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## France OT National Report to the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, 2022

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### Executive Summary

Since the passage of Mayotte as a territory under the European regime since January 1, 2014, the French tropical overseas of the Indian Ocean is now only the Éparses Islands which are attached to the higher administration of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands (TAAF). A marine nature park was created on February 22, 2012 (decree n°2012-245), it is the Glorieuses marine nature park, which depends on the Éparses Islands and extends over the entire Glorieuses EEZ.

The Éparses Islands (France Territories) do not have tuna fleets registered for this territory. Nevertheless, the TAAF administration issues fishing licenses to French and foreign longliners and purse seiners wishing to fish in the waters administered by France Territories, and an on-board observer program accompanies the granting of these licenses. In 2021, there was no OBSPEC training organized by the TAAF administration and no observers embarked during 2021 on tuna seiners or foreign flagged auxiliary vessels operating in the area. Among the purse seiners, the data collected on one of the vessels proved to be unusable, so this report covers 317 days observed during 10 trips.

The geographical distribution of the activities shows that the days at sea observed for the 8 purse seiners were distributed mainly and in almost equal proportion in international waters (40.5%) and in the Seychelles and Madagascar EEZs (42.3%). Only 8 days at sea (2.5% of the total days observed) were located in the EEZ of the Sparsely Islands. During the 317 days, 414 fishing trips were observed (of which 368 were positive and 46 were null), i.e., an average of 1.3 trips/day. The total estimated catch is 12,997.3 tons with almost half in international waters and the other half in the EEZs visited. Of the 414 fishing trips, 344 (83.1%) and 67 (16.2%) took place on floating objects and on free banks, respectively. Three fishing trips (0.7%) were carried out with an association with a whale shark despite the prohibition of this type of set (Resolution 13/05).

The proportion of sets on floating objects varies between 52.8% and 100% according to the purse seiners. The activity of the purse seiners around floating objects (1303 operations) could be fully documented between launching, visiting FADs, removal, abandonment, sinking, reinforcement and replacement. Observations at sea on the French longliners based in Réunion are made by on-board observers or via self-sampling (collection of data by the captains). These observations are managed by the IRD with European funds within the framework of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) project. In 2021, 54 fishing operations were observed during 2 trips between October 7 and December 10 on 2 Réunionese vessels in the EEZs of the Remote Islands, of which 30 were observed by an on-board observer and 24 by self-sampling. Data from longline vessels under the EU-France flag were presented in the EU-FR report.

The current French research program (IRD & Ifremer mainly) on large pelagics covers fishing activities, landings and biometrics of target species and discards, the study of migratory behavior of large pelagics, studies on fish aggregating devices, collection of observer data from electronic monitoring, genetic and microchemical studies for stock delineation, development of by-catch and depredation mitigation measures, post-discard mortality in the European seine and longline oceanic whitetip shark fisheries, as well as the development of an innovation to facilitate the rapid release of marine megafauna caught in longline fisheries and to improve the survival of individuals. Most of the projects are funded by international, European or national calls for proposals. This report lists the different projects that have continued or started in 2020. In addition, there are projects directly involving IOTC, even if they are in the process of being launched. France has actively participated in all the working groups organized by IOTC, and has presented 17 scientific contributions in 2021.

for the full report, in its submitted language go to link - <https://iotc.org/fr/documents/SC/25/NR07F>