

**The Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) 6th Meeting of the
Parties
01-05 July 2019**

Pearle Beach Resort & Spa conference centre, Flic en Flac, Mauritius

MoP6-INFO-06

Management of Alfonsino

Relates to agenda item: 1.5, 5, 7.2, 11, 13.1

Proposal ☐ Working Document ☐ Information Paper ☒ Other Document ☐

**Delegation of Southern Indian Ocean Deepsea Fishers
Association**

Abstract

Concerns and proposal for management of Alfonsino in the Southern Indian Ocean are noted.



Southern Indian Ocean Deepsea Fishers Association

SIOFA

Meeting of the Parties VI
Mauritius July 2019

Position Statement **July 2019**

Management of Alfonsino

The Southern Indian Ocean (SIO) alfonsino benthic-pelagic trawl fishery is miniscule in terms of the number of active vessels in the fishery but is one of the most spatially extensive trawl fisheries in the world, spanning > 2500 nautical miles, west to east.

Few population biology studies exist for alfonsino in the SIO yet a major data archive, collected over two decades, exists.

Developing a management strategy requires knowledge of the stock structure and population parameters. Without these, robust management *is* still possible using fishery status indicators, e.g. catch per day fishing or day at sea. SIODFA believes such measures could be used now, if only on an interim basis.

SIODFA is concerned about the limitations of the existing CMMs whereby the addition of even one vessel into the alfonsino fishery would cause an increase in fishing effort of $\approx 30\%$ - enough to make the fishery unsustainable. This should be a major consideration of the MoP6.

SIODFA proposes that an *Alfonsino Working Group* should be established to:

- Collate and analyse data to determine SIO-specific alfonsino parameters and stock structure.
- Catalogue collections of alfonsino otoliths and develop an alfonsino aging programme and find if this information informs on alfonsino stock structure.
- Determine the feasibility of undertaking acoustic stock assessment

SIODFA urges the MoP to consider options for managing secure harvesting entitlements in the SIOFA alfonsino fisheries to ensure sustainability of the fishery.

Our Association believes that the current most important challenge for SIOFA is to ensure that the CMM on bottom fisheries effectively limits fishing effort in the alfonsino fishery, to ensure its sustainability. Failure to do so will result in the alfonsino fishery becoming vulnerable to depletion and loss of a sustainable fishery resource. We see this as the major threat to the objectives of SIOFA.