



Sri Lanka National Plan of Action (SL-NPOA)
for Sharks, Rays, and Chimaeras

2025 – 2030

DFAR



Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR)

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CONTACT

Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR)

Postal Address: New Secretariat, Maligawatta, Colombo 10, Sri Lanka

Telephone: +94 11 244 6183 / +94 11 244 6184

Fax: +94 11 244 6194

Email: info@fisheries.gov.lk

Website: www.fisheries.gov.lk

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Executive Summary

The revised National Plan of Action (NPOA) for Sharks, Rays, and Chimaeras in Sri Lanka (2025-2030) outlines a comprehensive strategy for the conservation and sustainable management of these species within Sri Lanka's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and in international waters. The plan addresses the threats faced by sharks, rays, and chimaeras, primarily overfishing and bycatch, and aims to prevent their functional extinction.

This NPOA emphasises three core objectives:

1. Research
2. Sustainable Management
3. Awareness, Compliance, & Enforcement.

The research focuses on improving species-specific data, including life history parameters and stock assessments for priority species. It also aims to enhance the integration of external datasets into national statistics. The management objectives involve revising national regulations to improve further management for sharks, rays, and chimaeras, transitioning gear types, and introducing habitat management. The awareness and compliance strategy emphasises effective outreach to stakeholders, training for fisheries officers, and rigorous enforcement to ensure compliance with regulations.

The plan also integrates the precautionary principle, ensuring that protective measures are implemented even when scientific data is incomplete. It aligns with international commitments, such as the IOTC and CITES, and other related measures to ensure Sri Lanka's actions are consistent with global conservation efforts. Through this NPOA, Sri Lanka commits to a proactive approach to safeguard vulnerable species and secure the benefits of marine biodiversity for future generations.

SPECIAL NOTE: The following pages of this NPOA include the long-term vision and the strategic objectives for the upcoming 5 years, along with their objectives, activities, indicators, relevant agencies, and timeframe.

These form the core of the NPOA and provide readers and users with the relevant information to make proactive decisions towards the effective management and conservation of sharks, rays, and chimaeras in Sri Lanka.

All detailed supporting and background information can be found in the Annexes, available as an electronic document.

List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Key Definitions

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| AD | Assistant Director |
| BEEZ | Beyond the EEZ |
| Bycatch | The incidental capture of a species that is often landed for its value (also referred to as “secondary catch” or “non-directed catch”) |
| CFHC | Ceylon Fishery Harbours Corporation |
| Chondrichthyans | Sharks, rays, and chimaeras |
| CITES | Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora |
| CMS | Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals |
| Conservation | Actions to prevent a species' extinction (or habitat destruction), and ensure they can maintain their role within the natural ecosystem. |
| CPUE | Catch Per Unit Effort |
| DFAR | The Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources |
| DG | Director General |
| DL | Disc Length |
| DW | Disc Width |
| DWC | The Department of Wildlife Conservation |
| EEZ | Exclusive Economic Zone |
| Elasmobranchs | Sharks and rays (<i>also see above definition for Chondrichthyans</i>) |
| ETP | Endangered, threatened, and protected |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations |
| FARA | The Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act |
| FFBA | The Fisheries Regulation of Foreign Fishing Boats Act |
| FFPO | The Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance |
| Finning | The act of removing the fins and disposing of the carcass at sea |
| FMA | Fishery Management Area |
| HS | High Seas |
| HS Codes | Harmonised System Codes |
| IDAY | Inboard single-day boats |
| IFS | Introduction From the Sea (for CITES) |
| IMUL | Inboard multi-day boats |
| IOTC | Indian Ocean Tuna Commission |
| IPOA | International Plan of Action |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| IUU | Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing |

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|---------------|---|
| MPA | Marine Protected Area |
| MTRB | Motorised traditional boats |
| NARA | National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency |
| NDF | Non-detriment finding (for CITES) |
| NTRB | Non-motorised traditional boats |
| NPOA | National Plan of Action |
| OFRP | Outboard engine fiberglass reinforced plastic boats |
| PCL | Pre-Caudal Length |
| REC | Recreational fishing boats |
| SAR | Shark Assessment Report |
| Sharks | FAO definition: all sharks, rays, and chimaeras (Class Chondrichthyes). |
| SLAWEN | Sri Lanka Wildlife Enforcement Network |
| SLC | Sri Lanka Customs |
| SLN | Sri Lanka Navy |
| TAC | Total allowable catch |
| TL | Total Length |
| VMS | Vessel Monitoring System |

National Plan of Action for Sharks, Rays, and Chimaeras

Species overview

Sharks, rays, and chimaeras (Chondrichthyans) are declining globally due to their specific life characteristic and overfishing, despite their vital roles in marine ecosystems, food security, and livelihoods.

This Plan outlines key actions to establish the foundations of effective conservation and management to ensure these species fulfil their ecological roles while ensuring continued benefits for fisher communities.

Long-term vision

EFFECTIVELY CONSERVE ¹ AND MANAGE ² SHARKS, RAYS, AND CHIMAERAS (CHONDRICHTHYANS) IN SRI LANKA AND THE HIGH SEAS.

Strategic Objectives for 2025-2030

- 1. RESEARCH:** *encourage and support improved species-specific data for chondrichthyans, with relevant biological and ecological parameters for at least 10 priority species, to enable the development of (data-poor) stock assessments and inform proactive management.*
- 2. MANAGEMENT:** *revise existing “shark” regulations to incorporate rays and chimaeras; protect and sustainable manage chondrichthyan species known to be functionally extinct and/or commercially extinct and/or overexploited ³; proactively protect heavily depleted and/or rare and/or unique chondrichthyan species and/or their habitats; regulate all fisheries and trade of vulnerable chondrichthyans (including those identified to be through stock assessments), and initiate drafting of a recovery plan.*
- 3. AWARENESS, COMPLIANCE, & ENFORCEMENT:** *conduct effective awareness and outreach to enable better research, and for stakeholders, fisheries officers, and enforcement authorities to ensure good understanding, compliance, and enforcement of management*

¹ *Conserve*: the intention to prevent a species extinction and ensure it can maintain its role within the ecosystem.

² *Manage*: how we accomplish our intent to conserve. This could be through protecting heavily depleted species or the habitats they utilise, regulating the catch/trade of other species that can be sustainably managed, and identifying species that may not require any level of regulation at this point.

³ This is a precautionary measure in case of recovery of the species.

| OBJECTIVE & ACTIVITIES | INDICATORS | AGENCIES | TIMELINE |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. RESEARCH | | | |
| <p>1.1. <u>LANDINGS AND TRADE DATA COLLECTION</u></p> <p>1.1.1 Encourage species-specific data collection for 10 of the identified priority species (see 1.2.1, below), including: number of specimens, sex and maturity, dimensions (DW and DL for rays, TL and PCL for sharks), and where possible, other factors like weight, area of capture, sale prices, etc.</p> <p>1.1.2 Collect species-specific data on the landings and trade of shark and ray dried fish, skins, and shark liver oil. This can include (for each type of trade): species harvested and utilised, volumes, uses, value, and socio-economic factors (drivers and reliance upon trade).</p> <p>1.2. <u>COLLECTION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA</u></p> <p>1.2.1 Collection of socio-economic data along the coast of Sri Lanka to understand the people dependent on this fishery</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased biological and catch/landings data availability for the 10 priority species - Data available from more landing sites and/or more frequently. - Number of species, estimated annual volumes and values for dried meat, ray skins, and liver oil trade. - Number of interviews or case studies completed on trade and socioeconomics. - Number of families, individuals, and the proportionate value of shark and ray fisheries to their incomes. | <p>DFAR & NARA & other institutions under the supervision of, or in collaboration with, NARA</p> | <p>Throughout</p> <p>By Y3</p> |

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| <p>1.3. <u>EXPAND KNOWLEDGE ON PRIORITY SPECIES AND/OR AREAS</u></p> <p>1.3.1 Conduct a “quick and easy” species priority assessment (a pre-PSA analysis) to determine the (top 20) priority species.</p> <p>1.3.2 Conduct studies to determine age at maturity, growth, reproductive cycles, fecundity, and other key life history parameters for the top 10 priority species.</p> <p>1.3.3 Apply data-limited and semi-quantitative stock assessment methods (e.g., PSA’s, length-based indicators, catch trends) for the 10-priority shark and ray species. Use available fishery-dependent data, life history parameters, expert knowledge, and qualitative inputs to assess stock status, identify potential overexploitation, and recommend precautionary management decisions.</p> <p>1.3.4 Identify critical habitats (e.g., nursery/pupping/egg laying grounds, seasonal feeding/aggregation areas), and habitat use across life stages.</p> <p>1.3.5 In identified ISRAs, collect fisheries data, and spatial data of fisher activities or other anthropogenic pressures, and recommend mitigation measures.</p> <p>1.3.6 Identify, trial, and evaluate gear modifications or handling practices that reduce the incidental catch and mortality of protected or threatened species in different fisheries.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A list of the top 20 priority species for research and management is available. - Increased data on life history parameters for the top 10 priority species. - Conclusive stock assessments for at least 10 priority species are available with clear management recommendations. - New critical habitats identified and mapped across life stages. - Maps with spatial and fisheries pressures for the ISRA’s, with management recommendations, are published. - New knowledge on gear modifications or handling practices that reduce bycatch or mortality of protected/threatened species. | | <p>In Y1</p> <p>By Y5</p> <p>By Y5</p> <p>By Y5</p> <p>By Y3</p> <p>By Y4</p> |
|---|--|--|---|

| OBJECTIVE & ACTIVITIES | INDICATORS | AGENCIES | TIMELINE |
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| <p>1.3.7 Analyse and compare species-specific trade data (e.g., volumes, products, values) with fishery landings data to detect discrepancies or unreported harvests, and to identify potential data gaps in monitoring and enforcement.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of species with matched trade and landings data analysed for discrepancies. | | By Y4 |
| <p>1.3.8 Identify and quantify unreported chondrichthyan mortalities (e.g., discards, ghost fishing, post-release mortality) to improve total mortality estimates.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Estimates are available for annual total mortality through cryptic mortality. | | By Y4 |
| <p>1.3.9 Study post-release survival rates of sharks and rays captured as bycatch, with a focus on species protected under national regulations. Assess physiological and behavioural stress indicators where feasible.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survival rate estimates are available for protected species to assess the efficacy of non-retention measures. | | By Y5 |
| <p>1.3.10 Assess and determine the effectiveness of current fines and penalties for IUU fishing of chondrichthyans.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An assessment is available on the effectiveness of current deterrents for IUU fishing. | | By Y5 |

| OBJECTIVE & ACTIVITIES | INDICATORS | AGENCIES | TIMELINE |
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| <p>1.4. EXPAND DATA COLLECTION</p> <p>1.4.1 Conduct a questionnaire study, disseminated to all relevant universities, research organisations, and individuals, to collate all existing knowledge available and research projects being undertaken on sharks, rays, and chimaeras in Sri Lanka.</p> <p>1.4.2 Develop a standard template to aggregate fisheries data voluntarily provided by relevant universities, research organisations, and independent researchers, considering validation of species identification and potential challenges related to data duplication (i.e., double counting). Determine how best to incorporate such data into annual statistics.</p> <p>1.4.3 Identify other types of valuable data for incorporation into national datasets and/or analyses to inform fisheries management.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A compiled summary of shark, ray, and chimaera research projects and knowledge holders in Sri Lanka. - A standardised data-sharing template is distributed, and at least 3 are reporting back. - A proposed method to validate and integrate voluntarily shared data into national statistics. - A list of additional non-fisheries data sources identified for use in national fisheries assessments or decision-making. | <p>DFAR, NARA <i>with insights from relevant universities, research organisations, and independent researchers</i></p> | <p>By Y2</p> <p>By Y3</p> <p>By Y3</p> |

| 2. MANAGEMENT | | | |
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| <p>2.1. REVISE NATIONAL SHARK REGULATIONS</p> <p>2.1.1 Update the “shark” definition to incorporate rays and chimaeras.</p> <p>2.1.2 Include a pre-emptive clause to ensure any shark, ray, or chimaera that is retained is landed whole.</p> <p>2.1.3 Provide a phase-out period for a non-retention measure for mobulid rays⁴.</p> <p>2.1.4 Include best-handling and release practices guidelines to improve the survival of non-retained sharks, rays, and chimaeras.</p> <p>2.1.5 Require all IMUL and IDAY vessels to carry the ETP live-release kits.</p> <p>2.1.6 Reporting at a species-level of all incidentally captured protected species and their status at release.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A published regulation with an updated definition of “sharks,”. - The regulation requires all retained chondrichthyans to be landed whole. - A phase-out schedule is in place for other threatened species. - National guidelines on best handling and release practices are included in the regulation. - The regulation requires IMUL and IDAY vessels to carry ETP live-release kits. - Data available on the number of protected specimens released and their condition (at a species level). | DFAR | By Y2 ⁵ |

⁴ This is also a requirement under IOTC CMM 19/03: https://iotc.org/sites/default/files/documents/compliance/cmm/iotc_cmm_1903.pdf

⁵ Draft is included in the annex. Drafting to be completed within 2 months. Ministerial and other approvals, printing and publishing to be completed within 12 months.

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| <p>2.2. REVISE OTHER NATIONAL REGULATIONS</p> <p>2.2.1 Provide a phase-out period and prohibit the use of wire leaders.</p> <p>2.2.2 Establish a maximum length of 2.5 km for all gillnets.</p> <p>2.2.3 Prohibit the use of entangling or drifting FADs.</p> <p>2.2.4 Phase out J hooks and transition to circle hooks.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A regulation phases out and prohibits the use of wire leaders. - A maximum gillnet length is established for the high seas. - The use of entangling or drifting FADs is prohibited. - A phase-out schedule is in place for J hooks. | <p>- DFAR</p> | <p>By Y2</p> |
| <p>2.3. HABITAT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>2.3.1 Develop and implement at least one species and habitat management plan to improve the status of focal species in at least one of the designated Important Shark and Ray Areas in Sri Lanka: https://sharkrayareas.org/resources/isra-factsheets/?_sfm_jurisdiction=Sri%20Lanka⁶.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least one management plan with clear conservation outcomes for focal species and addressing key threats is published, implemented and monitored. | <p>DFAR & NARA with support from DWC and experts as required</p> | <p>By Y4</p> |

⁶ The Baththalanguduwa ISRA is identified as the highest priority for urgent action, while the Pigeon Island ISRA is the lowest priority as it is already a designated MPA.

