
GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL REPORTS TO THE IOTC SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE IN 2024

The National Report is due to be submitted no later than 15 days prior to the start of the annual regular session of the Scientific Committee.

DEADLINE: 17 NOVEMBER 2024

Purpose: To provide relevant information to the Scientific Committee on research and fishing activities and associated monitoring and research activities of Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties operating in the IOTC area of competence. The report should include all fishing activities for species under the IOTC mandate as well as for elasmobranch species and other species taken as bycatch as required by the IOTC Agreement and decisions by the Commission.

NOTE: The submission of a National Report is **Mandatory**, irrespective if a CPC intends on attending the annual meeting of the Scientific Committee.

Explanatory note

This report is intended to provide a summary of the main features of the tuna and tuna-like fisheries for Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties. As such, it does not replace the need for submission of data according to Resolution 15/02 *Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)* and other data related CMMs.

Mandatory versus Desirable information

National Reports must include all headings as noted in the template below as [Mandatory]. Where data/information is not available for a given [Mandatory] heading, the reason why it is not available should be clearly stated. These mandatory fields for the *National Reports* were agreed to by the Scientific Committee in 2010.

Where available, CPCs are encouraged to provide additional information under the headings shown as [Desirable].

For clarification on minimum reporting requirements for the National Report, please contact the IOTC Secretariat (IOTC-Secretariat@fao.org).

NOTE

Please use the template below when preparing your National Report. Simply delete this explanatory page and add your own cover page/preliminaries if needed.

Please also delete any text shown in **red** below before submitting your National Report.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) 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</p> <p>29/06/2023</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>NO</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions:</p> <p>The UK had no commercial longline vessels operating within IOTC jurisdiction in 2023. The UK British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) Administration does not operate a separate flag registry. BIOT does not have a fleet of commercial fishing vessels, and there is no commercial port in BIOT. The waters of the Territory are a no-take Marine Protected Area (MPA) to commercial fishing. An MPA exclusion zone covering Diego Garcia and its territorial waters exists where pelagic and demersal recreational fisheries are permitted. The recreational fishery catches some tuna and tuna like species.</p>	

Executive Summary [Mandatory]

This report is from the UK and primarily concerns the recreational fisheries in the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). The UK had no commercial fleet operating during 2023.

BIOT waters are a no-take Marine Protected Area (MPA) to commercial fishing. Diego Garcia and its territorial waters are excluded from the MPA and include a recreational fishery. UK (BIOT) does not operate a flag registry and has no commercial tuna fleet or fishing port. The UK National Report summarises fishing in the BIOT recreational fishery in 2023 and provides details of research activities undertaken to date within the MPA.

The recreational fishery landed eight tonnes of tuna and tuna like species on Diego Garcia in 2023. Principle target tuna species of the industrial fisheries (yellowfin and skipjack tunas) contributed to 15.1% of the total catch of tuna and tuna like species of the recreational fishery. Recognising that yellowfin tuna are currently overfished and subject to overfishing in the Indian Ocean and that Resolution 21/01 seeks to address this, UK(BIOT) have been taking action to reduce the number of yellowfin tuna caught in the BIOT recreational fishery and encouraging their live release. Length frequency data were recorded for all tuna and tuna-like species in the recreational fishery. A total of 213 yellowfin tuna from this fishery and the mean length was 70.4cm. Sharks caught in the recreational fishery are released alive.

IUU fishing remains one of the greatest threats to the BIOT ecosystem but a range of other threats exist including invasive and pest species, climate change, coastal change, disease and pollution, including discarded fishing gear such as Fish Aggregating Devices. During 2023 the BIOT Environment Officer continued to take forward the current conservation priorities. Recommendations of the Scientific Committee and those translated into Resolutions of the Commission have been implemented as appropriate by the BIOT Authorities.



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1. Background/General fishery information

The UK did not have any vessels registered in the IOTC RAV in 2023.

The recreational fishery catches some tuna and tuna-like species. Permitted recreational fisheries also include visiting yachts that fish outside the exclusion zone within the waters of the MPA, but not within Strict Nature Reserves. Such fishing must be for consumption within three days. Yachts must apply for a permit to moor in designated areas.

2. Fleet structure

N/A: As stated above, the UK does not have a flag registry or fleet of commercial fishing vessels. The recreational fishery is described in Section 4. The number of UK flagged vessels operating over the last 6 years is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence, by gear type and size class: 2017-2023.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Vessels Licensed</i>	<i>Number of Vessels Active</i>	<i>Length</i>
2023	0	0	N/A
2022	0	0	N/A
2021	0	0	N/A
2020	1	1 (drifting longliner)	45 Metres
2019	2	2 (drifting longliners)	39 metres – 45 metres
2018	2	2 (drifting longliners)	39 metres – 45 metres
2017	2	2 (drifting longliners)	39 metres – 45 metres

3. Catch and effort (by species and fishery) [Mandatory]

UK had no vessels registered on the RAV during 2023, catch and effort for primary species is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Annual catch and effort by fishery and primary species in the IOTC area of competence. Include a 'not elsewhere indicated – NEI' category for all other catches combined. [Mandatory]

Year	Total Effort	Total Catch
2023	0	0.0
2022	0	0.0
2021	0	0.0
2020	270000	411.9
2019	621600	881.8
2018	498100	989.3
2017	500300	579.8

Species Name	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Albacore	8.7	5.1	4.0	6.6	7.0	7.9	8.5	2.1	3.1	1.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Amberjack	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Barracuda	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bigeye Tuna	0.0	3.5	3.2	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	2.3	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sailfish	21.7	24.4	4.6	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	3.9	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Black Marlin	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	13.1	12.3	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bonito	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Blue Shark	427.1	379.3	333.0	326.4	193.4	251.8	215.3	172.4	195.7	369.5	371.8	157.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Blue Marlin	0.0	1.3	9.3	20.4	16.5	11.7	7.9	3.5	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Common Dolphinfish	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	2.9	3.3	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Silky Shark	0.4	2.5	1.3	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other or mixed Demersal	1.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Snake Mackerel	4.5	46.1	35.0	50.0	47.0	41.3	30.5	19.6	17.6	31.6	16.6	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Longfin Mako	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mako Shark	44.3	52.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Oilfish	32.7	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Indo-Pacific sailfish	0.9	5.5	3.0	7.5	5.7	2.8	1.2	1.7	1.2	7.3	3.5	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sharks	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Shortfin Mako	16.7	17.0	62.1	70.2	46.5	54.0	26.1	22.8	68.2	87.4	72.0	32.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Scalloped Hammerhead Sh	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Swordfish	646.3	684.0	679.6	687.3	558.9	527.2	365.0	203.7	284.2	523.0	383.2	202.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Tuna - Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Wahoo	0.0	1.8	1.5	3.5	2.1	2.8	1.7	0.4	0.7	1.6	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Yellowfin Tuna	120.4	51.6	42.7	56.8	53.9	85.9	85.4	41.8	20.6	91.0	14.2	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Yellowtail Amberjack	3.8	10.0	20.8	10.5	8.3	18.7	4.0	1.4	7.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grand Total	1334.4	1295.5	1200.0	1300.8	939.2	1004.0	745.6	469.4	614.1	1053.4	881.8	411.9	0.0	0.0	0.0

