



MAURITIUS National Report to the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, 2024

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INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

<p>In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02 (and other data related CMMs as noted below), final scientific data for the previous year were provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the current year, for all fleets other than longline [e.g., for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2024, final data for the 2023 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2024)</p>	<p>YES 30.06.2024</p>
<p>In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, provisional longline data for the previous year was provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the current year [e.g., for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2024, preliminary data for the 2023 calendar year were provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June 2024).</p> <p>REMINDER: Final longline data for the previous year are due to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 Dec of the current year [e.g., for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2024, final data for the 2023 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 December 2024).</p>	<p>YES 30.06.2024</p>
<p>If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions:</p>	



Executive Summary

In 2023, Mauritius had 5 purse seiners, 1 supply vessel and 16 industrial longliners operating in the tuna fishery. One of the purse seiners started to operate in December 2023 for only 15 days. The five purse seiners are large freezer vessels with three having an overall length of 89.4 m each, one at 82.06 m and the last at 71.95 m. The longliners are all industrial boats of more than 24 meters in length.

All the longliners carried out fishing activities inside and outside the EEZ of Mauritius undertaking a total of 56 fishing trips that spanned 3413 fishing days. A total of 4454205 hooks was deployed. The majority of the catch consisted of yellowfin (43.9%) followed by bigeye (33.7%), albacore (9.6%), and swordfish (3.4%). Their total catch amounted to 5866.25 tons and the CPUE was 1.3kg/hook. These longliners transhipped most of their main catch which included yellowfin, albacore, bigeye and swordfish at sea while the remaining catch were unloaded at Port Louis for the local market.

The Mauritian purse seiners operated between latitude 19°N to 23°S and longitude 28° to 68°E. The total catch of the five purse seiners amounted to 24920.0 tons comprising 29.1% yellowfin, 62.2% skipjack and 6.3% bigeye tuna for 822 positive sets out of a total of 856 sets.

Sampling exercises were carried out on the catches that were unloaded in port by the industrial longliners and purse seiners. The total amount of fish sampled amounted to 13097 (5779 from the longliners and 7318 from the purse seiners). In the artisanal fishery, 459 fishes were sampled for length frequency.



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1. Background/General fishery information

Industrial tuna fishing started in Mauritius in the late nineteen seventies. A first Mauritian purse seiner, 'Lady Sushil' was launched in 1979 and eight years later another purse seiner, the 'Lady Sushil II' joined the fleet. A third purse seiner, 'Cirné', started operations in 1991. Until 1997, the three vessels were operating for the local canning factory. However, due to financial problems and change in the administration of the factory, the vessels were sold off and the factory had to rely on import of raw materials to meet its commitments. In 2013, a Mauritius-flagged vessel restarted operating in the purse seine fishery after an absence of 13 years.

The number of purse seiners has gradually increased over the years from 3 since 2019 to reach 5 vessels in 2023. It is to be pointed out that one of the purse seiners started to operate in December 2023 for only 15 days. The total catch of the five purse seiners amounted to 24920.0t comprising of 29.1% yellowfin, 62.2% skipjack and 6.3% bigeye tuna for 822 positive sets out of a total of 856 sets.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the Observer Programme has been put on hold. The Observer program was usually being carried out by the staff of the Ministry of Blue Economy, Fisheries, Marine Resources and Shipping. There was a plan in 2023 to recruit observers on a contract basis.

The Mauritian surface longline fishery targeting mainly swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) started in the eighties. During experimental longlining for tuna during 1986-88, a few swordfish were caught in the coastal waters of Mauritius (Roullot et al, 1988). Commercial longline fishing started in 1999 when a small surface longliner started fishing for swordfish in the Mauritian waters. Since then, the number of vessels has gradually increased as promoters were encouraged to exploit the swordfish resource. Prior to 2022, the Mauritian longline fishing vessels were all semi-industrial vessels less than 24M in length.

Industrial longliners of more than 24 m in length started their operation in 2022. In 2023, there were sixteen industrial longliners targeting tuna were active in the tuna fishery. The industrial longliners landed a total of 5866.25 tonnes of fish. The majority of the catch consisted of yellowfin (43.9%) followed by bigeye (33.7%), albacore (9.6%) and swordfish (3.4%).

An artisanal fishery around Anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (AFADS) exists since 1985. A number of FADs are set at distances ranging from 2 to 12nm from the coast. There are approximately 350 fishermen that are registered to fish around the AFADs. In 2023, catch around the AFADs was not recorded due to internal issues.

2. Fleet structure

In 2023, the Mauritian tuna fleet comprised five purse seiners, sixteen surface longliners and one supply vessel (Table 1). However, one of the purse seiners started to operate in December 2023 for only 15 days. The purse seiners operated mostly outside the EEZ of Mauritius namely on the high seas and in the EEZ of Seychelles. The Overall Length and Gross Tonnage of the purse seiners ranged from 71.95 to 89.4 meters and 2347 to 2667 tons respectively.

The surface longliners all exceeding 24 meters in length operated mostly outside the EEZ. These vessels measure between 29.50 and 41.60 meters and have a Gross Tonnage ranging from 98 to 320 tons. Mauritius has only one supply vessel that services its purse seiners. The supply vessel is 30M in length and has aGT of 287t.

Table 1 shows the number of vessels of the National fleet which operated in the IOTC area of competence by gear type and size from 2019 to 2023.