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| <p>2.4. IMPROVE CITES COMPLIANCE</p> <p>2.4.1 Submit 0 (or any other) quotas to CITES for all nationally protected or regulated CITES-listed species.</p> <p>2.4.2 Implement the Introduction From the Sea (IFS) certification.</p> <p>2.4.3 Revise, or for newly listed species, develop new NDFs.</p> <p>2.4.4 Support, or lead, the listing of threatened chondrichthyans on the appropriate CITES appendices.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quotas for Sri Lankan CITES-listed species are published, enabling international monitoring and regulation. - IFS certificates are issued, as required. - Publish NDFs for all Sri Lankan CITES-listed species. - Sri Lanka maintains its proactive stance at CITES for chondrichthyan trade regulation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DFAR - NARA - DWC | <p style="text-align: center;">&</p> <p>In Y1</p> <p>By Y2</p> <p>By Y3</p> <p>Throughout</p> |
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| <p>2.5. <u>ENHANCE IOTC ENGAGEMENT ON SHARKS AND RAYS</u></p> <p>2.5.1 Ensure compliance with IOTC Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) on sharks and rays.</p> <p>2.5.2 Maintain attendance and increase engagement at the IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB) on shark-related agenda items.</p> <p>2.5.3 Improve reporting of species-specific shark and ray data (catch, effort, size-frequency data) to the IOTC.</p> <p>2.5.4 Support, or lead, in collaboration with other IOTC members, proposals to enhance shark and ray management (e.g., non-retention of threatened species, data improvements, spatial protection).</p> <p>2.5.5 Encourage data-limited and semi-quantitative stock assessment methods for sharks and rays at the IOTC WPEB.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National regulations aligned with IOTC CMMs for sharks and rays. - Sri Lanka maintains regular attendance and active participation in the IOTC WPEB on shark-related agenda items. - Increase in species-specific shark and ray data reporting to the IOTC. - Sri Lanka supports or co-leads at least one IOTC proposal to strengthen shark and ray management. - Data-limited and semi-quantitative stock assessment approaches for sharks and rays are initiated by the IOTC WPEB. | <p>- DFAR, NARA</p> | <p>In Y1</p> <p>Throughout</p> <p>By Y5</p> <p>By Y5</p> <p>By Y5</p> |
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| <p>2.6. <u>ESTABLISH A REVIEW AND MONITORING MECHANISM</u></p> <p>2.7.1 Establish a scientific committee with representatives from DFAR, NARA, universities, and other experts to review regulatory proposals and recommend science-based or precautionary measures, including research priorities.</p> <p>2.7.2 Establish a multi-stakeholder steering committee to coordinate implementation, review NPOA progress, and guide future planning through regular in-person meetings.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scientific committee is established and operational, with a ToR and procedures for reviewing chondrichthyan regulations. - Research guidance and at least one recommendation are developed, or a regulatory proposal is reviewed. - The steering committee is established and operational, with a ToR and members representing key fisheries, research, and stakeholder groups. - Meetings once a year with documented outcomes related to NPOA coordination. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DFAR, with engagement from NARA, relevant universities, research organisations, independent researchers, and other key stakeholders. | <p>By Y2</p> |
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| 3. AWARENESS, COMPLIANCE, & ENFORCEMENT | | | |
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| 3.1. <u>OUTREACH ON RESEARCH PRIORITIES</u> | | | |
| <p>3.1.1 Communicate all research needs (including required outputs and data types and/or formats) with NARA, academic institutions (e.g., heads of fisheries/marine departments), and other relevant entities (e.g., private research organisations and independent researchers), with the request for them to results and recommendation with the DFAR.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New research projects are developed and conducted, in alignment with the NPOA research priorities, and DFAR receive results and recommendations to inform better chondrichthyan management. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DFAR - NARA - Universities - Research organisations - Independent researchers | <p>Throughout</p> |
| <p>3.1.2 Encourage the provision of research grants to, or support research grant applications by, external research bodies or individuals (following due diligence and agreement to share research outcomes and recommendations), to meet the NPOA research needs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least one research grant is received following support from the DFAR, for a project to meet NPOA priorities, with agreed data-sharing conditions. | | <p>Throughout</p> |
| <p>3.1.3 Encourage participation and presentation of scientific data at the IOTC WPEB.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New chondrichthyan research findings are presented by Sri Lankan scientists at the IOTC WPEB. | | <p>Throughout</p> |
| <p>3.1.4 Provide an annual award to an individual and/or institution/department that provides the most useful data each year towards shark, ray, and chimaera management.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each year, one award is issued to a researcher or institution contributing valuable data for shark, ray, and chimaera management. | | <p>Annually</p> |

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| <p>3.2. <u>OUTREACH FOR STAKEHOLDERS</u></p> <p>3.1.1 Translate the core NPOA into Sinhala and Tamil, and share printed and digital versions in all three languages with fisheries offices, harbours, and online.</p> <p>3.1.2 Conduct workshops at a provincial scale for fishery ADs and other stakeholders (fishers and traders) to explain key elements of the NPOA, regulatory updates (e.g., protected species, gear restrictions, IFS certification), and the roles of different stakeholder groups.</p> <p>3.1.3 Fisheries ADs to conduct presentations at major landing sites and harbours on current regulations for chondrichthyans, share best handling practices and reporting requirements, and receive feedback from fishers.</p> <p>3.1.4 DFAR to conduct specific outreach to fisher representatives, trader associations, and exporters on the NPOA priorities.</p> <p>3.1.5 Develop brochures, posters, species ID guides, and fact sheets in Sinhala, Tamil, and English, highlighting best practices, legal obligations, and conservation messages. Disseminate via district fisheries ADs.</p> <p>3.1.6 Use radio, newspapers, and social media to reach wider audiences with targeted messages about chondrichthyan conservation and the NPOA.</p> <p>3.1.7 Establish a stakeholder feedback mechanism through a</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The NPOA is available in all three languages at district fisheries offices, fishery harbours, and online for public access. - Increased awareness among fisheries ADs and key stakeholders on the NPOA and, separately, regulatory updates. - IFS certificates are applied for and issued. - Increased awareness among fishers, skippers, and traders on regulations. - An increase in available discard data from logbooks and crew-based observers, showing higher releases of live chondrichthyans. - Increased awareness among key stakeholders on NPOA priorities and current/new regulations. - Outreach materials are visible across harbours and on board vessels. - An increase in records showing the live release of sharks, rays, and chimaeras. - Wider public awareness of chondrichthyan conservation and the NPOA priorities. - An online stakeholder feedback form is launched and promoted, with responses | <p>DFAR</p> | <p>In Y1</p> <p>By Y2</p> <p>Y2 - Y5</p> <p>By Y2</p> <p>By Y2</p> <p>Y2 - Y5</p> <p>By Y1</p> |
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| structured online form where concerns can be raised, questions asked, or input provided. | monitored and reviewed regularly. | | |
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| <p>3.3. IMPROVE AND EXPAND COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT</p> <p>3.3.1 Increase inspections at landing sites, harbours, onboard vessels at sea, and export hubs through regular and random inspections to check compliance with protected species lists, gear restrictions, non-retention measures (ETP kits), and product documentation.</p> <p>3.3.2 Disseminate the NPOA and new regulations with stakeholders. Where necessary, develop and implement SOPs or an enforcement handbook (including visual identification tools, regulatory summaries, protocols for seizure, reporting, and inspection) to improve IUU monitoring, intelligence sharing, reporting, and enforcement.</p> <p>3.3.3 Establish, or integrate with an existing, centralised enforcement database to record violations, fines issued, identify repeat offenders, and monitor enforcement outcomes.</p> <p>3.3.4 Conduct targeted training for fisheries inspectors, enforcement authorities (SLC, SLN, SLCG) on protected sharks, rays, and chimaeras, updated regulations, safe release practices, and documentation checks.</p> <p>3.3.5 Support the dissemination of the national shark and ray identification guidebook in all 3 languages.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inspections reveal a reduction in landing protected species and the possession of illegal gear (e.g., wire leaders, gillnets over 2.5 km,). - A reduction in the capture of sharks and rays on longlines is documented. - SLAWEN and the DFAR enforcement task force disseminate and utilise a new chondrichthyan enforcement handbook or SOP. - Increased coordination and communication between DFAR and enforcement agencies is documented. - A reduction in IUU fisheries is recorded. - A centralised enforcement database is maintained and repeat offenders are black-listed and prosecuted. - More enforcement officers can identify protected species and intercept IUU fisheries. - An increasing number of vessels have ETP release kits. - The national shark and ray identification guidebook is available at fishery harbours and with enforcement authorities. - Fishers, skippers, and vessel owners increase | <p>DFAR, <i>with support from</i> SLC, SLN, SLCG, NARA.</p> | <p>Throughout</p> <p>By Y2</p> <p>By Y2</p> <p>By Y2</p> <p>By Y3</p> <p>Annually</p> |
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| <p>3.3.6 Each year, award fishers, skippers, or vessel owners who have contributed significant amounts of data or demonstrated best practices in conservation and compliance.</p> | <p>data sharing and compliance. - A reduction in threatened chondrichthyan species being captured is recorded.</p> | | |
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Brief Background

Overview of Sharks, Rays, and Chimaeras in Sri Lanka and globally

SRI LANKA has an EEZ spanning 532,619 km² and available data confirms the presence of ~105 species of shark, ray, and chimaera. Of these, ~66% are threatened with extinction according to the global IUCN Red List.

Overfishing is the primary threat to these species. They are predominantly bycatch (longlines and gillnets), but some target fisheries do exist (deep-sea sharks for liver oil using handlines and bottom-set gillnets for rays). Discards, if occurring, are likely extremely low but mostly undocumented. Shark and ray meat is sold either fresh, or salted and dried, with preferences differing by region. Shark and ray fins, mobulid gill plates, skins (primarily from rays), oil from deep-sea shark livers, teeth, and jaws are exported.

As per the statistics from 2022 reported a total of 49,786 licensed fishing vessels and approximately 224,610 fishers. Fisheries are key for livelihoods and national food security. Primary target species include tuna, billfish, crustaceans, and reef fish. Landing statistics from 2021 show that sharks and rays comprise 2.6% (8,730 Mt) of total marine fish production (331,675 Mt). Shark finning is prohibited along with the retention of thresher sharks, oceanic whitetip sharks, and whale sharks. The release of pregnant sharks is encouraged, and there are projects underway providing fishers with tools and training to improve the handling and release of ETP species.

GLOBALLY, the situation is not too different. Over one-third of sharks, rays, and chimaeras are threatened with extinction, with overfishing being the primary threat affecting all threatened species. For some, in addition to overfishing, they also face challenges due to loss and degradation of habitat (31.2%, climate change (10.2%), and pollution (6.9%). Awareness and regulation of species have increased following their listings on conventions such as CITES and CMS, and to a lesser degree (usually through non-retention measures) at RFMOs.

Globally and nationally, there is an urgent need for proactive and cooperative management and conservation and sustainable management of sharks, rays, and chimaeras to ensure they are not exploited to the stage where they go functionally extinct or require the introduction of a non-retention measure.

Rationale for this revised NPOA

This is the third NPOA-Sharks developed by Sri Lanka in line with the FAO IPOA-Sharks. Many of the conservation and management challenges for sharks, rays, and chimaeras remain similar to when the previous two NPOAs were developed.

This new NPOA intends to be ambitious to ensure sharks, rays, and chimaeras are adequately managed and conserved. To ensure good outreach and understanding of the plan, the structure of the NPOA has been flipped around, with the core objectives and activities for the upcoming period brought to the front of the document, while the detailed supporting information and shark assessment report (SAR) are in the Annexes. As this NPOA focuses on realistic and practical outcomes that can be achieved within the timeframe laid out, it is recognised that not all requirements to fully manage and conserve sharks, rays, and chimaeras can be achieved within the duration of this new NPOA.

This NPOA also notes that many sharks, rays, and chimaeras have conservative life histories demonstrated by their slow growth rates, late maturity, and low fecundity. Therefore, management actions take this into account, recognising that mainstream fisheries management may not offer all the solutions and that in the absence of clear scientific advice, a precautionary approach to managing fisheries and other human impacts is necessary.

Pathway of revising NPOA

- 1. Review of the previous NPOA**
Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the previous National Plan of Action, identifying key achievements, implementation challenges, data gaps, and lessons learned.
- 2. Drafting of the revised NPOA**
Develop a revised draft based on updated scientific knowledge, national priorities, stakeholder inputs, and alignment with international commitments (e.g., IOTC, CITES, CMS).
- 3. Stakeholder consultation and public comment**
Engage relevant stakeholders—including government agencies, fisher representatives, scientists, universities, and research organisations—through targeted consultations. Facilitate a public comment period to ensure transparency and inclusive participation.
- 4. Finalisation of the NPOA**
Incorporate stakeholder feedback and finalise the revised NPOA through inter-agency coordination and endorsement by relevant authorities.
- 5. Outreach and dissemination**
Launch and distribute the final plan through official channels, awareness campaigns, and stakeholder networks to support implementation and promote compliance.

The precautionary principle

The precautionary principle is a risk management approach used in environmental and resource management when scientific information is incomplete or uncertain. It emphasises taking proactive action to prevent harm to species or ecosystems, even in the absence of full scientific certainty. In fisheries management, this principle supports implementing conservation measures, such as catch

limits, gear restrictions, non-retention measures, or area closures, to protect vulnerable species before significant population declines occur, thereby ensuring long-term sustainability.

This NPOA applies the precautionary principle to prevent species loss and to halt environmental degradation.

Summary of relevant organisations & international commitments

Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR)

DFAR is the national authority mandated under the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act (FARA) to manage, develop, and regulate all fisheries and aquatic resources within Sri Lanka's jurisdiction. It plays a central role in the formulation and implementation of national policies, regulatory frameworks, and data collection systems related to shark and ray fisheries. DFAR is also responsible for ensuring compliance with international fisheries and environmental agreements, facilitating monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS), and integrating ecosystem-based and precautionary approaches into fishery management.

National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA)

NARA is the principal scientific and technical institution for fisheries and aquatic resource management in Sri Lanka. It conducts research on fishery biology, stock assessments, and species distribution, and provides science-based advice to DFAR. NARA's role is critical in supporting data-driven decision-making for chondrichthyan management, including species identification, observer training, bycatch analysis, and the development of Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs) for CITES-listed species.

Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC)

The Department of Wildlife Conservation is the designated authority for the implementation and enforcement of the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (FFPO) in Sri Lanka. It holds jurisdiction over the protection of threatened marine and terrestrial species, national parks, marine protected areas, and other conservation zones. DWC also contributes to international reporting obligations and species listing proposals under multilateral environmental agreements.

Sri Lanka Customs (SLC)

Sri Lanka Customs is responsible for enforcing laws related to the import and export of goods, including wildlife and fishery products. In the context of CITES implementation, Customs officers play a key role in detecting and preventing illegal trade of listed shark and ray products. Coordination between Customs, DFAR, and DWC is essential to ensure effective border control, permit verification, and prosecution of violations related to the international trade of protected elasmobranchs.

Sri Lanka Navy (SLN)

The Sri Lanka Navy supports maritime surveillance and law enforcement within national waters, including the detection and deterrence of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. In collaboration with DFAR and the Coast Guard, the Navy contributes to Monitoring, Control, and

Surveillance (MCS) efforts and helps ensure compliance with national regulations, especially in offshore and deep-sea fisheries.

Sri Lanka Coast Guard (SLCG)

The Sri Lanka Coast Guard functions under the Ministry of Defence and plays a critical role in maritime law enforcement, including the prevention of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing within Sri Lanka's territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In coordination with DFAR and the Sri Lanka Navy, the Coast Guard contributes to Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) operations by conducting vessel inspections, boarding and patrolling activities, and ensuring compliance with national fisheries regulations. Its mandate supports the enforcement of conservation measures for sharks and rays, including finning bans, gear restrictions, and protected species regulations.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

CITES is an international multilateral environmental agreement that regulates international trade in listed species through a permit-based system to ensure such trade is legal, sustainable, and traceable. Sri Lanka, as a CITES Party, is required to implement provisions for all CITES-listed elasmobranchs through science-based Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs), Legal Acquisition Findings (LAFs), and national enforcement mechanisms. The DWC serves as the Management Authority, while DFAR is a designated Scientific Authority for marine species.

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

CMS is an international multilateral environmental agreement that provides a legal framework for the conservation of migratory species and their habitats across national boundaries. As a CMS Party, Sri Lanka is committed to implementing conservation actions for elasmobranch species listed under Appendices I and II. This includes the adoption of species-specific action plans and the integration of migratory connectivity into national conservation planning. DWC is the national focal point for CMS.

The CMS Sharks Memorandum of Understanding (CMS Sharks MoU)

The CMS Sharks Memorandum of Understanding is a multilateral, non-legally binding instrument under CMS aimed at the conservation of migratory shark and ray species. Sri Lanka is a signatory to the MoU and participates in implementing its Conservation Plan, which promotes regional cooperation, data sharing, and the adoption of science-based measures for listed species. DWC is the national focal point for CMS.