Figure 1. Historical annual catch for the national fisheries by primary species, for the IOTC area of competence for the entire history of the fisheries.

Figure 2a. Map of the distribution of fishing effort, by national fishery in the IOTC area of competence (most recent year e.g., 2023).

N/A - There was no commercial fishing activity by the UK fleet in IOTC area of competence in 2023

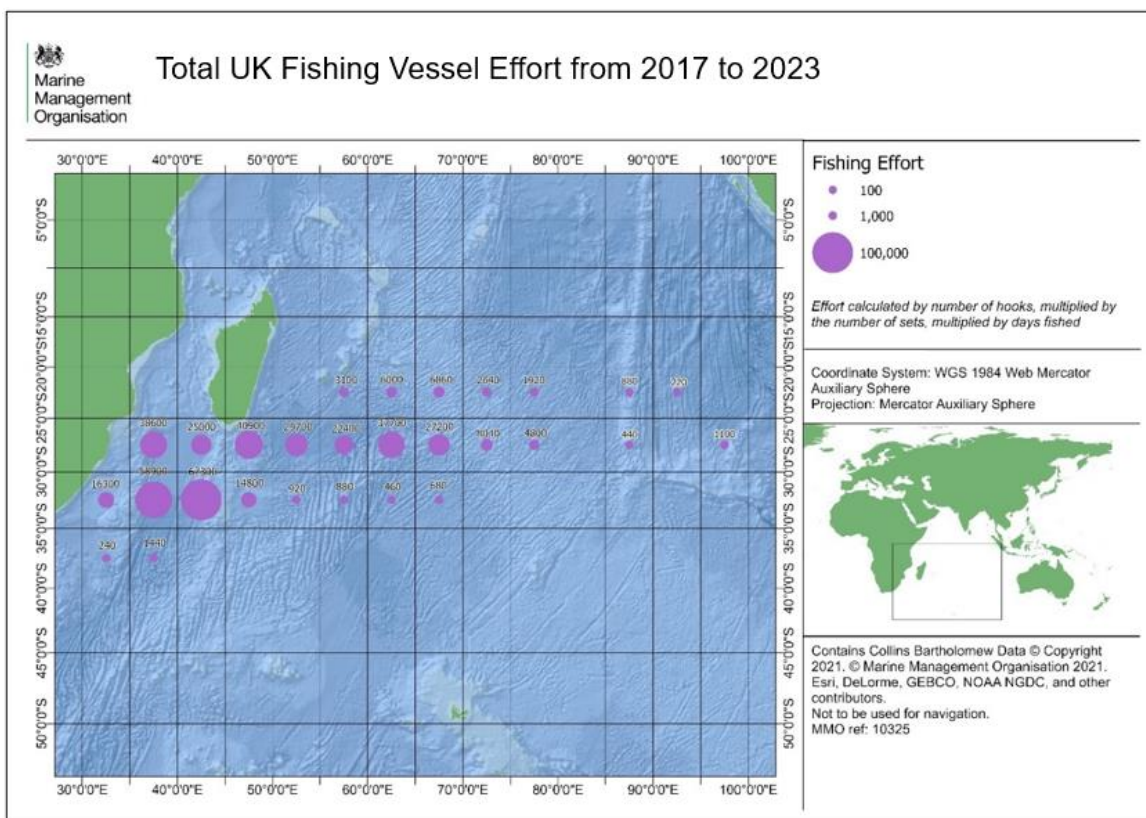


Figure 2b. Map of the distribution of fishing effort, by gear type for the national fleet in the IOTC area of competence (average of 2017-2023).

Figure 3a. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species for the national fisheries, in the IOTC area of competence (most recent year e.g., 2023).

N/A

Figure 3b. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species for the national fisheries, in the IOTC area of competence (average of the 5 previous years e.g., 2019–2023).