Table 1: Number of vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence, by gear type and size class

Year	Gear	Number of vessels	Number of fishing days	GT	LOA (m)	Preservation Methods
2019	Surface longline	15	1326	17.27-97.40	13.50-23.80	Chilled/Frozen
	Purse seine	3	681	2667	89.4	Frozen
	Supply vessel	1	198 days at sea	287	30	
2020	Surface longline	2	141	38.41-49.0	13.50-20.10	Chilled/Frozen
	Purse seine	3	678	2667	89.4	Frozen
	Supply vessel	1	215 days at sea	287	30	
2021	Surface longline	1	84	49	20.1	Chilled/Frozen
	Purse seine	3	854	2667	89.4	Frozen
	Supply vessel	1	217 days at sea	287	30	
2022	Surface longline	13	2170	98-320	29.50-41.60	Frozen
	Purse seine	4	558	2347-2667	71.95-89.40	Frozen
	Supply vessel	1	217 days at sea	287	30	
2023	Surface longline	16	3413	98-320	29.50-41.60	Frozen
	Purse seine	5*	691	2347-2667	71.95-89.40	Frozen
	Supply vessel	1	291 days at sea	287	30	

3. CATCH AND EFFORT (BY SPECIES AND FISHERY)

All fishing operations of the tuna fishing vessels operating under the Mauritian flag are monitored through the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS). The catch is verified through the fishing logbooks submitted by the masters of the fishing vessels. The submission of the logbooks is mandatory. If a vessel fails to submit its logbook, it is subjected to penalties. The catch of the vessels is also monitored by the Fisheries Protection and Technical officers based at the Port State Control Unit.

In 2023, the industrial longliners undertook 56 fishing trips covering 3413 fishing days and deployed 4454205 hooks (Table 2b). The total catch of the industrial longline fleet was 5866.25t. The vessels have been targeting tuna species which are usually gilled and gutted with both the head and tail off. The CPUE was 1.3kg/hook. Yellowfin tuna made up 43.9% of the catch followed by bigeye (33.7%), albacore (9.6%), and swordfish (3.4%). The other species caught were marlin (1.5%) and sharks (0.48%) as well as some skipjack and sailfish.

A total of 691 fishing days was recorded for the five super freezer purse seiners and 856 sets were deployed out of which, 822 were positive (Table 2b). The total catch amounted to 24920.0 tons with a catch composition of 29.1% yellowfin tuna, 62.2% skipjack tuna, 6.3% bigeye tuna and 0.01% albacore tuna. Miscellaneous fishes constituted 2.3% of the total catch. The purse seiners operated between 19°N to 23°S and longitude 28° to 68°E (Figure 2b). 88.2% of the catch (22071.99t) was made on log-associated schools whilst 11.3% (2848.0t) was from free school. The majority of the log-associated catch originated from artificial logs (94.6%) and only 5.4% of the log-associated catch was made on natural logs. Skipjack constitutes 63% of catch on the artificial logs with 29% of yellowfin and 6% of bigeye. On the natural logs, skipjack made up 56% of the catch followed by 36% yellowfin and 5% bigeye. The catch on free schools comprised 36.0% of yellowfin and 56.3% of skipjack.

The tables 2a and 2b below show the annual catch and effort of the Mauritian flagged longliner (Table 2a) and of the Mauritian flagged purse seiners (Table 2b) in the IOTC area of competence.

Table 2a. Annual catch and effort of Mauritian flagged longliners in the IOTC area of competence (2019 - 2023)

Species	Catch in Kg				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Yellowfin	324872	33790	11774	1617649	2574668
Bigeye	113043	183	20	921033	1977829
Albacore	18913	18090	7961	513226	560314
Swordfish	267645	1010	65	102781	197735
Billfishes	25610	2540	690	58257	120250
Other billfishes	11442	0	0	12171	0
Sharks	8138	0	0	23684	28220
NEI	34615	2577	1278	136021	407230
Effort (No. of hooks)	1553466	129500	84000	6877244	4454205

Table 2b. Annual catch and effort of Mauritian flagged purse seiners operating in the IOTC area of competence (2019 – 2023)

Species	Catch (tones)				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Yellowfin	12287	9681	9641	9521	7264
Bigeye	1895	1515	1953	2053	1579
Skipjack	12742	9210	14129	13792	15510
Albacore	16	19	10	10	2
Total	26940	20425	25733	25376	24355
Effort (No. of sets)	808	691	804	717	856

The figures 1a and 1b below show the historical annual catch for the Mauritius longline and purse seine fleets respectively. Regarding the longline fleet, there has been an increase in the catch made by all the longliners since 2014. This was mainly due to the development of the fishing fleet which reached 16 vessels in 2023. It is to be noted that in 2016, 3 longliners started to operate in Mozambique and they were joined by 7 other longliners which continued their activities in the Mozambican waters up to 2019. For the year 2023, 16 Industrial Longline vessels carried out fishing activities both inside and outside the EEZ.

The catch of the Mauritius purse seine fleet has known a gradual increase from 2013 to 2023 except for 2020 where the purse seine catch was 20 425t (Figure 1b). This was followed by an increase in 2021 mainly contributed by higher catch of the skipjack tuna. The gradual increase was mainly attributed to the rise in the number of purse seiners. However, it should be noted that one of the purse seiners was active for only fifteen days in 2023. A high percentage of skipjack was observed in the purse seine catch in 2023 with a noticeable decrease in the yellowfin catch despite the increase in the number of purse seiners. This was mainly attributed to the strict monitoring of the yellowfin quota allocated to the Mauritian tuna fishing vessels