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

The IOTC is a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) with the mandate to manage tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean, including associated and dependent species such as sharks. Sri Lanka, as a Contracting Party, is obligated to implement IOTC resolutions pertaining to shark conservation and management, including those related to finning or non-retention bans, mandatory data reporting, observer coverage, and bycatch mitigation. DFAR is responsible for aligning national fisheries practices with IOTC compliance requirements and conservation objectives.



RESOLUTION 12/04 – ON MARINE TURTLES
Reporting of progress of implementation of the FAO Guideline to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operation and on the implementation of resolution 12/04 on marine turtles
(Paragraph 5)

DEADLINE
With the implementation report, 60 days before the meeting of the Commission - annually

Reporting year: 2019

Date of reporting: 4th March 2020

Reporting flag CPC: SRI LANKA

| Progress of implementation of the measures of the resolution 12/04 | Action undertaken |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect (through logbooks and observer programs) and provide to the Scientific Committee all data on their vessels interactions with marine turtles, • Furnish information to the Scientific Committee on successful mitigation measures and other impacts on marine turtles (such as the deterioration of nesting sites & swallowing of marine debris). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data collected through port sampling, log books, and observer programme ▪ Catch data submission to IOTC in every Year June. Including By-catch and discard data submitted. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require fishermen to bring aboard, if practicable, any captured hard shelled turtle that is comatose or inactive as soon as possible and foster its recovery, including aiding in its resuscitation, before safely returning it to the water. • Ensure that fishermen are aware of and use proper mitigation and handling techniques and keep on board all necessary equipment for the release of turtles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is legally mandatory to take line cutters and de-hooks on board, (High seas fishing regulations 2014). Samples equipments provided for the fishermen to prepare and use. Vessels are not allowed to depart for fishing without line cutters and de-hooks on board. ▪ Awareness on turtle conservation and release of incidental caught turtles is been conducted ▪ Dept. of Wild Life Conservation of Sri Lanka also enforce their regulations on conservation of turtles including their nesting habitats. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For gillnet vessels Require vessel to record all incidents involving marine turtles in the logbooks and report incidents to authorities of the CPC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximum length of the drift gill net in high seas restricted to be less than 2.5km seiners (High seas fishing regulations 2014). ▪ To be comply with IOTC Resolution 17/07 , Sri Lanka in a process of is phasing out use of gill net within EEZ as explain in the implementation reports of 2018 and 2019 in a view to enforce complete prohibition of gill net >2.5 km with in EEZ by 2022. ▪ Fishermen make aware on proper disposal of fishing gear/ nets and the repercussion of ghost fishing by nets. ▪ Trawling is prohibited (Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (amendment) Act, No.11 of 2017). ▪ Collect information through port sampling, log books, and observer programme |



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fishermen are instructed to keep records of incidental entangles of turtles by giving geographical coordinates and the form of release whether dead or alive. Display of poster on turtle conservation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For longline vessels (a) Ensure that long line vessels carry line cutters & de-hookers to facilitate the handling and release of marine turtles caught or entangled Ensure that operators of such vessels are required to carry & use dip-nets (b) Encourage use of whole finfish bait; (c) Require vessel to record all incidents involving marine turtles in the logbooks and report incidents to authorities of the CPC. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is legally mandatory to take line cutters and de-hooks on board for long lines. (High seas fishing regulations 2014) . Basically use whole fin fish or squids as the bait in longlines. Local production of fin fish for baits has been initiated in 2017. Collect information through port sampling, log books, and observer programme |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For purse seine vessels: (a) Ensure that vessels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Avoid encirclement of marine turtles, if a marine turtle is encircled/ entangled, take measures to safely release the turtle. (ii) Release all marine turtles observed entangled in fish aggregating devices (FADs) or fishing gear. (iii) If a marine turtle is entangled in the net, stop net roll as soon as the turtle comes out of the water; disentangle the turtle without injuring it before resuming the net roll; and assist the recovery of the turtle before returning it to the water. (iv) Carry and employ dip nets to handle turtles. (b) Encourage vessel to adopt FAD designs which reduce the incidence of entanglement of turtles; (c) Require vessel to record incidents involving marine turtles in the logbooks and report incidents to authorities of the CPC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently no operating purse seines. However, in a thought of future developments, dip nets onboard is legally mandatory for purse seiners (High seas fishing regulations 2014.) Increase of awareness among fishermen The National research institute is experimenting on FAD designs of zero impact on tuna associated species Instructed to release the Entangled and remained live turtles immediately. Collect information through, log books, and observer programme |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPCs to undertake research trials of circle hooks, use of whole finfish for bait, alternative FAD designs, alternative handling techniques, gillnet design and fishing practices and other mitigation methods which may improve the mitigation of adverse effects on turtles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long line fishing is basically conduct using circular hooks Basically use whole fin fish or squids as the bait in long lines. Local production of fin fish for baits has been initiated in 2017 Use of monofilament net is banned. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPCs continue to undertake research and development to improve the mitigation of adverse affects on marine turtles & provide research outcomes to the Scientific Committee. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue undertake research, monitoring and conservation activities and the results are regularly informed. Monitoring nesting sites of turtles in western and southern coasts. Report on the main turtle nesting areas of southern coast of Sri Lanka has been presented to the WPEB in 2017. Tuttle ressources are conserve and use for Eco tourism. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with the IOSEA and take into account the IOSEA MoU | |

| Progress of implementation of the Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations | Actions undertaken |
|--|--|
| Legal framework | |
| 1. Fishing operations / A. Appropriate handling and release. In order to reduce injury and improve chances of survival: (i) Requirements for appropriate handling, including resuscitation or prompt release of all bycaught or incidentally caught (hooked or entangled) sea turtles. (ii) Retention and use of necessary equipment for appropriate release of bycaught or incidentally caught sea turtles. | (i) Turtles are legally prohibited to catch under fishing operation Regulations 1996 (ii) Turtles are protected under Fauna and Flora Ordinance of 1993 (iii) Sri Lanka is party to CITES. (iv) Made legally mandatory to carry line cutter and de-hooks on board and dip nets onboard under the High seas fishing regulations 2014. Currently no operating purse seines. (v) Legal actions have been taken against the violators. (vi) Drift gill nets >2.5 km is legally prohibited to use in High seas. (vii) Use of monofilament nets legally prohibited |

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| <p>1. Fishing operations / B. Coastal trawl (i) In coastal shrimp trawl fisheries, promote the use of turtle excluder devices (TEDs) or other measures that are comparable in effectiveness in reducing sea turtle by catch or incidental catch and mortality. (ii) In other coastal trawl fisheries, collect data to identify sea turtle interactions and conduct where needed research on possible measures to reduce sea turtle by catch or incidental catch and mortality. (iii) Implementation of successful methodologies developed as a result of B(ii).</p> | <p>(i) Trawling fishery is legally ban Sri Lanka. (Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (amendment) Act, No.11 of 2017).</p> |
| <p>1. Fishing operations / C. Purse seine (i) Avoid encirclement of sea turtles to the extent practical. (ii) If encircled or entangled, take all possible measures to safely release sea turtles. (iii) For fish aggregating devices (FADs) that may entangle sea turtles, take necessary measures to monitor FADs and release entangled sea turtles, and recover these FADs when not in use. (iv) Conduct research and development of modified FADs to reduce and eliminate entanglement. (v) Implementation of successful methodologies developed as a result of C(iv).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No currently operating purse seine fleet ▪ Ring nets are operate targeting free swimming schools of <i>Decaptraerus sp.</i>, <i>Rastregillerkanaguata</i>, balistids etc. ▪ The National research institute is experimenting on FAD designs of to reduce impact on tuna associated species |
| <p>1. Fishing operations / D. Long line (i) Development and implementation of appropriate combinations of hook design, type of bait, depth, gear specifications and fishing practices in order to minimize by catch or incidental catch and mortality of sea turtles. (ii) Research should include consideration of the impact of various mitigation measures on sea turtles, target species and other bycaught or incidentally caught species, such as sharks and seabirds. (iii) Retention and use of necessary equipment for appropriate release of by caught and incidentally caught sea turtles, including de-hooking, line cutting tools and scoop nets.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long line fishing is basically conduct using circular hooks and whole baits |
| <p>1. Fishing operations / E. Other fisheries (i) Assessment and monitoring of sea turtle by catch or incidental catch and mortality in relevant fishing operations. (ii) Research and development of necessary measures for reducing by catch or incidental catch or to control mortality in other fisheries with a priority on reducing by catch or incidental catch in gillnet fisheries. (iii) In other set net fisheries, collect data to identify sea turtle interactions and conduct when needed research on possible measures to reduce sea turtle by catch or incidental catch and mortality. (iv) Implementation of successful methodologies developed as a result of E (ii) and (iii).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In port sampling data collection system a separate sheet is allocated to record catch data of other fisheries (if any) ▪ There is a separate box in the log sheet to report incidental catches of turtles and live releases or dead discards. |
| <p>1. Fishing operations / F. Other measures as appropriate for all fishing practices (i) Spatial and temporal control of fishing, especially in locations and during periods of high concentration of sea turtles. (ii) Effort management control especially if this is required for the conservation and management of target species or group of target species. (iii) Development and implementation, to the extent possible, of net retention and recycling schemes to minimize the disposal of fishing gear and marine debris at sea, and to facilitate its retrieval where possible.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fishermen are made aware the proper disposal of fishing gear and the repercussions of ghost fishing. |
| <p>2. Research, monitoring and sharing of information / A. Collection of information and data, and research (i) Collection of data and information on sea turtle interactions in all fisheries, directly or through relevant RFBs, regional sea turtle arrangements or other mechanisms. (ii) Development of observer programmes in the fisheries that may have impacts on sea turtles where such programs are economically and practically feasible. In some cases financial and technical support might be required. (iii) Joint research with other states and/or the FAO and relevant RFBs. (iv) Research on survival possibilities of released sea turtles and on areas and periods with high incidental catches. (v) Research on socio-economic impacts of sea turtle conservation and management measures on fishers and fisheries industries and ways to improve communication. (vi) Use of traditional knowledge of fishing communities about sea turtle conservation and management.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The national observer is placed on board for Scientific data collection. ▪ Collect information through, log books, and observer programme and port sampling. ▪ Provide collected data and information to the IOTC. ▪ |
| <p>2. Research, monitoring and sharing of information / B. Information exchange (i) Sharing and dissemination of data and research results, directly or through relevant RFBs, regional sea turtle arrangements or other mechanisms. (ii) Cooperation to standardize data collection and research methodology, such as fishing gear and effort terminology, database development, estimation of sea turtle interaction rates, and time and area classification.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharing and Dissemination of data through IOTC |

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| <p>2. Research, monitoring and sharing of information / C. Review of the effectiveness of measures (i) Continuous assessment of the effectiveness of measures taken in accordance with these guidelines. (ii) Review of the implementation and improvement of measures stipulated above.</p> | - |
| <p>3. Ensuring policy consistency A. Maintaining consistency in management and conservation policy at national level, among relevant government agencies, including through inter-agency consultations, as well as at regional level. B. Maintaining consistency and seeking harmonization of sea turtle management and conservation-related legislation at national, sub-regional and regional level.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This a good coordination among the relevant agencies on turtle conservation. The Department of Wildlife conservation, Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR), Dept.of Coast Guard, Sri Lanka Navy, Department of Customs and the National Research institute (NARA) and the National Universities work closely to conserve the turtles resources in Sri Lanka. ▪ All turtle species protected under Fauna and Flora protection act and subjected to CITES . Catching, retain, sell, transport and export of turtles is prohibited under Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act. ▪ Comply with FAO and IOTC Conservation and Management measures |
| <p>4. Education and training A. Preparation and distribution of information materials such as brochures, manuals, pamphlets and laminated instruction cards. B. Organization of seminars for fishers and fisheries industries on: – Nature of the sea turtle-fishery interaction problem – Need to take mitigation measures – Sea turtles species identification – Appropriate handling and treatment of by caught or incidentally caught sea turtles – Equipment to facilitate rapid and safe release – Impacts of their operations on sea turtles – Degree to which the measures that are requested or required to adopt will contribute to the conservation, management and recovery of sea turtle population. – Impacts of mitigation measures on profitability and success of fishing operations – Appropriate disposal of used fishing gear C. Promotion of awareness of the general public of sea turtle conservation and management issues, by government as well as other organizations</p> | <p>A. There are two major NGOs working on turtle conservation in south coast of Sri Lanka. There are posters, publications and leaflets published by these organizations on turtle conservation. In addition Department of Wildlife conservation has published poster and brochures.</p> <p>B. The NGOs , National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency and DFAR conduct awareness programs to fishermen on reducing of incidental catches of turtles. And releasing of entangled turtles at minimum harm.</p> <p>C. The turtle identification cards provided by IOTC is distributed to port samplers, observers and fisher societies to facilitate species confirmation.</p> <p>The NGOs conduct lectures and awareness program to school children, Fishermen and all visitors and tourists their turtle conservation centres and do visit the places where need on the request .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency and Department of Wild Life Conservation (DWLC) working on turtle conservation. DWLC is running <i>in-situ</i> conservation activities at Bundala while NARA is running hatchery and refuge centre at Kalpitiya. The conservation mostly <i>in-situ</i> conditions, Mainly nest protection, hatching rearing and safe releasing. Eco tourism is one of the main advantage of these projects. This has provided alternative livelihood for the people those engaged in poaching of turtle eggs and there of protected the turtles. These projects conduct turtle rescue programs with fisher community. |
| <p>5. Capacity building A. Financial and technical support for implementation of these guidelines in developing countries. B. Cooperation in research activities such as on status of sea turtle incidental catch in coastal and high seas fisheries and research at foraging, mating and nesting areas. C. Establishment of a voluntary support fund. D. Facilitation of technology transfer.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring nesting sites of turtles in western and southern coasts by Nara through the Government treasury funds. ▪ Report on the main turtle nesting areas of southern coast of Sri Lanka has been presented to the WPEB in 2017 |
| <p>6. Socio-economic and cultural considerations A. Taking into account : (i) socio-economic aspects in implementing sea turtle conservation and management measures. (ii) cultural aspects of sea turtles interactions in fisheries as well as integration of cultural norms in sea turtle conservation and management efforts.</p> | <p>(i) Maintain turtle nesting sites and the turtle refugee as a tourist attractions.</p> <p>(ii) Provision of employments, in the turtle refugees, those depend on turtle meet and egg sales..</p> <p>(iii) Train the turtle dependent fisher Falk as tourist guided.</p> |

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| <p>(iii) sea turtle conservation and management benefits to fishing and coastal communities, with particular reference to small-scale and artisanal fisheries.</p> <p>B. Promotion of the active participation and, where possible, cooperation and engagement of fishing industries, fishing communities and other affected stakeholders.</p> | |
| <p>8. Consideration of other aspects of sea turtle conservation and management</p> <p>Fishers, research institutions, management authorities and other interested parties dealing with fisheries conservation and management should collaborate with relevant conservation and management bodies, at national, sub-regional and regional level, in the following subject matters:</p> <p>A. Collection and sharing of information on sea turtles relative to:</p> <p>(i) Biology and ecology (population dynamics, stock identification, behaviour, diet selection, habitats, breeding, nesting, foraging, migration patterns/areas, nursery grounds, etc).</p> <p>(ii) Sources of mortality other than fisheries.</p> <p>(iii) Status of sea turtle populations, including human-related threats.</p> <p>B. Improvement and development of conservation and management measures applied throughout the sea turtle life cycle (habitat/ nesting beach protection, enhancement of sea turtle populations).</p> <p>C. Promotion, as appropriate, of participation in regional sea turtle conservation and management arrangements with a view to cooperate on sea turtle conservation and management.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Research officers and Managers of Fisheries Dept. together participate in IOTC activities and present the research studies to Eco system and by-catch working party and report the progress of implementation to the Scientific Committee and the Commission of IOTC. |