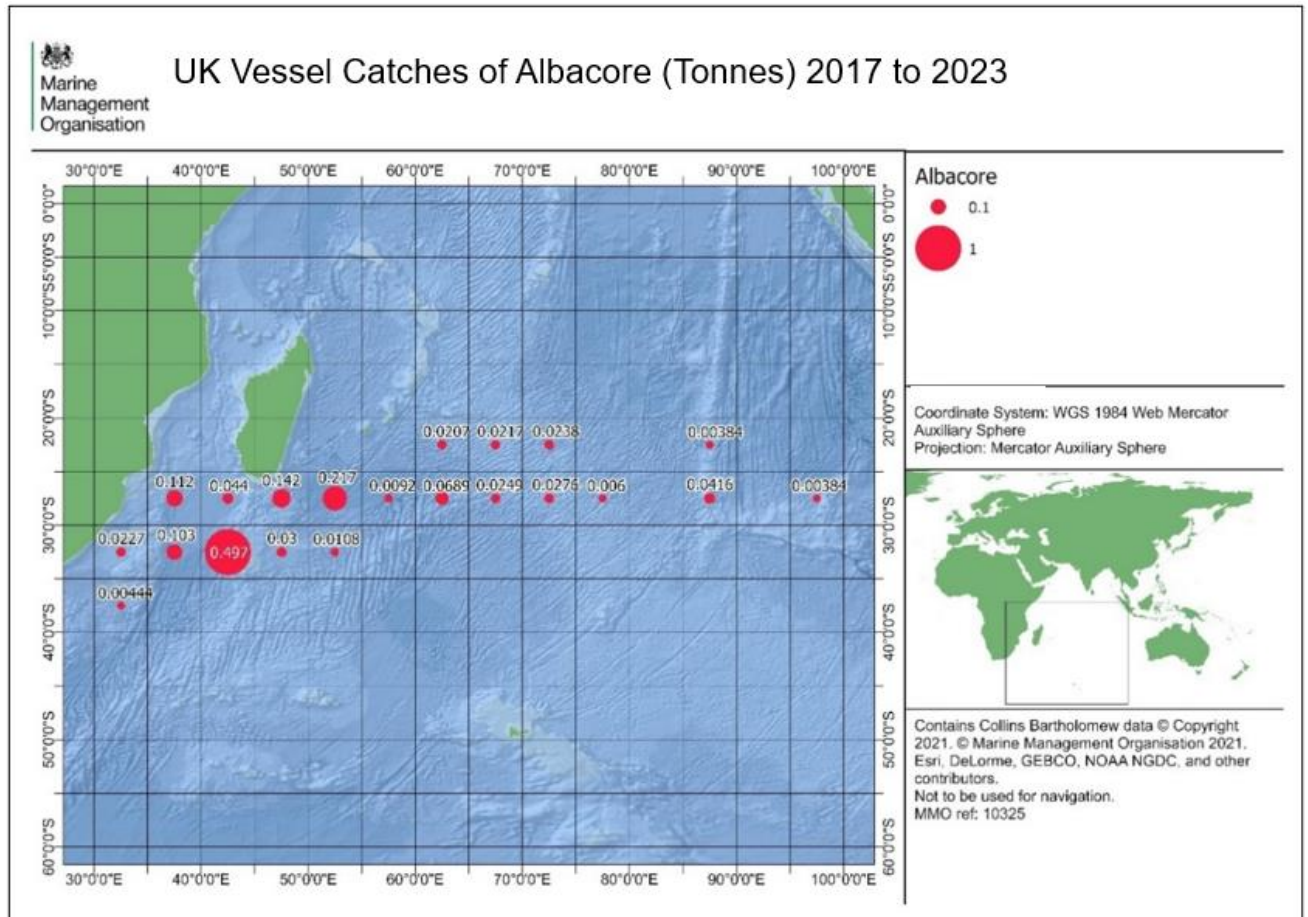


Figure 3b (1). Distribution of UK catch of albacore tuna (tonnes) 5° area (average 2017-2023).

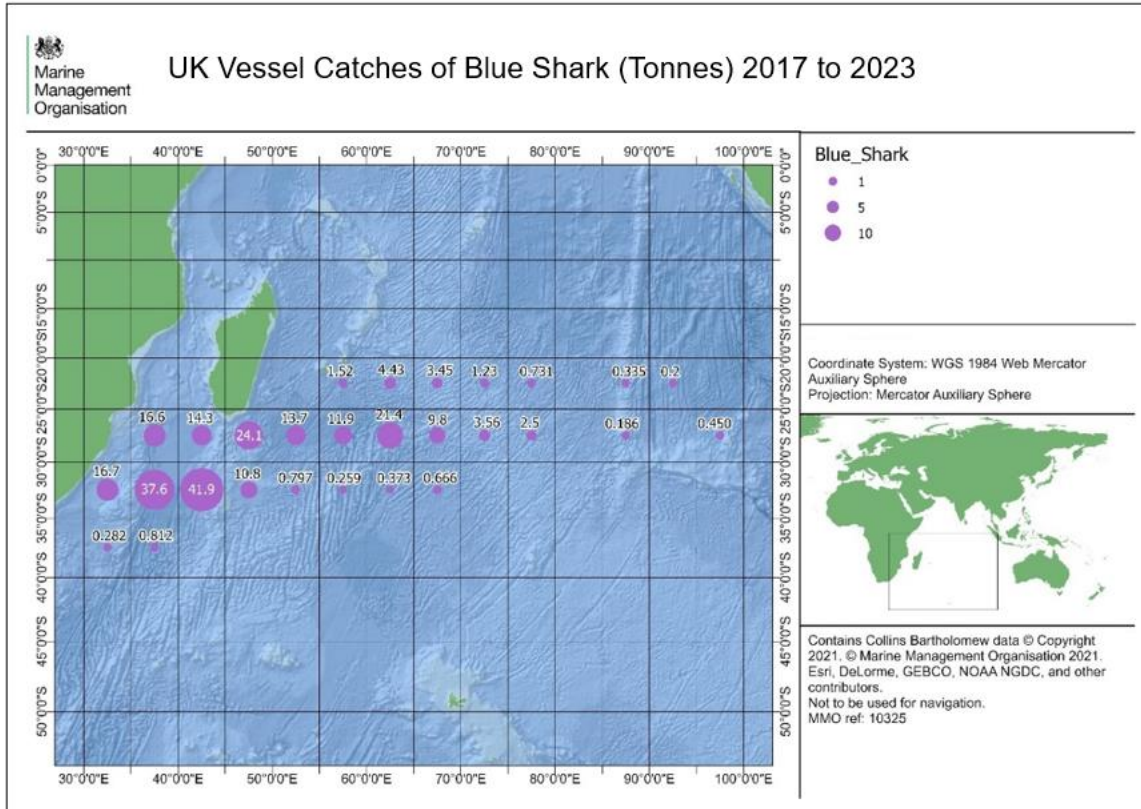


Figure 3b (2). Distribution of UK catch of blue shark (tonnes) by 5° area (average 2017-2023).

