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To the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission for 2022

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, final scientific data for the previous year was provided to the Secretariat by 30 June of the current year, for all fleets other than longline (e.g. for a National report submitted to the Secretariat in 2022, final data for the 2021 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2022).	NO Data submission for 2021 calendar year still in progress
In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, provisional longline data for the previous year was provided to the Secretariat by 30 June of the current year (e.g. for a National report submitted to the Secretariat in 2022, preliminary data for the 2021 calendar year was provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2022).	NO Data submission for 2021 calendar year still in progress
REMINDER: Final longline data for the previous year is due to the Secretariat by 30 Dec of the current year (e.g. for a National report submitted to the Secretariat in 2021, final data for the 2020 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 December 2021).	

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Summary

Pelagic longline and purse seine are the two main fishing methods used by Australian vessels to target tuna and billfish in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Area of Competence. The number of active longliners and levels of fishing effort are relatively low due to reduced profitability, primarily as a result of lower fish prices and higher operating costs. In 2021, two Australian longliners from the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery and two longliners from the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery operated in the IOTC Area of Competence. They caught 17.8 t of albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), 50.7 t of bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*), 19.9 t of yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), 131 t of swordfish (*Xiphius gladius*) and 0.7 t of striped marlin (*Kajikia audax*). In 2021, three shortfin makos were landed by the Australian longline fleet operating in the IOTC Area of Competence and 3,565 other sharks were discarded/released. In addition, 10.5% of hooks deployed in the WTBF were observed with electronic monitoring in the 2021 calendar year. The actual catch of southern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) in the purse seine fishery was 4,395 t in 2021. There was no skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) caught by purse seine fishing.

1 Background/general fishery information

Australian fisheries targeting tuna and billfish in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Area of Competence are the pelagic longline fisheries – Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (WTBF) and Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) (Appendix A) – and the purse seine fisheries – Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery (SBTF) and the Eastern and Western Skipjack Fisheries (SJF). These five fisheries are managed by the Australian Government through the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA). Other methods such as handline, dropline, trolling and gillnetting capture small amounts of tuna and related species in multi-purpose fisheries, which are managed by the Australian Government and Australian State Governments (e.g. Western Australia). Catches from the SBTF are included in this report, although this information is reported separately to the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna.

2 Fleet structure

2.1 Longline fleet

The number of Australian longline vessels operating in the IOTC Area of Competence has declined since 2000 (61 vessels) with four vessels operating in 2021 (Table 1). One of the factors influencing this decline is reduced profitability, caused by lower prices and higher operating costs, particularly fuel costs.

Historically, most of these vessels have operated in the WTBF (Appendix A) with very little longline effort taking place in the ETBF between 141°E and 150°E. However, in 2021, two vessels from the ETBF and two from the WTBF fished in the IOTC Area of Competence. In recent years, the Australian longline fleet has fished mainly within Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) between the latitudes 20°S and 44°S (96.3% of total effort in 2021).

Most Australian longline vessels range in length from 20 to 35 m and are less than 230 gross registered tonnes. Ice, ice slurry or brine spray systems are mostly used to chill the catch. The majority of the fishing trips undertaken by Australian longline operators are less than 15 days in length (40 trips undertaken in the WTBF in 2021). Vessels fishing on the high seas undertake longer voyages of up to 62 days.

2.2 Purse seine fleet

The purse seine fleet has fluctuated from 5–14 vessels since 1998 (Table 1). The purse seine vessels vary in length from 20 to 45 m and target southern bluefin tuna (SBT; *Thunnus maccoyii*) for farm cage grow-out. There were seven active SBT vessels in 2021.

Table 1 Number of Australian longline and purse seine vessels reporting one or more fishing trips in the IOTC Area of Competence from 1998 to 2021. For the purse seine fleet, the numbers in brackets represent the number of active SBT purse-seine vessels from the total number of purse seiners. The number of vessels >24 metres in length (all methods combined) for each year is also indicated.

	Number of vessels		
Calendar Year	**Longline**	**Purse seine**	**> 24 m**
1998	37	5 (5)	n/a
1999	49	7 (7)	n/a
2000	61	8 (8)	n/a
2001	45	13 (8)	n/a
2002	44	9 (7)	25
2003	36	7 (7)	21
2004	22	7 (6)	17
2005	6	8 (8)	11
2006	4	14 (7)	10
2007	3	11 (6)	9
2008	5	10 (7)	8
2009	4	10 (8)	13
2010	4	9 (7)	13
2011	2	5 (5)	7
2012	4	5 (5)	8
2013	4	5 (5)	11
2014	4	6 (6)	9
2015	7	6 (6)	9
2016	7	7 (7)	10
2017	10	6 (6)	11
2018	5	7 (7)	12
2019	4	7 (7)	10
2020	2	7(7)	9
2021	2	7(7)	9

n/a = data not available

3 Catch and effort by species and gear

3.1 Longline fleet

Australian longline fishing activity and associated catches of tunas and billfishes in the eastern Indian Ocean increased rapidly between 1998 and 2001, especially off Australia's western coast, south of latitude 20°S. Catch and effort then declined and have remained relatively low since 2005, with some annual variation (Figure 1). Swordfish (*Xiphius gladius*) has been the main target species since 1999 (peak catch of 2136 t in 2001) with smaller catches of albacore (*Thunnus alalunga;* peak catch of 94 t in 2001), bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus;* peak catch of 436 t in 2000), yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares;* peak catch of 558 t in 2001) and striped marlin (*Kajikia audax;* peak catch of 23 t in 1999).

Overall catch of the main target species in the fishery increased in 2021 compared to 2020, and longline effort increased from 241,225 hooks in 2020 to 330,701 hooks in 2021 in the IOTC area. The swordfish catch increased from 96.3 t in 2020 to 131 t in 2021 (Table 2a). Bigeye catch increased from 26.3 t in 2020 to 50.7 t in 2021. Yellowfin tuna catch increased from 15.8 t in 2020 to 19.9 t in 2021 (Table 2a). There was an 11 t increase in catch of the 'not elsewhere indicated' (NEI) category (the sum of all species that are 'not elsewhere indicated' in Table 2a). Figure 2a and Figure 2b map the footprint of Australian tuna fishing effort in the IOTC area of competence for 2021 and for 2017–21. Due to confidentiality restrictions that prevent the disclosure of fishing activity by fewer than five vessels, fine-scale effort distribution cannot be reported in the WTBF. Figures 3a and 3b indicate the distribution of the catch in the IOTC Area of Competence. However, the longline catch from the WTBF could not be mapped for 2021 due to confidentiality.

Figure 1 Australian annual catch of primary species in the longline sector of the WTBF, 1986 to 2021

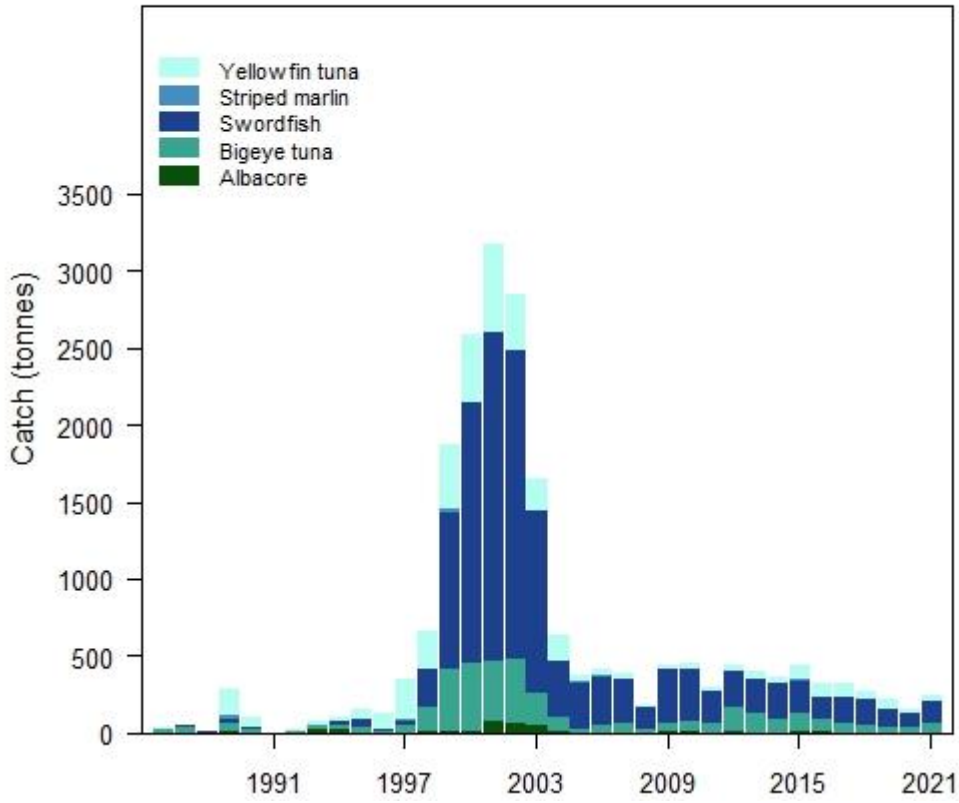


Figure 2a Fishing footprint (shown as 1-degree cells) in the WTBF and ETBF (longline) and in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2021

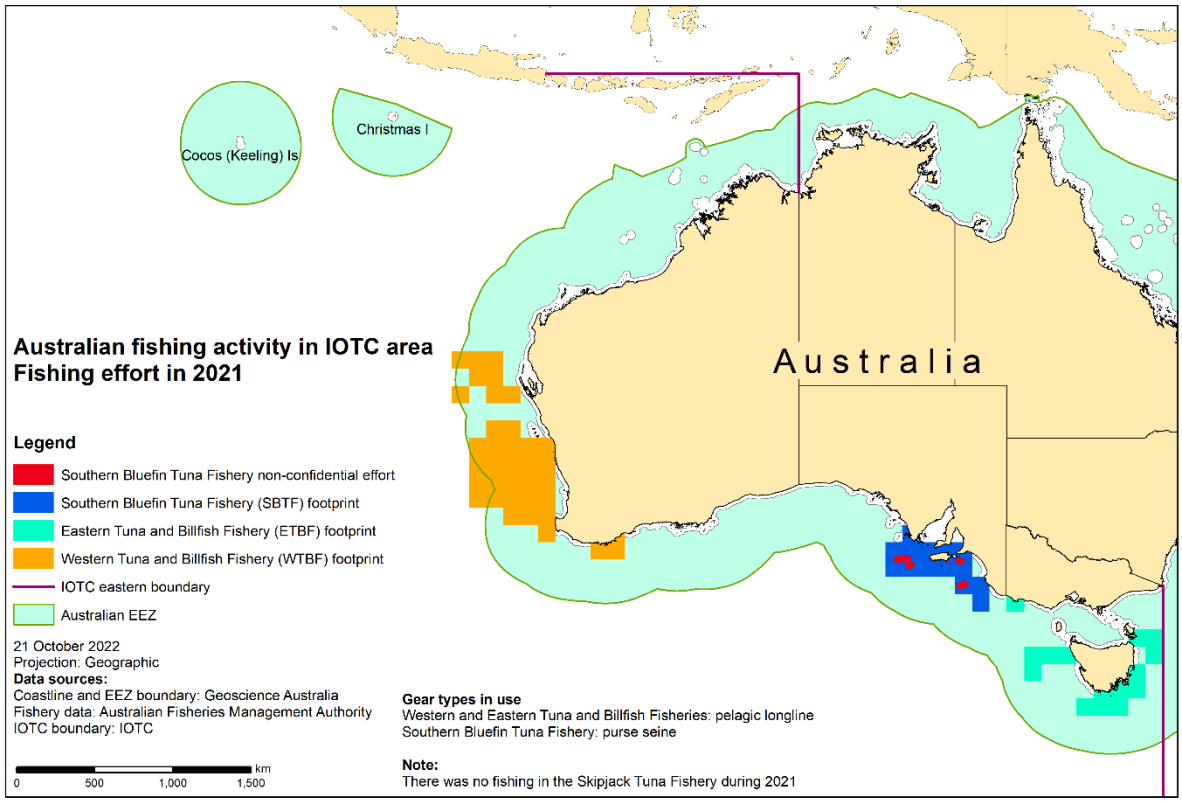


Figure 2b Aggregate fishing footprint (shown as 1-degree cells) in the WTBF and ETBF (longline) and in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2017 to 2021

