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To the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission for 2024

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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 (and other data related to CMMs as noted below), final scientific data for the previous year were 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 2023, final data for the 2022 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2024).

Yes

In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, provisional longline data for the previous year were provided to the Secretariat by 30 June of the current year (e.g. for a National report submitted to the Secretariat in 2023, preliminary data for the 2022 calendar year was provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2024).

Yes

REMINDER: Final longline data for the previous year are due to the Secretariat by 30 Dec of the current year (e.g. for a National report submitted to the Secretariat in 2024, final data for the 2022 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 December 2024).

Contents

Summary	vii
Background/general fishery information.....	1
Fleet structure.....	2
2.1 Longline fleet.....	2
2.2 Purse seine fleet.....	2
Catch and effort by species and fishery	4
3.1 Longline fleet.....	4
3.2 Purse seine fleet.....	8
3.3 Multi-purpose fleets.....	9
Recreational fishery	15
Ecosystem and bycatch issues.....	16
5.1 Bycatch and discard work plan.....	18
5.2 Sharks	18
5.3 Seabirds	24
5.4 Marine turtles.....	27
National data collection and processing systems	30
6.1 Logbook data collection	30
6.2 Vessel monitoring system	30
6.3 Electronic monitoring.....	30
6.4 Observer program	30
6.5 Unloading/transshipment.....	32
6.6 Actions taken to monitor catches and manage fisheries for striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish.....	32
6.7 Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring.....	33
6.8 Sampling plans for mobulid rays	33
6.9 Port sampling program.....	35
National research programs.....	36
Implementation of Scientific Committee recommendations and resolutions of the IOTC relevant to the SC	39
Appendix A: Fishery boundaries.....	44
Appendix B: Mandatory mitigation measures in the WTBF 2022	45
Seabirds	45
Turtles.....	46
References	47

Tables

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 2023.....	3
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 2023	10
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..	11
Table 2c Numbers of fishing vessels and catch of tuna and tuna-like species (tonnes live weight) in Western Australian state fisheries by method.....	12
Table 2d Catch of tuna and tuna-like species in Western Australian state fisheries, by species and method, for 2022 and 2023	13
Table 3a Total number of sharks, by species, retained by Australian longline vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence from 2011 to 2023	21
Table 3b Total weight (tonnes trunked weight) of shark species retained by Australian longline vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence from 2011 to 2023	22
Table 4 Total number of sharks, by species, released/discarded by Australian longline vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence from 2011 to 2023	23
Table 5 Observed seabird interaction data for the Australian WTBF longline fleet, 2023	27
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 2023.....	28
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 2023.....	29
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 2023 (calendar year). The purse seine coverage noted here refers only to fishing for southern bluefin tuna (SBT) where fish were retained.	34
Table 9 Number of individuals measured, by species, in the WTBF in 2023. Only target species and bycatch species with >50 individuals measured are provided.....	35
Table 10 Summary table of current or recent national research programs	36
Table 11 Scientific requirements contained in the Resolutions of the Commission, adopted between 2012 and 2023.....	39

Figures

Figure 1 Australian annual catch of primary species in the longline sector of the WTBF, 1986 to 2023	5
Figure 2a Fishing footprint (shown as 1-degree cells) in the WTBF and ETBF (longline) and in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2023	6
Figure 2b Aggregate fishing footprint (shown as 1-degree cells) in the WTBF and ETBF (longline) and in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2019 to 2023	6

Figure 3a Distribution of catch in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2023.....	7
Figure 3b Distribution of catch in the WTBF (longline), ETBF (longline) and in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2019 to 2023.....	7
Figure 4 Fishing season catches of southern bluefin tuna in the purse-seine sector of the SBTF, 1989–90 to 2022–23	8
Figure 5 Spatial distribution of 2023 observer coverage in the longline fishery in the IOTC Area of Competence	35

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 very low relative to the scale of the regional IOTC fishery. In 2023 in the IOTC Area of Competence, 1 Australian longliner operated exclusively in the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery, 4 operated exclusively in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery, and 1 operated in both fisheries. They caught 7.6 t of albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), 34.7 t of bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*), 44.4 t of yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), 98.3 t of swordfish (*Xiphius gladius*) and 1 t of striped marlin (*Kajikia audax*). In addition, in 2023 the review rate for electronic monitoring (e-monitoring) footage of longline hook deployed in the IOTC Area of Competence was 9%. The actual catch of southern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) in the purse-seine fishery targeting this species was 4,501 t in 2023. There was no skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) caught by purse-seine fishing.

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. It should also be noted that the eastern and western purse seine skipjack fisheries have been inactive since 2009.

Fleet structure

2.1 Longline fleet

The number of Australian longline vessels operating in the IOTC Area of Competence declined between 2000 (61 vessels) and 2005 (6) and has varied between 2 and 11 vessels per year in the period since (Table 1). One of the factors that drove this decline was 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 (the overlap area between IOTC and WCPFC boundaries). In 2023, 6 longline vessels operated in the IOTC Area of Competence, including 4 vessels from the ETBF, 1 from the WTBF, and 1 which operated in both the ETBF and WTBF. The ETBF vessels operated in the IOTC-WCPFC overlap area and primarily targeted southern bluefin tuna (SBT; *Thunnus maccoyii*). The majority of effort was recorded by the 2 vessels that operated in the WTBF. In recent years, the Australian longline fleet has fished mainly within Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (96% of total effort in 2023).

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 10 days in length (27 trips undertaken in the WTBF in 2023).

2.2 Purse seine fleet

The purse-seine fleet has fluctuated from 5 to 14 vessels since 1998 (Table 1). The purse-seine vessels vary in length from 20 to 45 m and target SBT for farm cage grow-out. There were 6 active SBT purse-seine vessels in 2023.

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 2023

Calendar Year	Number of vessels		
	Longline	Purse seine	> 24 m
1998	37	5 (5)	n/av
1999	49	7 (7)	n/av
2000	61	8 (8)	n/av
2001	45	13 (8)	n/av
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
2022	11	8(8)	11
2023	6	6(6)	6

n/av Not available.

Notes: 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.

Catch and effort by species and fishery

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 2,136 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 2023 compared to 2022, and longline effort increased from 247,171 hooks in 2022 to 274,990 hooks in 2023 in the IOTC area. The swordfish catch increased from 83 t in 2022 to 98.3 t in 2023 (Table 2a). Bigeye tuna catch increased from 19 t in 2022 to 34.7 t in 2023. Yellowfin tuna catch increased from 15.8 t in 2022 to 44.4 t in 2023 (Table 2a). There was a 2.5 t decrease 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 2023 and for 2019 to 2023. Due to Australian Government confidentiality restrictions that prevent the disclosure of fishing activity by fewer than 5 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 2023 due to Australian Government confidentiality rules.

