2010	12
2011	14
2012	18
2013	22

[1] The figure for catches in 2014 is pending final validation.

The table below shows the distribution of the nominal fishing effort (thousand hooks) by 5ºx5º degrees, carried out by the Spanish surface long-line fleet in the Indian Ocean harvesting swordfish for the overall 2008-2012 period.



The tables below reflect the distribution of the nominal fishing effort (thousand hooks) (left) and nominal CPUE weight in kg (round weight) of swordfish landed per thousand hooks set (right) by 5ºx5º degrees, carried out by the Spanish surface long-line fleet in the Indian Ocean during 2013.



EU CATCHES CCSBT*

Indian Ocean	2000	0
Indian Ocean	2001	0
Indian Ocean	2002	0
Indian Ocean	2003	3
Indian Ocean	2004	22
Indian Ocean	2005	0
Indian Ocean	2006	3
Indian Ocean	2007	18
Indian Ocean	2008	14
Indian Ocean	2009	2
Indian Ocean	2010	11
Indian Ocean	2011	3
Indian Ocean	2012	4
Indian Ocean	2013	0
Indian Ocean	2014	0

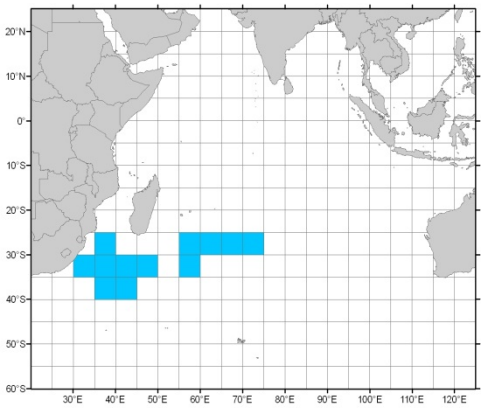
* Figure for 2014 is yet to be validated

3. Fisheries Monitoring for each Fleet
   - Summary of recent observer coverage of SBT fisheries fleets and summary of data collection activities of observers.
   - Summary of data collection activities from non-observed activities.

The observer programme for the IOTC long-line fleet started at the beginning of the fishery in 1993. A total of 180,921 hooks (2.9% of effort coverage) were observed during the year 2013 (table below). The observations were restricted to areas with regular commercial activity (figure below). However, piracy continues affecting to some extent this programme.

Year	Hooks obs.
2008	173725
2009	73140
2010	106619
2011	63139
2012	7451
2013	180921

Yearly observed number of hooks in the Spanish surface long-line fishery.



Map showing the spatial distribution of the observer coverage in surface long-line by square 5ºx5º, during 2013.

4. Seabird[2]
   - Summary of cpue and total numbers of seabirds incidentally caught by area and fleet and list of numbers of each seabird species caught reported from observers[3].
   - Summary of seabird captures from sources other than observers.

The data on interactions with ERS refer to EU long-liners targeting SWO in the IOTC without any reference to sets in which SBT was caught when/if applicable.

While there was a null incidental interaction scientifically observed on seabirds in surface long-liners in 2012 in the IOTC area, there was scientifically observed incidental interaction on 13 seabirds in surface long-liners in 2013.

The table below shows the incidence and mortality rates of seabirds after analysing 640,995 hooks during the 2007-2013 period.

	Year	Interaction rate	Mortality rate	Number
SEABIRDS	2007	9.92827E-06	9.92827E-06	2
	2008	2.30249E-05	2.30249E-05	4
	2009	0	0	0
	2010	0	0	0
	2011	0	0	0
	2012	0	0	0
	2013	7.18546E-05	7.18546E-05	13

5. Other Non-target Fish[1]
   - Summary of cpue and total numbers of shark and the predominant non-target fish species by area and fleet reported from observers[2].
   - Summary of non-target fish captures from sources other than observers.

[2] This information should also be provided by species (including the scientific name) wherever possible.

[3] ERSWG 9 recommended that Members and Cooperating Non-Members should include the information shown in Table 1 (see Annex 1) of this reporting template in future national reports to the ERSWG.

Preliminary data for 2013, indicates that the total catch of sharks was estimated as 4,763 tonnes, 251 tonnes for billfish, 934 tonnes for tunas and 433 tonnes for other species.

SPECIES	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Carcharhinus spp.	236902	223975	281021	145803	25625	565
Galeocerdo cuvieri	600	437	260	241	0	0
Isurus oxyrinchus	474305	334761	349959	439784	561690	620973
Isurus paucus	3944	2009	289	228	250	791
Lamna nasus	1263	2710	0	0	0	0
Prionace glauca	3880295	3101372	2422054	3290769	3686452	414948
Other sharks	45203	52689	289	228	0	0

6. Marine Mammal and Marine Reptile[1]
    - Summary of total numbers of marine mammal and marine reptile incidentally caught reported from observers[2].
    - Summary of marine mammal and marine reptile captures from sources other than observers.

A null incidental interaction or catch on marine turtles in surface long-liners was scientifically observed during 2012. In 2013, incidental interaction involving 27 marine turtles was observed in surface long-liners, five of them were dead. The table below shows the incidence and mortality rates of marine turtles after analysing 640,995 hooks during the 2007-2013 period.