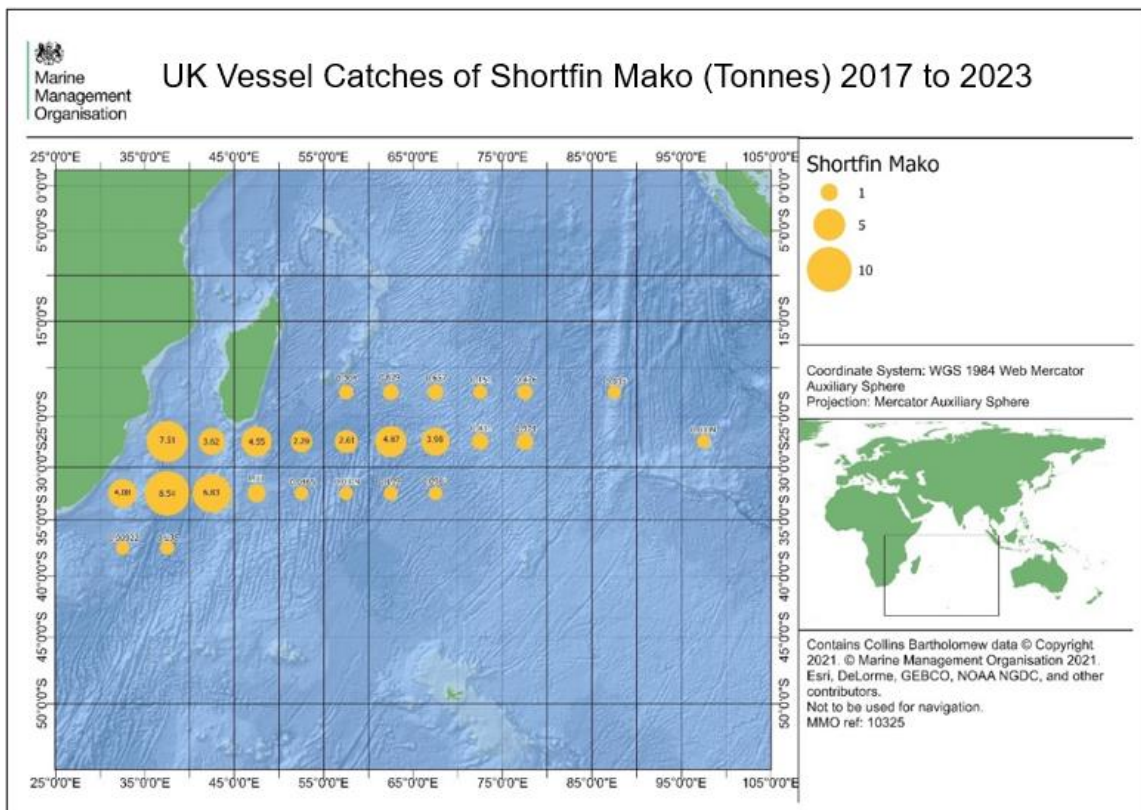


Figure 3b (3). Distribution of UK catch of shortfin mako (tonnes) by 5° area (average 2017-2023).

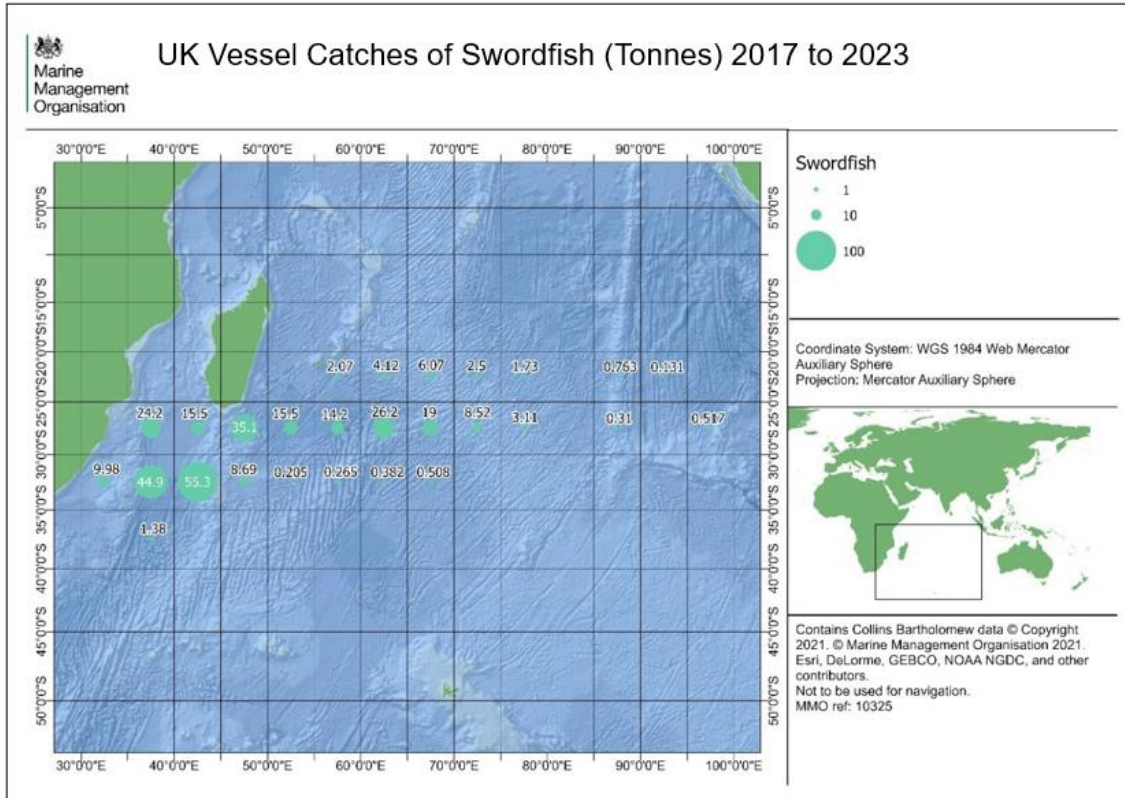


Figure 3b (4). Distribution of UK catch of swordfish (tonnes) by 5° area (average 2017-2023).