Figure 1 Australian annual catch of primary species in the longline sector of the WTBF, 1986 to 2023

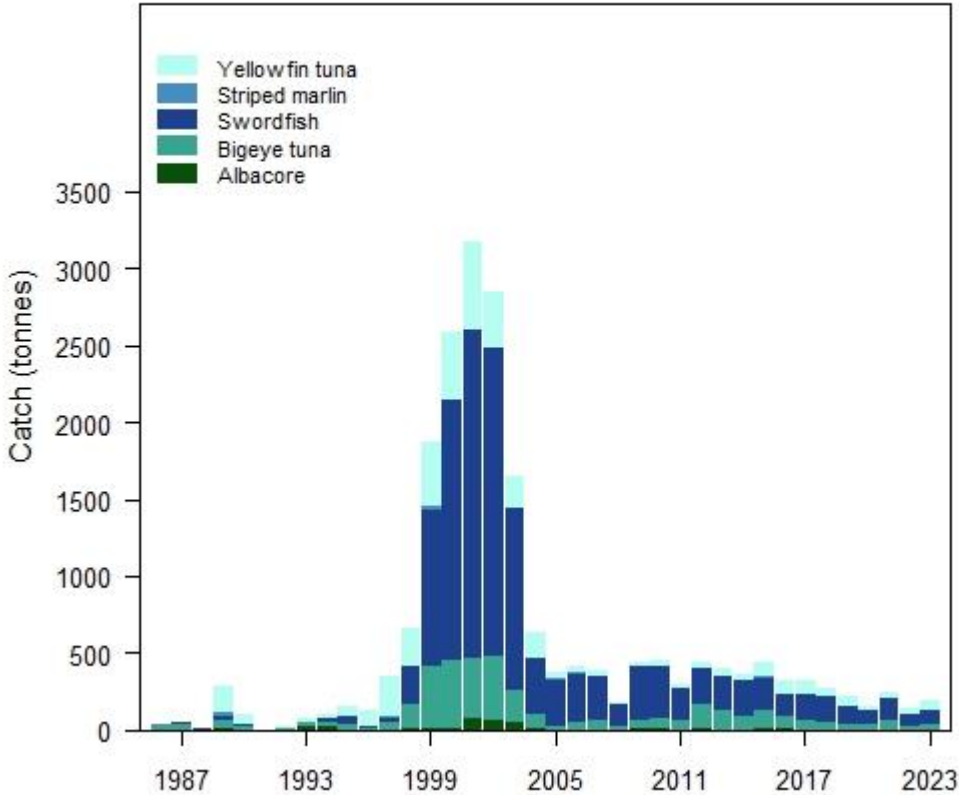


Figure 2a Fishing footprint (shown as 1-degree cells) in the WTBF and ETBF (longline) and in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2023

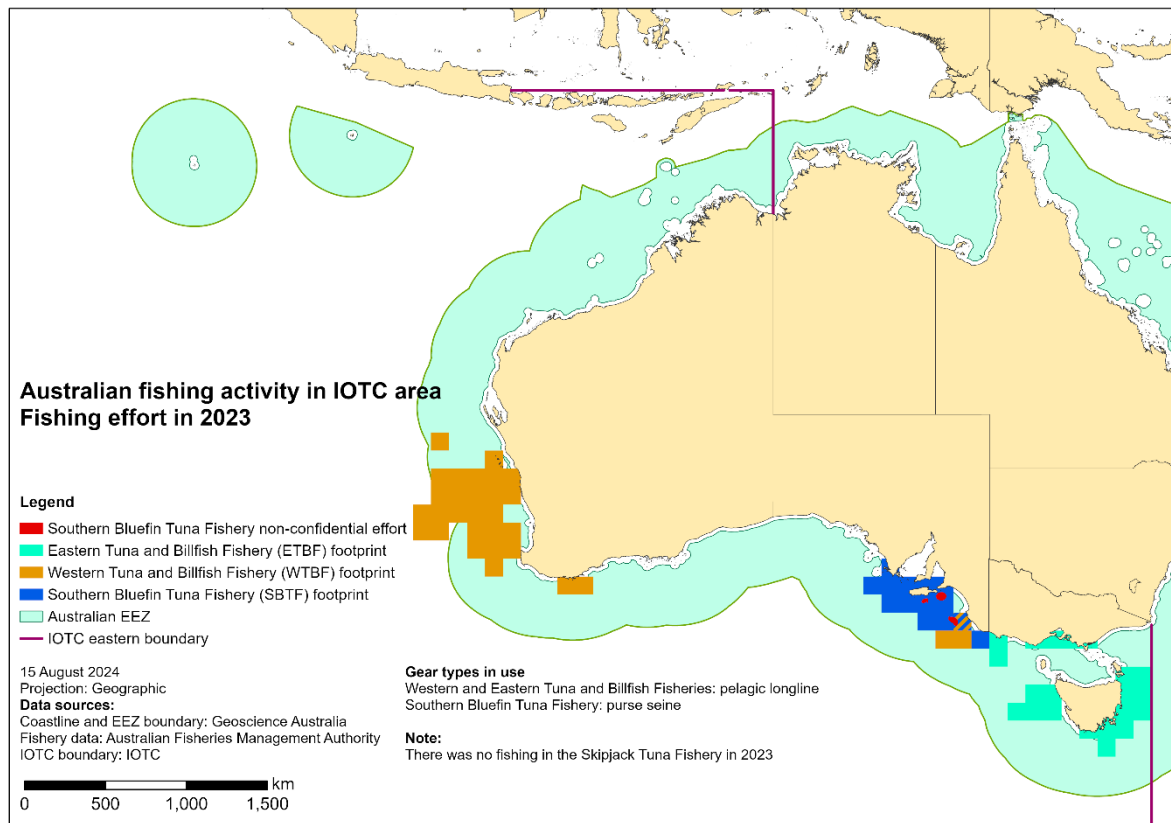


Figure 2b Aggregate fishing footprint (shown as 1-degree cells) in the WTBF and ETBF (longline) and in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2019 to 2023