Annexe I

| Institution | Research/ Monitoring | Conservation/ Management | Control/ Enforcement | Networking |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Establishment of scientifically managed sea turtle hatchery and refuge center for disabled or injured sea turtles at Kalpitiya Regional Research Station | | Conservation and management | | |
| Monitoring of sea turtle nesting beaches | Research and monitoring | | | |
| Regularly monitoring the fish catch and landings for detect illegal landings by the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Department of Wild Life Conservation, Sri Lanka Navy, Coast Guard Department, Sri Lanka Navy and Police Department | | | Control/Enforcement | |
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Res/Mon = Research and Monitoring; Cons/Manag = Conservation and Management; Contr/Enfo = Control and Enforcement; Net = Networking

Sri Lanka National Report to the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, 2019

Authors

H.P.K. Hewapathirana, N.D.P. Gunawardane, M. M. Ariyaratne

Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR), Sri Lanka



INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

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| <p>In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, final scientific data for the previous year was provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the current year, for all fleets other than longline [e.g. for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2019, final data for the 2018 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2019)</p> | <p>YES 30/06/2019</p> |
| <p>In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, provisional longline data for the previous year was provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the current year [e.g. for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2019, preliminary data for the 2018 calendar year was provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June 2019). REMINDER: Final longline data for the previous year is due to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 Dec of the current year [e.g. for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2019, final data for the 2018 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 December 2019).</p> | <p>YES 30/06/2019</p> |
| <p>If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions:</p> | |

Executive Summary [Mandatory]

The total production of tuna and tuna like species of Sri Lanka in year 2018 was 114,374t. 82% of the catch was from the EEZ. 70% of the total catch was Skipjack tuna and Yellow fin tuna in equal shares, the catch amounting to 40,000t each. 3% of the catch was bigeye tuna. The bill fish were the second most group and it was 15% to the catch. Sword fish dominate in the bill fish catch. The shark catch was 1804t. Enforcement of shark management regulations and discouraging of gill net operations has drop the shark catches. Over 4000 multi day boats engaged in large pelagic fishing both high seas and within EEZ. 1337 vessels were authorised for high seas and only 1164 vessels active in 2018. 99% of the high seas operating vessels are less than 24m. VMS is mandatory for high seas operating vessels. Major fishing gears are long line and gill net. In 2018, 28%, 14% and 16% of vessels exclusively operated for longline, gill net and for Ring nets. 42% of the vessels used multi-gear of more or less combinations of these gears. Multi-gear vessels are being promoted to long line by introducing mechanised line haulers and the upgrading of vessel conditions to accommodate better cooling systems to improve the quality of the fish and reduce the post economic loss. High fuel cost has restricted the year round vessel operations and most vessels are being kept anchored. Electronic means of fish catch data collection is being implemented and carried out parallel to the paper log books. On board observers were deployed in all large vessels. Port State Measures are being implemented and E-PSM application is followed. Coastal data collection system is being improved by introducing better sampling techniques.

1. BACKGROUND/GENERAL FISHERY INFORMATION [MANDATORY]

Tuna fishery in Sri Lanka occurs mainly within the offshore EEZ area and in high-seas. The traditional coastal fishing remain operating mainly targeting neritic tuna and associated fish such as carangids, scades, barracuda and rainbow runner within continental shelf and slope areas. The offshore fisheries are confined to the area beyond the 40km up to the 200nm and beyond in high seas. Majority of offshore and high seas operating vessels target for Tuna and tuna like species.

The tuna fishing fleet consists in array of size but as a whole all are small scale. More than 99% crafts are below 24m and do not have mechanized haul. Limited deck space and the manual operation of fishing gears limit the fishing capacity of most boats. About 900 boats were engaged in one day fishing and about 2500 boats conducted multiday fishing within the EEZ of Sri Lanka. 02 long line vessels > 24m operated only in high seas. Only the Vessels > 10.3m, fitted with VMS were permitted to engage high-seas fishing combined with offshore areas of EEZ Thereby 1337 boats were authorized for high-seas fishing in year 2018 and only 1164-vessels were active.

27% are dedicated long liners mainly targeting yellow fin tuna and 14% of the total effort in large pelagic fisheries is large-mesh drift gillnets(GN), targeting skipjack tuna. The High seas gill nets are made of 20-25 pieces and 5” or 6” stretched mesh. Around 200 -1200 hooks are used in longlines depending on the vessel size. The exclusive longliners fish with a larger number of hooks per set (1000/1200 hooks), and reach the depth of 70m-100m hauled by mechanized winch.

Gillnets are being discouraged. 6 number of upgraded longline vessels with mechanized longliners and better cooling facilities introduced for high seas tuna fishing. Ring net is become popular for catching of mackerel scads (*Decapterus ruseellii*) and trigger fish etc. This net operates in coastal areas of south, southwest and east and offshore areas in lesser extent. The other fishing gears being used in lesser extent for tuna were hand-line and trolling.

Beach seine is a traditional method of near coastal fishery in Sri Lanka. The target species are near coastal small pelagic and demersal fish. It has proper management practices from the history and those has been regularized and number of licence is freeze. Beach seine catch data is included to the coastal data submission from 2017 onwards.

The use of fishing gear in multipurpose vessels is determined based on the availability of fish, climate condition, the availability of the bait, skill of the crew etc. The Indian mackerel, flying fish, milkfish and frozen squid are generally used as the bait in long lines. Offshore and the high-seas catch dominated by skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacores*), neritic tuna species and followed by billfish and other bony fish.

Fishing activities within EEZ are seasonal depending on the monsoon pattern. Fishing in coastal and offshore area are more success in just before and after monsoon. Coastal fishing is conducted mainly with 6-7 meters length FRP boats/ out board motor boats and 7-10 meters 3.5GT in board motor boats. The trip length of offshore fishing multiday boats varies from 5-30 days or sometimes more. If successful long line operations took place, the catch landed early targeting the export market. The boats use gillnets under take long trips sometimes up to 30 days or more and preserve the early catch by salting and sun drying and the late catch in ice. The weather conditions, small size of the boat and inadequate safety measures on board also influence the trip duration.

Improve the on board fish quality to reduce the post economic loss, is the main fishery policy in the recent past. To achieve this target offshore and high seas fishing vessels are being upgraded with advanced cooling systems such as chilled seawater (CSW) or refrigerated sea water (RSW). The legal framework has been strengthened to expand the high seas fisheries as per the international conventions and regional obligations..

There is no tuna fishing grounds close to Sri Lanka and the small size boats travel far away to find fish. Hence, there is an issue of unbearable operating cost due to the high fuel price, and the poor catch. As a result substantial number of vessels did make limited trips and most of the time the boats are being anchored in harbours although they have obtained an operation license in high sea. According to the fishers the fuel cost represent more than 40% of the operational costs fishing in the offshore and high seas.

2. FLEET STRUCTURE [MANDATORY]

Table 1(a) National fleet structure, by gear type, including vessel size and duration of fishing operations

| Boat Type | Vessels operated within EEZ | Vessels operated High seas +EEZ | | Gears used | Trip length |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|--|--|
| | | Number Authorized at IOTC | Active | | |
| 8m-10.3m (1-5 days) | 2280 | No | No | 28% LL only 14% GI only 16% PSRN 42% Multi gear (more or less combination of all above gears) | About 18% of the 8-10.3m length boats operates one day while rest operates 5-30 or more days |
| 10.3m-15m | 1157 | 1322 | 1149 | | |
| 15m-24m | 0 | 13 | 13 | | |
| >24m | - | 02 | 02 | | |
| | 3437 | 1337 | 1164 | | |
| Total vessels engaged in tuna and tuna like fisheries = 3437+1164 =4601 | | | | | |

Out of the registered 4601 number of large pelagic fishing vessels around 900 boats engaged in one day fishing operations and the rest conducted fishing within the EEZ and high seas. Only the vessels >10.3m in length were permitted to engage in high-seas fishing combined with offshore limits of the EEZ. Although 1337 number of vessels obtained the high-seas fishing operation license for year 2018 only 1164 vessels >10.3m operated at high seas

Table 1(b): Number of vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence, [minimum – most recent five years: 2014–2018];

| Year | Total Number of Vessels Operated | |
|------|----------------------------------|--------|
| | Total | Active |
| 2014 | 4294 | 2241 |
| 2015 | 4294 | 1615 |
| 2016 | 4485 | 1577 |
| 2017 | 4572 | 1374 |
| 2018 | 4601 | 1164 |

Source: Vessel Registry- DFAR

3. CATCH AND EFFORT (BY SPECIES AND GEAR) [Mandatory]

Table 2. Annual catch and effort by gear and primary species in the IOTC area of competence. Include a ‘not elsewhere indicated – NEI’ category for all other catches combined. [Note: Multiple tables may be required e.g. **Table 2a, 2b, 2c**]. [Mandatory]

Tables 2a, 2b, 2c

Figure 1. Historical annual catch for the national fleet, by gear and primary species, for the IOTC area of competence for the entire history of the fishery/fleet. [Mandatory]

The catch trends by the main fishing gears (Figure 1) and the species compositions (Figure 1a-1e).

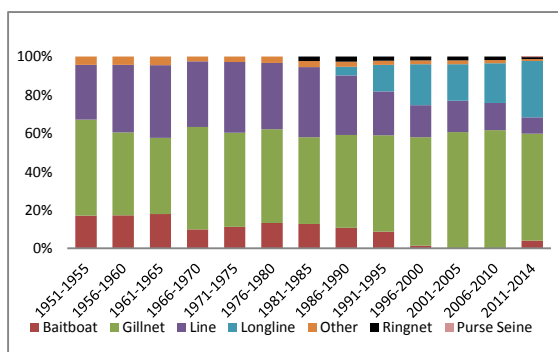


Figure 1a: Relative contribution of fishing gear in Tuna fish gill net fishery production in Sri Lanka 1950-2014

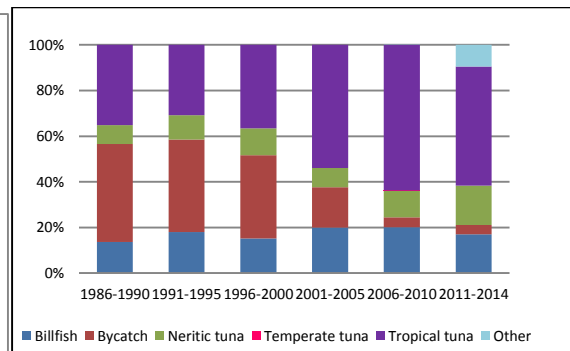


Figure 1b: Catch composition long line and production in Sri Lanka 1950-2014

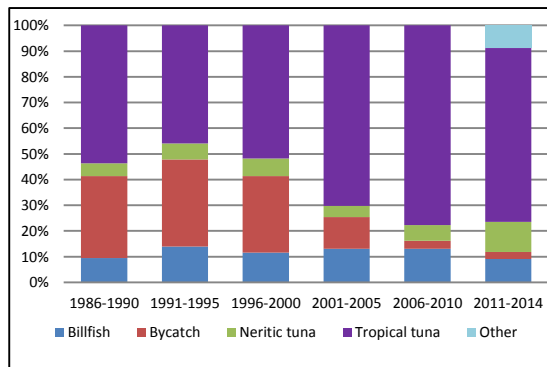


Figure 1c: Catch proportions gill net cum Long line in Sri Lanka 1950-2014

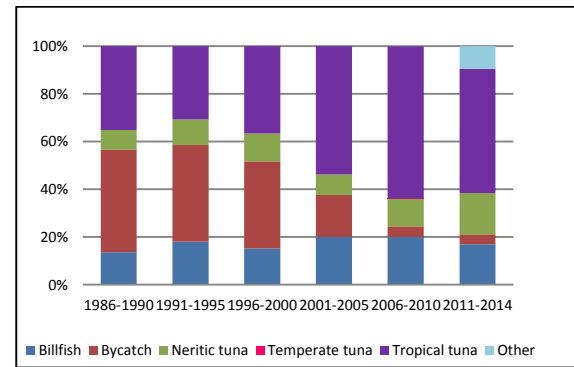


Figure 1d: Catch proportions long line fishery (including Long line attached to gill net) in Sri Lanka 1950-2014

Source: IOTC data base

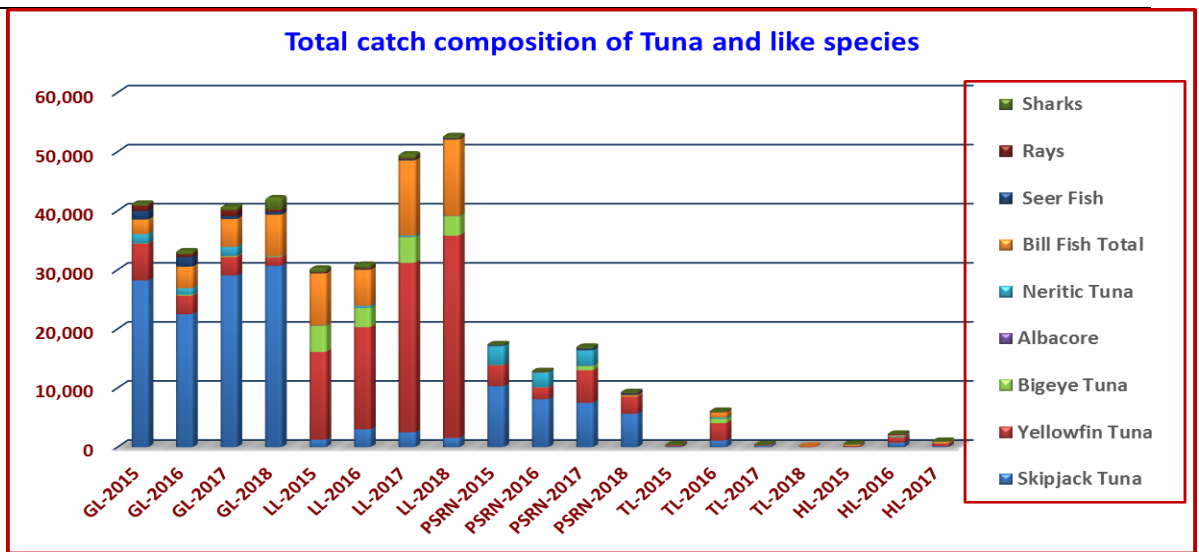
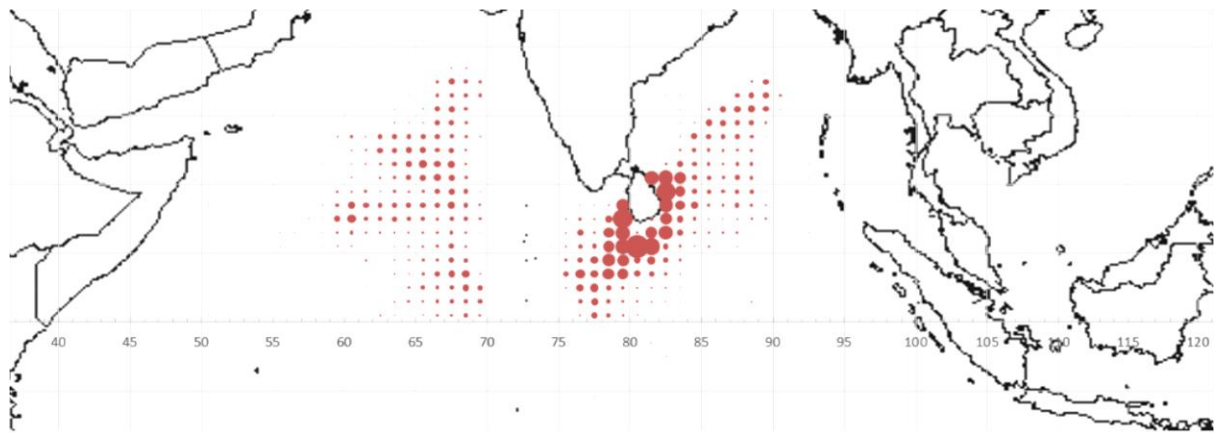


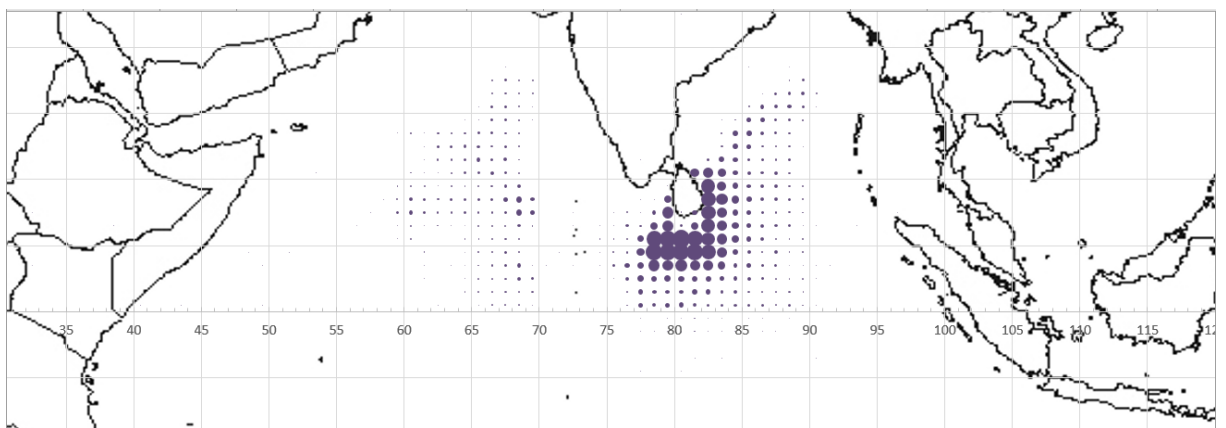
Figure 1e: Total Catch composition of Tuna and tuna like species by gear for the years 2015 to 2018.