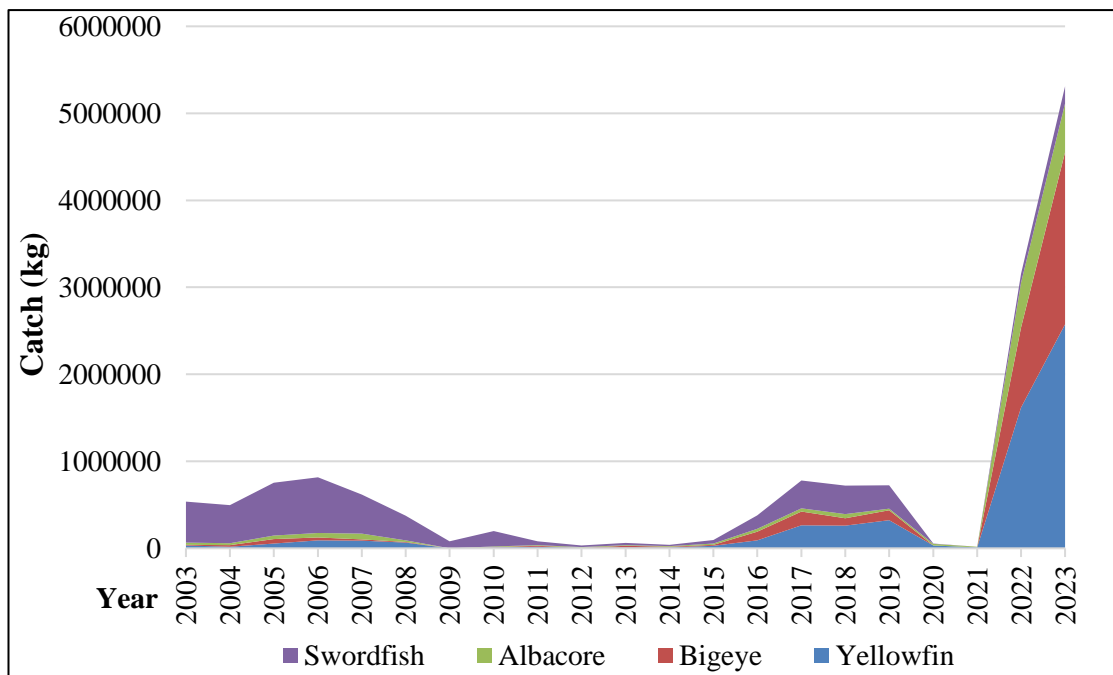


Figure 1a. Historical annual catch of the primary species for the Mauritius longline fleet in the IOTC area of competence (2003 – 2023)

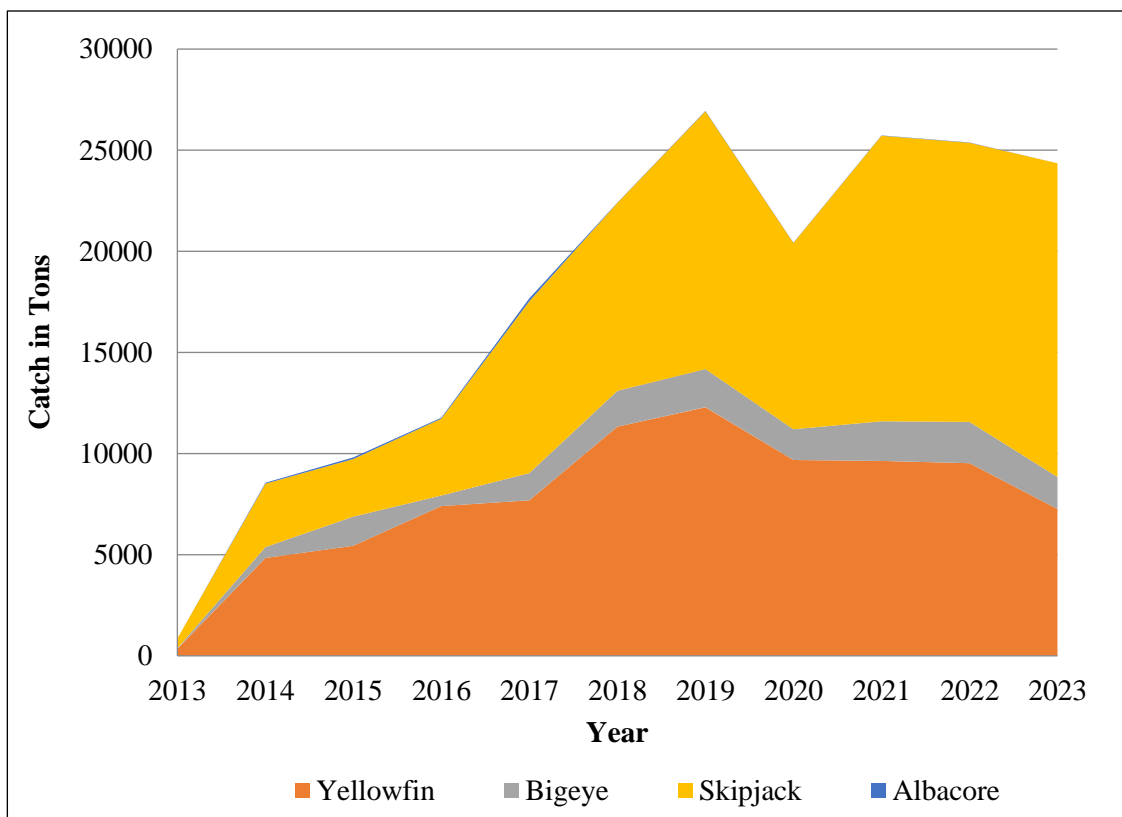


Figure 1b: Historical annual catch for the Mauritius purse seine fleet in the IOTC area of competence (2013-2023)

Figures 2a (i) and (ii) show the fishing efforts of the Mauritius longline and purse seine fleets in 2023. There was 16 Mauritius flagged longliners involved in the industrial tuna fishery and a total of 4454205 hooks were deployed. Regarding the Mauritius flagged purse seiners, fishing effort was concentrated in the region north of the EEZ of Mauritius. The geographical distribution primarily extended mostly between 13°N to 5°S and 46° to 66°E.