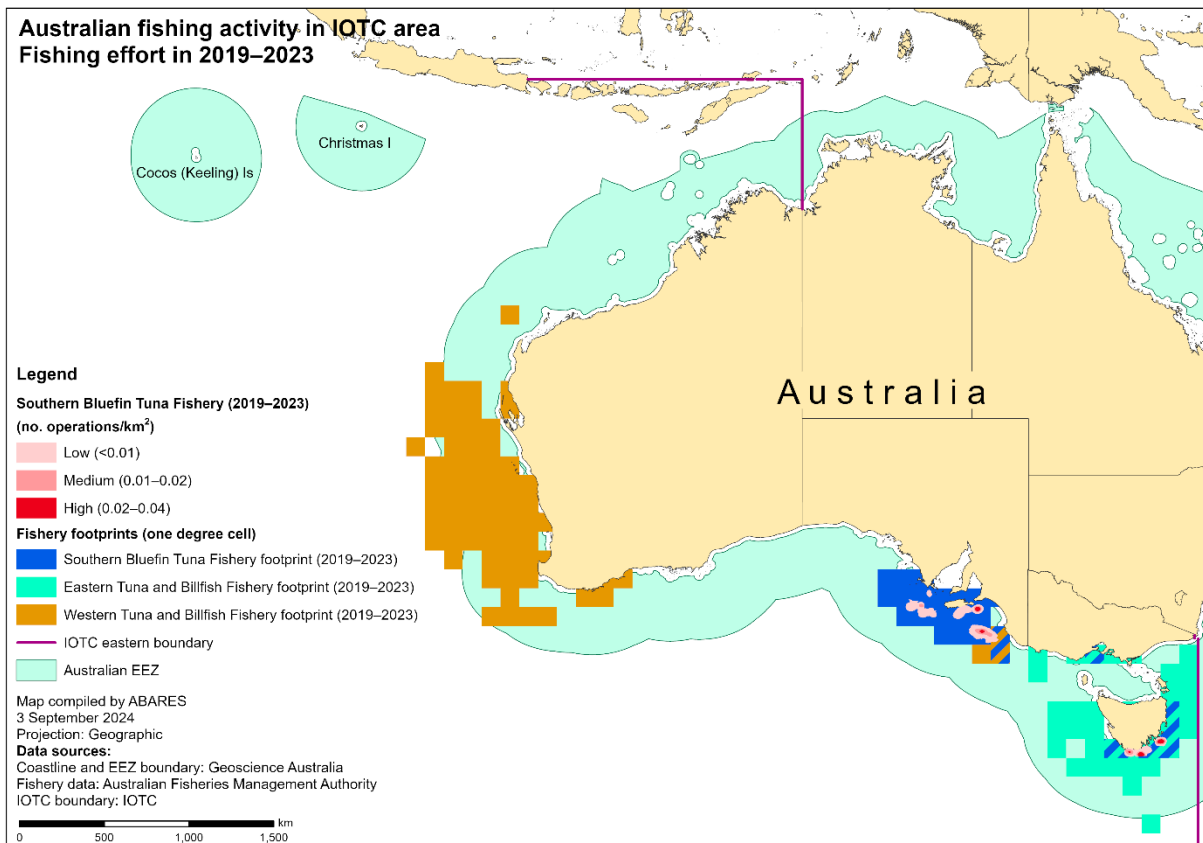
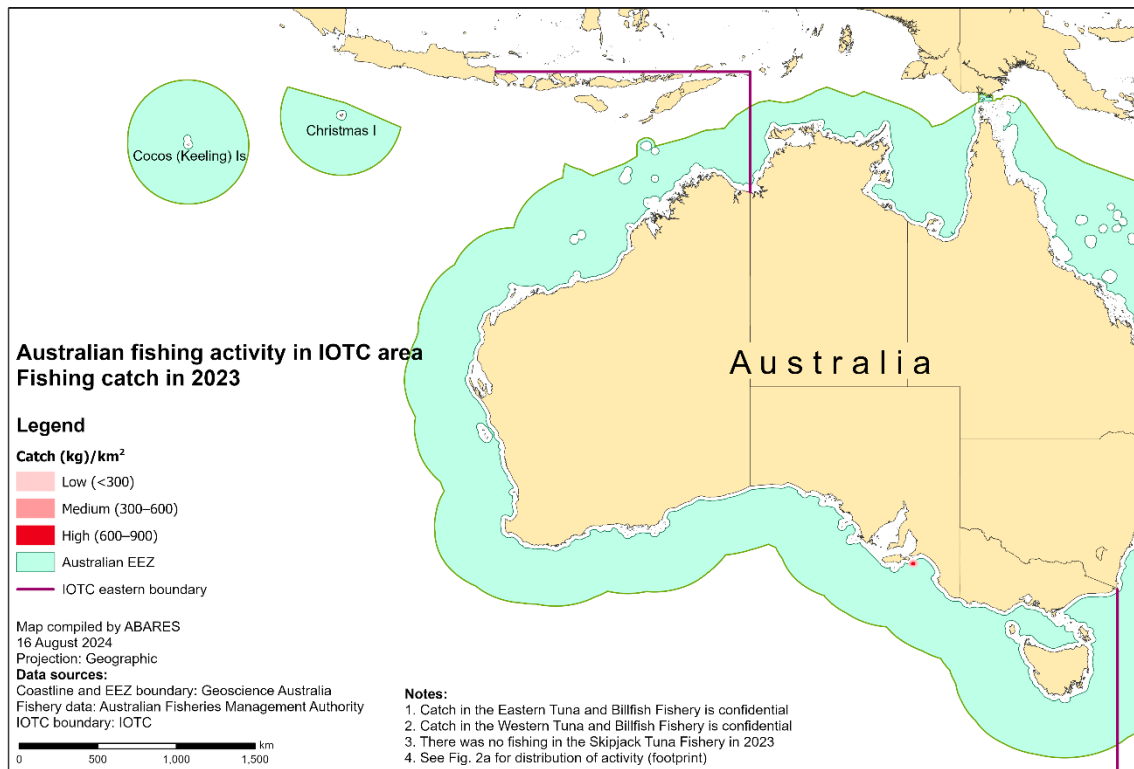
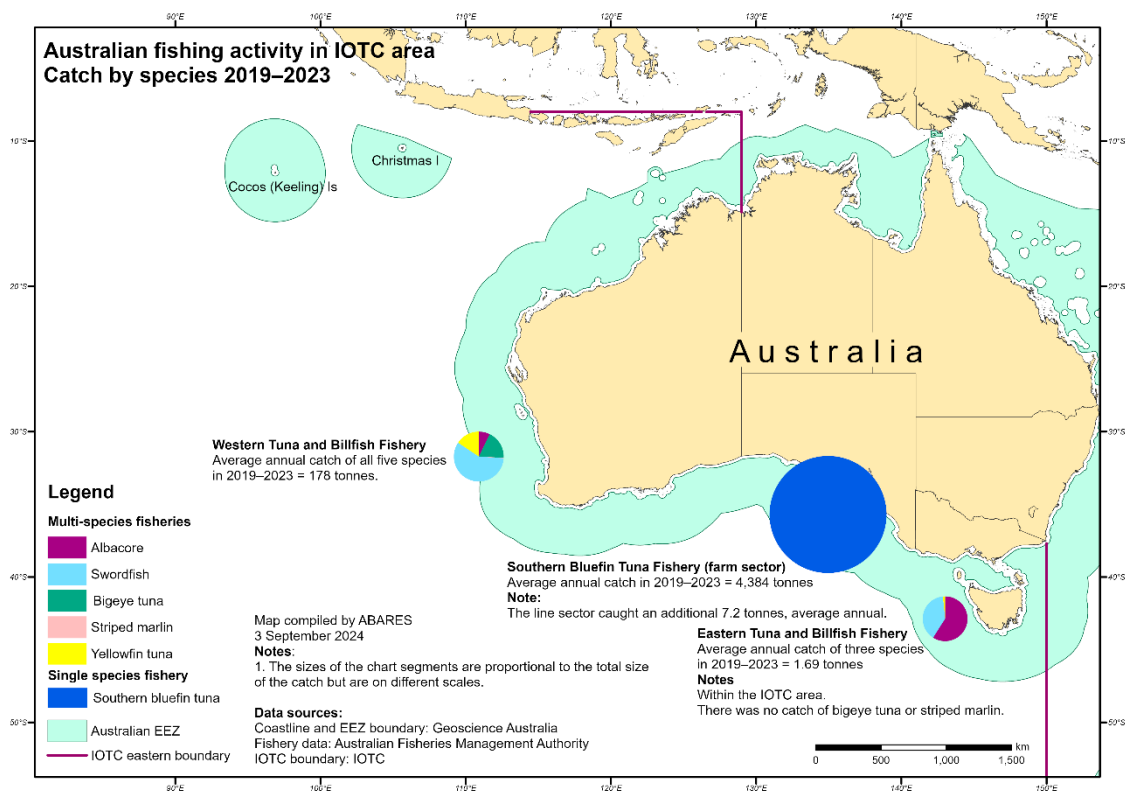


Figure 3a Distribution of catch in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2023



Note: that due to the low effort in the longline fisheries, confidentiality rules prohibit the depiction of the 2023 WTBF and ETBF data.