Source: PELAGOS database(NARA), log book database-(DFAR) & land based sampling database (DFAR/MFARD)

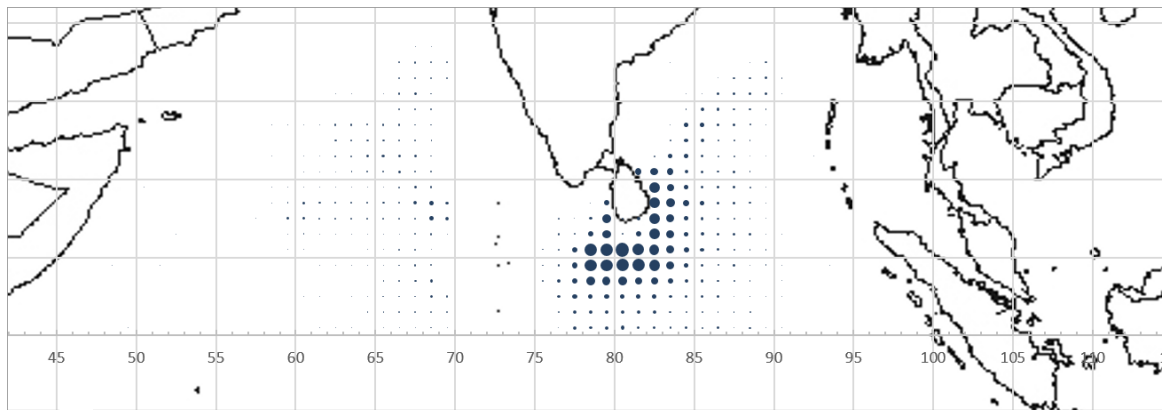
Figure 2a. Map of the distribution of fishing effort, by gear type for the national fleet in the IOTC area of competence (most recent year e.g. 2018). [Mandatory]



2a.(i) Long Line

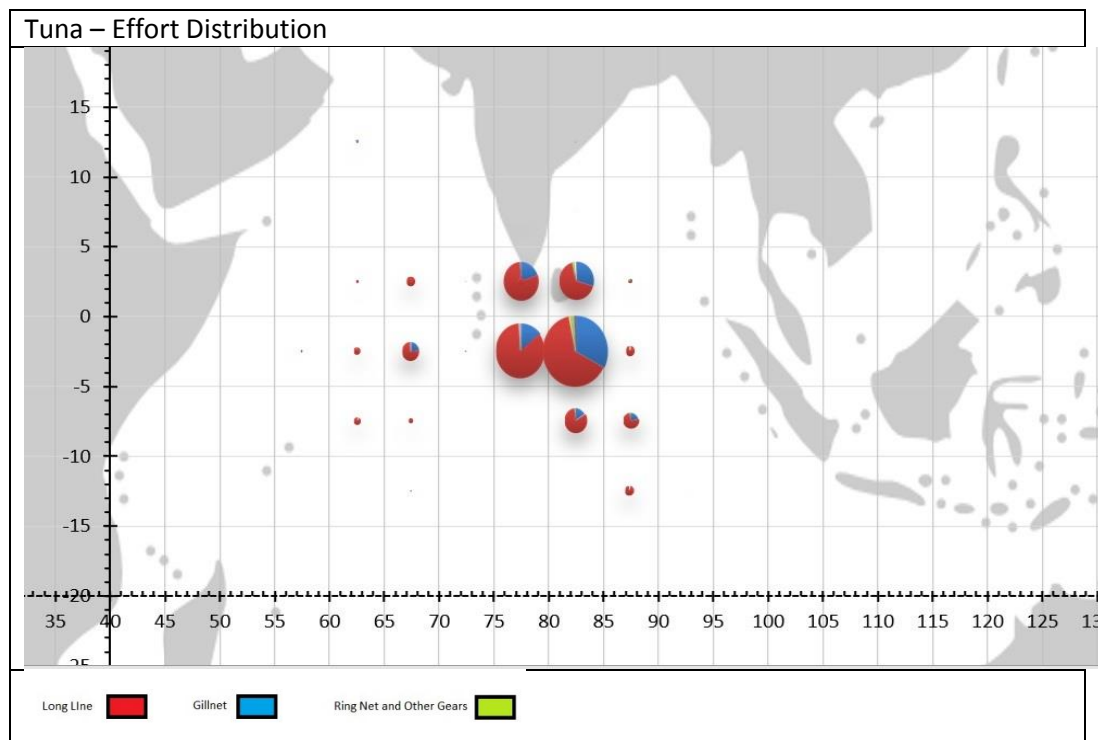


2a.(ii) Gill Net

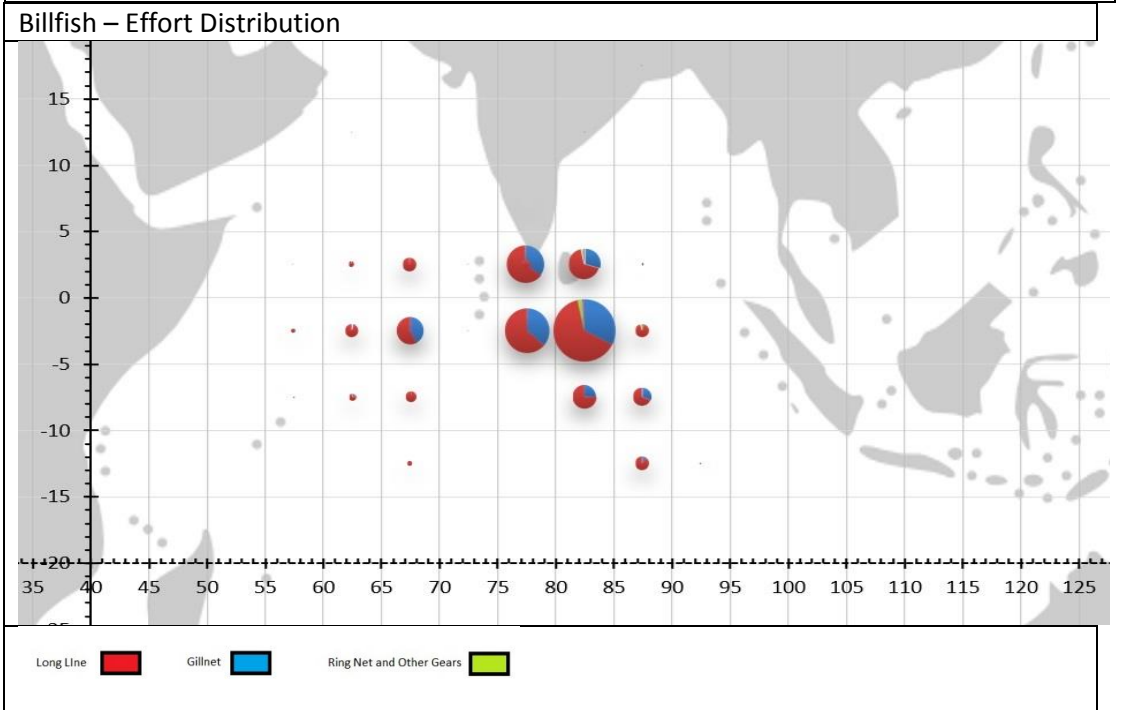
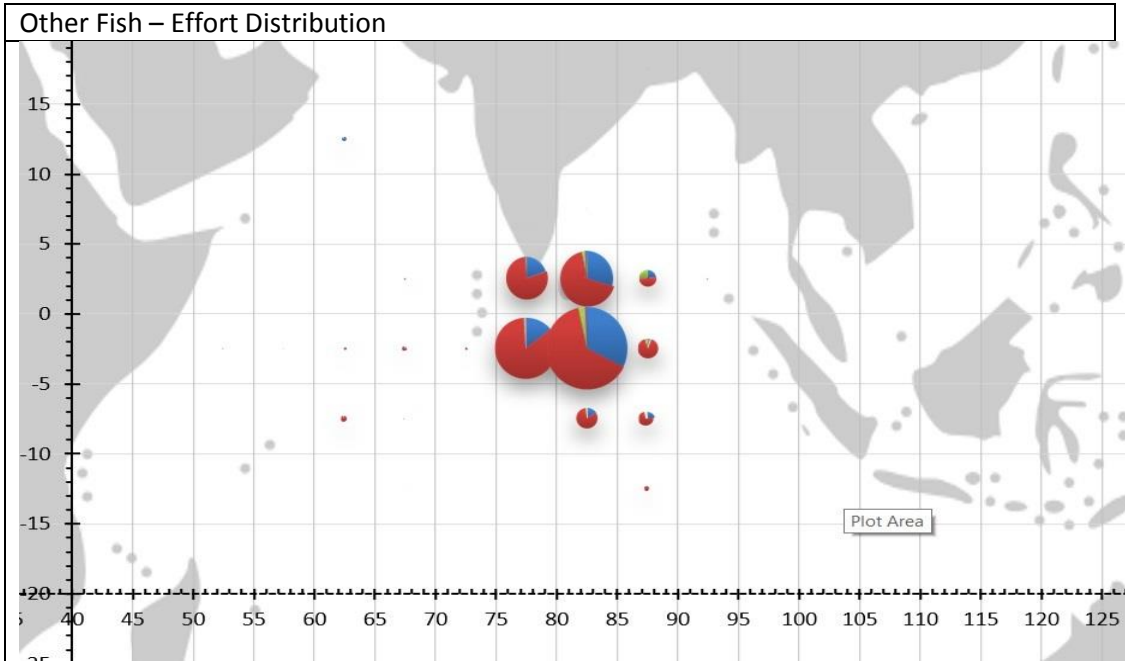


2a.(iii) Ring Net

Figure 2b. Map of the distribution of fishing effort, by gear type for the national fleet in the IOTC area of competence (average of the 5 previous years e.g. 2014–2018). **[Mandatory]**

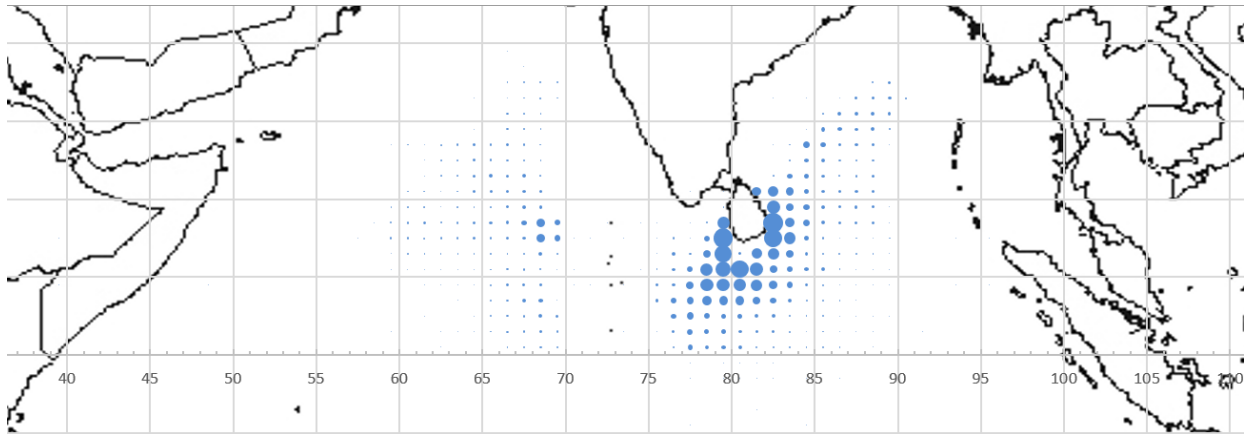


2b.(i) Tuna

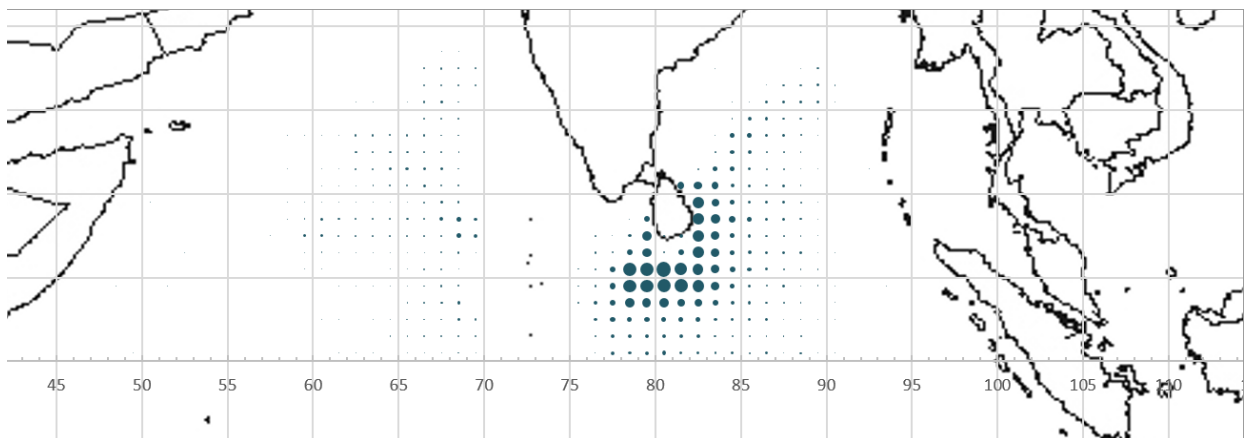


2b.(iii) Bill Fish

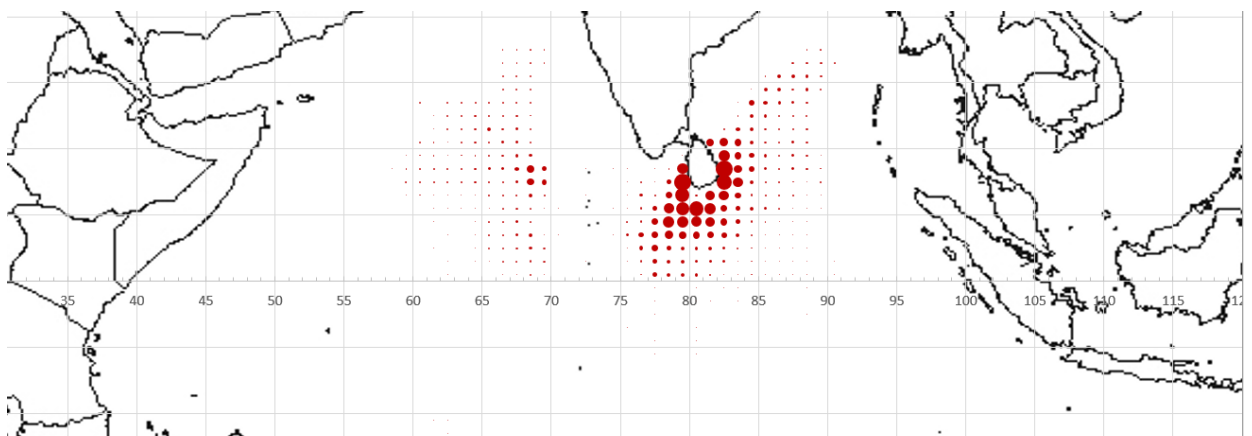
Figure 3a. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species for the national fleet, in the IOTC area of competence (most recent year e.g. 2018). **[Mandatory]**