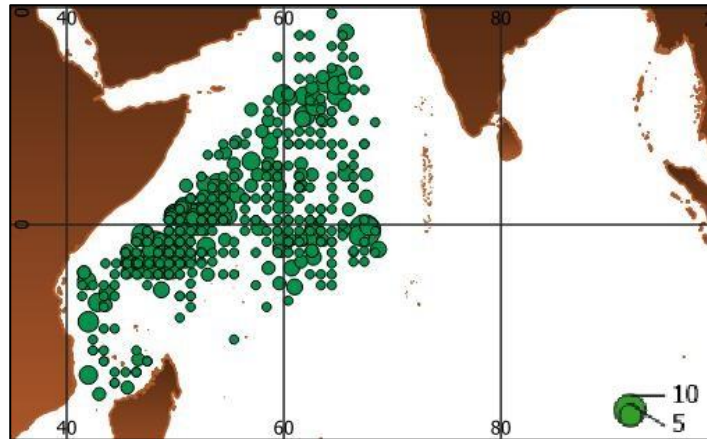


Figure 2a (i): Fishing effort (no. of sets) -Mauritius-flagged purse seiners (2023)

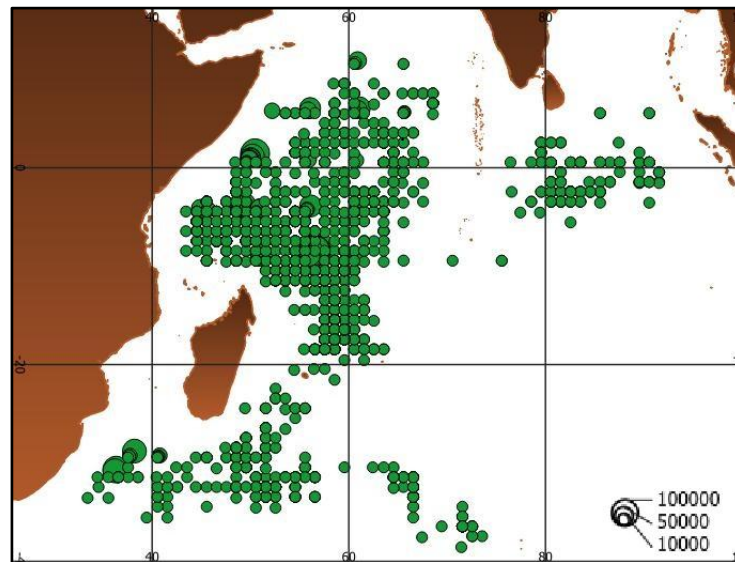


Figure 2a (ii): Fishing effort (no. of hooks) -Mauritius-flagged longliners (2023)

Figures below 2b (i) and (ii) show the fishing effort of the Mauritius purse seine and industrial longline fleets from 2019 to 2023. The fishing effort of the national longline fleet operating in the EEZ was concentrated between latitudes 5°N to 15°S and 45°E to 68°E. During the last five years, the fishing efforts of the Mauritius purse seine fleet were concentrated between latitudes 14°N to 8°S and longitudes 43°E to 69°E extending from the upper part of the EEZ of Seychelles northwards into the high seas.

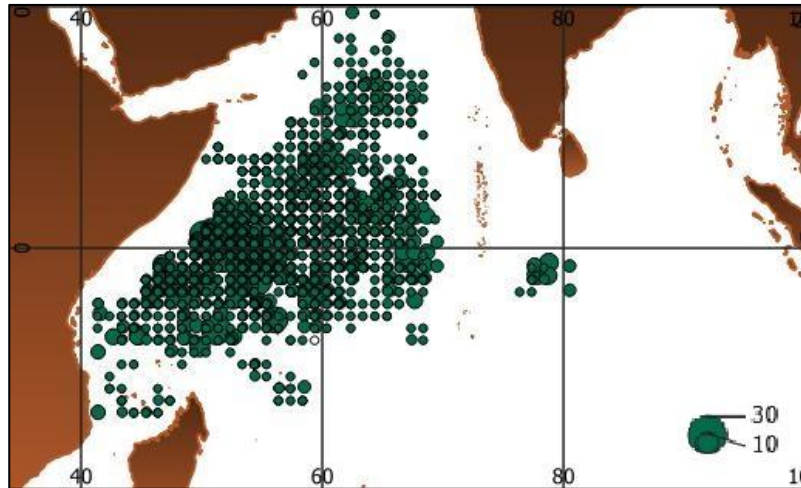


Figure 2b (i): Fishing effort (no. of sets) - Mauritius-flagged purse seiners (2019 – 2023)

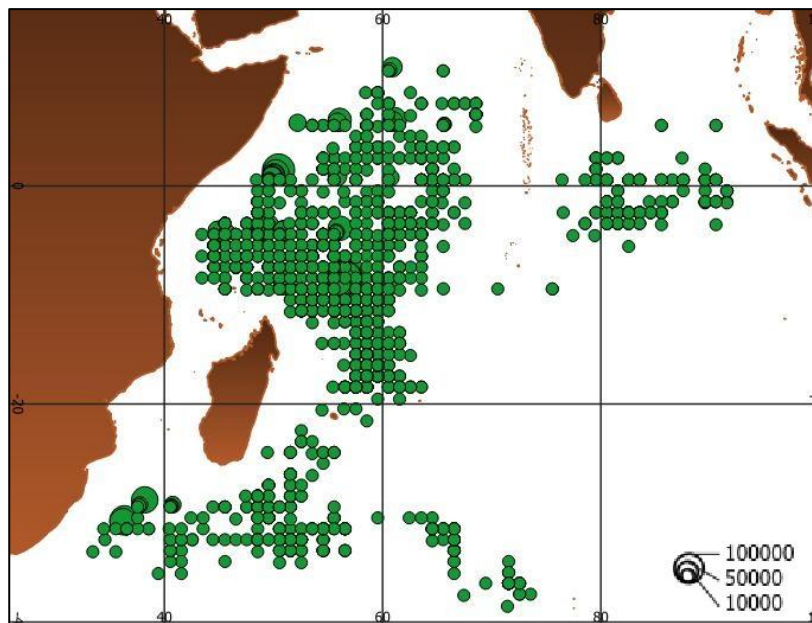


Figure 2b (ii): Fishing effort (no. of hooks) -Mauritius-flagged longliners (2019 -2023)

In figures 3a (i) and 3a (ii) show the maps of distribution of the catch of the national tuna fleets in 2023. The longline catches were concentrated between 10°N to 10°S and 44° to 65°E. For the national purse seine fleet, catches of the tropical tuna spanned from 13°N to 5°S and 45°E to 68°E with the majority being taken on high seas.