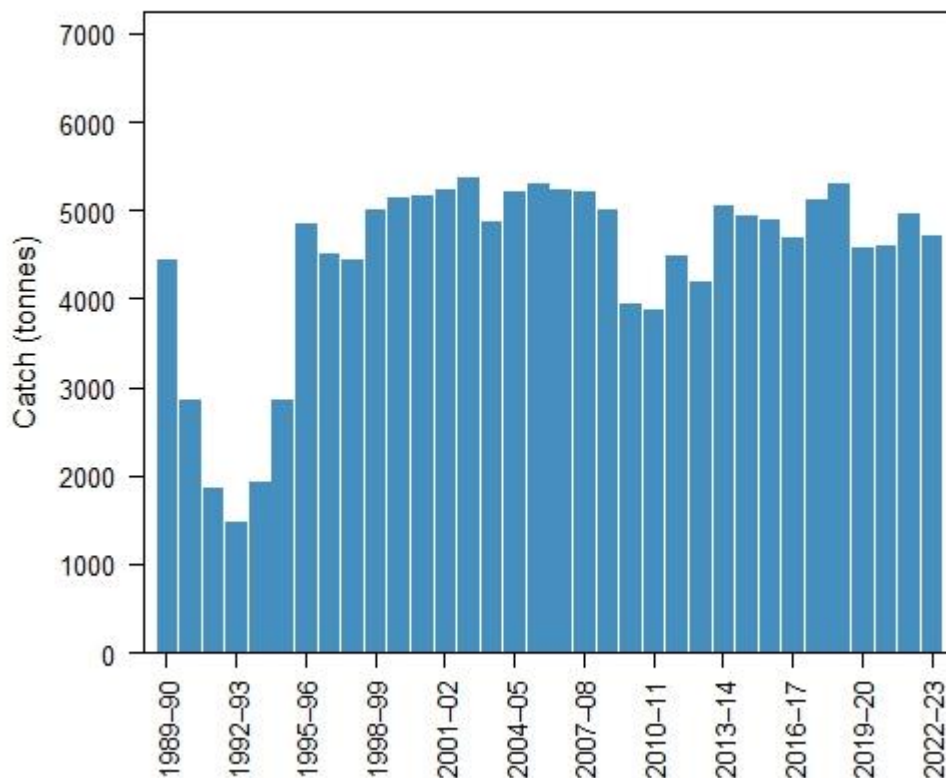
Figure 3b Distribution of catch in the WTBF (longline), ETBF (longline) and in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2019 to 2023



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 Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT). Effort in the purse-seine sector increased from 136 sets in 2021–22 to 173 sets in the 2022–23 season (Table 2b). In 2023, the actual catch was 4,501 t, while for the 2022–23 fishing season (1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023), the actual catch was 4,697 t (Table 2b; Figure 4). Distribution of the catch in the SBT is shown for 2023 in Figure 3a and for 2019 to 2023 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 SBT, 1989–90 to 2022–23



3.3 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 2023, total tuna catch for gillnet, troll, trawl and line (mainly handline) from state-managed Western Australian fisheries increased from 2022 (Tables 2c, 2d). In the Commonwealth-managed WTBF, SBTF and ETBF, 15 vessels (1 vessel using pole-and-line and 14 vessels using trolling) mainly targeting southern bluefin tuna, operated in the IOTC Area of Competence in 2023. These vessels caught 14.3 t of SBT, 0.1 t of albacore, <0.1 t of skipjack and <0.1 t of undefined tunas.

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 2023

Calendar year	Vessel number	Hooks set (thousands)	Live weight (t)					Total catch	
			Albacore	Bigeye tuna	Yellowfin tuna	Swordfish	Striped marlin		NEI ^a
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
2022	11	247	9.2	19.0	15.8	83.0	0.2	17.4	144.6
2023	6	275	7.6	34.7	44.4	98.3	1.0	14.9	200.9

^a NEI denotes the sum of all species that are 'not elsewhere indicated' in the table. Note that SBT catches are not included but are reported in Hobsbawn & Patterson (2024).

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/av	1,840	n/av
1995–96	631	89	2,859	3,442	1996	n/av	3,121	n/av
1996–97	769	118	3,134	2,505	1997	n/av	2,998	n/av
1997–98	671	143	3,916	3,629	1998	3,290	3,584	n/av
1998–99	972	129	4,418	4,991	1999	5,120	5,325	n/av
1999–00	764	107	4,746	5,131	2000	4,616	5,132	n/av
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	5,299	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
2021–22	1,041	136	4,639	4,942	2022	4,881	5,250	0
2022–23	1,688	173	4,832	4,697	2023	4,659	4,501	0

n/av Not available.

^a Estimated catch is derived from logbook data while actual catch is derived from catch disposal data; ^b There has been no effort in the Skipjack Tuna fisheries since 2008–09.

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/av	n/av	0.9	6	10.6 ^b	30	23.4	10	283.6	18
2007	0.1	5	1.2	8	23.6	24	n/av	n/av	317.8	18
2008	n/av	n/av	5.0	9	12.6	22	n/av	n/av	333.6	26
2009	n/av	n/av	1.3	7	12.0	18	n/av	n/av	285.6	16
2010	n/av	n/av	0.8	6	27.1	13	n/av	n/av	269.4	15
2011	n/av	n/av	1.1	6	14.7	14	n/av	n/av	285.5	17
2012	n/av	n/av	1.5	6	16.4	17	n/av	n/av	316.4	17
2013	n/av	n/av	0.2	6	11.9	16	n/av	n/av	300.5	25
2014	n/av	n/av	0.3	6	41.6	18	n/av	n/av	299.6	26
2015	n/av	n/av	0.4	7	36.3	18	n/av	n/av	285.1	27
2016	n/av	n/av	0.6	7	15.6	12	n/av	n/av	282.4	28
2017	n/av	n/av	0.4	8	13.8	15	<0.5	<3	287.9	19
2018	n/av	n/av	0.2	5	4.4	11	<0.5	<3	225.1	17
2019	n/av	n/av	<0.5	4	3.3	11	n/av	n/av	296.7	18
2020	n/av	n/av	<0.5	<3	1.1	15	<0.5	<3	306.6	30
2021	n/av	n/av	<0.5	5	4.0	17	n/av	n/av	244.0	31
2022	n/av	n/av	<0.5	<3	1.2	11	<0.5	<3	211.9	14
2023	n/av	n/av	n/av	n/av	4.1	13	n/av	n/av	236.8	18

n/av Not available.

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).

Table 2d Catch of tuna and tuna-like species in Western Australian state fisheries, by species and method, for 2022 and 2023

Year	Species		Live weight (kg)				
			Gillnet	Line ^a	Trolling	Trawl	Haul Net
2022	bonitos	<i>Sarda australis & Cybiosarda elegans</i>	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av	n/av
	bonito, oriental	<i>Sarda orientalis</i>	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, grey	<i>Scomberomorus semifasciatus</i>	n/av	>500	12,744	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, school	<i>Scomberomorus queenslandicus</i>	n/av	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, shark	<i>Grammatorcynus bicarinatus</i>	n/av	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, Spanish	<i>Scomberomorus commerson</i>	n/av	n/av	198,480	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, spotted	<i>Scomberomorus munroi</i>	n/av	n/av	<500	n/av	<500
	mackerels, general	Scombridae	n/av	n/av	n/av	<500	n/av
	tuna, bigeye	<i>Thunnus obesus</i>	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av	n/av
	tuna, longtail	<i>Thunnus tonggol</i>	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	tuna, mackerel	<i>Euthynnus affinis</i>	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av	n/av
	tuna, other	Scombridae	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	tuna, skipjack	<i>Katsuwonus pelamis</i>	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	tuna, yellowfin	<i>Thunnus albacares</i>	<500	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	wahoo	<i>Acanthocybium solandri</i>	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
		TOTAL		<500	1,216	211,906	<500

n/av Not available.

a Line consists mainly of handline.

Table 2d (cont.) Catch of tuna and tuna-like species in Western Australian state fisheries, by method and species, for 2022 and 2023

Year	Species		Live weight (kg)				
			Gillnet	Line ^a	Trolling	Trawl	Haul Net
2023	bonitos	<i>Sarda australis & Cybiosarda elegans</i>	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av	n/av
	bonito, oriental	<i>Sarda orientalis</i>	n/av	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, grey	<i>Scomberomorus semifasciatus</i>	n/av	>500	13,498	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, school	<i>Scomberomorus queenslandicus</i>	n/av	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, shark	<i>Grammatorcynus bicarinatus</i>	n/av	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, Spanish	<i>Scomberomorus commerson</i>	n/av	<500	222,087	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, spotted	<i>Scomberomorus munroi</i>	n/av	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av
	mackerels, general	Scombridae	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av	n/av
	tuna, longtail	<i>Thunnus tonggol</i>	n/av	>500	<500	n/av	n/av
	tuna, mackerel	<i>Euthynnus affinis</i>	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av	n/av
	tuna, other	Scombridae	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av	n/av
	tuna, skipjack	<i>Katsuwonus pelamis</i>	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	tuna, yellowfin	<i>Thunnus albacares</i>	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	wahoo	<i>Acanthocybium solandri</i>	n/av	n/av	606	n/av	n/av
		TOTAL		0	4,141	236,765	0

n/av Not available.

a Line consists mainly of handline.

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 1 billfish (sailfish and marlins combined) in Western Australia, but the majority of sailfish and marlins are tagged and released alive. There is also a mixed species daily bag limit of 3 large pelagic finfish, which includes SBT and other tuna species, among others. 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. 2019; 2022), South Australia in 2021–22 (Beckmann et al. 2023), the Northern Territory (West et al. 2022) 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).

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.

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, e-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 e-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 <https://www.afma.gov.au/fisheries-management/management-tools/ecological-risk-management-strategies>.

The ERAs rely on existing biological and catch information and consider 5 ecosystem components: target species, byproduct and bycatch species, threatened, endangered or protected (TEP) species, habitats, and communities.

For species, there are 3 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). Risks 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 fisheries have been inactive since 2009, hence there has been no ecological risk from the fisheries 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. Management measures in relation to bycatch in the ETBF have more recently been incorporated into the ETBF overall Fishery Management Strategy (AFMA 2021).

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 articulates how Australia manages sharks and ensures that Australia meets international conservation and management obligations. The plan identifies research and management actions across Australia for the long-term sustainability of sharks, including actions to help minimise the impacts of fishing on sharks. The most recent review in 2023 was informed by the [Shark Assessment Report](#) (Wright et al. 2022) and feedback from key stakeholders through the Shark-plan Representative Group. The Australian Fisheries Management Forum, including representatives from the Australian Government, Northern Territory and state fisheries management agencies, adopted the Revised Shark-plan 2 in April 2024. Changes to the Shark-plan recognise that many actions have been completed, including the implementation of legislation to ban the practise of shark-finning.

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. The ban was implemented more than a decade ago following research (e.g. Ward et al. 2007) that demonstrated higher at-vessel catch rates of sharks on wire trace when compared to monofilament. 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

The number of sharks taken (retained or released) are monitored via compulsory logbooks, 100% e-monitoring coverage of the longline fleet, and, for retained catches, port-based catch disposal records.

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 2023, 32 bronze whalers, 3 shortfin makos and 1 shark – unknown were landed (Table 3a, 3b), while 7,587 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 2023, e-monitoring data recorded 235 sharks captured in the WTBF (77 crocodile sharks, 77 sharks – mixed, 55 blue sharks, 21 whaler and weasel sharks, 4 oceanic whitetip sharks and 1 bigeye thresher). Of these sharks, 7 were dead, 36 were released alive and 192 were released with an undetermined life status.

Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

As little effort from the ETBF occurred in the IOTC Area of Competence (<10% of the total hooks set in 2023), 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 & Patterson 2024).

Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery

No interactions with sharks by purse-seiner vessels were reported by observers in the IOTC Area of Competence relevant to the SBTF in 2023. All interactions with ecologically related species are reported to the CCSBT (e.g. Patterson & Hobsbawn 2024).

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 2023

Common name	Scientific name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Blacktip shark	<i>Carcharhinus</i> spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blue shark	<i>Prionace glauca</i>	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0
Bronze whaler	<i>Carcharhinus brachyurus</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32
Cookie-cutter shark	<i>Isistius brasiliensis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Crocodile shark	<i>Pseudocarcharias kamoharai</i>	0	16	20	0	10	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Dusky shark	<i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna</i> spp.	13	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oceanic whitetip	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>	11	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Porbeagle	<i>Lamna nasus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	2	0	0	0	0	0
Roughskin shark	<i>Centroscymnus</i> spp.; <i>Deania</i> spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandbar shark	<i>Carcharhinus plumbeus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scalloped hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shortfin mako	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>	43	6	34	73	0	92	20	1	0	0	3	0	3
Longfin mako	<i>Isurus paucus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Silky shark	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smooth hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thresher shark	<i>Alopias vulpinus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tiger shark	<i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shark – other	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL		69	35	58	73	10	92	50	7	1	0	3	1	36

Note: The table refers to pelagic longline vessels.

Source: AFMA logbook data

Table 3b Total weight (tonnes trunked weight) of shark species retained by Australian longline vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence from 2011 to 2023

Common name	Scientific name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Blacktip shark	<i>Carcharhinus</i> spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blue shark	<i>Prionace glauca</i>	0.04	0.05	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.0	0	0	0	0.002	0
Bronze whaler	<i>Carcharhinus brachyurus</i>	0	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.625
Cookie-cutter shark	<i>Isistius brasiliensis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
Crocodile shark	<i>Pseudocarcharias kamoharai</i>	0	0.03	0.04	0	0.03	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Dusky shark	<i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna</i> spp.	0.2	0	0.04	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oceanic whitetip	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>	0.2	0.3	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Porbeagle	<i>Lamna nasus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	0.05	0	0	0	0	0
Roughskin shark	<i>Centroscymnus</i> spp.; <i>Deania</i> spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandbar shark	<i>Carcharhinus plumbeus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scalloped hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shortfin mako	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>	0.6	0.1	0.5	1.5	0	2.2	0.9	0.01	0	0	0.22	0	0.09
Longfin mako	<i>Isurus paucus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Silky shark	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smooth hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thresher shark	<i>Alopias vulpinus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tiger shark	<i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shark – other	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.001
TOTAL		1.1	0.5	0.6	1.5	0.03	2.2	1.8	0.07	0.0	0.0	0.22	0.002	0.716

Note: The table refers to pelagic longline vessels.