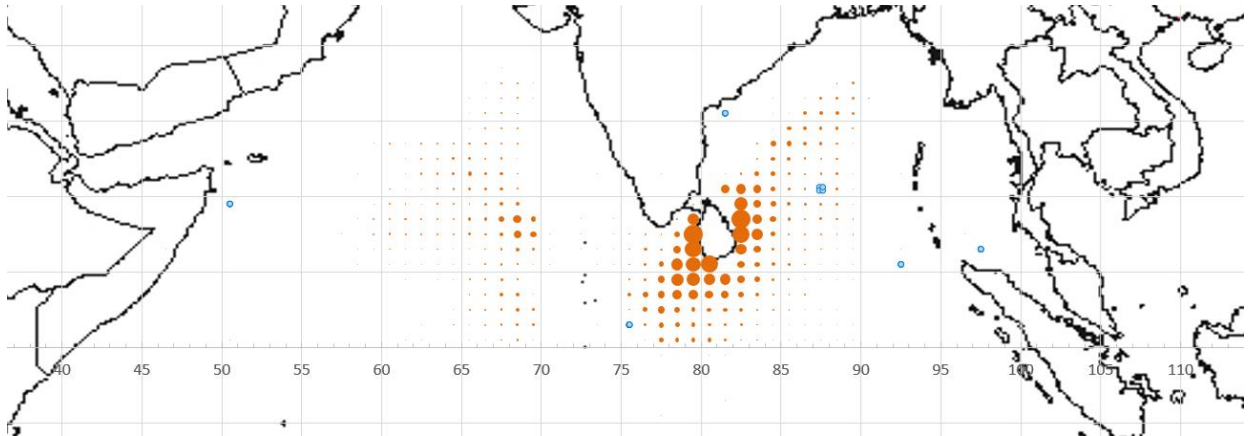
3a.(i) Tuna



3a.(ii) Sharks and Rays

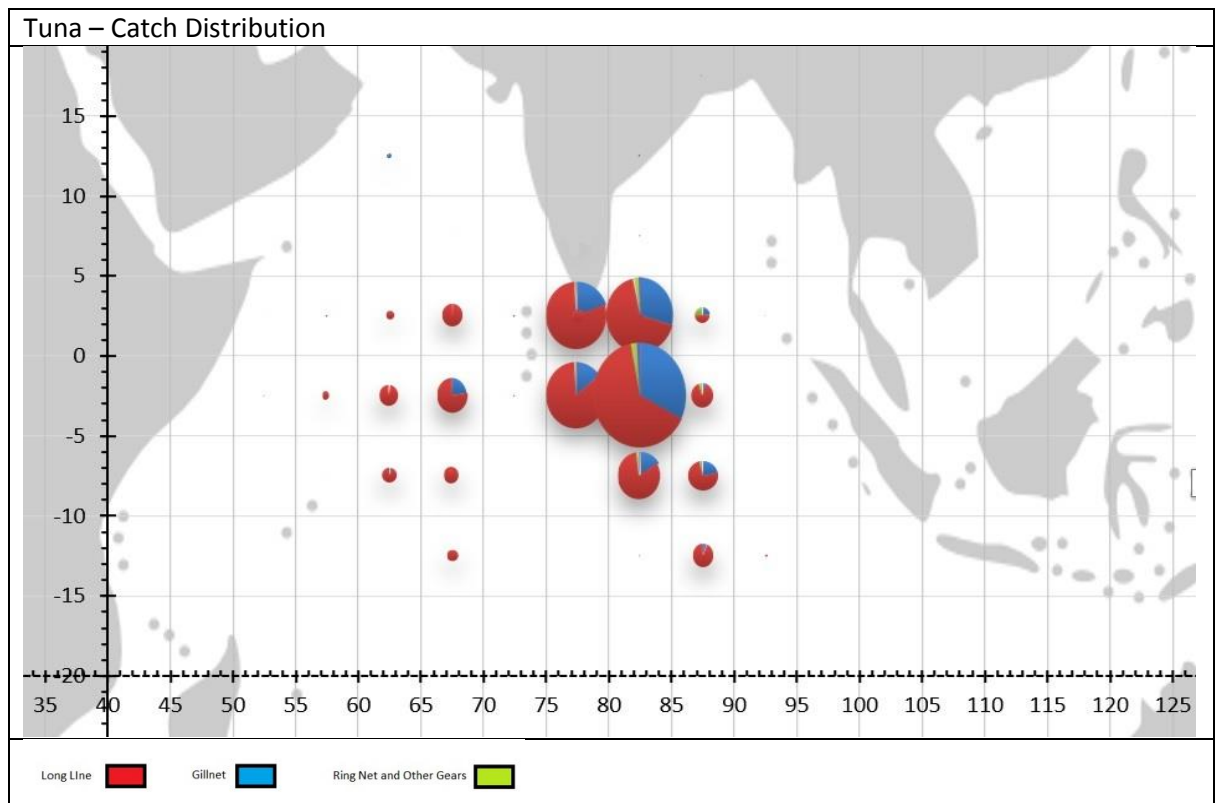


3a.(iii) Bill Fish

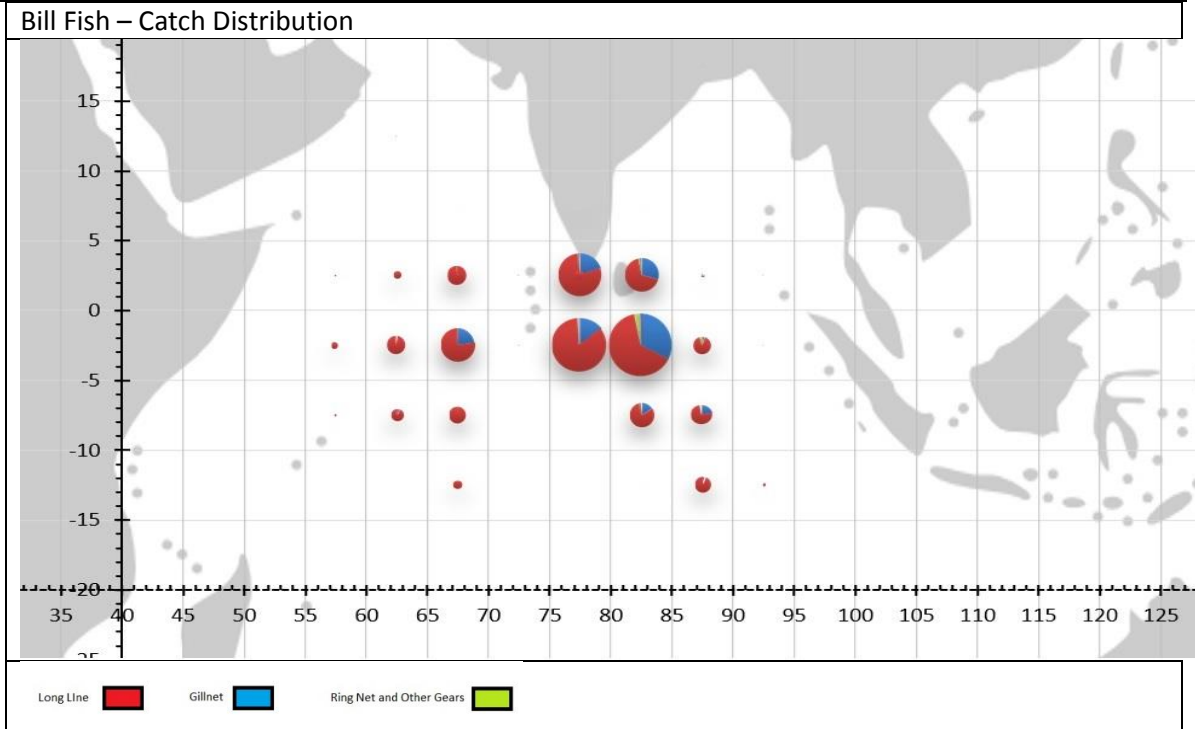


3a.(iv) Other Fish

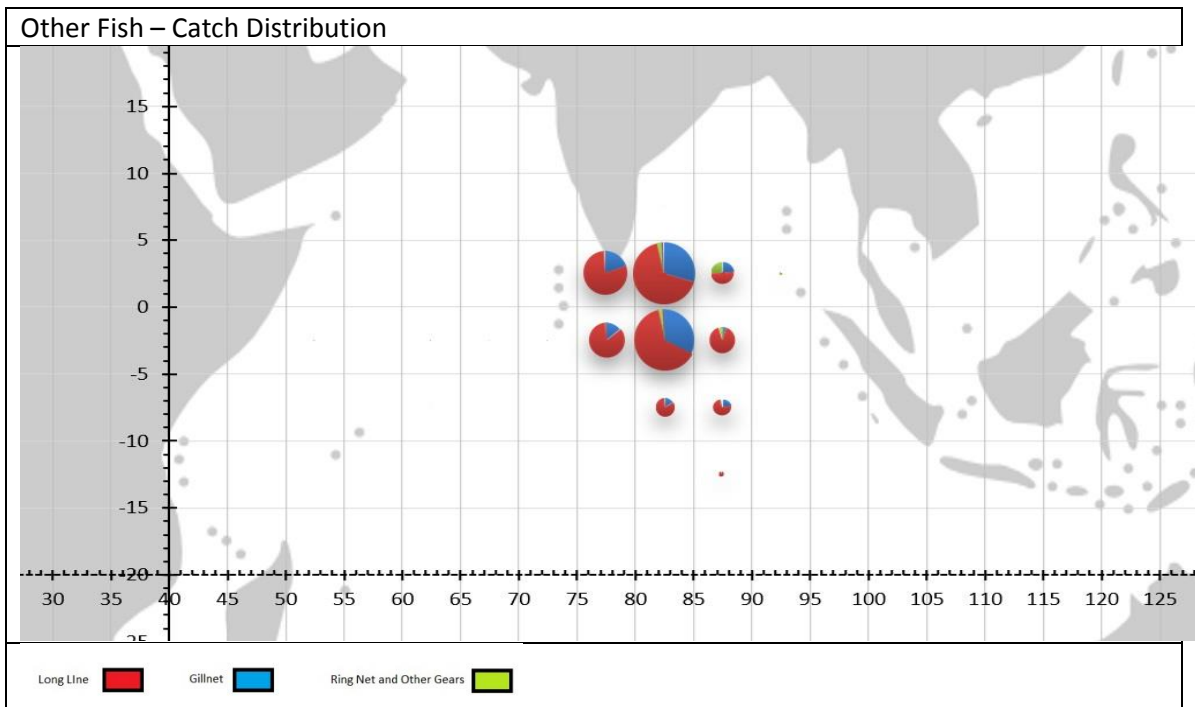
Figure 3b. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species for the national fleet, in the IOTC area of competence (average of the 5 previous years e.g. 2014–2018). [Mandatory]



3b.(i) Tuna



3b.(ii) Bill Fish



3b.(iii) Other Fish

4. RECREATIONAL FISHERY [Mandatory]

Recreational fishery for tuna and tuna like species is not a popular or the widely spread event in Sri Lanka, However sport fishing take place sporadic manner in associated with tourist industry mostly for coral associated fish. In recent, Department of Fisheries drafted a regulation for recreational fishery consultation with relevant stake holders and processing at Legal Draftsman Department. Prohibited species and recommended gear types , for recreational fishery was identified and listed as a schedule in the draft regulation. The safe release of the fish caught by recreational fishery is ensured under this regulation and a catch data recording sheet is incorporated to record the position and fish species caught

5. ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH ISSUES [Mandatory]

5.1 Sharks [Mandatory]

(A) High Seas Fishing Operations Regulations 2014 (Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act /FARA)

- (i) The masters/skippers of the vessels have been legally ordered to prompt release of all mammals, turtles and seabirds and prohibited and unwanted sharks in live form at minimum harm caused to them if caught incidentally.
- (ii) It is mandatory to carry and use of the line cutters and de-hookers on board to release sharks/turtles.
- (iii) Departure and arrival boat inspections at port.
- (iv) Prohibition of intentional surrounding of whale sharks by purse seiners. Mandatory to carry dip nets on board for purse seines to release whale sharks in live form.
- (v) Deployment of onboard observer for Scientific data collection in the vessels >24m.
- (vi) Prohibition of use of drift gill nets > 2.5km in high seas.FARA

(B) Shark Fisheries Management Regulation 2015 (FARA)

- (i) Prohibition of finning on board and prohibition of , catching, retaining , transshipment , and sale of Thresher shark, Ocean white tip shark and whale shak.
- (ii) Provisions to collect biological samples for research studies.

(C) Fish Catch data recording regulations 2014 (Log book)

- (i) Keeping the records of any incidental catches, release/discard in live or dead ones of sharks, mammals, turtles and sea birds is legally mandatory
- Regulation on prohibition of use of poisonous, explosives or stupefying substances in fishing (FARA amendment 2004)
 - Prohibition of monofilament net. 2006, FARA
 - Mesh size restrictions for specified fisheries.FARA
 - Prohibition of fishing dredging and bottom trawling damaging the sea bottoms and breeding and nursery grounds FARA

- Sri Lanka is a signatory to Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species(CITES) The hammer head ,white tip and porbeagal sharks are subjected to CITES and Sri Lanka has proposed Thresher shark for listing.
- Declaration of endangered marine species as protected species under Fauna & Flora Protection Act.
- Prohibition of coral mining removal and transport by the regulations under Coast conservation Act.
- Promoting the use of circle hooks to the longlines rather than “J hooks.
- *Marine* Pollution Prevention Act No 59 of 1981(amended 2008) has legal provisions against pollutions affecting to marine animals and ecosystems such as actions on Sea accidents leading to oil pollution and cause harm to the environment and fauna and flora any to Sea.
- National Environment Act, has published “The National Red List 2012” of Sri Lanka revealing the National and Global conservation status of the fauna and flora of Sri Lanka. Special attention has been drawn to corals and marine fish species mammals and holoturiansetc .
- The National Plan of Actions for Sharks- Sri Lanka(NPOA-Sharks) is under implementation from October 2014 being amended to publish amendment in 2020. Banning of the use /carry on-board the wire trace/shark lines in High Seas fishing is to be included to the amendments.
- Species identification guides and posters for shark identification has been prepared and published in 2015.
- Improve the onsite sampling program to cover all species of shark as per the IOTC resolution 12/03 to collect required catch and size data and data submitted to IOTC on June 2019.
- Awareness programs are being conducted on the banning of thresher sharks, white tip sharks and whale sharks and recording of the incidental catches and prompt release in an unharmed condition.
- The sanction on violations has been increased to a adequate severity up to Rupees one million under the provisions of the Amended Act for High Seas Fishing in 2013.
- Shark fin sample has to be identified to species level obtain CITES clearance from Department of Wildlife to get the clearance for export of the fins of the sharks that are not prohibited to catch in Sri Lanka. The identifications are done both physically and genetically by the National Research Agency (NARA).

