APPENDIX XVIII
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CETACEANS (2024)

Table A 1. Cetaceans: IUCN Red List status and records of interaction (including entanglements and, for purse seines, encirclements) with tuna fishery gear types for all cetacean species that occur within the IOTC area of competence.

Family	Common name	Species	IUCN Red List status*	Interactions by Gear Type**
Balaenidae	Southern right whale	*Eubalaena australis*	LC	GN
Neobalaenidae	Pygmy right whale	*Caperea marginata*	LC	-
Balaenopteridae	Common minke whale	*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*	LC	-
	Antarctic minke whale	*Balaenoptera bonaerensis*	NT	-
	Sei whale	*Balaenoptera borealis*	EN	PS
	Bryde's whale	*Balaenoptera edeni*	LC	-
	Blue whale	*Balaenoptera musculus*	EN	-
	Fin whale	*Balaenoptera physalus*	VU	-
	Omura's whale	*Balaenoptera omurai*	DD	-
	Humpback whale	*Megaptera novaeangliae*	LC***	GN, LL
Physeteridae	Sperm whale	*Physeter macrocephalus*	VU	GN
Kogiidae	Pygmy sperm whale	*Kogia breviceps*	LC	GN
	Dwarf sperm whale	*Kogia sima*	LC	GN
Ziphiidae	Arnoux's beaked whale	*Berardius arnuxii*	LC	-
	Southern bottlenose whale	*Hyperoodon planifrons*	LC	-
	Longman's beaked whale	*Indopacetus pacificus*	LC	GN
	Andrew's beaked whale	*Mesoplodon bowdoini*	DD	-
	Blainville's beaked whale	*Mesoplodon densirostris*	LC	-
	Ramari’s beaked whale	*Mesoplodon eueu*	DD	-
	Gray's beaked whale	*Mesoplodon grayi*	LC	-
	Hector's beaked whale	*Mesoplodon hectori*	DD	-
	Deraniyagala's beaked whale	*Mesoplodon hotaula*	DD	-
	Strap-toothed whale	*Mesoplodon layardii*	LC	-
	Spade-toothed whale	*Mesoplodon traversii*	DD	-

	Shepherd's beaked Whale	*Tasmacetus shepherdi*	DD	-
	Cuvier's beaked whale	*Ziphius cavirostris*	LC	GN
Delphinidae	Common dolphin	*Delphinus delphis*	LC	GN
	Pygmy killer whale	*Feresa attenuata*	LC	GN
	Short-finned pilot whale	*Globicephala macrorhynchus*	LC	LL, GN
	Long-finned pilot whale	*Globicephala melas*	LC	-
	Risso's dolphin	*Grampus griseus*	LC	LL, GN
	Fraser's dolphin	*Lagenodelphis hosei*	LC	-
	Irrawaddy dolphin	*Orcaella brevirostris*	EN	GN
	Australian snubfin dolphin	*Orcaella heinsohni*	VU	GN
	Killer whale	*Orcinus orca*	DD	LL, GN
	Melon-headed whale	*Peponocephala electra*	LC	LL, GN
	False killer whale	*Pseudorca crassidens*	NT	LL, GN
	Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin	*Sousa chinensis*	VU	GN
	Indian Ocean humpback dolphin	*Sousa plumbea*	EN	GN
	Australian humpback dolphin	*Sousa sahulensis*	VU	GN
	Pantropical spotted dolphin	*Stenella attenuata*	LC	PS, GN, LL
	Striped dolphin	*Stenella coeruleoalba*	LC	-
	Spinner dolphin	*Stenella longirostris*	LC	GN
	Rough-toothed dolphin	*Steno bredanensis*	LC	GN
	Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin	*Tursiops aduncus*	NT	GN
	Bottlenose dolphin	*Tursiops truncatus*	LC	LL, GN
Phocoenidae	Indo-Pacific finless porpoise	*Neophocaena phocaenoides*	VU	GN

* The assessment of the status level in IUCN is independent of IOTC processes
** Published bycatch records only (reference at the end of the document)
*** Arabian Sea population: EN
The IUCN Red List of Threatened species. <www.iucnredlist.org>.
Downloaded on 16 September 2020.

INDIAN OCEAN STOCK – MANAGEMENT ADVICE

Stock status. . The current[1] International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List status for each of the cetacean species reported in the IOTC Area of Competence is provided in Table **A** 1. Information on their interactions with IOTC fisheries is also provided. It is important to note that a number of international global environmental accords (e.g., Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), International Whaling Commission (IWC)), as well as numerous fisheries agreements obligate States to provide protection for these species. The status of cetaceans is affected by a range of factors such as direct harvesting and habitat degradation, but the level of cetacean mortality due to capture in tuna drift gillnets is likely to be substantial and is also a major cause for concern (Anderson *et al.* 2020, Kiszka *et al.* 2021). Several reports (e.g., Sabarros et al., 2013) also suggest some level of cetacean mortality for species involved in depredation of pelagic longlines, and these interactions need to be further documented throughout the IOTC Area of Competence. Recently published information suggests that the incidental capture of cetaceans in purse seines is low (e.g., Escalle et al., 2015), but should be further monitored.

Outlook. . Resolution 23/06 *On the conservation of cetaceans* highlights the concerns of the IOTC regarding the lack of accurate and complete data collection and reporting to the IOTC Secretariat of interactions and mortalities of cetaceans in association with tuna fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence. In this resolution, the IOTC have agreed that CPCs shall prohibit their flagged vessels from intentionally setting a purse seine net around a cetacean if the animal is sighted prior to the commencement of the set. The IOTC also agreed that CPCs using other gear types targeting tuna and tuna-like species found in association with cetaceans shall report all interactions with cetaceans to the relevant authority of the flag State and that these will be reported to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the following year. It is acknowledged that the impact on cetacean populations from fishing for tuna and tuna-like species may increase if fishing pressure increases (which is already clear for tuna gillnet fisheries from IOTC data) or if the status of cetacean populations worsens due to other factors such as an increase in external fishing pressure or other anthropogenic or climatic impacts.

The following should be noted:

- The number of fisheries interactions involving cetaceans is highly uncertain and should be addressed as a matter of priority as it is a prerequisite for the WPEB to determine a status for any Indian Ocean cetacean species.
- Available evidence indicates considerable risk to cetaceans in the Indian Ocean, particularly from tuna drift gillnets.
- Current reported interactions and mortalities are scattered but are most likely severely underestimated (Anderson *et al*., 2020, Kiszka *et al*., 2021).
- Maintaining or increasing fishing effort in the Indian Ocean without appropriate mitigation measures in place will likely result in further declines in a number of cetacean species. An increasing effort by tuna drift gillnet fisheries has been reported to the IOTC, which is a major cause of concern for a number of species, particularly in the northern Indian Ocean.
- Efforts should be undertaken to encourage CPCs to investigate means to reduce cetacean bycatch and at-vessel and post-release mortality in IOTC fisheries and improve data collection and reporting for cetaceans. This may include alternative data collection mechanisms such as skipper-based reporting, port sampling and cost-effective electronic monitoring systems.

[1] September 2023

RELEVANT LITERATURE

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