Source: AFMA logbook data

Table 4 Total number of sharks, by species, released/discarded by Australian longline vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence from 2011 to 2023

Common name	Scientific name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Blacktip shark	<i>Carcharhinus</i> spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blue shark	<i>Prionace glauca</i>	5148	5315	3333	3273	2315	3309	6013	2624	1343	1326	1163	2386	4989
Bronze whaler	<i>Carcharhinus brachyurus</i>	1	39	27	106	11	12	63	47	25	22	37	24	112
Cookie-cutter shark	<i>Isistius brasiliensis</i>	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	2
Crocodile shark	<i>Pseudocarcharias kamoharai</i>	7167	4880	2118	2911	2716	2378	3299	3514	2720	1696	1697	1511	1363
Dusky shark	<i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>	0	1	0	11	0	111	86	3	6	0	0	8	0
Hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna</i> spp.	6	96	7	39	91	45	74	48	44	11	18	4	117
Oceanic whitetip	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>	51	131	12	14	11	36	34	52	50	44	42	71	123
Pelagic Thresher	<i>Alopias pelagicus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0
Porbeagle	<i>Lamna nasus</i>	0	0	0	7	3	0	129	5	9	16	1	2	0
Port Jackson shark	<i>Heterodontus portusjacksoni</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Roughskin shark	<i>Centroscymnus</i> spp.; <i>Deania</i> spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandbar shark	<i>Carcharhinus plumbeus</i>	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scalloped hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
School Shark	<i>Galeorhinus galeus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30
Shortfin mako	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>	525	758	290	238	361	333	425	257	142	165	112	75	0
Longfin mako	<i>Isurus paucus</i>	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Silky shark	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smooth hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thresher shark	<i>Alopias vulpinus</i>	4	14	84	19	32	18	26	45	20	19	16	8	24
Tiger shark	<i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>	0	1	1	2	8	4	31	3	7	9	4	2	4
Shark – other	-	0	132	0	0	4	0	1	1	5	293	474	297	823
TOTAL		12 902	11 371	5 875	6 621	5 553	6 247	10 184	6 599	4 375	3 603	3 565	4 388	7 587

Note: The table refers to pelagic longline vessels.

Source: AFMA logbook data

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 5 years.

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 1,000 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 3 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 1,000 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 5-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 (Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, 2018). 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 2022 (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water 2022).

The recovery plan's objective is "to improve the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels so that these species are on a trajectory towards no longer being threatened in Australia's 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.

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 99.8% of the longline fishing from the 6 active vessels occurred in 2023; 100% of vessels were required to use these methods in 2023. This requirement is the same in the ETBF. Of the sets conducted in the IOTC area in 2023, 94.3% were at night. As a result of the implementation of e-monitoring on all WTBF and ETBF longline vessels, reporting of protected species interactions in logbooks has substantially improved in accuracy. E-monitoring allows verification of boat-level seabird interaction triggers and has improved monitoring of these triggers. Vessels that exceed trigger interaction rates are subject to additional in-season management measures/mitigation (see Appendix B).

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. Both logbook and e-monitoring data indicate that in recent years 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 2023, e-monitoring did not observe any interactions with seabirds (Tables 5 and 6) (based on 9.7% e-monitoring audit rate). Six interactions were recorded in logbooks (5 flesh footed shearwaters that were released alive and one Wilsons storm petrel released alive).

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. Further, where vessels experience increased interaction rates, strengthened individual vessel-focussed management approaches are implemented that include in-season monitoring (via e-monitoring) and additional mitigation requirements.

In 2023, one seabird interaction was recorded in logbooks in the IOTC Area of Competence (unknown bird and unknown life status). No seabird interactions were observed by e-monitoring in the IOTC Area of Competence. A full description of seabird interactions in the ETBF (inside and outside IOTC

area) is provided in Australia's national report to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (Blake & Patterson 2024).

Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery

Observers did not report any seabird interactions in the purse-seine sector in 2021–2022 or 2022–23. All interactions with ecologically related species from the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery are reported to the CCSBT (e.g. Patterson & Hobsbawn 2024).

Table 5 Observed seabird interaction data for the Australian WTBF longline fleet, 2023

Fishery		Observed					
Area	Total effort	Total observed effort	Observer coverage	Captures (number)	Mortalities (number)	Live releases (number)	Mortality estimate (number) ¹
WTBF	236,020	22,880	9.7%	0	0	0	0

Note: 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.

5.4.2 Interactions

Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery

In the WTBF, 2 sea turtle interactions were observed by e-monitoring in 2023 (one leatherback turtle released alive and one unknown turtle released alive; Tables 6 and 7). Fifteen turtle interactions were recorded in logbooks (11 leatherback turtles, and 4 loggerhead turtles). All loggerhead turtles were release alive. Nine of the leatherback turtles were released alive, and 2 were recorded as dead at vessel.

Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

In 2023, 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 & Patterson 2024).

Southern Tuna Bluefin Fishery

Observers did not report any turtle interactions in the purse-seine sector in 2021–22 or 2022–23. All interactions with ecologically related species are reported to the CCSBT (Patterson & Hobsbawn 2024)

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 2023

Group	Common name	Scientific name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Seabirds	Yellow-nosed albatross	<i>Thalassarche chlororhynchos</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Albatrosses	<i>Diomedidae - undifferentiated</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Flesh footed shearwater	<i>Puffinus carneipes</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Petrels, prions and shearwaters	<i>Procellariidae – undifferentiated</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0
Turtles	Loggerhead turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Hawksbill turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Leatherback turtle	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	4	3	2	0	0	1
	Green turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Olive Ridley turtle	<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sea turtles	<i>Cheloniidae - undifferentiated</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	1
Mammals	Australian fur seal	<i>Arctocephalus pusillus doriferus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Whales	<i>Whales - undifferentiated</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Source: AFMA electronic monitoring data and observer program data

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 2023

Year	Fishery			Observed				
	Lat	Long	Total effort	Total observed effort	Species	Captures (number)	Mortalities (number)	Live releases (number)
2012	10	95	672,792	119,757	Leatherback	1	0	1
2014	30	110	451,275	41,066	Hawksbill	1	0	1
2014	30	110	451,275	41,066	Leatherback	1	0	1
2016	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
2022	30	112	223,063	24,650	Sea turtle	1	0	1
2023	30	114	250,390	22,880	Leatherback	1	0	1
2023	29	113	250,390	22,880	Unidentified	1	0	1

Note: Since 1 July 2015 all observer coverage is by electronic monitoring.

Source: AFMA electronic monitoring data and observer program data.

National data collection and processing systems

6.1 Logbook data collection

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, 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 2023, observer coverage (through e-monitoring) was 9.7% of hooks set (22,880 hooks; Table 8).

6.4.2 Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

Five longline vessels in the ETBF fished in the IOTC Area of Competence in 2023 (one of which also operated in the WTBF). As with the WTBF, these vessels were subject to compulsory e-monitoring. Observer coverage rates in the ETBF are reported to the WCPFC (Blake & Patterson 2024).

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 2022–23 quota year, Australian observers spent 59 days at sea. They observed purse-seine activities for 36 days and tow activities for 23 days. The observers monitored 14 purse-seine sets where fish were retained, representing 8.1% coverage for sets where fish were retained. This equates to 12.7% of the total estimated catch. There were 4 sets observed where fish escaped or were released because fish were too small.

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 20 observers are currently employed in the AFMA observer program which operates across many different domestic fisheries. 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 current medical and functional fitness clearance, remote or advanced first aid training, fire safety training, standards of training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers (STCW) certification, and have completed an AFMA observer training course.

While AFMA maintains an ability to place observers on any vessels that it chooses, AFMA introduced compulsory e-monitoring longline vessels in WTBF and ETBF from 1 July 2015. This is the primary mode of observer-type data collection in both fisheries since 2015.