	Year	Interaction rate	Mortality rate	Number
TURTLES	2007	1.98565E-05	0	4
	2008	9.20996E-05	1.15124E-05	16
	2009	0	0	0
	2010	0	0	0
	2011	0	0	0
	2012	0	0	0
	2013	0.000149236	2.76364E-05	27
	2008	2.30249E-05	2.30249E-05	4
	2009	0	0	0
	2010	0	0	0
	2011	0	0	0
	2012	0	0	0
	2013	7.18546E-05	7.18546E-05	13

7. Mitigation Measures to Minimise Seabird and Other Species by catch

The EU is in full compliance with measures applicable in non-EU waters managed by RFMOs.

Where not already required to do so, the EU PoA for seabirds stipulates that for long-line fisheries at least two of the following mitigation measures should be used:

– Night setting with minimum deck lighting

– Bird-scaring lines (Tori lines)

– Line weighting

The same requirements are established by IOTC Resolution 12/06.

In addition, it is not unusual that the EU long-lining fleet uses one or several of the additional mitigation measures:

- Deep-setting line shooter
- Management of offal discharge
- Blue-dyed bait
- Weighted branch lines

The IOTC established in Resolution 09/06 adopted in 2012 that CPCs with longline vessels that fish for species covered by the IOTC Agreement shall:

a. Ensure that the operators of all longline vessels carry line cutters and de-hookers in order to facilitate the appropriate handling and prompt release of marine turtles caught or entangled, and that they do so in accordance with IOTC Guidelines. CPCs shall also ensure that operators of such vessels follow the handling guidelines in the IOTC Marine Turtle Identification Cards;
b. Where appropriate, encourage the use of whole finfish bait;
c. Require that operators of such vessels record all incidents involving marine turtles during fishing operations in their logbooks and report such incidents to the appropriate authorities of the CPC.

The EU if fully compliant with mitigation measures adopted at IOTC regarding turtles.

8. Public Relations and Education Activities

Public Relations Activities

- media releases
- information booklets, posters, other written material
- video
- public presentations
  - trade shows
  - forums, conference
  - school/university group

Education

- crew training, especially ship masters
- trainee fishers
- engineers
- managers
- observers

Information Exchange

- research
- educational materials
- other regional fisheries organisations
- international organisations
- non-member states and entities
- review of new ideas obtained from crew debriefings or ship fishing reports

9. Information on other ERS (non-by catch) such as prey and predator species
10. Others
    - Information obtained concerning ERS related fishing activities of non-party fleets.
11. Implementation of the IPOA-Seabirds and IPOA-Sharks
    - A description of activities undertaken for the implementation of NPOAs as they relate to SBT fisheries. The emphasis should be on updates and recent activities.

In February 2009, the European Commission adopted the first ever EU Action Plan for the Conservation and Management of Sharks. The European plan is based on the International Action plan for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA SHARKS) adopted by the FAO in 1999. The aim of the plan is to ensure that effective steps are taken to help rebuild shark stocks wherever they are under threat, if necessary on a precautionary basis, and to set out guidelines for the sustainable management of the fisheries concerned, including those where sharks are taken as a by-catch. The plan also includes measures to improve scientific knowledge of shark stocks and shark fisheries. The measures set out cover not only sharks, but also related species, such as skates and rays, and will apply wherever the EU fleet operates, both within and outside European waters.

Recognising that incidental mortality of seabirds in fisheries remains at high levels and populations of many affected seabird species continue to decline, the European Commission adopted an EU Plan of Action (EU-PoA) on 16 November 2012 (http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/seabirds/seabirds_communication_en.pdf).

The EU-PoA is consistent with the framework of an International Plan of Action (IPOA) for Reducing the Incidental Catches of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries adopted in 1999 by FAO.

The Plan of Action a stable and effective platform for the development of a management framework that will lead to seabirds by-catch being minimised to as low levels as is practically possible. This is in line with the objectives of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy of moving towards eco-system management covering all components of the eco-system including seabirds.

The proposed objective of the EU-PoA is to minimise and where possible eliminate the incidental catches of threatened seabird populations by EU vessels operating in EU and non-EU waters and to reduce by-catch for other seabird species where the populations are stable but by-catch are at levels that are cause for conservation concern.

The European Commission has brought forward proposals on more effective mitigation measures in long-line fisheries for tuna and non-tuna through a number of RFMOs including ICCAT, IATTC, CCAMLR, SPRFMO and IOTC in the last years and the EU-PoA will help to encourage similar measures to be adopted by other RFMOs.

The EU strongly supports the improvement of the assessment of existing incidental catches of seabirds in fisheries and intends to examine which measures are required to achieve more reliable reporting of incidental catches of seabirds in European fisheries.

Annex 1

Summary of papers submitted to ERSWG

Members should provide a summary of papers submitted to the ERSWG meeting in their national report

CCSBT 9 specified that Members should provide a summary of papers submitted to the ERSWG meeting in their national report (see paragraph 89 of the CCSBT 9 report).

Table 1: Reporting form for estimation of total mortality of ERS in CCSBT fisheries

Country _____ Year (calendar year) _____

Species (or group) _____

Fishery		Observed							Estimate
Stratum (*CCSBT Statistical Areas or finer scale)*	Total Effort[4]	Total Observed Effort[43]	Observer Coverage[5]	Captures (*number*)	Capture Rate[6]	Mortalities (*number*)	Mortality Rate[65]	Live releases (*number*)	Estimated total mortalities (*number*)
TOTAL									

4 For longline provide number of hooks, for purse seine provide number of sets.
5 For longline provide as a percentage of the number of hooks, for purse seine provide as a percentage of the number of shots.
6 For longline provide as captures per thousand hooks, for purse seine provide as captures per set.