Table 3: Total number and weight of sharks, by species, retained by the national fleet in the IOTC area of competence (for the most recent five years at a minimum, e.g. 2014–2018[Mandatory])

| Species | | FAO codes | Total weight (t) | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Common name | | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
| <i>Carcharhinusfalciformis</i> | Silky Shark | FAL | 1122 | 750 | 647 | 622.6 | 704.4 |
| <i>Prionaceglauca</i> | Blue Shark | BSH | 213 | 207 | 568 | 740 | 1028 |
| <i>Carcharhinuslongimanus</i> | Oceanic Whitetip shark | OCS | 78 | 87 | 0 | 0 | 5.2 |
| <i>Isuruspaucus</i> | Longfinmacko | LAM+SMA | 55 | 58.6 | 69 | 83.7 | 14.1 |
| <i>Isurusoxyrinchus</i> | Short fin macko | | | | | | |
| <i>Alopiassupercilliosus</i> | Big eye thresher | BTH | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 0 |
| <i>Alopiaspelagicus</i> | Pelagic thresher | PTH | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 0 |
| <i>Sphyrnalewini</i> | Scallop hammerhead | SPL | 33 | 42 | 75 | 117.6 | 16 |
| <i>Carcharhinussorrah</i> | Spot tail | - | 00 | 00 | 00 | 02 | |
| <i>Sphyrnazyaena</i> | Smooth hammerhead | SPZ | 18 | 44 | 22 | 11.4 | 1.4 |
| <i>Spyrnamokarran</i> | Great hammerhead | GRH | 04 | 04 | 00 | 00 | 01 |
| | Whale Shark | RHN | 00 | 2 | 00 | 00 | 0 |
| - | Other sharks | SKA | 88 | 19 | 126 | 187 | 32.1 |
| Total shark | | | 1612 | 1214 | 1507 | 1764.3 | 1802.2 |

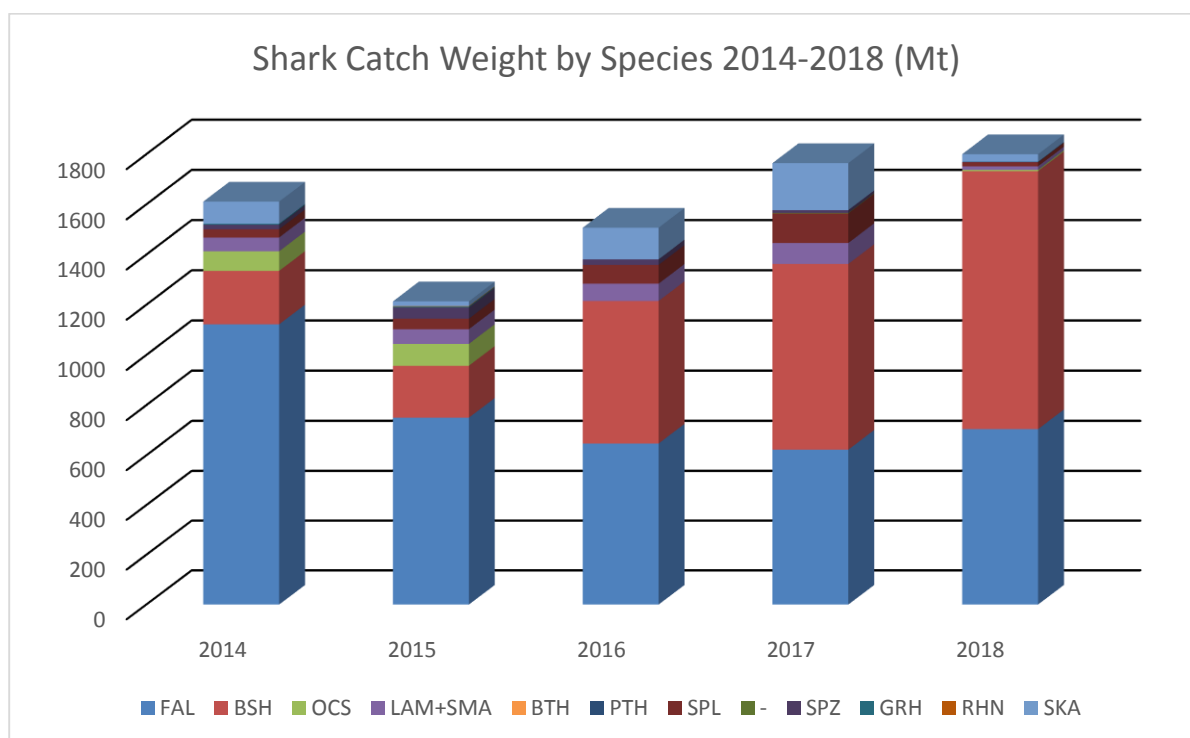


Table 4: Total number of sharks, by species, released/discarded by the national fleet in the IOTC area of competence (for the most recent five years at a minimum, e.g. 2014–2018). Where available, include life status upon released/discard. **[Desirable]**

| Year | status | Thresher Shark | | | Whale Shark | | | Oceanic whitetip | | | Silky Shark | | |
|------|--------|----------------|-----|-------|-------------|----|-------|------------------|----|-------|-------------|----|-------|
| | | GN | LL | PSR N | GN | LL | PSR N | GN | LL | PSR N | GN | LL | PSR N |
| 2014 | Live | 2 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Dead | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2015 | Live | 2 | 18 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Dead | 0 | 14 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2016 | Live | 7 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Dead | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2017 | Live | 0 | 29 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 23 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Dead | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2018 | Live | 0 | 174 | 115 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 53 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Dead | 5 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |

5.2 Seabirds [Mandatory]

Sea bird catches are not reported in Sri Lanka due to the nature of the fishery and less availability of sea birds species in the high seas around Sri Lanka. Seabirds are not interacting with long liners either line is setting or line hauling mostly due to the low height of the small boats without sophisticated super structure. The National Aquatic Resources and Research Development Agency (NARA) has done two short-term studies on sea birds through comprehensive port sampling and onboard observation study made in research vessels in the high seas of Bay of Bengal. The findings were present at the WPEB in 2014. Thus there is no mitigation measures in applied to prevent seabird interactions and Sri Lanka and has not developed the NPOA-Sea birds. Observers are not deployed in the small vessels due to space and safety restrictions . No vessels operated south of 25°S.

Observer seabird interaction data sheet for the IOTC longline fleet [Desirable]

Name of member state: _____;

Reporting period* or calendar year _____

Species _____

| Fishery | | Observed | | | | | Estimate |
|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Area ¹ | Total effort ² | Total observed effort ² | Observer coverage ³ | Captures (number) | Mortalities (number) | Live releases (number) | Mortality estimate (number) |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | | | |

*This field can be used to specify a temporal stratification to the data e.g. season

¹Spatial stratification (5x5, 10x10 or other – to be determined)

²Number of hooks observed hauled

³Percentage of all hooks set that were observed hauled

1. How many vessels operated south of 25°S in the period covered by this report?
2. How many of those vessels used bird scaring lines (as a proportion of total effort)?
3. How many of those vessels used line weighting (as a proportion of total effort)?
4. How many of those vessels used night setting (as a proportion of total effort)?

5.3 Marine Turtles [Mandatory]

Marine turtles are legally protected under Fauna and Flora Protection Act (FFPA) and Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act no.2 of 1996. In 1979, Sri Lanka has signed the CITES agreement and therefore trading of turtles and their parts and products are completely prohibited. The sanctions have been increased in amended FFPA,2008 and FARA, 2013for the violation of laws. Further, large-scale drift net fishing in the high seas is restricted to maximum 2.5km in length reducing the entangling of turtles and other non-target species. In the longline fishery most of the vessels use the circle hook s. (“J” hooks are not in use).Trawling is completely prohibited in Sri Lanka.

The logbook data collection system allows the fisherman to report the interaction of turtles to the fishing gear. Out of the completed log sheets received following data is extracted but the position data has not clearly mentioned. By-catch data recording has been improved towards 2018 as a result of regular awareness programs.

| 10 | status | Olive ridley turtle | | | Green turtle | | | Log head turtle | | | Howkbil turtle | | | Leatherback Turtle | | |
|------|--------|---------------------|--------|------|--------------|----|------|-----------------|----|------|----------------|----|------|--------------------|----|------|
| | | GN | L L | PSRN | GN | LL | PSRN | GN | LL | PSRN | GN | LL | PSRN | GN | LL | PSRN |
| 2014 | Live | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Dead | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2015 | Live | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 5 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Dead | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2016 | Live | 0 | 0 | 0 | 99 | 93 | 92 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Dead | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2017 | Live | 316 | 30 | 0 | 533 | 40 | 33 | 34 | 0 | 2 | 96 | 5 | 8 | 12 | 8 | 1 |
| | Dead | 13 | 4 | 0 | 16 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| 2018 | Live | 326 | 5 | 26 | 735 | 82 | 3 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 178 | 0 | 151 | 16 | 28 | 8 |
| | Dead | 48 | 0 | 0 | 119 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 14 | 0 |

Discard levels monitored by the skipper of the vessel/ fishing master (Log book records) L – Live, D-Dead. There are two major NGOs working on turtle conservation in south coast of Sri Lanka. In addition NARA and Department of Wild Life Conservation (DWLC) working on turtle conservation. DWLC is running *in-situ* conservation activities at Bundala while NARA is running hatchery and refuge centre at Kalpitiya. The conservation mostly *in-situ* conditions, Mainly nest protection, hatching rearing and safe releasing. Eco tourism is one of the main advantage of these projects. This has provided alternative livelihood for the people those engaged in poaching of turtle eggs and there of protected the turtles. These projects conduct turtle rescue programs with fisher community

5.4 Other ecologically related species (e.g. marine mammals, whale sharks) [Desirable]

Catching of marine mammals is legally prohibited Under the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act No.2 of 1996 and the Fauna and Flora protection (amendment) Act 1937 ,(amended 1993 and 2008). Sri Lanka do not operate large purse seines. The fishermen are made aware by conducting regular awareness programs by NARA and DFAR to releasing dolphins, turtles and whale sharks if incidentally caught to a fishing gear. The Log books facilitate reporting of incidental catches of marine mammals. The log book data recordings is not satisfactory and unbelievable on this regard. Deployment of an observer in small boats is also has an issue in space and safety aspects.

Table 5. Observed annual catches of species of special interest by species (seabirds, marine turtles and marine mammals) by gear for the national fleet, in the IOTC area of competence (for the most recent five years at a minimum, e.g. 2014–2018 or to the extent available). **[Mandatory]**

Sri Lanka commenced reporting of by-catch in 2014. Refer table under point 5.3 of this report for turtle by-catch data. Sea bird catches are not reported in Sri Lanka fish catch data. The incidental marine mammal catches from 2014 are as follows.

| Year | status | Blue Whale | | | Dolphin | | |
|------|--------|------------|----|------|---------|----|------|
| | | GN | LL | PSRN | GN | LL | PSRN |
| 2014 | Live | | | | | | |
| | Dead | | | | | | |
| 2015 | Live | 6 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| | Dead | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 2016 | Live | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 3 | 1 |
| | Dead | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2017 | Live | 25 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Dead | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2018 | Live | 0 | 0 | 0 | 124 | 1 | 0 |
| | Dead | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 0 | 0 |

Discard levels monitored by the skipper of the vessel/ fishing master (Log book records)
L – Live, D- Dead

6. NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING SYSTEMS [Mandatory]

6.1. Logsheet data collection and verification (including date commenced and status of implementation)

The log book data recording system is legally mandatory by Fish Catch Data Collection Regulations, 2012 (Gazette, No. 1878/11 amended in 01 September 2014)for multiday fishing vessels > 34 feet (10.3m) in length operate basically in catching large pelagic fish

within EEZ and high seas. It has been mandated to submit log sheet after every fishing trip. They provide detail data on the spatial and temporal distribution of catch and effort by individual gear, which satisfy the need of rectifying the shortcomings of obtaining special information on catch and effort by individual gear through port sampling programme.

Thereby information received in 2015 through logbooks has been utilized for the first time in verification and also to overcome inherent inefficiencies of port sampling data as per the IOTC requirement. Procedures for comparing logbook data with data on fish landings obtained from the Large Pelagic fishery survey has been completed and pre-tested with a sample of boats.

The vessels that were sampled at ports and the same vessels submitted log sheets were sorted by month referencing to their registration number. The landed catch records were separated by gear and area based on the catch and effort reported as in log sheets since submission of log sheets is a mandatory requirement for multiday fleet of >10.3m. Majority of sampled boats at ports have been regularly submitted the log sheet after every fishing trip. The assumption made during the multi-gear separation process was that each boat made two fishing trips instead of one; longline and gillnet separately. Around 15% landings are sampled jointly by NARA and DFAR officials at 18 major landing sites (fishery harbours) and 14 minor landing centres. Total of 32 data collectors (27 from DFAR and 15 from NARA) are involved in this field data collection.

6.2. Vessel Monitoring System (including date commenced and status of implementation)

First batch of Vessel Monitoring devices installation was completed in March 2015 for 50 high sea operating vessels. In the second phase another 1500 Vessel Monitoring devices were installed covering all multiday boats operating in high seas. As a result all high seas operating vessels of Sri Lanka equipped with on board Vessel Monitoring Device since January 2016.

The annual report on VMS for year 2018 was submitted to IOTC on June 2019. The regulation on “Implementation of Satellite based Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for fishing boats operating in High Seas 2015” is being under implementation.

The vessel monitoring centre is established in a separate building in the Fisheries Department Head office Colombo. The Fisheries Management Centre (FMC) is well equipped. Officials have been trained. The (FMC) is fully functioning and the monitoring is initiated. The following reports and alarms are now being generated at FMC.

- Position data once 4 hrs intervals
- Any incident of tampering, power off or crossing of MBLs.
- Indicate the entry to buffer zone before arrive to the harbor.
- Final report of the cruise track (map) of the vessel

The cruise tracks data of VMS are being manually cross checked with the Log sheet data submitted on the arrival and results of reconciliation is reported in a standard format. This helps to validate the information submitted in the logbooks. Sri Lanka developed a software of electronic catch data recording (E-logbook) and the pilot project run in 2016 and 2017. It was successful and facilitate the data collection with accurate position data and leads towards better monitoring.

6.3. Observer programme (including date commenced and status; number of observer, include percentage coverage by gear type)

Sri Lankan fishing fleet consists of vessels in the ranges from 10-18 m in length without the minimum requirements viz: safety, accommodation and space for deploying the observers. Therefore Sri Lanka could not implement the national observer program in terms of Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Resolution 11/04 On a Regional Observer Scheme. However Sri Lanka initiated implementing the national observer programme (NOP) in September 2014 on a pilot basis. This programme was implemented with the support from Fisheries Improvement Project of Sri Lanka.

Twenty fisheries officers of DFAR with experience and capability for the duty were selected and trained for days. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between DFAR and Fisheries improvement Project to carried out the programme.

- Basic Training on Safety at Sea
- Scientific data collection
- IOTC Observer Manual and its application
- Documentation – forms, agreements, Appointment, Insurance
- Practical training on species identification, sampling methods, scientific data collection and reporting
- Pilot observer trips (7 pilot trips) to get practical experience by observers

The observer manual provides reference material along with instructions detailing observer tasks, observational requirements, sampling protocols, log book entry protocols and reporting procedures in the long line, purse seine and other artisanal fisheries in the Indian Ocean. Two training programme were conducted on handling of GPS, Communication and Navigation at CINEC Maritime University and Species Identification at NARA.

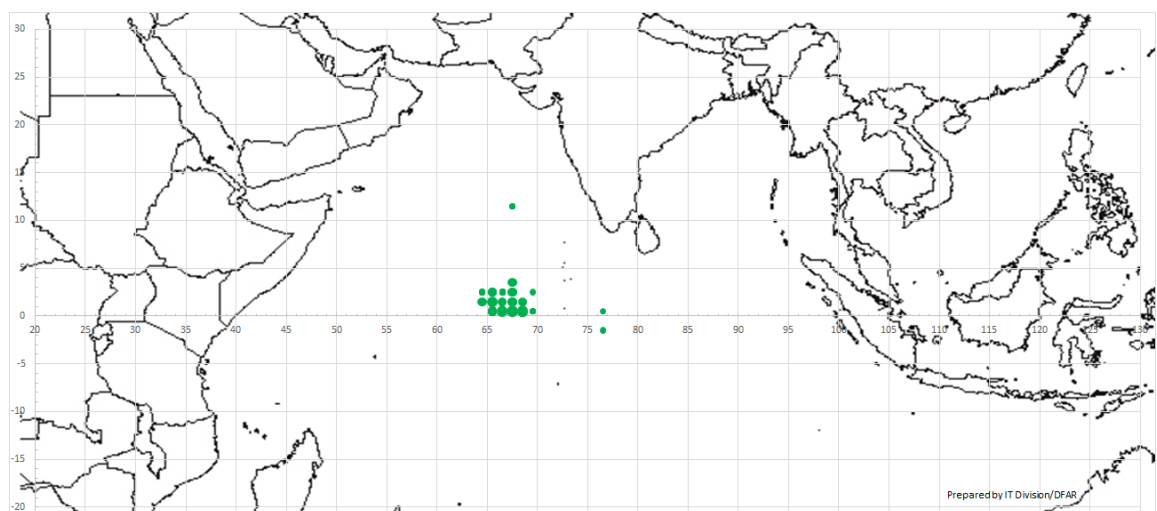
Three pilot trips were covered under the Pilot Observer Programme. A team of IOTC experts carried out an assessment of the pilot observer programme during the mission in Sri Lanka 2015. The team of experts interviewed the observers to identify key gaps on data reporting, collecting information and for other matters. Special trainings were conducted for identification of fish species and the way of collecting best scientific information during the observer trips. Many gaps on data recording were identified and the mission findings are given in the back to office report on “capacity building mission in support of the Regional Observer Scheme. Sri Lanka’s Observer Programme needs much more assistance and training .

Two long liners >24m were operated during the years 2017 and 2018 and reports of observer coverage 13% and 22.22% submitted to the IOTC respectively. Two weeks training programme from 12 to 23 February 2018 were conducted by the FAO for 30 Officer including Observers (26) under supervision of the IOTC. The training covered basic theoretical background to support observers at sea operating in fishing sector, theory on fishing operations, gear and species caught in sector specific fisheries, and data recording forms and electronic data capture systems.

Table 6. Annual observer coverage by operation, e.g. longline hooks, purse seine sets (for the most recent five years at a minimum, e.g. 2014–2018 or to the extent available). **[Mandatory]**

| Year | Number of Vessel – 24m< | Number of fishing operations | Number of observer coverage | % of Observer coverage |
|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 2014 | Purse Seine - 08 | 10 | 02 | 20 |
| 2015 | Long line - 02 | 02 | 02 | 100 |
| 2016 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2017 | Long line - 02 | 15 | 02 | 13 |
| 2018 | Long line - 02 | 09 | 02 | 22.22 |

Figure 4. Map showing the spatial distribution of observer coverage 2018. **[Mandatory]**



6.4. Port sampling programme [including date commenced and status of implementation]

Table 7. Number of individuals measured, by species and gear] [Mandatory]

| Fish Name | Within EEZ | | | Beyond EEZ | | | Grand Total |
|--------------------|------------|----------|---------|------------|----------|---------|-------------|
| | Gillnet | Longline | Ringnet | Gillnet | Longline | Ringnet | |
| Skipjack tuna | 24,518 | 1,654 | 5,452 | 4,470 | 1,212 | 1,389 | 38,695 |
| Yellowfin tuna | 1,380 | 23,107 | 2,877 | 702 | 8,716 | 534 | 37,316 |
| Bigeye tuna | 110 | 675 | 51 | 30 | 1,107 | 76 | 2,049 |
| Albacore | - | - | - | | | | 0 |
| Bullet tuna | 238 | - | 1,488 | | | 220 | 1,946 |
| Frigate tuna | 673 | | 2,482 | 69 | | 659 | 3,883 |
| Kawakawa | 1,505 | | 930 | 44 | 21 | 163 | 2,663 |
| Blue Shark | 814 | 301 | | 15 | 92 | | 1,222 |
| Silky shark | 624 | 14 | 63 | 79 | 82 | | 862 |
| Scallop hammerhead | 8 | | | 18 | - | - | 26 |
| Blue marlin | | | | 117 | 183 | | 300 |
| Black marlin | 176 | - | - | 47 | 166 | 7 | 396 |
| Sailfish | 745 | 446 | - | 131 | 246 | 16 | 1,584 |
| Swordfish | 60 | 154 | - | 35 | 549 | 4 | 802 |

6.4. Unloading/Transshipment [including date commenced and status of implementation] [Mandatory]

| Nationality of Fishing Vessels | No of Fishing Vessels do Port entry | Purpose of Port Call | No of Fishing Vessels inspected | No of Inspection report submitted to the IOTC |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| Taiwan | 60 | Transshipment (38) | 23 | 23 |
| | | Maintenance / refueling/ resupplying/ dry docking (12) | 2 | 2 |
| | | Exchange of security personnel & crew members (10) | 0 | 0 |
| China | 02 | Exchange of security personnel & crew members (02) | 0 | 0 |
| Seychelles | 26 | Transshipment (08) | 4 | 4 |
| | | Maintenance / refueling/ resupplying/ dry docking (02) | 0 | 0 |
| | | Exchange of security personnel & crew members (16) | 0 | 0 |
| Panama | 13 | Maintenance (13) | 9 | 9 |
| Vanuatu | 04 | Maintenance (04) | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 105 | | 39 | 39 |

7. NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS [Desirable]

Table 8. Summary table of national research programs, including dates.

| Project title | Period | Countries involved | Budget total | Funding source | Objectives | Short description |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Assessment and monitoring of small pelagic and large pelagic fishery resources via port sampling | Ongoing | Sri Lanka | 2.5 LKR million | Treasury | Collection of large pelagic and small pelagic fisheries statistics-catch species Effort –by craft and gear Length by species, craft, gear | Information sent to FAO, IOTC and also utilize for fishery management (locally) |
| Molecular based studies on feeding predation in commercially important fish species | 2018/2019 | Sri Lanka | 0.775 LKR million (for 2019) | Treasury | Molecular identification of prey items found in stomachs of commercially important fish species such as yellowfin tuna, neritic tunas and sharks using appropriate primer/primer combinations. <i>Determination of the prey-predator relationships of the species studies.</i> | Identification of fish and invertebrate prey items of neritic tuna species using molecular methods completed. |
| Assessment of the blue whale population living in south coast of Sri Lanka and studying the interactions of marine mammals with fisheries. | Ongoing | Sri Lanka | 1 LKR Million (for 2019) | Treasury | Photo identification of the blue whale for studying the individual seasonal migration pattern and estimate the stock size.Study the interaction of fisheries with marine mammals | All the individual species were separately recorded. Strandings are also recorded. Information are also being used to address US fisheries export issue. |
| Biological, fisheries and other aspects in shark fishery with a special reference to shark fin trade in Sri Lanka | 2019 | Sri Lanka | 0.716 LKR Million | Treasury | To study biological aspects and fisheries aspects in shark fishery, to study the emerging trends in shark fishery and local & international trade, to study the interactions of protected sharks with commercial fishing, to study about the directed fishery for catching sharks | Biological and fisheries data on shark landings are being collecting in major landing sites. Locally and internationally trends in the shark fishery will be analysed by using import-export statistics and literature review. |
| Sri Lanka – Norway Bilateral project to improve the management of the fish resources of Sri Lanka. | On going (up to 2021) | Sri Lanka and Norway | 10 LKR million (for 2019) | Sri Lanka and Norway | Upgrade of NARA port sampling procedure, Fish stock assessments including resources surveys with RV. Dr. Fridtjof Nansen Incorporate findings to management of the resource in the country | Development and establishment of a robust fisheries information system is essential for sustainable management of coastal fisheries. To achieve above targets, “Sri Lanka-Norway” bilateral project for fisheries sector is being conducted by NARA and Institute of Marine Research (MRI), Bergen, Norway. Since this is a joint project both countries are involved in |

| | | | | | | |
|---|------|-----------|------------------|----------|--|---|
| | | | | | | financing. Sri Lanka has to contribute for the project |
| Genetic study of marine biological resources in Sri Lankan waters | 2019 | Sri Lanka | 0.75 LKR million | Treasury | Study the genetic stock structure of key species distributed in Sri Lankan marine waters Identification species structure of fish populations Study the polygenetic relationship of fish species Identification of sequence variations of fish species due to natural mutations | <i>Decapturus sp</i> and <i>Lethrinus sp</i> stock identification is completed. DNA barcoding is being conducting to identify species where morphological identification is impossible. Discover 5 novel species from Sri Lankan Waters. Phylogenetic analysis and sequencing is being conducting for important fish species. |

8. IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE IOTC RELEVANT TO THE SC. [Mandatory]

Table 9. Scientific requirements contained in Resolutions of the Commission, adopted between 2011 and 2018.

| Res. No. | Resolution | Scientific requirement | CPC progress |
|----------|---|------------------------|--|
| 11/04 | On a regional observer scheme | Paragraph 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sri Lanka deployed on-board observers for the vessels >24m (100%) - Sri Lanka is selected for the pilot project on introduction of Electronic Monitoring system in the small vessels operating at high seas by IOTC. The project is being implemented and Sri Lanka fully support for this project. - Sri Lanka seeks a cost effective solution for on-board scientific data collection and therefore conducted crew based on-board observer program at trial basis and presented to WPDCS 2018. Refer 6.3 for more information |
| 12/04 | On the conservation of marine turtles | Paragraphs 3, 4, 6–10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refer 5.3 above. Carry the line cutters and de-hookers on board by long liners and dip nets by purse seiners has made legally mandatory for the high seas operating vessels under high seas fishing regulation 2014 |
| 12/06 | On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries. | Paragraphs 3–7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a separate box in the log book to report incidental catches in the logbook. • Currently there is are no records of Sri Lanka vessels fish in the area of south of 25 degrees South latitude • Sri Lanka will apply , mitigation measures with the development of fishing activities in this area. |
| 12/09 | On the conservation of thresher sharks (family alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence | Paragraphs 4–8 | Refer 5.1.1 National initiatives on conservation and management of sharks Refer 5.1.1 National initiatives on conservation and management of sharks |
| 13/04 | On the conservation of cetaceans | Paragraphs 7– 9 | Marine mammals (cetaceans) and turtles are protected under Fauna and Flora Protection (amendment) Act 1937(FFPA) (amended 1993 and 2008); Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act No. 2 of 1996 (FARA)(amended 2004, 2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Vessels >24m are deployed with observers and data reported . •There is a separate box in the log book to report incidental catches of cetaceans (if any) and release of them dead/alive form. This has been incorporated to the e-log book/tab by giving pictures and drop down selection |

| Res. No. | Resolution | Scientific requirement | CPC progress |
|----------|---|------------------------|--|
| 13/05 | On the conservation of whale sharks (<i>Rhincodon typus</i>) | Paragraphs 7– 9 | <p>Catch of whale shark is prohibited by the amended shark fishery management regulation 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fishers are being aware recording of the incidental catches and prompt release in an unharmed condition. • There is a separate box in the log book to report incidental catches •The sanction on violations has been increased up to Rupees one million under the provisions of the Amended Act for High Seas Fishing in 2013. <p>Prohibition of intentional surrounding of whale sharks by purse seiners. Mandatory to carry dip nets on board for purse seines to release whale sharks in live form.(High Seas Fishing Operations Regulations 2014)</p> |
| 13/06 | On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries | Paragraph 5–6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch, retain onboard, tranship, land,store or sell of thresher sharks species, oceanic white tip shark, whale shark and shark finning on board and landing sharks fins detached both within EEZ and high seas areas is prohibited in the consolidated A regulation. published in March 2015 • submitted data for sharks, as required by IOTC data reporting procedures. |
| 15/01 | On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence | Paragraphs 1–10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper Log book onboard is made legally mandatory (catch data collection regulation 2012 (amended 2014) • The log books for year 2019 are printed as per resolution 15/01 and distributed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Log book templates are provided to Secretariat to display on IOTC website. |
| 15/02 | Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) | Paragraphs 1–7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection sheets have been introduced and the port samplers were trained, sampling procedures introduced, Log book has been improved in a way that enabling the calculation of total catch as per the resolution. • .Marine mammals and turtles are protected under Fauna and Flora Protection (amendment) Act 1937(FFPA) (amended 1993 and 2008); Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act No. 2 of 1996 (FARA)(amended 2004, 2013) • Sea bird catches are not reported in Sri Lanka due to the nature of the fishery. There is a separate cage to report incidental catches of sea birds if any and release of them dead/alive from. . <p>Electronic software for catch and effort data recording (E-logbook/tab) with autonomy geo- positions is being developed and a tested for better data collection and generation of reports.</p> |
| 17/05 | On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC | Paragraphs 6, 9, 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the removal of shark fins on board, landing, retention onboard, transhipment and carrying of detached shark fins and • Landing of carcasses of sharks which are not having fins naturally attached to the body at the point of landing is prohibited by law published in March 2015 . • Release of live sharks, especially juveniles and pregnant sharks that are caught incidentally is made lagally mandatory by the above regulation. • Fishers and the data collectors law enforcement officers have made aware and the species identification guides are provided. • Data recorded as per IOTC data reporting requirements and procedures in Resolution 15/02. • The NPOA-Sharks is being amended to ban use /carry onboard the wire trace/shark lines in High Seas fishing vessels and to be published in 2020. |

| Res. No. | Resolution | Scientific requirement | CPC progress |
|----------|--|------------------------|--|
| 18/02 | On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries | Paragraphs 2-5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> record Blue shark catch in accordance with the requirements set out in the Resolution 15/01. The data collection programme has been improved to report accurate blue shark catch, effort, size and discard data to IOTC in accordance with the Resolution 15/02. The domestic catch data to collection and monitor system is given under point (6) this report.. |
| 18/05 | On management measures for the conservation of the Billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish | Paragraphs 7 – 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data recording of catch and effort data is practised by using a log book prepared as per the standards given in the resolution 15/02 in the IOTC area. Use of species identification cards for proper identification of fish species specially to ensure accurate reporting of Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish |
| 18/07 | On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC | Paragraphs 1, 4 | Nominal catches were submitted to IOTC as per the IOTC IRC electronic form covering the most commonly caught elasmobranch species according to records of catches and incidents as established in Resolution 15/01 including zero (0) catches. |

9. LITERATURE CITED [Mandatory]