The minimum e-monitoring review rates for each vessel fitted with an e-monitoring system in the ETBF and WTBF are: all pelagic longliners, 10% catch review, 10% seabird mitigation review, 100% threatened, endangered and protected (TEP) species verification and 100% event detection. Further information on the review types is as follows:

- A fishing event is defined as a spatially and temporally corresponding set and haul. Event detection identifies and records sets and hauls.
- Catch review is the documentation stage where all items that have interacted with the fishing gear during the haul are recorded to the lowest taxonomic level possible. When possible, fate and life status are also documented.
- All interactions with TEP species observed during an e-monitoring review are recorded as incidental take, with the details of the time, date, location, type of capture, life status of the animal.
- TEP verification requires an e-monitoring analyst to verify logbook reported TEP interactions with e-monitoring footage.
- In addition to the standard TEP review, pelagic longliners require review for the deployment of seabird mitigation devices.

Port sampling processes facilitate the collection of biological information which cannot be achieved through e-monitoring. The processes involve the collection of individual fish size data of key commercial and byproduct species, covering approximately 90% of total catch for commercial species.

In 2023, a total of 274,990 longline hooks were deployed in the IOTC Area of Competence by Australian vessels, of which 9% were observed. 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 2023.

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 prohibited from taking black or blue marlin *under the Fisheries Management Act 1991* and must report any interactions with these species. Since 2015, there have been 4 sailfish reported through the WTBF compulsory logbooks and these were not retained. Striped marlin are subject to quota management in WTBF. In 2023, 1 t striped marlin was caught in the IOTC Area of Competence (Table 2a). The number of billfish taken are monitored via logbooks and e-monitoring coverage of the longline fleet.

6.7 Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring

Australia does not authorise the use of gillnets to target tuna.

6.8 Sampling plans for mobulid rays

Setting any gear for targeting of mobulid rays is prohibited under the EPBC Act.

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 2023 (calendar year). The purse seine coverage noted here refers only to fishing for southern bluefin tuna (SBT) where fish were retained.

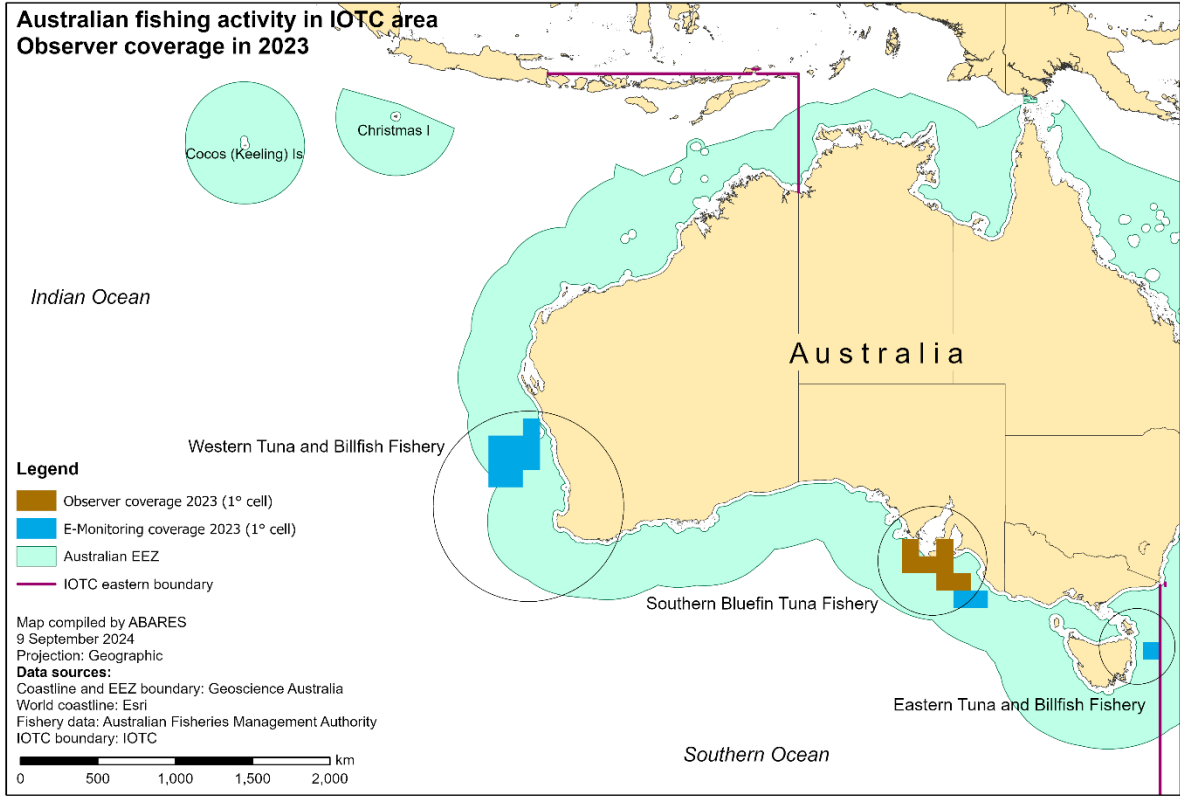
Year	Longline Hooks Observed	Percentage Coverage (Hooks)	SBT Season	Purse Seine Sets Observed	Percentage Coverage (Sets)
2006	n/av	n/av	2006–07	9	5.6
2007	n/av	1.42	2007–08	16	11.8
2008	n/av	n/av	2008–09	11	7.9
2009	44,790	8.46	2009–10	7	9.0
2010	15,330	2.45	2010–11	21	19.8
2011	6,232	1.7	2011–12	17	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	13	9.6
2022	24,650	11.1	2022–23	14	8.1
2023	22,880	9.7	2023–24	n/av	n/av

n/av Not available.

a Observer coverage in 2015 includes both human observers and data obtained from electronic monitoring systems.

b Since 1 July 2015 all coverage is by electronic monitoring.

Figure 5 Spatial distribution of 2023 observer coverage in the longline fishery in the IOTC Area of Competence



6.9 Port sampling program

As noted above, port sampling processes facilitate the collection of biological information which cannot be achieved through e-monitoring. The processes involve the collection of individual fish size data of key commercial and byproduct species, covering approximately 90% of total catch for commercial species.

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 2023 these data were obtained from 1 longline vessel and approximately 26 trips (Table 9).

Table 9 Number of individuals measured, by species, in the WTBF in 2023. Only target species and bycatch species with >50 individuals measured are provided.

Common name	Scientific name	Number measured
Albacore	<i>Thunnus alalunga</i>	569
Bigeye tuna	<i>Thunnus obesus</i>	1,309
Swordfish	<i>Xiphias gladius</i>	1,249
Yellowfin tuna	<i>Thunnus albacares</i>	1,331
Rudderfish	<i>Centrolophus niger</i>	534
Mahi mahi	<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>	399

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
Investigate oceanographic and environmental factors impacting on the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery	2018–2024	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 can be taken account of when developing or amending management arrangements.	This project collated fisheries, environmental and biological data for Australia and participating regional countries and developed habitat models for 5 key tuna and billfish species.
Provenance and chain of custody of tropical tunas in the north-east Indian Ocean	2015–2023	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

Project title	Period	Countries Involved	Funding source	Objectives	Short description
					chain of custody and Catch Documentation Schemes.
Harvest strategies for Indonesian tropical tuna fisheries to increase sustainable benefits	2018–2023	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	2021–2024	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)	2021–2024	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

Project title	Period	Countries Involved	Funding source	Objectives	Short description
study for Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna					(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.