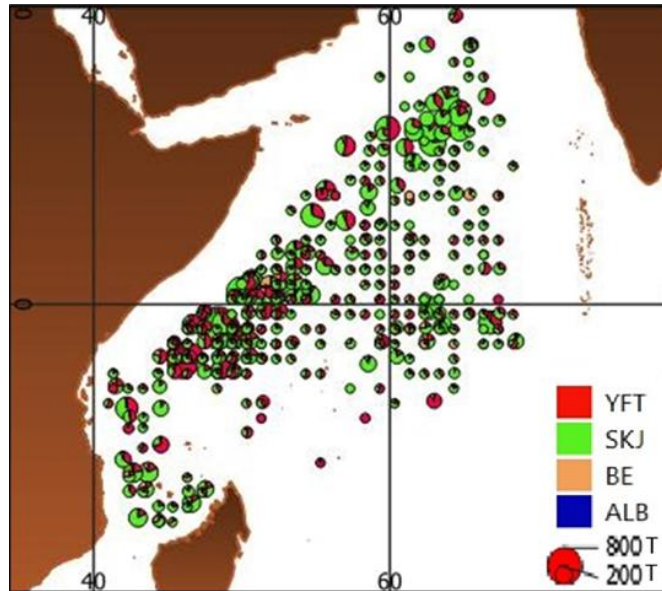


Figure 3a (i). Distribution of catch (in tons) by species for the Mauritian flagged purse seiner (2023)

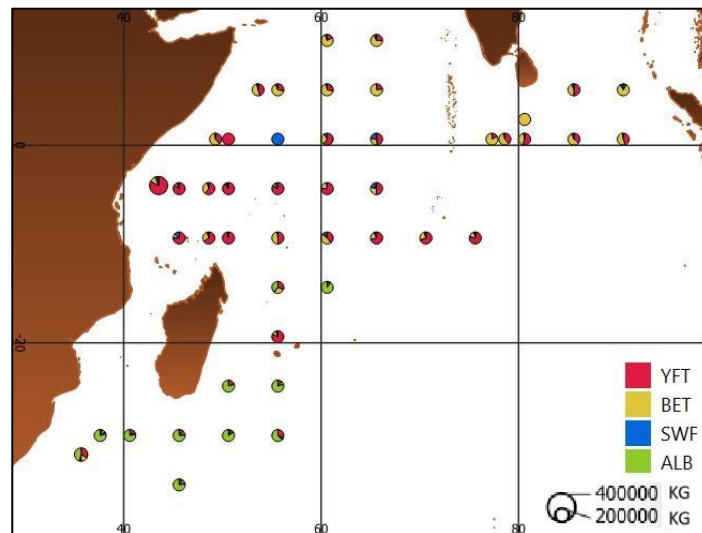


Figure 3a (ii) Distribution of catch by species for the Mauritian flagged longliners (2023)

In figures 3b (i) and 3b (ii): The aggregated catches of the last five years have been compiled for the national longline and the purse seine fleets. Regarding the purse seine fleet, the spatial catch distribution extended from 14°N to 8°S and 43°E to 69°E but were mostly concentrated between 3°N to 7°S and 45°E to 58°E. For the longline fleet, catches were concentrated in EEZs of Mauritius and Seychelles as well as in areas extending from 0°N to 19°S and 45° to 63°E.

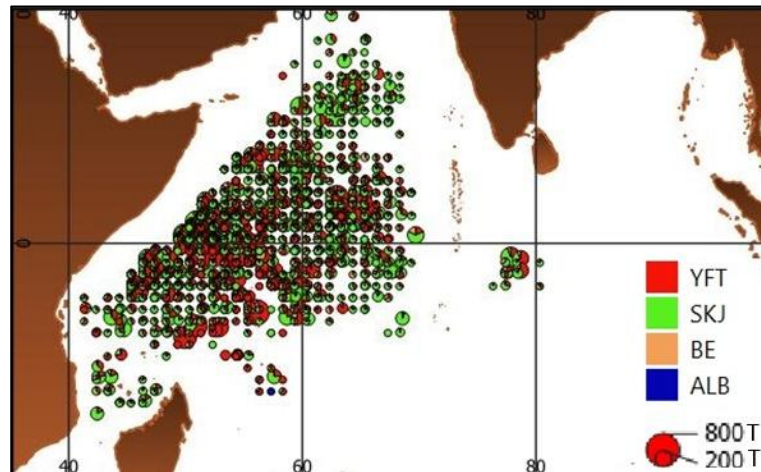


Figure 3b (i) Distribution of catch by species for the Mauritian flagged purse seiners in the EEZ (2019–2023)

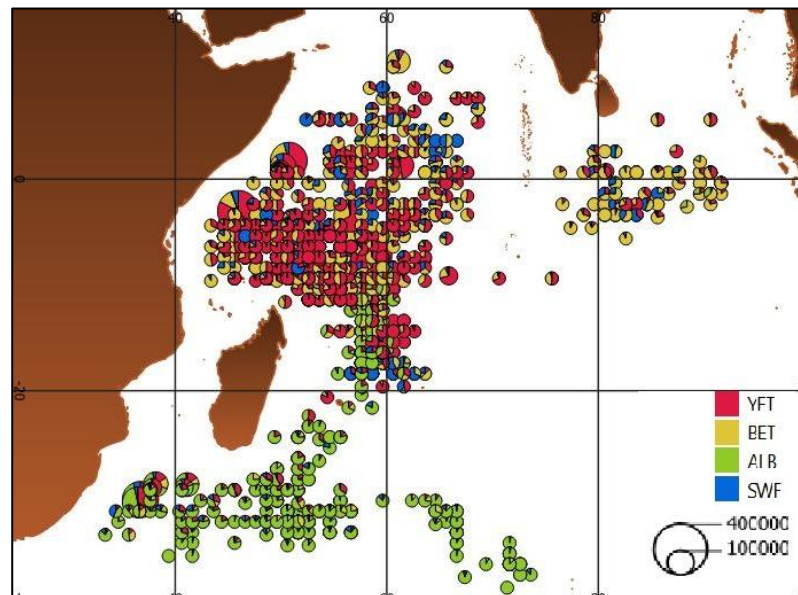


Figure 3b (ii) Distribution of catch (in kgs) by species for the Mauritian flagged longliners in the EEZ (2019–2023)

4. RECREATIONAL FISHERY

The sports/recreational fishing is an important activity for the tourism industry as well as for the local recreational fishermen. Around 60 sports/recreational fishing boats are involved in this fishery. The main fishing gear is trolling and the fishery supplies the local market with an estimated amount of about 350 tons. The main species comprises marlins, sailfish, tuna, common dolphinfish and wahoo. International big game fishing competitions which are usually held on an annual basis could not be carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic period. In 2022, with the waving of all the restrictions, the tourism industry started to recover. The estimation of the sports was maintained at 350 tones.

5. ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH ISSUES

Skippers, masters and agents of vessels have been sensitised on the conservation and management measures related to sharks; namely Resolutions 12/09, 13/05, 13/06, 17/05 and 18/02. Those resolutions are included in the fishing licence as mandatory conditions. The skippers/masters have also been informed of their obligation to comply with Resolution 19/03 concerning mobulid rays. Furthermore, identification guides on pelagic sharks have been distributed to the masters of the national-flagged vessels. Mauritius has already implemented its NPOA-sharks.

5.1 Sharks

5.1.1. NPOA sharks

Mauritius has a National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA- Sharks, Mauritius) which has been developed and submitted to the IOTC in 2015. In the NPOA, a series of actions have been described to ensure the conservation and management of sharks. These include:

- (i) Decrease fishing effort in any fishery where shark catch is unsustainable;
- (ii) Improve data collection and monitoring of shark fisheries;
- (iii) Train all concerned in identification of shark species;
- (iv) Facilitate and encourage research on sharks;
- (v) Improve the utilization of sharks caught; and
- (vi) Ascertain control over access of fishing vessels exploiting shark stocks.

5.1.2. Sharks finning regulation

Shark finning is banned in Mauritius. All vessels licensed to fish for tuna and tuna-like species are bound by the licence conditions to comply with the different IOTC resolutions, more specifically to Resolution 17/05. Licence conditions are legally binding under PART X of the Fisheries Act 2023.

5.1.3. Blue shark

Skippers/Masters are bound to report any catch of blue sharks. The skippers/masters have to abide by Resolution 18/02 as per licence conditions. All blue sharks reported in the logbooks have been transmitted to the IOTC. The catch of blue sharks is normally monitored through the collection fishing logbook and submission of observer reports. Table 3 shows the total number and weight of sharks, by species, retained by the national fleet in the IOTC area of competence from 2019 to 2023 while the total number of sharks, by species, released/discarded by the national fleet in the IOTC area of competence (2019 – 2023) are shown in table 4.

Table 3: Total number and weight of sharks, by species, retained by the national fleet in the IOTC area of competence (2019-2023)

Year	No. of sharks	Species	Weight (Kg)
2019	65	<i>Prionace glauca</i>	1455
	394	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>	5478
	62	<i>Isurus paucus</i>	810
	1	<i>Carcharinus falciformi</i>	202
	9	<i>Sphyrna sp</i>	573
2020	42	<i>Carcharinus limbatus</i>	1050
2021	1	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>	11
2022	67	<i>Prionace glauca</i>	1477
	313	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>	4349
2023	157	<i>Carcharinus limbatus</i>	5498
	5	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>	151
	425	<i>Prionace glauca</i>	12864

Table 4: Total number of sharks, by species, released/discarded by the national fleet in the IOTC area of competence (2018–2023)

Year	No. of sharks released	Species
2018	1(released alive)	<i>Rhincodon typhus</i>
2019	Nil	Not applicable
2020	1	<i>Prionace glauca</i>
	982	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>
	3	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>
	1(released alive)	<i>Rhincodon typhus</i>
2021	462 (released alive)	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>
	267	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>
	1 (released alive)	<i>Rhincodon typhus</i>
	3 (released alive)	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>
	2	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>
2022	1 (released alive)	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>
	2	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>
	117 (released alive)	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>
	212 (released dead)	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>
	5	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>
2023	1 (released alive)	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>
	1 (released dead)	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>
	1 (released dead)	<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>
	21 (Unknown)	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>
	3 (released dead)	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>

5.2 Seabirds

As reported in the Implementation Report for Mauritius, there was no incidental bycatch of seabirds by the Mauritian longliners in 2023. Nil encounters with seabirds have been reported in the fishing logbooks received from the Mauritius-flagged vessels in 2023. Five vessels operated south of 25°S but they were all equipped with bird scaring lines and also made use of line weighting.

It is to be noted that masters and agents of the licensed vessels have been provided with “Seabirds Identification cards for fishing vessels operating in the Indian Ocean” whereby identification techniques and mitigation measures are described.

5.3 Marine Turtles

The protection of marine turtles and eggs of marine turtles is ensured under Sections 33 (1) (d) and 83 (1) (b) of The Fisheries Act 2023. The vessels’ agents and masters have been provided with the ‘Marine Turtle Identification Cards – for Indian Ocean Fisheries’ depicting different species of turtles, techniques of releasing hooked turtles as well as some literature related to the ecology of marine turtles, threats to marine turtles; amongst others. Also, the licence conditions of Mauritius make provision for compliance with Resolution 12/04. Other measures taken by Mauritius related to the conservation of marine turtles have been included in the ‘Reporting of progress of implementation of the FAO Guideline to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operation and on the implementation of resolution 12/04 on marine turtles’ which was submitted to the Secretariat on the 14 March 2024. Interactions with Marine turtles by the Mauritian purse seiners in 2024 have also been reported to the IOTC in the Form 1DI.

5.4 Other ecologically related species (e.g., cetaceans, mobulid rays, whale sharks)

The Fisheries Act 2023 makes provision for the protection of marine mammals under Section 27 “Prohibition on commercial whaling and conservation of marine mammal”

No catch of cetaceans, mobulid rays and marine mammals have been recorded for the national fleet in the IOTC Area of Competence in the last five years. However, interactions with these species have been submitted to the IOTC in the appropriate IOTC Form.

6. NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING SYSTEMS

6.1. Logsheet data collection and verification

Catch data is being collected from the fishing logbooks since 2001. The fishing licence conditions make it mandatory for all the fishing vessels to submit duly filled in logbooks to the Ministry upon arrival in port. All the fishing positions are verified for accuracy against the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and landing data from the Port State Control Unit (PSCU), Mauritius Ports Authority and fishing agents. A total of 31 logbooks from the industrial longliners and 39 logbooks from the purse seiners were processed.

6.2. Observer scheme

The deployment of observers on board of the National fleet started in February 2015. The technical staff of the Fisheries Department were trained as observers by the SWIOFP, the COI and the OCUP programme. The observers follow the SWIOFP protocol where the observer has a clear set of objectives regarding data which they have to record. Training and qualification are prerequisite prior to deployment on board. There is a code of conduct which has to be respected on board such as respect of hierarchy, confidentiality and most importantly the authority of the captain on vessel operation and safety at sea. Observers must be aware of cultural awareness including eating customs and religious practices. Observers must also be acquainted with nautical terms related to the parts of a ship. All observers must have undergone formal STCW95 approved courses in personal survival training (PST) and CPR & first aid before being deployed at sea to know how to behave in emergency situations. Data collection includes vessel characteristics, biological and ecological information. All information is recorded on data capture forms where FAO and IOTC data codes are used whenever possible. Otherwise, full information must be provided. For species, IOTC and FAO 3-alpha codes are used to identify species. The observers are provided with a manual to be able to identify any species including fish, marine mammals and turtles, seabirds and sharks.

Catch composition are determined through stratified or proportional sampling where length frequency data are recorded to a precision of 0.5% of the overall length. Weight measurement is taken on an accurate scale such as hand or mechanical scales depending on the situation and availability. Different reports have to be submitted to the coordinator such as the deployment, five-day report status and the final trip report.

Observers were deployed mostly on purse seiners and at a lesser extent on longliners from 2015 to 2019. During that period, Mauritius had been able to maintain an observer coverage of at least 15%; for the 2019 Observer's Program, a 25.6% coverage was achieved through the deployment of three observers covering a total of 181 sets and 169 days at sea. Table 5 shows the annual observer coverage on the Mauritius flagged longliners and purse seiners from 2015 to 2019. Since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Observer Programme has been put on hold. Since then, the NOP has not been relaunched, as the Ministry had a project of recruiting observers.

Table 5. Annual observer coverage (2015-2023)

Year	Gear	Period	Number of Days	
2015	Purse seine	26/02/15 – 03/05/15	69	
		06/04/15 – 17/06/15	71	
		06/05/15 – 15/07/15	70	
2016		23/03/16 – 01/06/16	78	
		01/06/16 – 10/08/16	71	
		08/09/16 – 17/11/16	71	
2017			04/10/17 – 13/12/17	71
2018		Purse seine	02/05/18 – 11/07/18	71
			30/05/18 – 05/08/18	68
	Longline	03/11/18 – 14/11/18	16	
		17/11/18 – 28/11/18	12	
		03/11/18 – 14/11/18	16	
		17/11/18 – 29/11/18	13	
2019	Purse Seiner	17/05/19 -07/06/19	20	
		11/06/19 -22/06/19	11	
		23/06/19 -01/07/19	8	
		11/07/19 -21/07/19	11	
		01/07/19 -18/07/19	16	
		24/07/19 -25/08/19	31	
		25/08/19 -02/09/19	6	
		29/08/19 -02/10/19	35	
		10/10/19 -01/11/19	23	
2020	Longliner + Purse seiner	N/A	NIL	
2021	Longliner + Purse seiner	N/A	NIL	
2022	Longliner + Purse seiner	N/A	NIL	
2023	Longliner + Purse seiner	N/A	NIL	

6.3. Port sampling programme

Port sampling programs started since the coming into operation of the first Mauritian purse seiners in the 1980's. The sampling programme consists of sampling exercises that are carried out on the catch of tuna and tuna-like species unloaded by Mauritian flagged as well as on foreign licensed vessels. Data collection sheets have been designed to enable the recording of length and species composition. Different length measurements are recorded depending on the type of fish processing. Fork length measurements are recorded for whole fish. Other measurements such as the operculum to keel or base of pectoral to the base of the anal fin are recorded for tunas, marlins or swordfish that are processed and unloaded by the local longliners. Table 6 shows the number of active vessels which were monitored.

Table 6. Number of vessel trips or vessels active monitored, by species and fishery

Species	No. of vessels	
	Purse seine	Longline
Yellowfin	5	16
Skipjack	5	16
Bigeye	5	16
Albacore	NIL	16
Black marlin	NIL	16
Blue Shark	NIL	NIL
Blue Marlin	NIL	NIL
Oceanic white Shark	NIL	NIL
Striped marlin	NIL	16
Silky Shark	NIL	NIL
Swordfish	NIL	16

Table 7. Number of fish measured, by species and fishery

Species	No. of individuals measured	
	Purse seine	Longline
Yellowfin	2429	2626
Skipjack	4070	90
Bigeye	819	1996
Albacore	NIL	567
Black marlin	NIL	77
Blue Shark	NIL	NIL
Blue Marlin	NIL	84
Oceanic white Shark	NIL	NIL
Striped marlin	NIL	NIL
Silky Shark	NIL	NIL
Swordfish	NIL	339

6.4. Actions taken to monitor catches & manage fisheries for Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish [Mandatory]

All fishing vessels have to report data and information on Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish in their logbooks including their catches and whether they have been released alive and/or discarded. All data about billfishes are submitted to the IOTC in accordance with the Resolution 15/02. Compliance with Resolution 18/05 for the conservation of billfishes is mandatory as per the fishing licence conditions.

6.5. Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring

No gillnet vessel is registered under the Mauritian flag

6.6 Sampling plans for mobulid rays

Up to now, no mobulid rays have been reported in the national fleet and since 2019, Resolution 19/03 for the conservation of Mobulid rays is mandatory as per the fishing licence conditions.

7. NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS

7.1. to 7.6 It is to be noted that no research programs are being carried out on blue shark, sharks, striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin, indo-pacific sailfish, oceanic whitetip sharks, marine turtles and thresher sharks.

8. IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE IOTC RELEVANT TO THE SC.

Table 9. Scientific requirements contained in Resolutions of the Commission, adopted between 2012 and 2023.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
12/04	On the conservation of marine turtles	Paragraphs 3, 4, 6–10	Licensed fishing vessels have been notified about the mitigation measures proposed under this resolution. Furthermore, marine turtles and their eggs are protected by the Mauritian law as specified in Sections 33 and 83 of The Fisheries Act 2023.
12/09	On the conservation of thresher sharks (family alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 4–8	Skippers of national flagged vessels have been trained in the identification of thresher sharks and have been informed to release live specimens of thresher sharks which are caught. They have also been provided with identification guides. No vessel has reported any encounter with thresher sharks
13/04	On the conservation of cetaceans	Paragraphs 7– 9	As per the logbooks of the fishing vessels, there has been no encirclement of cetaceans by the Mauritius-flagged purse seiners. Skippers have to report any interaction with cetaceans. Also, the Fisheries Act 2023 has prohibited the fishing of marine mammals, under Section 27. Compliance with Resolution 13/04 for the conservation of cetaceans is mandatory as per the fishing licence conditions.
13/05	On the conservation of whale sharks (<i>Rhincodon typus</i>)	Paragraphs 7– 9	The masters and agents of the Mauritius-flagged vessels have already been sensitised on the importance to comply with Res 13/05. Also, the Fisheries Act 2023 has prohibited

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
			the fishing of marine mammals including whale sharks under Section 27.
13/06	On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries	Paragraph 5–6	Mauritius is not a shark-fishing nation and does not issue licenses to foreign vessels targeting sharks. However, guides related to the shark identification have been distributed among the agents of the Mauritius-flagged vessels to avoid the retention of endangered shark species which are under the IOTC mandate on board. Moreover, the NPOA-sharks of Mauritius highlights the conservation of sharks caught as bycatch. Data on sharks was submitted to the IOTC on 30/06/24.
15/01	On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 1–10	As per the license conditions, it is mandatory for the vessels to keep on board a copy of the logbook which makes provision for daily recording of catch and effort. Logbooks are collected after each trip. The data is then verified, input, processed and analysed. Logbook data are also verified against VMS record and declarations collected at the landing port.
15/02	Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)	Paragraphs 1–7	Data on mandatory statistical reporting is regularly submitted to the IOTC in June every year. All the data pertaining to Resolution 15/02 for the year 2023 was submitted to the IOTC Secretariat on the 30/06/24 in accordance with the reporting requirements.
17/05	On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC	Paragraphs 6, 9, 11	Mauritius is not a shark-fishing nation and does not issue licenses to foreign vessels targeting sharks. However, guides related to the shark identification have been distributed among the agents of the Mauritius-flagged vessels to avoid the retention of endangered shark species under the IOTC mandate on board. Moreover, the NPOA sharks of Mauritius highlights the conservation of sharks caught as bycatch. Data on sharks was submitted to the IOTC on 30/06/24.
18/02	On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 2-5	Mauritian vessels catching blue shark are required to record their catch in the fishing logbooks. This data is reported as per Resolution 15/02. As per the fishing licence conditions, it is mandatory for the skippers to record catch data on blue sharks.
18/05	On management measures for the conservation of the Billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish	Paragraphs 7 – 11	All fishing vessels have to report data and information on Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish in their logbooks including their catches and whether they have been released alive and/or discarded. All data about billfishes are submitted to the IOTC in accordance with the Resolution 15/02. Compliance with Resolution 18/05 for the conservation of billfishes is mandatory as per the fishing licence conditions.
18/07	On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC	Paragraphs 1, 4	The Implementation Report was submitted to the Secretariat on 14/03/24 and includes all measures taken for the reporting obligations regarding the mentioned resolutions in the different sections of the report. All columns in the form 1RC are filled as required and reporting of zero catches is done as per Resolution 18/07 in the appropriate format.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
19/01	On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence (<i>If not provided under Res 21/01 below</i>)	Paragraph 22	Mauritius did not make any over-catch under Res. 19/01. This was due to the fact that meetings were held with operators to sensitise them on the need to decrease the yellowfin catches. A decrease in the yellowfin catch was noted both in 2020 and 2021 when compared to the catch of 2019. It is to be noted that during the Commission meeting in 2020, Mauritius took the commitment to pay back any excess catch if any.
19/03	On the Conservation of Mobulid Rays Caught in Association with Fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence	Paragraph 11	Compliance with Resolution 19/03 for the conservation of Mobulid rays is mandatory as per fishing licence conditions since 2019.
21/01	On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence (<i>If not provided under Res 19/01 above</i>)	Paragraph 23	In 2022, Mauritius made an over-catch of 701 tons which were deducted from its quota in 2023 and 2024 respectively. The over catch has already been paid back.
22/04	On a regional observer scheme	Paragraph 12	Note that the National Observer Programme (NOP) has ceased since the COVID 19 pandemic. Since then, the NOP has not been relaunched, as the Ministry had a project of recruiting observers to be placed on Mauritian fleet.
23/07	On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries.	Paragraphs 3–7	No encounter with seabirds has been reported in the fishing logbooks. All vessels have been advised on the application of the seabird mitigation measures. Furthermore, 'Seabird Identification Cards' provided by the IOTC, have been distributed to the agents of the Mauritius-flagged vessels.

9. LITERATURE CITED

1. The Fisheries Act 2023
2. Implementation Report 2023 for Mauritius (IOTC-2023-CoC21-IR16-Mauritius)
3. National Report 2023 (IOTC-2023-SC26-NR17E_Rev1_Mauritius)
4. Compendium of active Conservation and Management measures for the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission