



France OT: National Report to the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, 2023

Executive Summary

Since Mayotte became a territory under the Community regime on 1 January 2014, the French tropical overseas territories in the Indian Ocean now only include the Éparses islands, which are attached to the higher administration of the Terres Australes et Antarctiques françaises (TAAF). A marine nature park was created on 22 February 2012 (decree no. 2012-245), the PNM des Glorieuses, which depends on the Éparses islands and covers the entire Glorieuses EEZ.

The Éparses Islands (France Territories) do not have any tuna fleets registered for this territory. Nevertheless, the TAAF administration issues fishing licences to French and foreign longliners and seiners wishing to fish in the waters administered by France Territoires, and an on-board observer programme accompanies the granting of these licences. In 2022, there was no OBSPEC training organised by the TAAF administration and no observers embarked during 2022 on tuna seiners or auxiliary vessels under French or foreign flags operating in the zone. Observations at sea on French longliners based on Réunion are carried out by on-board observers or via self-sampling (collection of data by captains). These observations are managed by the IRD with European funding as part of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) project. In 2022, 112 fishing operations were observed on 3 Réunionese vessels in the EEZs of the Remote Islands, including 40 by on-board observation and 72 by self-sampling. Data from longliners flying the EU-France flag were presented in the EU-FR report. France's current research programme (mainly IRD & Ifremer) on large pelagics covers fishing activities, landings and biometrics of target species and discards, the study of the migratory behaviour of large pelagics, studies on fish aggregating devices, the collection of observer data from electronic monitoring, genetic and microchemical studies to delimit stocks, the development of measures to mitigate by-catches and depredation, post-discard mortality in European seine and longline fisheries for oceanic whitetip sharks, and the development of an innovation to facilitate the rapid release of marine megafauna caught on longlines and improve the survival of individuals. Most of the projects are funded by international, European or national calls for tender. This report lists the various projects that have continued or started in 2022. It also includes projects directly involving the IOTC, even if they are in the process of being launched.

France participated actively in all the working groups organised by the IOTC, and presented 12 scientific contributions in 2022.