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 2023

No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
12/04	On the conservation of marine turtles	Paragraphs, 3, 4, 6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.
12/09	On the conservation of thresher sharks (family Alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 4–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Australia provides data on interactions with thresher sharks to the IOTC. - In 2011, Australia implemented new permit conditions to prohibit licence holders from retaining, transshipping, 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.

No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
13/04	On the conservation of cetaceans	Paragraphs 7–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 (<i>Rhincodon typus</i>)	Paragraphs 7–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resolution 13/05 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 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The retention, transshipment, 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.
15/02	Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting	Paragraphs 1–7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data submitted including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Total catch data

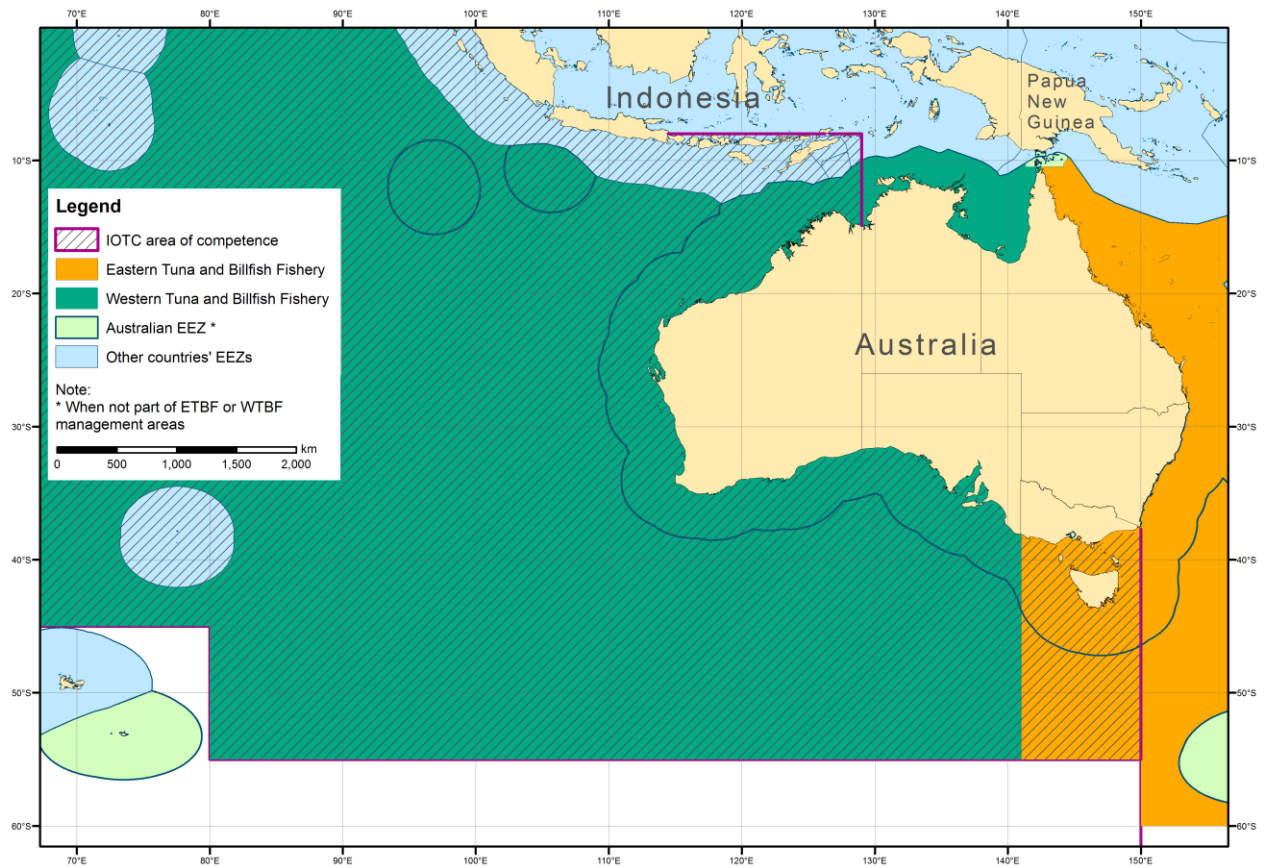
No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
	Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Catch and effort data - Size data - Data submitted by 30 June each year
17/05	On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by the IOTC	Paragraphs 6, 9, 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Available data submitted to meet the data reporting requirements outlined in the resolution. Size frequency data are 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. - 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 <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>, licence holders must take measures to avoid the catch of porbeagle shark (<i>Lamna nasus</i>), shortfin (<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>) and longfin (<i>Isurus paucus</i>) 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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).

No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
18/05	On management measures for the conservation of the billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish	Paragraphs 7–11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Australia is compliant with data reporting requirements and has implemented reporting obligations in their IOTC fisheries. -Australia has reported on the implementation of e-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
19/03	On the conservation of mobulid rays caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraph 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Australia does not have subsistence or artisanal fisheries -This is not applicable to Australia
21/01	On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence (if not provided under Res 19/01 above)	Paragraph 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The obligation in para 23 is not applicable to Australia -Australia does not authorise the use of gillnets to target tuna in the WTBF
22/04	On a regional observer scheme	Paragraph 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In both the ETBF and WTBF, e-monitoring has been in place since July 2015 and is mandatory for all longline vessels. Size data are collected at port. -A minimum of 10% of the video footage is reviewed.
23/07	On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries	Paragraphs 3–7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 2018, Australia implemented a revised Threat Abatement Plan for seabirds to minimise seabird interactions in pelagic longline operations. Under the 2018 plan, longline vessels are required to

No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
			<p data-bbox="1025 279 2024 336">maintain the bycatch rate of 0.05 seabirds per 1000 hooks set in all fishing areas and fishing seasons.</p> <ul data-bbox="1025 360 2085 616" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1025 360 2085 485">- Consistent with the objectives of the plan and with Resolution 23/07, 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. <li data-bbox="1025 509 2085 566">- The design and deployment of bird scaring lines meet the specifications described in Annex I of Resolution 23/07 <li data-bbox="1025 590 1989 616">- Australia reports on seabird interactions and mitigation measures in its national report.

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 2024

Source: [AFMA management arrangements booklets](#)

Seabirds

At all times you must:

- Carry more than one assembled tori line onboard
- 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 a shot when fishing between the hours of nautical and nautical dusk
- A tori line is 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 numbers of seabird interactions are possible.

Tori line specifications – tori lines must:

- 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 a maximum interval 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.

Individual vessels that fail to consistently avoid or minimise interaction rates with seabirds are subject to additional monitoring and mitigation requirements. Specifically, vessels that exceed a rate of 0.05 birds/1,000 hooks - in two of the last three consecutive Summer (or Winter) TAP seasons, or in consecutive Summer and Winter seasons, or take more than ten birds in a season - will be notified and placed on a watchlist. If that vessel then breaches the trigger again in-season, it will be required to implement additional mitigation. That will comprise either stronger line weighting, night setting, hook shields, or moving the area of operation at least 5 degrees north (to a lower seabird abundance area). Additional mitigation will be required on top of this if the vessel continues to have seabird interactions. The additional mitigations measures remain in place until AFMA notifies the SFR holder in writing that the vessel has achieved a seabird by-catch rate less than 0.05 birds per 1,000 hooks.

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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