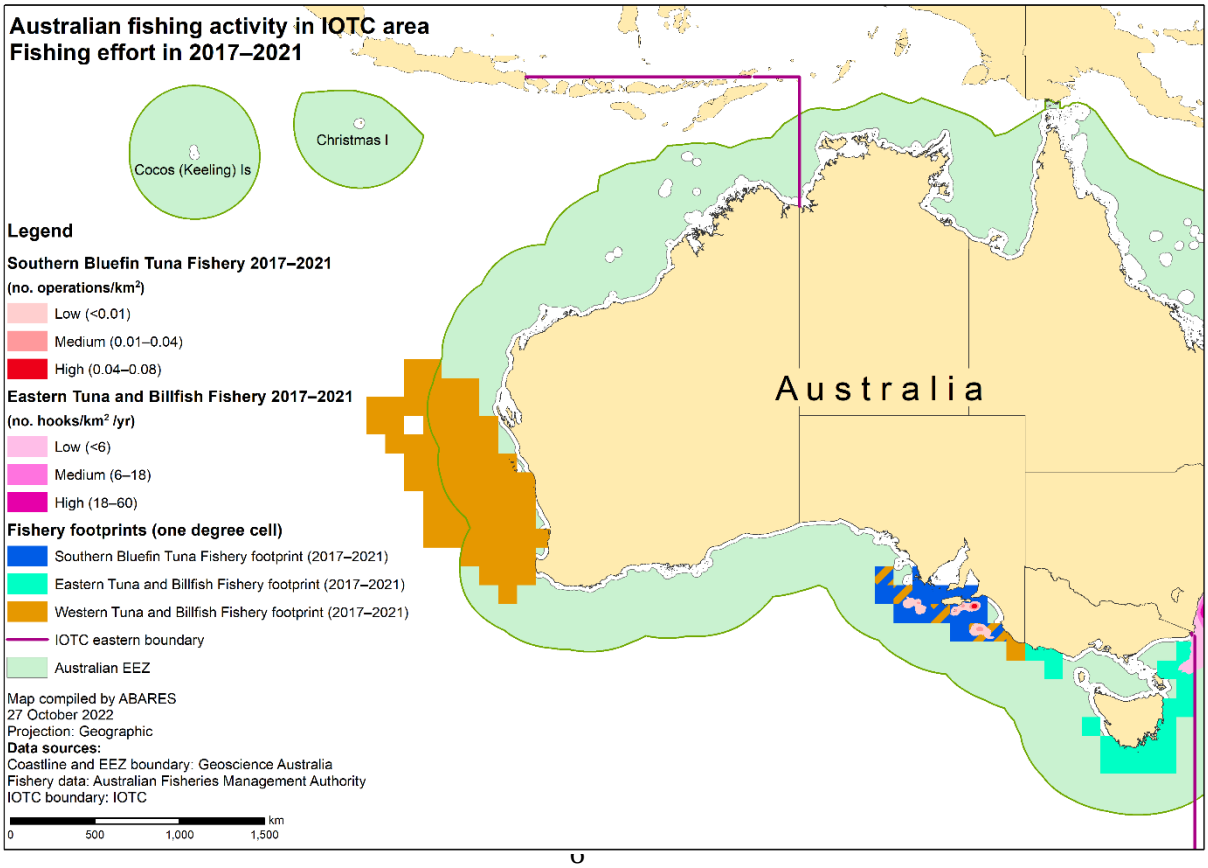


Figure 3a Distribution of catch in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2021. Note that due to the low effort in the longline fisheries, confidentiality rules prohibit the depiction of the 2021 WTBF and ETBF data

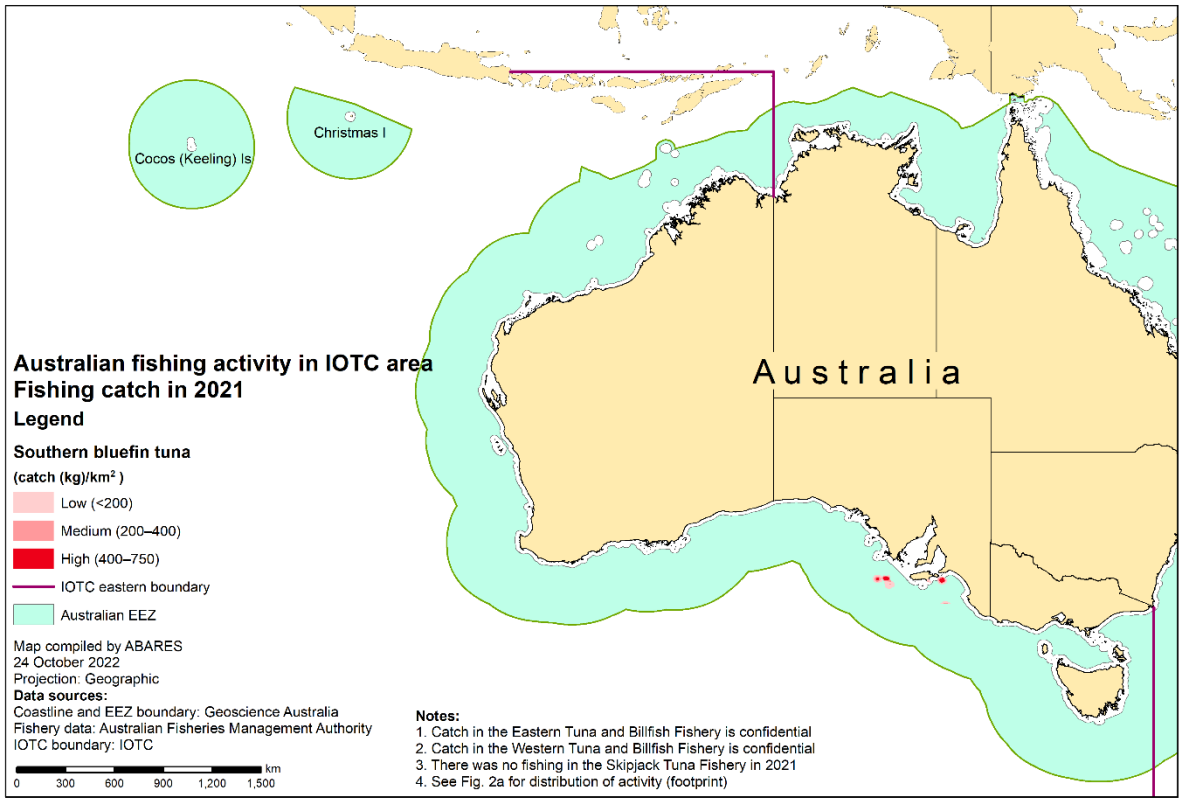
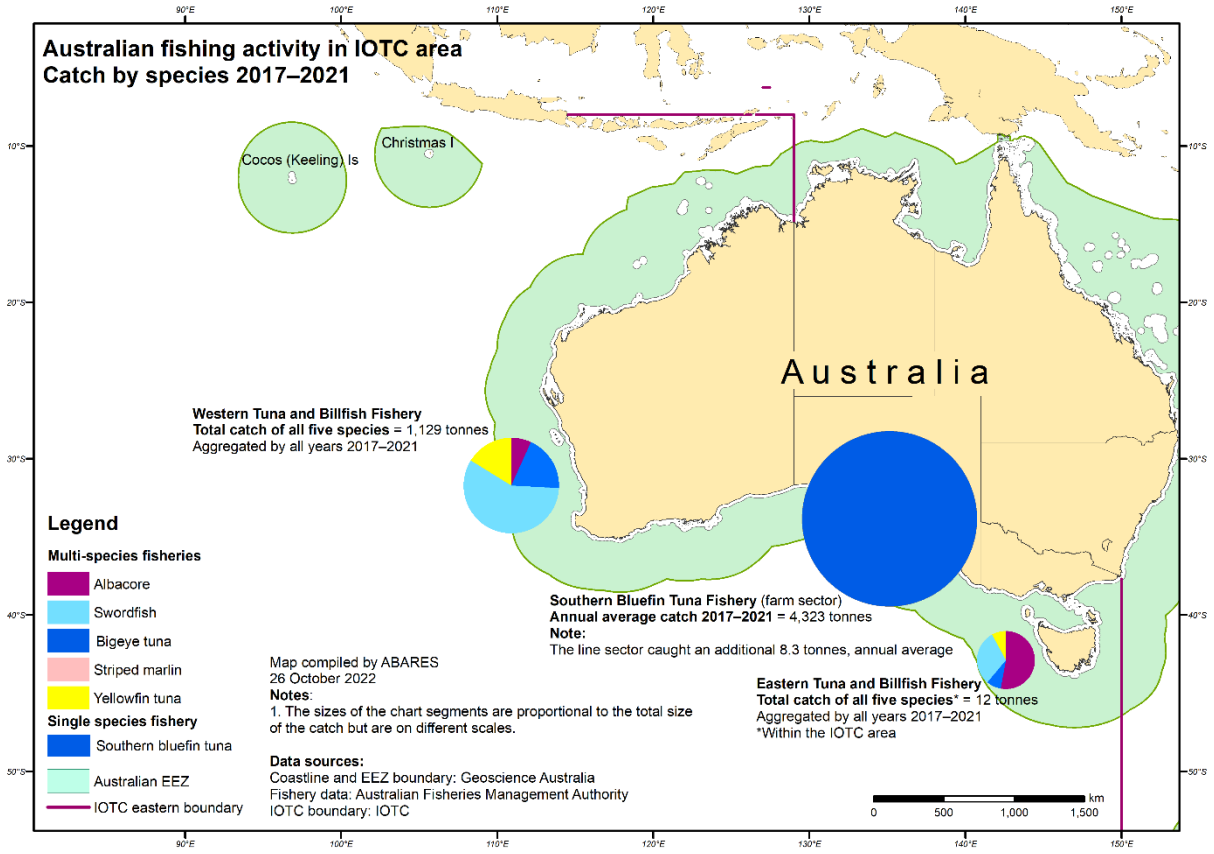


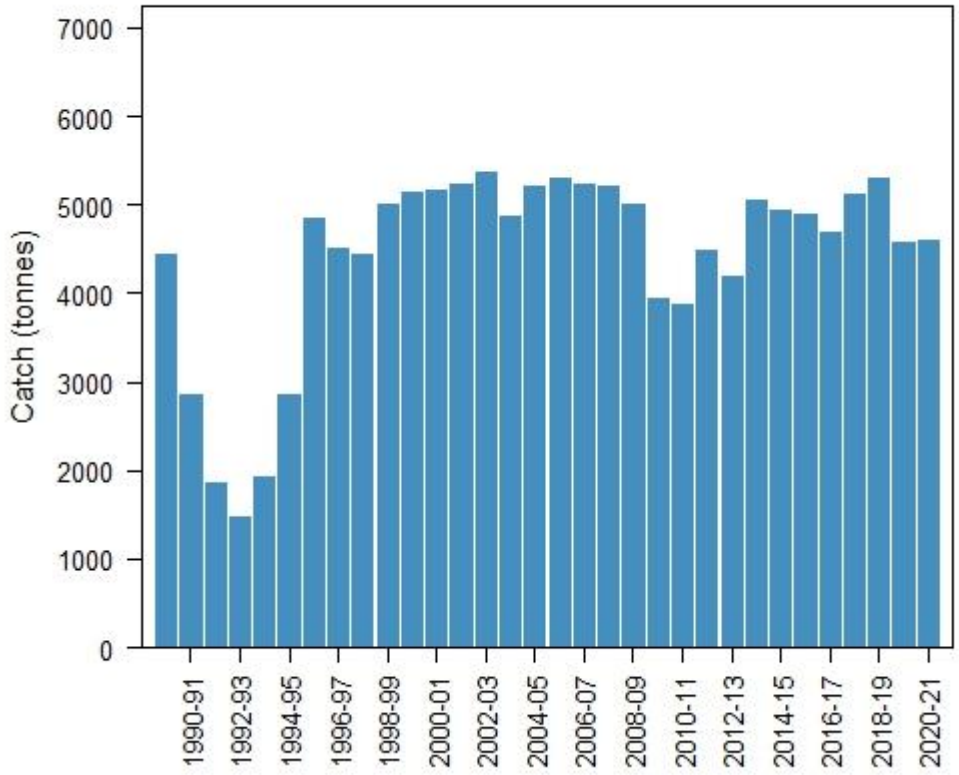
Figure 3b Distribution of catch in the WTBF (longline), ETBF (longline) and in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2017 to 2021



3.2 Purse seine fleet

Purse seine fishing by Australian vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence targets SBT in the Great Australian Bight for grow-out in farm cages at Port Lincoln, South Australia. The fishery is managed in accordance with the requirements of the CCSBT. Effort in the purse-seine sector increased from 142 sets in 2019–20 to 152 sets in the 2020–21 season (Table 2b). The actual catch of SBT taken in the purse seine fishery (derived from catch disposal data) for the 2019–20 fishing season (1 December 2019 to 30 November 2020) was 4,568 t (Table 2b; Figure 4). In 2021, the actual catch was 4,395 t, while for the 2020–21 fishing season (1 December 2020 to 30 November 2021), the actual catch taken was 4,592 t. Distribution of the catch in the SBTF is shown for 2021 in Figure 3a and for 2017–21 in Figure 3b. In some previous fishing seasons, purse-seine vessels have also targeted skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) late in the SBT season. However, this sector has not caught skipjack tuna since 2015.

Figure 4 Fishing season catches of southern bluefin tuna in the purse seine sector of the SBTF, 1989–90 to 2020–21



Multi-purpose fleets

The multi-purpose fisheries (dropline, gillnet, minor line, trawl and troll) typically target a different suite of species (e.g. Spanish mackerel) compared to the longline fishery. In 2021, total tuna catch for gillnet, troll, trawl and line (mainly handline) from state-managed Western Australian fisheries decreased from 2020 (Tables 2c, 2d). In the Commonwealth-managed WTBF, SBTF and ETBF, nine vessels (one pole-and-line vessel, four vessels using rod-and-reel, three vessels using trolling, and one vessel using multiple methods – trotline and trolling) operated in the IOTC Area of Competence in 2021. These vessels caught 13.4 t of southern bluefin tuna, 0.5 t of albacore and 0.2 t of shortfin mako.

Table 2a Total numbers of Australian longline vessels, hooks set, and total catch (tonnes live weight) of the five main tuna and billfish species taken by those vessels operating in the IOTC Area of Competence from 1998 to 2021

Calendar year	Vessel number	Hooks set (thousands)	Albacore	Bigeye tuna	Yellowfin tuna	Swordfish	Striped marlin	NEI[a]	Total catch
1998	37	1,807	25.1	161.1	231.3	238.3	8.8	196.7	1,031.4
1999	49	4,031	29.2	411.6	406.2	1,013.7	22.6	154.1	2,586.0
2000	61	6,246	30.9	436.2	429.1	1,690.5	1.7	42.5	2,726.5
2001	45	6,175	93.9	386.0	557.5	2,135.7	0.0	118.5	4,702.4
2002	44	5,956	72.1	419.5	355.2	2,004.8	0.7	14.2	2,866.3
2003	36	4,000	65.7	205.5	191.3	1,184.0	0.2	100.7	2,526.3
2004	22	1,593	26.6	90.9	152.3	370.0	0.4	46.9	1,300.7
2005	6	773	7.3	31.3	35.9	301.4	4.1	12.3	380.6
2006	4	718	10.6	58.7	37.3	311.2	4.5	14.1	436.4
2007	3	738	12.1	69.1	29.3	281.2	1.6	15.3	404.1
2008	5	237	10.3	26.6	1.2	142.2	0.5	10.5	191.0
2009	4	529	19.9	61.7	11.7	349.3	0.3	11.3	454.3
2010	4	622	18.7	65.3	21.9	349.4	0.5	4.8	460.5
2011	2	360	5.8	50.0	14.1	189.9	0.7	1.4	261.9
2012	4	672	13.1	167.4	23.0	209.3	2.5	1.6	417.3
2013	4	610	14.6	90.6	40.5	203.5	2.0	1.0	352.2
2014	4	449	16.6	75.3	19.0	211.6	0.6	5.4	328.6
2015	7	430	19.3	94.3	72.6	200.6	1.5	3.9	392.3
2016	7	429	30.1	69.4	65.8	133.8	0.9	135.1	435.2
2017	10	532	18.6	59.3	65.1	155.8	1.5	126.4	426.7
2018	5	411	11.9	45.7	37.8	161.2	0.5	1.8	259.0
2019	4	374	15.6	34.5	43.9	112.7	0.8	5.1	212.4
2020	2	241	18.3	26.3	15.8	96.3	0.1	5.2	162.0
2021	2	331	17.8	50.7	19.9	131	0.7	16.2	236.3

[a] NEI denotes the sum of all species that are 'not elsewhere indicated' in the table

Table 2b Purse seine effort and catch (tonnes live weight) of southern bluefin tuna (by fishing season) and skipjack tuna (by calendar year) by Australian vessels fishing in the IOTC Area of Competence

Southern bluefin tuna								Skipjack tuna
Fishing season	Search hours	No. of sets	Estimated catch [a]	Actual catch	Calendar year	Estimated catch	Actual catch	Estimated catch
1994–95	526	104	2,179	2,009	1995	n/a	1,840	n/a
1995–96	631	89	2,859	3,442	1996	n/a	3,121	n/a
1996–97	769	118	3,134	2,505	1997	n/a	2,998	n/a
1997–98	671	143	3,916	3,629	1998	3,290	3,584	n/a
1998–99	972	129	4,418	4,991	1999	5,120	5,325	n/a
1999–00	764	107	4,746	5,131	2000	4,616	5,132	n/a
2000–01	799	129	5,100	5,162	2001	5,319	4,767	1,039
2001–02	1,309	159	5,400	5,234	2002	4,920	4,683	1,144
2002–03	1,276	150	5,188	5,375	2003	5,587	5,792	<1
2003–04	1,202	160	5299	4,874	2004	5,178	4,834	30
2004–05	1,168	139	5,225	5,215	2005	5,330	5,210	<1
2005–06	1,304	156	5,463	5,302	2006	5,852	5,629	446
2006–07	1,459	160	5,091	5,230	2007	4,822	4,809	4
2007–08	1,217	134	4,530	5,211	2008	4,431	5,010	877
2008–09	1,156	139	4,348	5,015	2009	4,316	4,884	855
2009–10	417	78	3,323	3,931	2010	3,660	4,039	0[b]
2010–11	835	106	3,840	3,872	2011	3,909	4,114	0[b]
2011–12	1,150	156	4,328	4,485	2012	4,423	4,444	<1
2012–13	1,021	110	4,039	4,198	2013	4,210	4,561	<1
2013–14	752	101	4,381	5,039	2014	3,649	4,168	0
2014–15	1,235	154	4,789	4,950	2015	4,789	5,252	<1
2015–16	1,076	124	4,826	4,896	2016	5,012	5,222	0
2016–17	1,004	109	4,036	4,683	2017	3,951	4,571	0
2017–18	1,137	191	4,920	5,123	2018	5,281	5,367	0
2018–19	1,366	154	4,750	5,291	2019	4,700	5,388	0
2019-20	1,248	142	4,224	4,568	2020	3,652	3,906	0
2020-21	1,101	152	4,203	4,592	2021	4,030	4,395	0

[a] Note that estimated catch is derived from logbook data while actual catch is derived from catch disposal data; [b] Note that there has been no effort in the Skipjack Tuna Fishery since 2008–09

n/a = data not available

Table 2c Numbers of fishing vessels and catch of tuna and tuna-like species (tonnes live weight) in Western Australian state fisheries by method

Year	Dropline		Gillnet		Line[a]		Trawl		Troll	
	Catch (t)	Vessels	Catch (t)	Vessels	Catch (t)	Vessels	Catch (t)	Vessels	Catch (t)	Vessels
2004	0.6	7	2. 7	9	36.8	46	3 .4	14	435.1	34
2005	0.04	6	2.6	8	46.3	30	5.0	4	310.4	22
2006	n/a	n/a	0.9	6	10.6[b]	30	23.4	10	283.6	18
2007	0.1	5	1.2	8	23.6	24	n/a	n/a	317.8	18
2008	n/a	n/a	5.0	9	12.6	22	n/a	n/a	333.6	26
2009	n/a	n/a	1.3	7	12.0	18	n/a	n/a	285.6	16
2010	n/a	n/a	0.8	6	27.1	13	n/a	n/a	269.4	15
2011	n/a	n/a	1.1	6	14.7	14	n/a	n/a	285.5	17
2012	n/a	n/a	1.5	6	16.4	17	n/a	n/a	316.4	17
2013	n/a	n/a	0.2	6	11.9	16	n/a	n/a	300.5	25
2014	n/a	n/a	0.3	6	41.6	18	n/a	n/a	299.6	26
2015	n/a	n/a	0.4	7	36.3	18	n/a	n/a	285.1	27
2016	n/a	n/a	0.6	7	15.6	12	n/a	n/a	282.4	28
2017	n/a	n/a	0.4	8	13.8	15	<0.5	<3	287.9	19
2018	n/a	n/a	0.2	5	4.4	11	<0.5	<3	225.1	17
2019	n/a	n/a	<0.5	4	3.3	11	n/a	n/a	296.7	18
2020	n/a	n/a	<0.5	<3	1.1	15	<0.5	<3	306.6	30
2021	n/a	n/a	<0.5	5	4.0	17	n/a	n/a	247.9	31

[a] Line consists mainly of handline

[b] Total includes dropline catches for this year as individual method data could not be presented because of state jurisdictional confidentiality reasons (i.e. <5 active vessels using each method)

n/a = data not available

Table 2d Catch of tuna and tuna-like species in Western Australian state fisheries, by species and method, for 2020 and 2021

Year	Species		Live weight (kg)			
	Common name	**Scientific name**	**Gillnet**	**Line**[a]	**Trolling**	**Trawl**
2020	bonitos	*Sarda australis & Cybiosarda elegans*	n/a	<500	4,943	n/a
	bonito, oriental	*Sarda orientalis*	n/a	672	2,437	n/a
	mackerel, grey	*Scomberomorus semifasciatus*	n/a	<500	11,118	n/a
	mackerel, school	*Scomberomorus queenslandicus*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	mackerel, shark	*Grammatorcynus bicarinatus*	n/a	n/a	112	n/a
	mackerel, Spanish	*Scomberomorus commerson*	n/a	<500	287,691	<500
	mackerel, spotted	*Scomberomorus munroi*	n/a	n/a	<500	n/a
	mackerels, general	Scombridae	n/a	<500	n/a	n/a
	tuna, bigeye	*Thunnus obesus*	n/a	<500	n/a	n/a
	tuna, northern bluefin	*Thunnus orientalis*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	tuna, longtail	*Thunnus tonggol*	<500	44	<500	n/a
	tuna, mackerel	*Euthynnus affinis*	n/a	n/a	<500	n/a
	tuna, other	Scombridae	n/a	<500	n/a	n/a
	tuna, skipjack	*Katsuwonus pelamis*	n/a	<500	n/a	n/a
	tuna, yellowfin	*Thunnus albacares*	n/a	92	<500	n/a
	wahoo	*Acanthocybium solandri*	n/a	n/a	<500	n/a
	TOTAL		**n/a**	**1,091**	**306,561**	**n/a**

[a] Line consists mainly of handline
n/a = data not available

Table 2d (cont.) Catch of tuna and tuna-like species in Western Australian state fisheries, by method and species, for 2020 and 2021

Year	Species		Live weight (kg)			
	Common name	**Scientific name**	**Gillnet**	**Line**[a]	**Trolling**	**Trawl**
2021	bonitos	*Sarda australis & Cybiosarda elegans*	<500	n/a	n/a	n/a
	bonito, oriental	*Sarda orientalis*	<500	n/a	n/a	n/a
	mackerel, grey	*Scomberomorus semifasciatus*	n/a	1,743	7,960	n/a
	mackerel, school	*Scomberomorus queenslandicus*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	mackerel, shark	*Grammatorcynus bicarinatus*	<500	n/a	28	n/a
	mackerel, Spanish	*Scomberomorus commerson*	<500	>1,000	236,638	n/a
	mackerel, spotted	*Scomberomorus munroi*	n/a	n/a	<500	n/a
	mackerels, general	Scombridae	<500	273	2,427	n/a
	tuna, bigeye	*Thunnus obesus*	n/a	11	n/a	n/a
	tuna, northern bluefin	*Thunnus orientalis*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	tuna, longtail	*Thunnus tonggol*	n/a	<500	<500	n/a
	tuna, mackerel	*Euthynnus affinis*	n/a	<500	<500	n/a
	tuna, other	Scombridae	n/a	<500	<500	n/a
	tuna, skipjack	*Katsuwonus pelamis*	n/a	<500	163	n/a
	tuna, yellowfin	*Thunnus albacares*	<500	54	189	n/a
	wahoo	*Acanthocybium solandri*	n/a	<500	<500	n/a
	TOTAL		**86**	**3,964**	**247,925**	0

[a] Line consists mainly of handline
n/a = data not available

4 Recreational fishery

Recreational fishing is undertaken in Australian states and the Northern Territory. The Western Australian recreational gamefish fishery targets sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*), black marlin (*Makaira indica*) and yellowfin tuna, with blue marlin (*Makaira mazara*) and striped marlin caught on occasions. There is a daily bag limit of one billfish (sailfish and marlins combined) in Western Australia but the majority of sailfish and marlins are tagged and released alive. There is also a combined daily bag limit of two fish for yellowfin tuna and SBT. In South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania, gamefishers mainly target albacore, skipjack tuna and SBT. Daily bag limits or possession limits also apply in those states.

Recreational fishing surveys have been undertaken in Western Australia (Ryan et al. 2015, 2017) and South Australia in 2013–14 (Giri & Hall 2015), and in Tasmania in 2017–18 (Lyle et al. 2019). However, these surveys have used different methodologies, have large estimation errors, and were generally focussed on species other than tunas. While estimates of total recreational catch for most tuna and tuna-like species within the IOTC area in Australian waters remain uncertain, a survey of recreational fishing for SBT in Australia (all areas) estimated a catch of 270 t (95% confidence interval 232–292 t) in 2018–19 (Tracey et al. 2020).

5 Ecosystem and bycatch issues

In Australia, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is the primary legislation that covers environmental issues, including the ecologically sustainable use of marine resources. The EPBC Act requires that:

- all Commonwealth and State/Northern Territory wild capture marine fisheries with an export component be assessed to determine the extent to which management arrangements will ensure each fishery is being managed in an ecologically sustainable way;
- all Commonwealth fisheries are also assessed to determine the impact of actions taken under a fishery management plan on matters of national environmental significance; and
- all Commonwealth fisheries and any State/Northern Territory-managed fisheries that operate in Commonwealth waters must also be assessed to determine the impacts of fishing operations on cetaceans, listed threatened species and ecological communities, migratory species and listed marine species under the EPBC Act.

The assessments consider the impacts of the fishery on target and non-target species caught and the impacts of fishing on the broader marine environment. Initial and subsequent assessments have been completed for the WTBF, ETBF, SJF and SBTF, and continue to guide the development of improved management arrangements to reduce the ecological impacts of Australian tuna and billfish fisheries (see https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/marine/fisheries/commonwealth-managed-fisheries).

Measures to reduce the ecological impacts of these fisheries rely initially on the analysis of fishery-dependent and -independent data collected through observer programs, logbooks, electronic monitoring and targeted research activities. As data are collected and the impacts of fishing operations on ecologically related species become clearer, strategies to reduce these impacts continue to be developed and refined.

In this context, Australia has:

- continued to use catch and effort logbooks to collect data on the catch of target and non-target species
- introduced and maintained observer and/or electronic monitoring programs in the WTBF, ETBF, SJF and SBTF, which include specific reporting requirements for threatened, endangered and protected (TEP) species
- initiated a range of at-sea programs to trial strategies to reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds caught during longlining operations (e.g. increasing line sink rates)
- introduced detailed strategies to reduce bycatch and impacts on ecologically related species, performance measures to monitor progress, and reporting and review targets to assess the effectiveness of these strategies, and refine them where necessary. An important part of these strategies is the development of fishing industry codes of practice to reduce impacts on ecologically related species (see below).

Each fishery has been subject to Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) and an Ecological Risk Management (ERM) process in response to the ERA.

The ERA/ERM framework aims to inform government agencies and stakeholders of priorities for research, data collection, monitoring and management, and ensure there is a high level of confidence in verifiable results.

ERAs have been completed for fisheries relevant to the IOTC (see below). These reports are available at: (http://www.afma.gov.au/sustainability-environment/ecological-risk-management-strategies/).

The ERAs rely on existing biological and catch information and consider five ecosystem components: target species, byproduct and bycatch species, threatened, endangered or protected (TEP) species, habitats, and communities.

For species, there are three levels at which an ERA may be conducted: Level 1 (Scoping); Level 2 (Productivity and Susceptibility Assessment [PSA]; Sustainability Assessment for Fishing Effects [SAFE]) and Level 3 (fully quantitative assessments). Risk to species are categorised at high, medium or low according to the methodology.

Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

The most recent ERA for the ETBF, which overlaps but sits mostly east of the IOTC area of competence, was finalised in 2019 (Sporcic et al. 2018). Of 261 species evaluated at ERA level 2, 8 species were found to be at potential high risk after productivity susceptibility analysis or sustainability assessment for fishing effects. The subsequent residual risk analysis, examining logbook and observer data, demonstrated that there was a low or zero level of reported interactions and/or higher survivability than assumed in the initial analyses, reducing the risk posed by the fishery to these species to medium or low. There was no requirement to progress to a level 3 analysis in the most recent ERA.

Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery

A level 2 ecological risk assessment (ecological risk assessment for effect of fishing) of 50 species across 3 ecological components was completed in 2020. No high risks were identified for any components assessed in the southern bluefin tuna purse-seine sub-fishery from internal activities (Bulman, Sporcic & Fuller 2020).

Skipjack Tuna Fishery

Using a Level 2 PSA assessment, 320 species were assessed (Daley et al. 2007; Zhou, Fuller & Smith, 2009; AFMA 2010a). After the residual risk assessment was applied, 25 species, mostly TEP species, were deemed to be at high risk. Two TEP shark species were assessed as part of the Level 2 SAFE assessment and deemed to be at low risk from the impacts of fishing. Other TEP species found to be at high risk in the PSA did not undergo further assessment.

It should be noted that the Skipjack Tuna Fishery has been inactive since 2009, hence there has been no ecological risk from the fishery since then.

Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery

The Level 2 SAFE ERA conducted in 2009 examined 187 fish species in the WTBF (38 chondrichthyans and 149 teleosts), all of which were classified as being at low risk (Zhou, Smith & Fuller 2009). While no shark species was identified as high risk, the report noted that an increase in effort could move some species to a higher-risk category. Effort has decreased since that time. A priority action identified in the WTBF ecological risk management report is to monitor the catch of, and level of interaction with sharks (AFMA 2010b).

5.1 Bycatch and discard work plan

In response to bycatch issues, AFMA formulated a Bycatch and Discard Work Plan for both the WTBF and ETBF (AFMA 2014). The work plan outlines a series of measures to improve the monitoring of bycatch and reduce fishery impacts on bycatch species identified in the ERA process as being at high risk from fishing operations. Bycatch and Discard Workplan measures in relation to the ETBF have been incorporated into the ETBF overall Fishery Management Strategy.

5.2 Sharks

5.2.1 NPOA-Sharks

Australia's National Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA-Sharks), first released in 2004, was reviewed and revised in July 2012 (Shark-plan 2) (DAFF 2012). It is currently under review again. Consistent with the International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks), Shark-plan 2 incorporates scientific information and issues identified in the 2009 Shark Assessment Report (Bensley et al. 2009). Shark-plan 2 can be found at:
http://www.agriculture.gov.au/fisheries/environment/sharks/sharkplan-2

The most recent Shark assessment report was released in 2019 (Woodhams & Harte 2018). This report can be found at: http://agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/fisheries/fisheries-research/shark-assessment-report-2018#download-the-full-report. An updated Shark assessment report is expected in late 2022.

5.2.2 Shark catch and finning regulations

The Australian Commonwealth prohibits the possession or landing of fins separate from shark carcasses. There is a landing limit of 20 sharks per longline vessel per fishing trip, and a ban on wire traces to decrease the likelihood of retaining shark. Longline vessels undertaking single jurisdiction high seas trips may apply for a permit to retain 100 sharks per fishing trip, of which only 80 can be blue sharks.

Shortfin mako, longfin mako and porbeagle sharks were listed under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) in 2008, which triggered a mandatory legal obligation to list them for protection under the Australian EPBC Act. Listing under the EPBC Act came into effect on 29 January 2010. As a consequence, in February 2010 all Australian fisheries that interact with these species in Commonwealth waters were assessed under the EPBC Act. The management arrangements for each fishery were reaccredited on the basis that the arrangements in place required all reasonable steps to be taken to ensure that shortfin and longfin makos and porbeagles are not killed or injured as a result of fishing activities. These species may be retained in accredited fisheries if the sharks are dead on hauling to the vessel. Live caught specimens must be released unharmed and fishers are required to report interactions. Australia requires all tuna longline vessels to carry line cutters and de-hookers to ensure the safe release of shark and turtle species in the water, which may help improve their chances of survival.

A number of species for which Australia is a range state were added to Appendix I and/or II of the CMS at its 11th Conference of Parties in November 2014. Following the completion of domestic processes, the following species were included in the list of migratory species under the Australian EPBC Act:

- *Anoxypristis cuspidata* (narrow sawfish)
- *Pristis clavata* (dwarf sawfish)
- *Pristis zijsron* (green sawfish)
- *Pristis pristis* (largetooth sawfish)
- *Carcharhinus falciformis* (silky shark)
- *Manta alfredi* (reef manta ray)
- *Mobula eregoodootenkee* (pygmy devil ray)
- *Mobula japanica* (Japanese devil ray)
- *Mobula thurstoni* (bentfin devil ray)

The full list of migratory species can be found at: http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicshowmigratory.pl

As listed migratory species, it is now an offence to kill, injure, take, trade, keep or move these species in Commonwealth waters. Any interactions with the above species in Commonwealth waters will also need to be reported, as is currently the case with other protected species such as dugongs and whale sharks. Further information on reporting requirements can be found at:

http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/listed-species-and-ecological-communities-notification

In the WTBF, a number of sharks and rays are not allowed to be taken. These are:

- Great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*)
- Grey nurse shark (*Carcharias taurus*)
- Oceanic whitetip (*Carcharhinus longimanus*)
- Silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*)
- Thresher shark (Family Alopiidae)
- Mobulid rays (Family Mobulidae)

5.2.3 Blue sharks

Per IOTC Resolution 18.02, paragraph 4, Australian operators may not take more than 80 blue sharks per trip. The number of sharks taken are monitored via compulsory logbooks and 100% electronic monitoring coverage of the longline fleet.

5.2.4 Interactions

Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery

Total interactions by the Commonwealth Australian longline fleet with shark species in the IOTC Area of Competence are provided in Tables 3a, 3b and 4. In 2021, three shortfin makos were landed (Table 3a, 3b), while 3,565 individual sharks were discarded/released (Table 4). No information is currently available from logbooks on the life status of discarded/released sharks, other than those considered to be threatened species under the EPBC Act. In 2021, e-monitoring data recorded 254 sharks captured in the WTBF, mainly crocodile sharks and blue sharks. Of these sharks, 2 were dead, 45 were released alive and 207 were released with an undetermined life status.

Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

As very little effort from the ETBF has occurred in the IOTC Area of Competence in recent years, a full description of shark interactions is not provided here, but can be found in Australia's national report to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC; Blake, D'Alberto & Patterson, 2022).

Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery

No interactions with sharks were reported by observers in the IOTC Area of Competence relevant to the SBTF in 2021. All interactions with ecologically related species are reported to the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT; Patterson & Hobsbawn 2022).

Minor line fisheries

Other fisheries in Western Australia use a variety of minor line gear types (see. Tables 2c, 2d) which take small incidental catches of tuna and tuna-like species. No data are available on the interaction of these minor line fisheries with sharks. However, given the nature of the fishing and the small catches in these fisheries, shark catches are likely negligible.

Table 3a Total number of sharks, by species, retained by Australian longline vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence from 2011 to 2021 (source: AFMA logbook data)

Common name	Scientific name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Blacktip shark	*Carcharhinus* spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blue shark	*Prionace glauca*	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
Bronze whaler	*Carcharhinus brachyurus*	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cookie-cutter shark	*Isistius brasiliensis*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Crocodile shark	*Pseudocarcharias kamoharai*	0	16	20	0	10	0	0	1	1	0	0
Dusky shark	*Carcharhinus obscurus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hammerhead	*Sphyrna* spp.	13	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oceanic whitetip	*Carcharhinus longimanus*	11	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Porbeagle	*Lamna nasus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	2	0	0	0
Roughskin shark	*Centroscymnus* spp.; *Deania* spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandbar shark	*Carcharhinus plumbeus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scalloped hammerhead	*Sphyrna lewini*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shortfin mako	*Isurus oxyrinchus*	43	6	34	73	0	92	20	1	0	0	3
Longfin mako	*Isurus paucus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Silky shark	*Carcharhinus falciformis*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smooth hammerhead	*Sphyrna zygaena*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thresher shark	*Alopias vulpinus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tiger shark	*Galeocerdo cuvier*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shark – other	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL		**69**	**35**	**58**	**73**	**10**	**92**	**50**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**3**

Table 3b Total weight (tonnes trunked weight) of shark species retained by Australian longline vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence from 2011 to 2021 (source: AFMA logbook data)

Common name	Scientific name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Blacktip shark	*Carcharhinus* spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blue shark	*Prionace glauca*	0.04	0.05	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.0	0	0	0
Bronze whaler	*Carcharhinus brachyurus*	0	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cookie-cutter shark	*Isistius brasiliensis*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0
Crocodile shark	*Pseudocarcharias kamoharai*	0	0.03	0.04	0	0.03	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0
Dusky shark	*Carcharhinus obscurus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hammerhead	*Sphyrna* spp.	0.2	0	0.04	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oceanic whitetip	*Carcharhinus longimanus*	0.2	0.3	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Porbeagle	*Lamna nasus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	0.05	0	0	0
Roughskin shark	*Centroscymnus* spp.; *Deania* spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandbar shark	*Carcharhinus plumbeus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scalloped hammerhead	*Sphyrna lewini*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shortfin mako	*Isurus oxyrinchus*	0.6	0.1	0.5	1.5	0	2.2	0.9	0.01	0	0	0.22
Longfin mako	*Isurus paucus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Silky shark	*Carcharhinus falciformis*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smooth hammerhead	*Sphyrna zygaena*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thresher shark	*Alopias vulpinus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tiger shark	*Galeocerdo cuvier*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shark – other	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL		**1.1**	**0.5**	**0.6**	**1.5**	**0.03**	**2.2**	**1.8**	**0.07**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.22**

Table 4 Total number of sharks, by species, released/discarded by Australian longline vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence from 2011 to 2021 (source: AFMA logbook data)

Common name	Scientific name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Blacktip shark	*Carcharhinus* spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blue shark	*Prionace glauca*	5 148	5 315	3 333	3 273	2 315	3 309	6 013	2 624	1 343	1326	1163
Bronze whaler	*Carcharhinus brachyurus*	1	39	27	106	11	12	63	47	25	22	37
Cookie-cutter shark	*Isistius brasiliensis*	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	2	0	0
Crocodile shark	*Pseudocarcharias kamoharai*	7 167	4 880	2 118	2 911	2 716	2 378	3 299	3 514	2 720	1696	1697
Dusky shark	*Carcharhinus obscurus*	0	1	0	11	0	111	86	3	6	0	0
Hammerhead	*Sphyrna* spp.	6	96	7	39	91	45	74	48	44	11	18
Oceanic whitetip	*Carcharhinus longimanus*	51	131	12	14	11	36	34	52	50	44	42
Pelagic Thresher	*Alopias pelagicus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1
Porbeagle	*Lamna nasus*	0	0	0	7	3	0	129	5	9	16	1
Roughskin shark	*Centroscymnus* spp.; *Deania* spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandbar shark	*Carcharhinus plumbeus*	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scalloped hammerhead	*Sphyrna lewini*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shortfin mako	*Isurus oxyrinchus*	525	758	290	238	361	333	425	257	142	165	112
Longfin mako	*Isurus paucus*	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Silky shark	*Carcharhinus falciformis*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smooth hammerhead	*Sphyrna zygaena*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thresher shark	*Alopias vulpinus*	4	14	84	19	32	18	26	45	20	19	16
Tiger shark	*Galeocerdo cuvier*	0	1	1	2	8	4	31	3	7	9	4
Shark – other	-	0	132	0	0	4	0	1	1	5	294	474
TOTAL		**12 902**	**11 371**	**5 875**	**6 621**	**5 553**	**6 247**	**10 184**	**6 599**	**4 375**	**3603**	**3565**

5.3 Seabirds

Seabirds are opportunistic feeders and are attracted to longline vessels, particularly during line setting and hauling, when the seabirds are at risk of being caught or entangled in the fishing gear. Seabirds are also attracted to discarded offal and are at risk of ingesting discarded hooks still attached to discarded baits. The design of purse-seine nets and the way this fishing gear is deployed, means that the risk of seabird bycatch during purse seine fishing operations is low.

5.3.1 Threat Abatement Plan

The incidental catch (or bycatch) of seabirds during oceanic longline fishing operations was listed as a key threatening process on 24 July 1995. Threat abatement plans for this key threatening process have been in place since 1998 with the current plan being the *Threat Abatement Plan for the incidental catch (or bycatch) of seabirds during oceanic longline fishing operations 2018* (Commonwealth of Australia 2018). The ultimate aim of this plan is to achieve zero bycatch of seabirds from longline fishing in Commonwealth fisheries, especially threatened albatross and petrel species. The plan is subject to review within five years and is available at the following link: https://www.antarctica.gov.au/about-antarctica/environment/plants-and-animals/threat-abatement-plan-seabirds/

Considerable progress has been made under successive threat abatement plans to reduce the impact of pelagic longlining on seabirds (Commonwealth of Australia 2018). The incidental bycatch rates for several fisheries are well below 0.01 or 0.05 birds per 1000 hooks, which are the maximum permissible levels set as performance criteria for different fisheries under the current plan, and which apply to individual fishing seasons and fishing areas, as relevant. This reduction in bycatch rates has been achieved through the combined efforts of the fishing industry, researchers and non-governmental stakeholders working with government to reduce seabird bycatch in longline fisheries in a feasible, effective, and efficient way. The prescriptions in the current plan recognise this success and seek to further reduce the incidental capture of seabirds.

Information on the level and nature of interactions between seabirds and fishing gear has increased significantly since 1995, and there is now extensive information available upon which to base decision-making. Considerable research and development activities have been undertaken into seabird bycatch mitigation measures including at-sea trials. The prescriptions in the latest threat abatement plan also draw on best and improving practices in seabird bycatch mitigation for pelagic longline fishing developed under the *Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels* (ACAP). This international agreement, to which Australia is a Party, aims to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels.

Threat abatement plans must specify actions needed to achieve their objective. Under the current plan:

- AFMA will require all pelagic longline tuna fishers operating within either the ETBF or WTBF, or both fisheries, southwards of the parallel of 25 degrees South to:
    a. employ a line-weighting strategy approved by AFMA that enables the bait to be rapidly taken below the reach of most seabirds;
    b. employ at least one bird-scaring line constructed to a specified standard approved by AFMA, or use another proven mitigation measure approved by AFMA for use without such a line;

c. not discharge offal during line setting; and

d. employ, as part of an adaptive management approach to seabird bycatch mitigation, such other mitigation measures as AFMA may stipulate following consultation with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (including, but not limited to, use of bird exclusion devices and/or managing offal discharge during line hauling, night setting, and area closures).

- AFMA will continue to require domestic and foreign vessels in all longline fisheries operating within Australian jurisdiction to adopt proven mitigation measures that ensure the performance criteria for each fishery are achieved in all areas and seasons.
- AFMA will implement an appropriate management response if identified circumstances occur, or data analysis indicates that the performance criteria, defined in this threat abatement plan, have not been met in any fishing area, season or fishery, or that independent monitoring has dropped below acceptable levels. Consistent with an adaptive management approach, the management response will be implemented as soon as practical, but no later than within three months of identification of a problem.
- AFMA require that seabird bycatch in all fishing areas and seasons in the ETBF and WTBF is less than 0.05 birds per 1000 hooks.
- Areas within the ETBF or WTBF south of the parallel of 25 degrees South are divided for the purposes of the above bycatch rate criteria into five-degree latitudinal bands. Seasons are defined, for the purposes of the criteria, into two: summer 1 September – 30 April, and winter 1 May – 31 August.

5.3.2 NPOA-Seabirds

Australia has developed a National Plan of Action to minimise the incidental catch of seabirds in Australian capture fisheries (NPOA-Seabirds) to address the potential risk posed to seabirds by all fishing methods (https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/sitecollectiondocuments/fisheries/environment/bycatch/npoa-seabirds.pdf). NPOA-Seabirds applies to all commercial, recreational and Indigenous capture fisheries within Australian jurisdiction, as well as to fishing undertaken by Australian-flagged fishing vessels on the high seas including areas governed by regional fisheries and conservation bodies. The goal of the NPOA–Seabirds is to minimise and, where practicable, eliminate the incidental catch of seabirds in capture fisheries. To achieve this, NPOA-Seabirds seeks to identify and understand all sources of seabird mortality from fishing practices with a view to developing an appropriate response to mitigate the effects of these practices on seabird species. The NPOA-Seabirds complements the FAO's best practice technical guidelines for member countries to use when drafting NPOAs, which recommends fishing methods apart from longline (particularly gillnet and trawl) be assessed for risk, and mitigation methods be developed and prescribed when drafting an NPOA.

5.3.3 Recovery Plan

A *National Recovery Plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels* in Australia has been in place since 2001, with the current recovery plan adopted in 2011 (https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/albatrosses-and-giant-petrels-recovery-plan.pdf).

The recovery plan's objective is to ensure the long-term survival and recovery of albatross and giant petrel populations breeding and foraging in Australian jurisdiction. The recovery plan sets out a coordinated conservation strategy for albatrosses and giant petrels listed as threatened under the EPBC Act. It considers threats to albatrosses and giant petrels both at terrestrial breeding sites and at-sea in their foraging habitat. The recovery plan also collects specific data on population trends of those threatened species found breeding in Australia. A five-year review of the recovery plan was completed in early 2016. An updated *Draft National Recovery Plan for Albatrosses and Petrels (2021)* closed for public comment in August 2021 and will replace the previous plan once finalised.

5.3.4 Mitigation measures

The mitigation measures required in the WTBF are detailed in Appendix B and include the use of weighted lines and tori lines when fishing south of 25°S, where the majority of fishing occurred in 2021; 100% of vessels used these methods in 2021. This requirement is the same in the ETBF. Of the sets done in the IOTC area in 2021, 88.8% were at night.

5.3.5 Interactions

Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery

The abundance of seabirds on the west coast of Australia and the level of fishing effort for tuna-like species are considerably lower than on the east coast. In addition, the WTBF predominantly targets swordfish and operates at night, which reduces the risk of interactions with many species of seabirds vulnerable to bycatch. While observer data are only available for recent years, when fishing activity has been very low, the data indicate that seabird interactions are well below the limit of 0.05 seabirds per 1,000 hooks in each fishing area prescribed by the threat abatement plan. In 2021, there were three observed (using electronic monitoring, hereafter referred to as 'observed') interactions with seabirds (all shearwaters and all released alive; Tables 5 and 6). Eight interactions were recorded in logbooks (eight flesh footed shearwaters, seven of which were released alive and one dead).

Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

With the implementation of the original threat abatement plan (TAP) in 1998, a large proportion of the ETBF longline fleet began to set their lines during the night to avoid interactions with albatross species. Through a number of at-sea trials and the subsequent improvements to mitigation measures, the total catch of all seabirds in the fishery was considerably reduced. More recently, a small number of vessels in the ETBF experienced increased interaction rates and this has led to the implementation of a strengthened individual vessel focussed management approach that includes in-season monitoring (via EM) and additional mitigation requirements.

In 2021, no seabird interactions were recorded in the IOTC Area of Competence by the ETBF by observers or logbooks. A full description of seabird interactions in the ETBF is provided in Australia's national report to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (Blake, D'Alberto & Patterson 2022).

Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery

Observers did not report any seabird interactions in the purse seine sector in 2019–20 or 2020–21. All interactions with ecologically related species from the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery are reported to the CCSBT (e.g. Patterson & Hobsbawn 2022).

Table 5 Observed seabird interaction data for the Australian WTBF longline fleet, 2021

Fishery		Observed					
Area	Total effort	Total observed effort	Observer coverage	Captures (number)	Mortalities (number)	Live releases (number)	Mortality estimate (number)[1]
WTBF	311,841	32,739	10.5%	0	0	3	0

1 = Raised estimate of mortality

5.4 Marine turtles

5.4.1 Recovery Plan

A Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia was developed, with an overall objective to reduce the detrimental impacts on Australian populations of marine turtles and hence promote their recovery in the wild (http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/turtle-recovery/index.html).

5.4.2 Interactions

Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery

In the WTBF, no turtle interactions were observed in 2021 (Tables 6 and 7). Five turtle interactions were recorded in logbooks (all leatherback turtle), all of which were released alive.

Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

In 2021, no turtle interactions were recorded in the IOTC Area of Competence by the ETBF by observers or logbooks. A full description of sea turtle interactions in the ETBF can be found in Australia's national report to the WCPFC (Blake, D'Alberto & Patterson 2022).

Southern Tuna Bluefin Fishery

Observers did not report any turtle interactions in the purse seine sector in 2019–20 or 2020–21. All interactions with ecologically related species are reported to the CCSBT (Patterson & Hobsbawn 2022).

Table 6 Observed annual estimated captures of species of special interest (seabirds, turtles and marine mammals) for the Australian longline fleet (Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery), in the IOTC Area of Competence, for 2011 to 2021 (source: AFMA electronic monitoring data and observer program data)

Group	Common name	Scientific name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Seabirds	Yellow-nosed albatross	*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Albatrosses	*Diomedeidae - undifferentiated*	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Flesh footed shearwater	*Puffinus carneipes*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Petrels, prions and shearwaters	*Procellariidae – undifferentiated*	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Turtles	Loggerhead turtle	*Caretta caretta*	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
	Hawksbill turtle	*Eretmochelys imbricata*	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Leatherback turtle	*Dermochelys coriacea*	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	4	3	2	0
	Green turtle	*Chelonia mydas*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Olive Ridley turtle	*Lepidochelys olivacea*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sea turtles	*Cheloniidae - undifferentiated*	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0
Mammals	Australian fur seal	*Arctocephalus pusillus doriferus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Whales	*Whales - undifferentiated (order Cetacea, in part)*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

Table 7 Observed annual captures and fate of marine turtles for the Australian longline fleet (Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery), in the IOTC Area of Competence, for 2009 to 2021 (source: AFMA electronic monitoring data and observer program data)

	Fishery			Observed				
Year	Lat	Long	Total effort	Total observed effort	Species	Captures (number)	Mortalities (number)	Live releases (number)
2010	30	110	619,220	15,330	Leatherback	1	0	1
2011	n/a	n/a	359,832	6,232	n/a	0	n/a	n/a
2012	10	95	672,792	119,757	Leatherback	1	0	1
2013	n/a	n/a	609,995	0	n/a	0	n/a	n/a
2014	30	110	451,275	41,066	Hawksbill	1	0	1
2014	30	110	451,275	41,066	Leatherback	1	0	1
2015[a]	n/a	n/a	428,662	30,435	n/a	0	n/a	n/a
2016[b]	30	110	353,313	36,038	Leatherback	1	0	1
2017	25	110	417,997	48,795	Loggerhead	1	0	1
2017	30	110	417,997	48,795	Leatherback	1	0	1
2017	25	110	417,997	48,795	Leatherback	1	0	1
2017	25	110	417,997	48,795	Unidentified	1	0	1
2018	25	110	404,880	52,510	Loggerhead	1	0	1
2018	30	110	404,880	52,510	Leatherback	3	0	3
2018	25	110	404,880	52,510	Leatherback	1	0	1
2018	30	110	404,880	52,510	Unidentified	1	0	1
2019	25	110	373,810	47,047	Leatherback	2	0	2
2019	25	110	373,810	47,047	Unidentified	2	0	2
2019	30	110	373,810	47,047	Leatherback	1	0	1
2020	30	110	241,225	26,460	Leatherback	2	0	2

n/a = not applicable; a Note that observer coverage in 2015 includes both human observers and data obtained from electronic monitoring systems; b Note that since 1 July 2015 all coverage is by electronic monitoring.

6 National data collection and processing systems

6.1 Logbooks

Catch and effort data continue to be collected in compulsory daily fishing logbooks for the Australian longline and purse seine vessels operating in the IOTC Area of Competence. AFMA distributes, collects, and processes these logbooks. Logbooks have been in place for purse seiners in the SBTF and SJF since the 1960s. Logbooks for Australian longline fisheries first began in 1986. The current Longline Daily Fishing Log, AL06 has existed since 2007. Electronic logbooks have been implemented for the ETBF and the WTBF.

Disposal of catch in port is monitored for the WTBF and ETBF longline, and the SJF and SBT purse seine fisheries.

6.2 Vessel monitoring system

A Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) has been required on all boats in all Commonwealth managed-fisheries since 1 July 2007, including the WTBF, ETBF, SJF and SBTF.

6.3 Electronic monitoring

In both the ETBF and WTBF, electronic monitoring (e-monitoring) has been in place since July 2015 and is mandatory for all longline vessels. E-monitoring is a system of strategically placed video cameras and sensors capable of monitoring and recording fishing activities, which can be reviewed at a later point to verify reported data, such as logbooks.

6.4 Observer program

6.4.1 Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery

In 2007, an ongoing observer program was implemented in the WTBF with a target level of observer coverage set at 5%. In 2021, observer coverage (through e-monitoring) was 10.5% of hooks set (32,739 hooks; Table 8).

6.4.2 Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

Two longline vessels in the ETBF fished in the IOTC Area of Competence in 2021. As with the WTBF, this vessel was subject to compulsory e-monitoring. Observer coverage rates in the ETBF are reported to the WCPFC (Blake, D'Alberto & Patterson 2022).

6.4.3 Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery

The target observer coverage for the SBT purse seine fleet operating out of Port Lincoln is 10% of the total catch and effort for the fishery. During the 2020–21 quota year, Australian observers spent 95 days at sea. They observed purse-seine activities for 28 days and tow activities for 17 days. The observers monitored 20 purse seine sets where fish were retained, and 13 shots where fish were released because fish were deemed to be too small, representing 13.2% coverage for sets where fish were retained. This equates to 14.1% of the total estimated catch.

6.4.4 Regional Observer Scheme

In March 2010, the IOTC passed Resolution 10/04 on a regional observer scheme, which was superseded by Resolution 11/04, and more recently by Resolution 22/04, which specifies:

3) *In order to improve the collection of scientific data, each CPC shall ensure that all fishing vessels of 24 meters length overall and above and under 24 meters, if they operate outside the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the flag CPC and in the IOTC area of competence, comply with the minimum observer coverage of 5% as defined by the number of operations/sets.*

4) *The IOTC Scientific Committee, in collaboration with the Compliance Committee, shall develop and agree on minimum standards for the use of EMS for purse seine, longline, bait boat (pole and line), handline, and gillnet fleets by 2023 at the latest, including on modalities of the substitution of the human observer coverage by an EMS, taking into account factors such as, the principles and regulations regarding minimum safe manning requirements. The Commission may consider and adopt these standards by 2024 in a separate Resolution.*

5) *Once the EMS standards are adopted and providing CPCs meet the minimum mandatory ROS data reporting standards, the minimum human observer coverage provided for in paragraph 3 may be complemented or substituted by means of an EMS. To ensure the minimum mandatory ROS data reporting standards are met, the EMS may be complemented by port sampling and/or other Commission approved data collection methods. CPCs are encouraged to use an EMS to improve the collection of scientific data before the standards mentioned in paragraph 4 are adopted.*

Resolution 22/04 also sets out the following tasks for observers:

a) *record and report fishing activities, verify positions of the vessel;*

b) *observe and estimate catches as far as possible with a view to identifying catch composition and bycatch and to monitoring discards including their fate (e.g. released alive) and size frequency;*

c) *record the gear type, mesh size and attachments employed by the master;*

d) *collect information to enable the cross-checking of entries made to the logbooks (species composition and quantities, live and processed weight and location, where available); and*

e) *carry out such scientific work (e.g. collecting samples), as requested by the IOTC Scientific Committee..*

AFMA has recruited and trained observers since its establishment in 1992. Approximately 15 observers are currently employed in the AFMA observer program. They are sourced from universities and maritime industries from around Australia and must be able to live and work at sea, have demonstrated experience in collecting biological data at sea, and experience in fisheries research methodologies and collection of associated scientific data. Observers must also hold marine radio operators certificate of proficiency (or similar qualifications and/or experience), a sea safety certificate and medical certificate, and have completed an AFMA observer training course.

Recently, AFMA has introduced electronic monitoring (e-monitoring) to its longline fisheries. E-monitoring of the WTBF and ETBF became compulsory from 1 July 2015 for most vessels operating within the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone. As a minimum, e-monitoring

information from 10% of the hauls is reviewed and used to acquit information provided in logbooks.

In 2021, a total of 330,701 longline hooks were deployed in the IOTC Area of Competence by Australian vessels. Figure 5 depicts the spatial distribution of the longline e-monitoring coverage in the IOTC Area of Competence.

6.5 Unloading/transhipment

This section is not applicable to Australia as Australian-flagged vessels were not authorised to tranship at sea in the IOTC Area of Competence in 2021.

6.6 Actions taken to monitor catches and manage fisheries for striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish

Per Resolution 18.05 paragraph 9, Australian operators in the WTBF are not permitted to land black or blue marlin and must report any interactions with these species. Since 2015, there have been four sailfish reported through the WTBF compulsory logbooks and these were not retained. Striped marlin are subject to quota management in WTBF. In 2021, < 1 t striped marlin was caught in the IOTC Area of Competence (Table 2a). The number of billfish taken are monitored via logbooks and electronic monitoring coverage of the longlined fleet.

6.7 Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring

There is no gillnet fishing in the WTBF and therefore no observer coverage so this is not applicable.

6.8 Sampling plans for mobulid rays

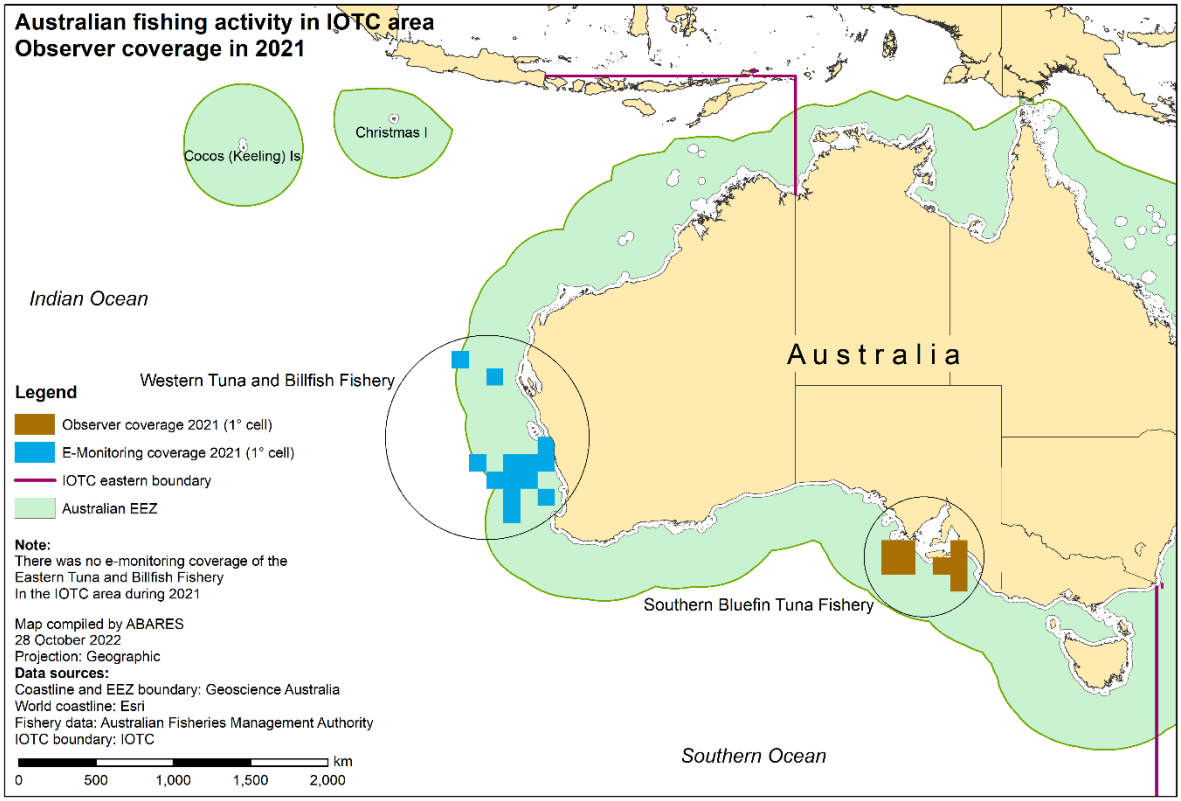
Australia does not have artisanal fisheries, so this is not applicable.

Table 8 Observer coverage, by hooks in the WTBF longline sector and by sets in the purse seine sector, in the IOTC Area of Competence for 2006 to 2021 (calendar year). The purse seine coverage noted here refers only to fishing for southern bluefin tuna (SBT) where fish were retained.

Year	Longline Hooks Observed	Percentage Coverage (Hooks)	SBT Season	Purse Seine Sets Observed	Percentage Coverage (Sets)
2006	n/a	n/a	2006–07	9	5.6
2007	n/a	1.42	2007–08	16	11.8
2008	n/a	n/a	2008–09	11	7.9
2009	44,790	8.46	2009–10	7	9.0
2010	15,330	2.45	2010–11	21	19.8
2011	6,232	1.7	2011–12	17	11.1
2012	119,757	17.8	2012–13	14	12.7
2013	0	0.0	2013–14	16	17.0
2014	41,066	9.1	2014–15	14	9.1
2015[a]	30,435	7.1	2015–16	25	18.9
2016[b]	36,038	10.2	2016–17	20	18.3
2017	48,795	11.7	2017–18	40	20.9
2018	52,510	13.0	2018–19	22	14.3
2019	47,047	12.8	2019–20	14	9.9
2020	26,460	11.6	2020-21	20	13.2
2021	32,739	10.5	2021-22	n/a	n/a

n/a = data not available
a Note that observer coverage in 2015 includes both human observers and data obtained from electronic monitoring systems.
b Note that since 1 July 2015 all coverage is by electronic monitoring.

Figure 5 Spatial distribution of 2021 observer coverage in the longline fishery in the IOTC Area of Competence



6.9 Port sampling program

A fish size monitoring program for the WTBF has been conducted since 1999. Weights for target species are recorded from processors in Western Australia. In 2021 these data were obtained from two vessels and approximately 34 trips (Table 9).

Table 9 Number of individuals measured, by species, in the WTBF in 2021. Only target species and bycatch species with >50 individuals measured are provided.

Common name	Scientific name	Number measured
Albacore	*Thunnus alalunga*	821
Bigeye tuna	*Thunnus obesus*	1,326
Swordfish	*Xiphias gladius*	1,878
Yellowfin tuna	*Thunnus albacares*	339
Ray's bream	*Brama brama*	72
Mahi mahi	*Coryphaena hippurus*	210

7 National research programs

Australia undertakes research projects and programs that are applicable to IOTC fisheries. Details of recent projects are provided below in Table 10.

Table 10 Summary table of current or recent national research programs

Project title	Period	Countries Involved	Funding source	Objectives	Short description
Population Structure of IOTC species and sharks of interest in the Indian Ocean	2017–2020	CSIRO (Australia), AZTI (Spain), IRD (France), RCFMC-TRIF (Indonesia)	EU	To determine the connectivity of IOTC species and sharks of interest throughout their distribution and their effective population size	This project used next generation sequencing technologies and otolith micro-chemistry to evaluate the degree of connectivity among populations of IOTC species and sharks of interest throughout the Indian Ocean. Results were reported to the IOTC Scientific Committee in 2020 (Davies et al. 2020)
Investigate oceanographic and environmental factors impacting on the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery	2018–2021	Australia	Australia	To improve the Australian Fisheries Management Authority and participating countries' understanding of environmental impacts upon a) the ETBF and other national fisheries and b) ETBF interactions with other fisheries (domestic and international) and ensure such impacts	This project will collate fisheries, environmental and biological data for Australia and participating regional countries with the aim of developing habitat models for five key tuna and billfish species.

				can be taken account of when developing or amending management arrangements.	
Provenance and chain of custody of tropical tunas in the north-east Indian Ocean	2015–2021	Australia, Indonesia, Maldives	Australia	To support current initiatives to deter and eliminate IUU in the IOTC region.	This project is assisting current initiatives to deter and eliminate IUU in the region by providing a detailed understanding of the provenance of tropical tuna stocks in the north-east Indian Ocean, operational technical tools to identify and trace the provenance and source of tropical tuna products, and expert technical advice to national governments, industry bodies, international certifiers and IOTC on the design requirements of chain of custody and Catch Documentation Schemes.
Harvest strategies for Indonesian tropical tuna fisheries to increase sustainable benefits	2018–2020	Indonesia, Australia	Australia	The aim of the project is to enable Indonesian fisheries scientists, industry and managers to improve the understanding of tuna population biology and the effectiveness of monitoring and management systems for Indonesian tuna fisheries.	This project is delivering expertise and advice on the development and implementation of harvest strategies to implement Indonesia's National Tuna Management Plan, information on the population biology required to determine productivity of tropical tuna in Indonesia, socio-economic information and bio-economic modelling for the different sectors of the tuna fisheries, and strategic capacity building in operational fisheries management and research.

Development of management procedures for IOTC yellowfin and bigeye tuna	2021–2023	Australia	Australia	To evaluate using MSE the performance of candidate Management Procedures for IOTC yellowfin and bigeye tuna.	This project aligns with the IOTC Commission's commitment to the adoption of management procedures for key IOTC species. The project is applying management strategy evaluation to a set of operating models, endorsed by the IOTC science community, to evaluate the performance of alternative Management Procedures in meeting the management objectives agreed to by the IOTC Commission.
Design study for a close-kin-mark-recapture (CKMR) study for Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna	2021–2023	Australia	Australia	To design a basin-scale CKMR study for Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna	This project will design a basin-scale CKMR study to estimate the absolute spawner abundance and trend of yellowfin tuna in the Indian Ocean, including an evaluation of logistic feasibility (including potential cooperation and participation of IOTC members) and statistical evaluation of alternative sampling designs. A design study for a basin-scale CKMR project for yellowfin tuna was the number 1 priority in the Program of Work for the IOTC Working Party on Tropical Tuna in 2020.

8 Implementation of Scientific Committee recommendations and resolutions of the IOTC relevant to the SC

Australia is compliant with IOTC resolutions relevant to the Scientific Committee. Table 11 details the resolutions and how they have been implemented.

Table 11 Scientific requirements contained in the Resolutions of the Commission, adopted between 2012 and 2021. Note – in 2022 there have been some delays to Australia's data provision relating to 2021 season fishing data (linked to a range of Resolutions listed below) due technical issues encountered during a major transition and modernisation of the Australian Governments fisheries data management systems.

No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
11/04	On a regional observer scheme	Paragraph 9	- Australia provides information on observer coverage including the number of vessels monitored and the coverage rates by gear type. Australia has had observers for a number of years and aims to achieve 5% observer coverage each year.
12/04	On the conservation of marine turtles	Paragraphs, 3, 4, 6–10	- Australian vessels are required to record and report interactions with marine turtles; this information is reported to the IOTC. - Research using circle hooks has been undertaken and reported to IOTC (Ward & Hall 2009). - Australia is a signatory member of Indian Ocean South-East Asia Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding and has committed to implement conservation and management measures to protect sea turtle habitat and nesting sites. - Australia requires the operators of all longline vessels to carry line cutters and de-hookers to facilitate the appropriate handling and prompt release of marine turtles that are caught or entangled.

No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
12/06	On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries.	Paragraph 3–7	- Australia has conducted research on methods to reduce seabird bycatch and reported the results to the IOTC (e.g. Robertson & Ashworth 2010; Robertson, Candy & Wienecke 2010; Robertson & Candy 2013; Robertson, Candy & Hall 2013). - In 2014, Australia implemented a revised Threat Abatement Plan for seabirds to minimise seabird interactions in pelagic longline operations. Under the 2014 plan, longline vessels are required to maintain the bycatch rate of 0.05 seabirds per 1000 hooks set in all fishing areas and fishing seasons. - Consistent with the objectives of the plan and with Resolution 12/06, Australia requires that all longline vessels fishing south of 25°S employ an approved line-weighting strategy and a bird-scaring line or another approved method; longline vessels in all other areas must use at least one mitigation method. - Australia reports on seabird interactions and mitigation measures in its national report.
12/09	On the conservation of thresher sharks (family Alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 4–8	- Australia provides data on interactions with thresher sharks to the IOTC. - In 2011, Australia implemented new permit conditions to prohibit licence holders from retaining, transhipping, landing, storing or selling thresher sharks in the IOTC Area of Competence. - Commercial interactions with thresher sharks in 2015 have been reported to the IOTC as required. Captured thresher sharks were released as required. - The results from recreational tuna catch surveys indicated that interactions with thresher sharks by recreational fishers are also extremely rare.
13/04	On the conservation of cetaceans	Paragraphs 7–9	- Resolution 13/04 has been implemented through conditions on boat statutory fishing rights in the WTBF and permit conditions in the SJF. - The setting of purse seines around cetaceans is prohibited and concession holders are required to report all interactions with cetaceans through their daily catch and effort logbooks. This information is also collected by observers if on board. - All cetacean species are protected by Australian law (EPBC Act).
13/05	On the conservation of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*)	Paragraphs 7–9	- Resolution 13/05 has been implemented through conditions on boat statutory fishing rights in the WTBF and permit conditions in the SJF.

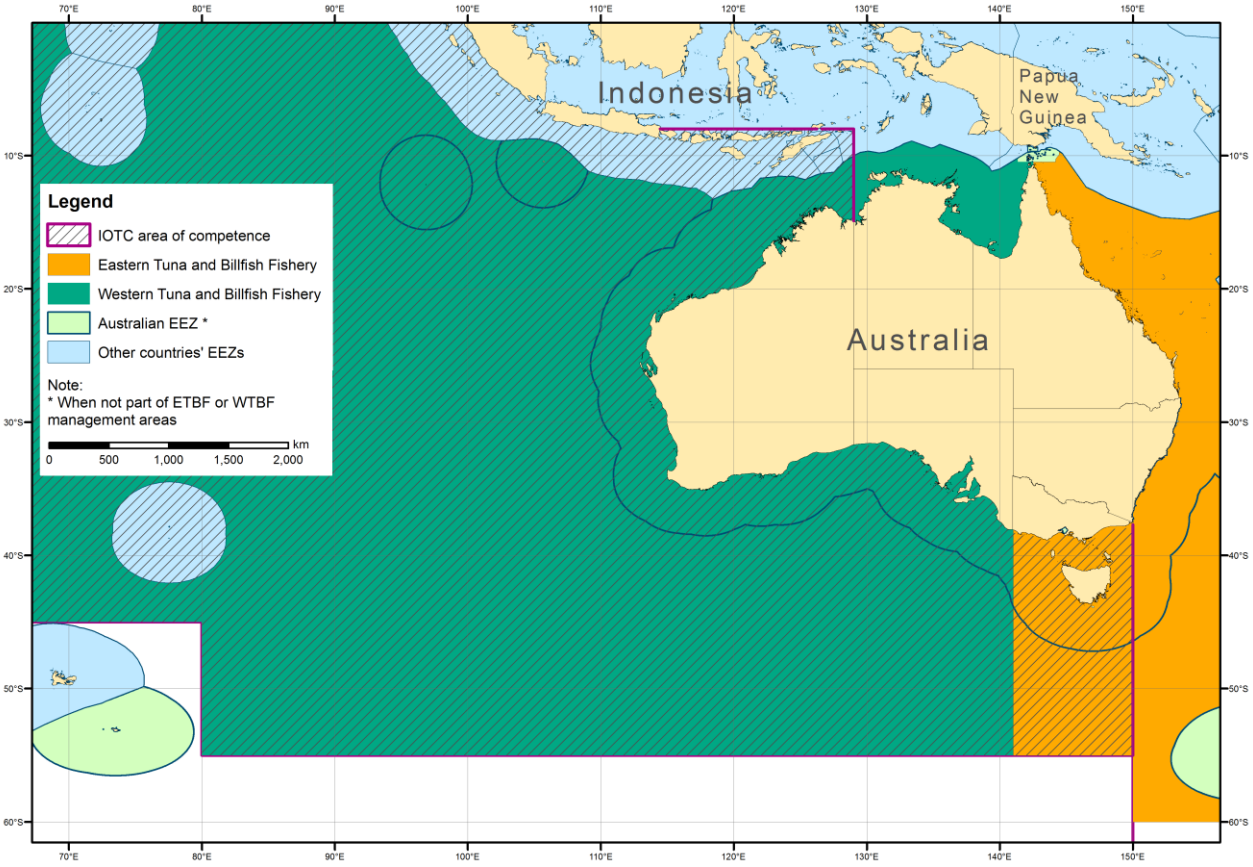
No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
			- The setting of purse seines around whale sharks is prohibited and concession holders are required to report all interactions with cetaceans through their daily catch and effort logbooks. This information is also collected by observers if on board. - Whale sharks are protected by Australian law (EPBC Act).
13/06	On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries	Paragraphs 5–6	-The retention, transhipment, landing or storage of oceanic whitetip sharks, whole or parts of, is prohibited in the WTBF and ETBF. - Australia continues to collect data, including on ocean whitetip sharks, through Australia's scientific observer program.
15/01	On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 1–10	- Catch and effort data prescribed in the Resolution are collected in daily fishing logbooks for the Australian longline and purse seine vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence. - Catch and effort data are also recorded in daily fishing logbooks for relevant fisheries managed by Western Australia that operate in the IOTC area of competence. - Disposal of catch is monitored using catch disposal record forms for the WTBF and ETBF longline, and the SJF and SBT purse seine fisheries. -Australia has submitted templates of its official logbooks to record data in accordance with Annex I, II and III to the IOTC Executive Secretary for publishing on the IOTC website. - Data submitted by 30 June each year, but delayed in 2022 (see table header).
15/02	Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)	Paragraphs 1–7	- Data submitted including: -Total catch data -Catch and effort data -Size data - Data submitted by 30 June each year, but delayed in 2022 (see table header).
17/05	On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by the IOTC	Paragraphs 6, 9, 11	- Available data submitted to meet the data reporting requirements outlined in the resolution. Size frequency data is not provided as most shark catch is discarded (Table 3a, 4). - Landing requirements are in place: sharks must be landed with fins attached naturally or by other means; landing of shark livers only (i.e. without the carcass) is not permitted. - The use of wire leaders is not permitted.

No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
			- In the Australian EEZ, a longline shark trip limit of 20 sharks per vessels per trip applies, as well as a 15 kg trip limit for gulper sharks. - Good handling practices are encouraged to return sharks to the sea alive and vigorous. - Research pertaining to the conservation of sharks has been conducted by Australia and reported to the IOTC (e.g. Hindmarsh 2007; Ward et al. 2007; Ward & Hall 2009; Patterson, Hansen & Larcombe 2014). - A shark bycatch mitigation guide was produced and distributed to encourage practical solutions that can be used by fishers (Patterson & Tudman 2009). - Under Australia's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, licence holders must take measures to avoid the catch of porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*), shortfin (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) and longfin (*Isurus paucus*) makos and any live animals must be returned to the water alive.
18/02	On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 2–5	- Data submitted to meet the data reporting requirements outlined in the resolution. - In the Australian EEZ, a longline shark trip limit of 20 sharks per vessels per trip applies. Longline vessels undertaking single jurisdiction high seas trips may apply for a permit to retain 100 sharks per fishing trip, of which only 80 can be blue sharks. - Research pertaining to the conservation of sharks has been conducted by Australia and reported to the IOTC (e.g. Hindmarsh 2007; Ward et al. 2007; Ward & Hall 2009; Patterson, Hansen & Larcombe 2014).
18/05	On management measures for the conservation of the billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish	Paragraphs 7–11	- Catch and effort data prescribed in Resolution 15/01 are collected in daily fishing logbooks for the Australian longline and purse seine vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence. - Catch and effort data are also recorded in daily fishing logbooks for relevant fisheries managed by Western Australia that operate in the IOTC area of competence. - Commercial fisheries in Australia are not permitted to keep black or blue marlin - Catch of striped marlin in the WTBF is very low (~1 t in 2020)
18/07	On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC	Paragraphs 1, 4	-Australia is compliant with data reporting requirements and has implemented reporting obligations in their IOTC fisheries.

No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
			-Australia has reported on the implementation of electronic monitoring in its longline fisheries. This will improve the accuracy of the data recorded in logbooks, including data on shark interactions. -Such data will be reported in the implementation report and in the annual data submission to the IOTC. -Australia reports zero catches as part of the annual data submission
19/01	On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraph 22	-Australia does not use gillnets in the WTBF and therefore there is no observer coverage or field sampling of gillnet fishing -This is not applicable to Australia
19/03	On the conservation of mobulid rays caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraph 11	-Australia does not have subsistence or artisanal fisheries -This is not applicable to Australia

Appendix A: Fishery boundaries

Locations of the ETBF and the WTBF in relation to the IOTC Area of Competence. The Western Skipjack Fishery and the Eastern Skipjack Fishery use the same boundary line as the WTBF and ETBF.



Appendix B: Mandatory mitigation measures in the WTBF 2022

(Source: AFMA website:

https://www.afma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022_wtbf_management_arrangements_booklet_final.pdf

Seabirds

At all times you must:

- Carry more than one assembled tori line on board
- Not discharge offal while setting
- Carry at least three Seabird feather kits onboard
- Comply with any further seabird interaction obligations relating to the Threat Abatement Plan.

When you are fishing south of 25°S you must:

- Deploy a tori line before commencing all shots that take place between nautical dawn and nautical dusk
- A tori line if not required to be deployed when performing fishing operations between the hours of nautical dusk and nautical dawn, unless instructed by AFMA
- Use only non-frozen bait
- Weight longlines with either a minimum of:
    - 60 g swivels at a distance of no more than 3.5 m from each hook; or
    - 98 g swivels at a distance of no more than 4 m from each hook; or
    - 40 g weights immediately adjacent to the hook, or no more than 0.5 m from the hook, with dead, non-frozen baits attached to the hooks; or
    - 'hook-shielding device' with a cap and weighing at least 38 g may be deployed directly at the hook as an alternative.

Note: If you are fishing south of 40°S, AFMA may require you to implement additional seabird mitigation measures as this is an area in which higher than average number of seabird interactions are possible.

Tori line specifications – tori lines must be:

- Have an aerial extent of at least 100 m for vessels ≥35 m, or 75 m for vessels <35 m

- Set up from a position on the boat that allows it to stay above the water for at least 75 m from the stern (generally achieved by a tori pole of 6–7 m in height)
- Have streamers attached at least every 3.5 m
- Streamers should be maintained, ensuring that their lengths are as close to the water as possible.
- Have a towed line, material or object at the end of the line to give sufficient drag to meet the aerial coverage criteria.

Turtles

Circle hooks

Large circle hooks must be used if less than eight hooks per bubble are set.

De-hooking device

At all times you must carry on board a minimum of one de-hooking device, with the following specifications:

- The device must enable the hook to be secured and the barb shielded so that the barb does not re-engage with the fish or protected species while the hook is being removed
- The device must be blunt with all edges rounded
- Where more than one size of hook is to be carried, a de-hooking device (or devices) must be carried that can be used with all hooks on the boat; and
- The shaft of the device must be a minimum of 1.5 metres in length.

Line-cutting device

At all times you must carry on board a minimum of one line cutting device. The line cutting device must be constructed and used in accordance with the following specifications:

- The device must be constructed to allow the line to be cut as close to the hook as possible
- The blade of the device must be enclosed in a blunt rounded (arc-shaped) cover with the hook exposed on the inside of the arc; and
- The shaft of the device must be a minimum of 1.5 metres in length.

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