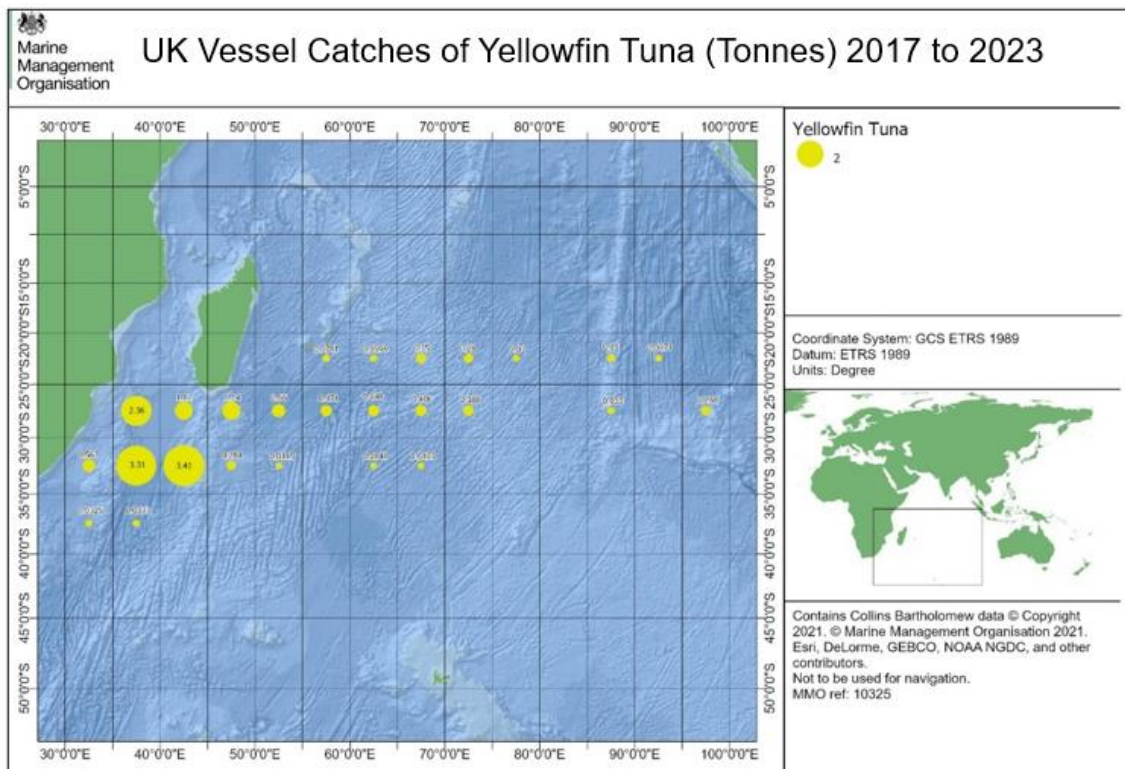


Figure 3b (5). Distribution of UK catch of yellowfin tuna (tonnes) 5° area (average 2017-2023).

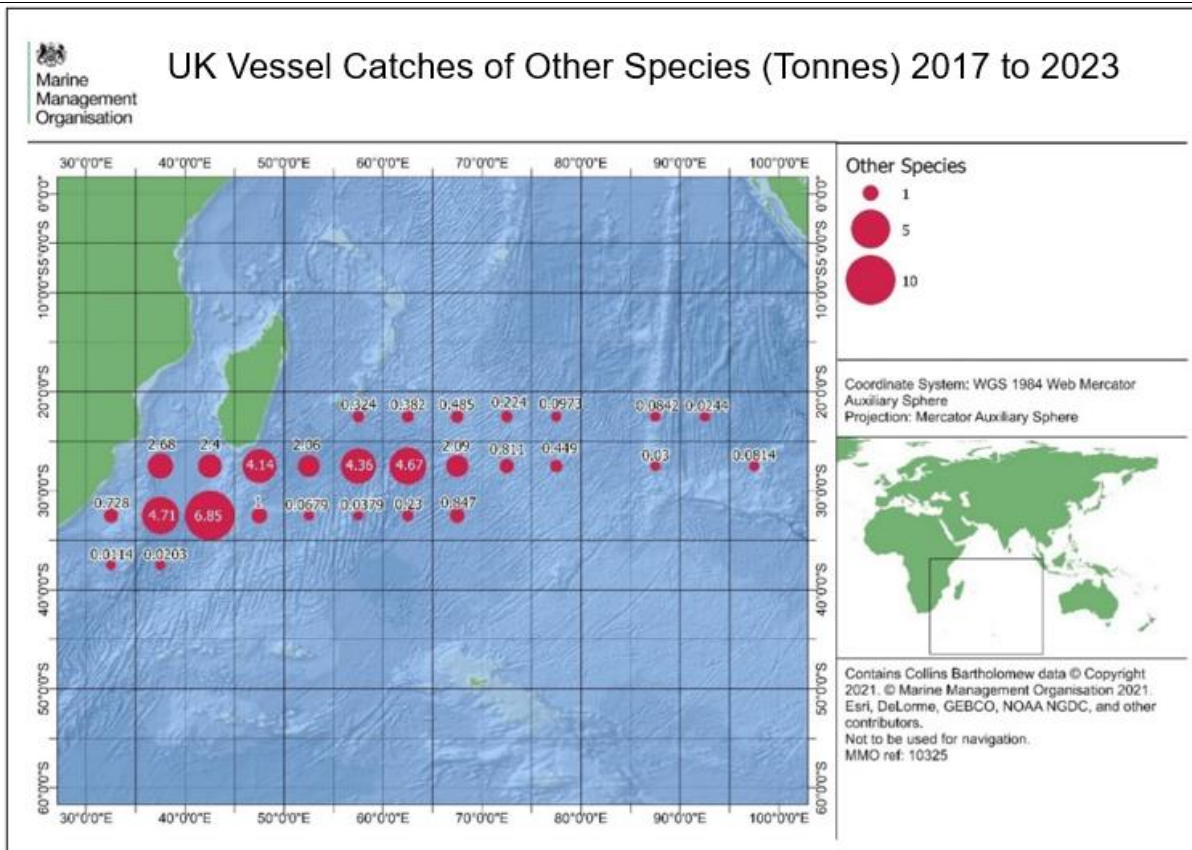


Figure 3b (6). Distribution of UK catch of other species (tonnes) 5° area (average 2017-2023).

4. Recreational fishery [Mandatory]

A small recreational fishery occurs in Diego Garcia. A total of eight tonnes of tuna and tuna like species were caught in 2023, shown in the table below, reef associated species are also caught in this fishery. The principle commercial tuna species, yellowfin and skipjack tunas (no bigeye were landed), contributed 15.1% of the total catch of tuna and tuna like species of the recreational fishery.

Recognising that yellowfin tuna are currently overfished and subject to overfishing in the Indian Ocean and that Resolution 21/01 seeks to address this, the UK have been taking action to reduce the number of yellowfin tuna caught in the recreational fishery and have been encouraging their live-release for a number of years.

Year	Estimated catch of tuna and tuna like species (kg)										Total (kg)		
	Blue marlin	Dolphinfish	Kawakawa	Rainbow runner	Sailfish	Wahoo	Dogtooth tuna	Skipjack tuna	Yellowfin tuna	Other tuna nei	Tunas	Tuna like spp	All
2017	0.0	70.0	1525.0	288.0	0.0	7899.0	569.0	107.0	2425.0	0.0	3401.0	9783.0	13184.0
2018	0.0	94.0	1189.0	153.0	0.0	5163.0	189.0	176.0	4313.0	0.0	4678.0	6599.0	11277.0
2019	0.0	32.0	1201.0	186.0	0.0	3859.0	109.0	257.0	2770.0	299.0	3434.0	5279.0	8713.0
2020	0.0	31.8	345.2	76.2	141.1	2663.9	10.4	117.9	3110.7	45.4	3284.5	3258.2	13928.2
2021	9.1	22.2	582.4	39.9	0.0	5421.3	342.9	78.0	2622.7	0.0	3043.6	6075.0	9118.6
2022	0.0	59.0	199.1	61.7	0.0	5356.7	191.4	9.5	1580.5	4.5	1785.9	5676.5	7462.4
2023	0.0	35.4	244.7	22.7	0.0	6238.0	244.5	19.5	1191.4	22.7	1478.0	6540.8	8018.8

Catches of tuna and tuna like species landed from the UK (BIOT) recreational fishery during the period 2017-2023.

Length data have been collected for yellowfin tuna (*T. albacares*) from the recreational fishery since June 2009. A total of 213 *T. albacares* were measured in 2023 with a mean length of 70.4cm. For comparison, observer programmes on

purse seiners (2005/6) and longliners (2003/4) operating in BIOT recorded mean lengths of 98cm (n=378) and 123cm (n=2385) respectively and the mean length in the recreational fishery in 2020 was 78.6 cm with a range of 55-110 cm.

5. Ecosystem and bycatch issues [Mandatory]

The BIOT zone, excluding territorial waters around Diego Garcia, is a no-take MPA closed to commercial fishing. The recreational fishery on Diego Garcia is monitored. Beyond the blanket protection of all species through the declaration of the MPA, there are currently no separate national plans of action in place for individual species or species groups. However, in its recreational fishery, all sharks and billfish caught must be released alive and fishers are encouraged to release yellowfin tuna.

The current ecosystem threats relate to illegal unreported and unregulated fishing of which a large number of events were detected by the BIOT Patrol Vessel in 2023 and are reported separately to the Compliance Committee (IOTC-2024-CoC21-06 Rev1). Controlling IUU is a core element of the current conservation priorities (see <https://biot.gov.io/environment/>).

Other threats to the ecosystem that have been identified include invasive and pest species (introduced by visiting or IUU vessels), climate change (including weather changes; coral bleaching and mortality, sea level rise, likely increasing rates of erosion or inundation events; and oceanic chemical composition change), coastal change, disease (particularly of corals), and pollution. The latter includes lost and abandoned fishing gear including fish aggregating devices (FADs) which can have harmful impacts on species and habitats within BIOT, research has been undertaken and previously reported on their potential impacts and how currents and oceanic conditions may influence their movement throughout BIOT. FAD analysis remains an important element of the current conservation priorities and it is hoped with the eventual adoption of the revised DFAD Resolution (24/02) that more data become available on FAD movement and the presence of deactivated FADs within the MPA.

5.1 Sharks

Sharks must be released alive when caught in the recreational fishery, however they continue to be caught illegally by IUU vessels in BIOT waters. No commercial fishery operated in 2023.

Research, including tagging of sharks in BIOT waters is ongoing through the Bertarelli Programme on Marine Science which has included scientific research expeditions in BIOT, these are listed under Section 7.

Total number and weight of sharks, by species, retained by the national fleet in the IOTC area of competence (2016–2023)

Year	Catches by Species (longline gear)							Total
	Blue	Oceanic white tip	Scalloped hammerhead	Shortfin mako	Silky	Bigeye thresher	Pelagic thresher	
2023	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2022	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2021	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2020	157.1	0.0	0.0	32.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	190.0
2019	378.8	0.0	0.0	72.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	450.8
2018	369.5	0.0	0.0	87.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	456.9
2017	195.7	0.0	0.0	68.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	263.9
2016	172.4	0.0	0.0	22.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	195.2

5.1.1. NPOA sharks

N/A

5.1.2. Blue shark

The UK did not operate a fishery in the IOTC area of competence in 2023, this was reported via e-MARIS. Biological data - size and discard data were provided in accordance with the Resolution 15/02 between 2017 and 2020 when on board observers were deployed on UK vessels operating in the IOTC.

5.2 Seabirds

Seabird bycatch does not occur in the recreational fishery and has not been observed in IUU fisheries. No commercial fishery operated in 2023., although research is undertaken, see for example publication 30.

Reporting period* or calendar year: 2023

Species: N/A

Fishery		Observed					Estimate
Area ¹	Total effort ²	Total observed effort ²	Observer coverage ³	Captures (number)	Mortalities (number)	Live releases (number)	Mortality estimate (number)
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total							

*This field can be used to specify a temporal stratification to the data e.g. season

¹Spatial stratification (5x5, 10x10 or other – to be determined)

²Number of hooks observed hauled

³Percentage of all hooks set that were observed hauled

1. How many vessels operated south of 25°S in the period covered by this report? None
2. How many of those vessels used bird scaring lines (as a proportion of total effort)? N/A
3. How many of those vessels used line weighting (as a proportion of total effort)? N/A
4. How many of those vessels used night setting (as a proportion of total effort)? N/A

5.3 Marine Turtles

No turtle bycatch / interaction was reported in the BIOT recreational fishery in 2023. The BIOT area includes undisturbed and recovering populations of hawksbill and green turtles. Island sweeps are conducted as part of the normal monitoring programme, where part or entire islands are inspected, turtle nesting tracks are regularly encountered and recorded (See Section 7)

No incidents have been reported to the UK Fisheries Monitoring Centre since 2019. In 2023 there was no commercial fishing activity by the UK fleet in the IOTC area.

Fishery – Longlines (logbook data)				Observed ** (Observer reports)				
Year	Lat*	Lon	Total effort	Total effort observed	Species	Captures (number)	Mortalities (number)	Releases (number)
2018	22.5	57.5	14400					
2018	22.5	62.5	13200					
2018	27.5	37.5	26400					
2018	27.5	42.5	34600					
2018	27.5	47.5	100400	2400				
2018	27.5	52.5	27200	6000	Loggerhead turtle (<i>Caretta caretta</i>)	1	0	1
2018	27.5	57.5	17600	3600				
2018	27.5	62.5	56900	21600				
2018	27.5	67.5	7700					
2018	27.5	72.5	20900					
2018	32.5	32.5	45600					
2018	32.5	37.5	39600	8400	Not identified	2	0	2
2018	32.5	42.5	95300					
2018	32.5	47.5	3400					
2018	32.5	52.5	2200					
2018	32.5	62.5	2200					
2018	32.5	67.5	4400					
2019	22.5	62.5	1200					
2019	22.5	67.5	4800					
2019	27.5	37.5	2400					
2019	27.5	42.5	58800	2400				
2019	27.5	47.5	74400	6000	Loggerhead turtle (<i>Caretta caretta</i>)	1	0	1
2019	27.5	52.5	81600	15600				
2019	27.5	57.5	46800					
2019	27.5	62.5	26400					
2019	27.5	67.5	7200					
2019	27.5	72.5	3600					
2019	32.5	32.5	36000					
2019	32.5	37.5	148800					
2019	32.5	42.5	69600	19200				
2019	32.5	47.5	40800	2400				
2019	32.5	52.5	2400					
2019	37.5	32.5	1200					
2019	37.5	37.5	7200					

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

See Table under section 5.3. Only marine turtles were caught by commercial vessels in the period covered by the table. No catches have been recorded since 2018 (or prior to this) although mobulid rays are caught by IUU vessels. No incidental mortality /annual catches on other ecologically related species such as marine mammals and whale sharks have been observed in the recreational fishery.

6. National data collection and processing systems

6.1. Logsheet data collection and verification

No Commercial fisheries operated in the IOTC area of competence during 2023.

Logbook data collection for the recreational fishery is completed by the vessel charterer for each trip conducted. The system was introduced in 2006 and provides 100% coverage of all boat based recreational fishing activity. Prior to that a system of logbooks to be completed by fishers was utilised but proved less effective and did not achieve full coverage. A similar fisher-based system was introduced in 2016 for shore based recreational fishers, although they tend not to catch tuna and tuna like species and the reporting is inconsistent.

6.2. Observer scheme

No Commercial fisheries operated in the IOTC area of competence during 2023, coverage from previous years is given in Table 3 and Figure 4.

Table 3. Annual observer coverage by operation, e.g., longline hooks, purse seine sets.

Year	Hooks set	Hooks observed	Percent Observed
2023	0	0	0
2022	0	0	0
2021	0	0	0
2020	270,000	0	0
2019	621,600	45,000	7.2
2018	498,100	42,000	8.4
2017	500,300	38,688	7.7

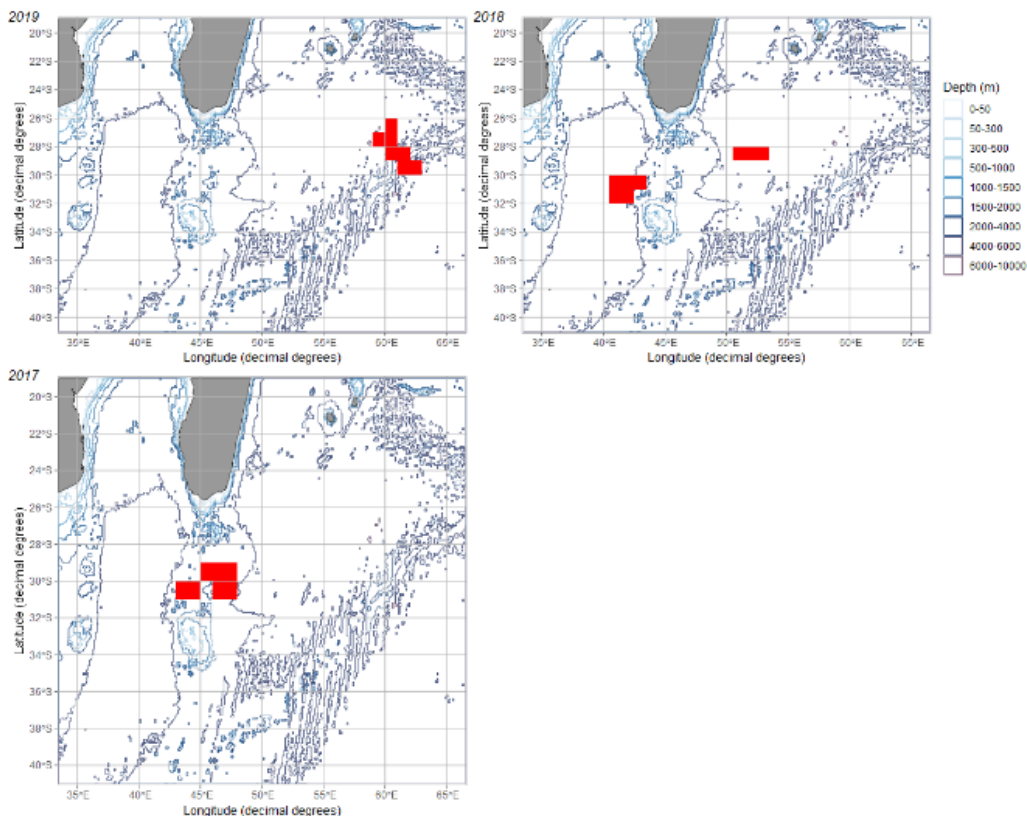


Figure 4. Map showing the spatial distribution of observer coverage in the years in which a programme ran (2017-2019).

6.3. Port sampling programme

N/A - The UK operated no commercial fisheries in the IOTC area of competence during 2023 and no port sampling regime has been in place.

Table 4. Number of vessel trips or vessels active monitored, by species and fishery.

Year	Port sampling (all gears)	
	Vessel trips	Trips monitored
2023	0	0

Table 5. Number of fish measured, by species and fishery.

Year	Port sampling (all gears)	
	Individuals landed	Individuals measured
2023	0	0

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

The UK operated no commercial fisheries in the IOTC area of competence during 2023 and none of these species have been landed.

Within the recreational fishery gaffing billfish and sailfish is prohibited under the licence terms and conditions and all should be unhooked and released if caught

6.5. Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring.

The UK operated no commercial fisheries in the IOTC area of competence during 2023 and has never operated a gillnet fishery in the area.

6.6 Sampling plans for mobulid rays.

The UK operated no commercial fisheries in the IOTC area of competence during 2023 and has no sampling plan in place. However some sampling does take place on IUU catches, when the opportunity arises. Research is also undertaken, see Table 6 – 3 and 4, DG Manta Project, publications 12 and 27.

7. National research programs [Desirable]

Currently most research is conducted within BIOT through a series of expeditions funded under the Bertarelli Programme in Marine Science (BPMS, see Table 6) Research under the BPMS links to conservation priorities through ‘Key Species’ research. The UKs Darwin funding programme also supports research in the territory including that on invasive species and recreational fishing, the outputs from these are given in Section 9.

7.1. National research programs on blue shark

There is no National research programme specifically on blue shark, any caught in the IUU fisheries are measured and reported to IOTC.

7.2. National research programs on Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish

There is no National research programme specifically on these species.

7.3. National research programs on sharks

There is no National research programme specifically on sharks taken in fisheries, however there has been some general research programmes with BIOT (see for example publications 9 and 26).

7.4. National research programs on oceanic whitetip sharks

There is no National research programme on whitetip sharks taken in the IOTC area of competence, however there has been some DNA studies conducted on sharks within BIOT during research expeditions.

7.5. National research programs on marine turtles

There is no National research programme on marine turtles, however research continues within BIOT on their global movements and the effects plastic has on them (see Table 6 – 9. Sea Turtles, 8. Darwin Local Plastics, publications 18, 23, 24 and 25).

7.6. National research programs on thresher sharks

There is no National research programme specifically to look at potential nursery areas, research has been undertaken to look at the effects of the landings ban on thresher sharks in Sri Lanka (see publications 4 and 9).

Table 6. Summary table of national research programs, including dates.

Project title	Period	Countries involved	Budget total	Funding source	Objectives	Short description
1. Seabirds	23 Jan – 25 Feb	UK		BPMS	Phase II project – Chagos seabirds	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat RFB tagging and census at Barton point Tagging and sampling of RFB, shearwaters and frigatebirds at Nelson Island
2. Wildlife Observer	1 Feb – 31 Mar	UK		BPMS	First rotation for full time Wildlife Observer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarisation for WO with vessel and crew Initial obs to go into SMART system – trouble shooting Bird identification at sea training with PC in first two weeks Aiding SFPO and EO with IUU obs and sampling
3. Management and DG Mantas	7 Mar – 21 Mar	UK		BPMS	Routine MS prog. Ops trip plus setting up Manta team with new DG project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback on fieldwork ops 2022 and plan for 2023 Check all gear and supplies Work with DG teams to get approval for JH to spend 8 weeks in situ setting up Manta Project Check corals for gametes and spawning obs Post coral samples for Cat Head from Oct 2022
4. DG Manta project	30 Mar – end May	UK		BPMS	Set up the new DG based manta project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Retrieve acoustic array from Egmont lagoon Deploy array in DG lagoon Tag mantas on DG with acoustic and satellite tags Join BPV on OISPS and tag mantas in north Engage volunteers with manat work in MAD cove – film cleaning stations etc. Set up citizens science recording project for mantas on DG
5. Wildlife Observer	27 May-19 Jul	UK		BPMS	Second rotation for full time Wildlife Observer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cetacean observations 6 days per week 30 mins off 30 mins on during daylight hours Deploying two hydrophones
6. Darwin Plus/Local socioeconomic aspects of rec. fisheries	3 May – 22 May	UK		Darwin Plus	Establishing community links to explore extent and understanding of	Establishing community links to explore extent and understanding of rec. fishery and establishing sustainable limits to management.

					rec. fishery and establishing sustainable limits to management.	
7.Darwin Plus – CEH Invasives	May	UK		Darwin Plus	Assessing status of terrestrial INNS populations across DG and developing biosecurity protocols and training	Assessing status of terrestrial INNS populations across DG and developing biosecurity protocols and training
8.Darwin Local Plastics	10 Jun – 25 Jun	UK		Darwin Plus	Waste management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set conditions of feasibility study for plastic board press 2. Establish questions to answer from PWD 3. Familiarise IM with waste management and DG env. Generally Conduct additional MDT transects on DG and Egmont – train EOs
9.Sea turtles	27 Jun- 25 Jul	UK		BPMS	To study the nesting ecology and hatching success of sea turtles for an extended period during the hawksbill nesting season – PhD student to stay on site for up to 3 months.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tagging nesting female green turtles 2. Tagging juvenile hawksbill turtles 3. Surveying nesting beaches and activity for plastic impacts Surveying foraging habitats in lagoon
10. Ctenella rescue	18 Jul – 12 Aug	UK		BPMS	Rescue colonies of Ctenella from incoming warming event	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish suitable unrelated colonies for removal via in field sequencing 2. Take up to 12 colonies from two sites in Middle Brother lagoon and DG 3. Transfer successfully to aquarium system at Horniman museum Establish ex-situ breeding colony
11.Darwin Plus - DG fisheries	16 Sep – 14 Oct	UK		Darwin Plus	Deliver fieldwork for year 2 of Darwin recreational fisheries project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dive at repeat sites to map reef and survey fishes 2. Assess spawning behaviour through obs and gamete collection 3. Continue social survey work with communities
12.Reefs and islands	14 Oct – 8 Nov	UK		BPMS	Phase II project – Island and reef connections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setting up experimental work on reefs and islands habitats to monitor nutrient flows over the next three years 2. Conducting surveys of native forest and other vegetation 3. Conducting a complete archipelago wide bird census
13.Wildlife Observer	12 Oct-7 Dec	UK		BPMS	Wildlife Observer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cetacean observations 6 days per week 30 mins off 30 mins on during daylight hours 2. Deploying two hydrophones 3. BRUVS surveys

8. Implementation of Scientific Committee Recommendations and Resolutions of the IOTC relevant to the SC. [Mandatory]

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	All mandatory statistical reports, including null reports are submitted.
12/09	On the conservation of thresher sharks (family alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 4–8	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2023.
13/04	On the conservation of cetaceans	Paragraphs 7–9	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2023.
13/05	On the conservation of whale sharks (<i>Rhincodon typus</i>)	Paragraphs 7–9	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2023.
13/06	On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries	Paragraph 5–6	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2023.
15/01	On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 1–10	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2023. Sharks are released alive if caught in the recreational fishery.
15/02	Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)	Paragraphs 1–7	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence 2023.
17/05	On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC	Paragraphs 6, 9, 11	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2023.
18/02	On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 2-5	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2023.
18/05	On management measures for the conservation of the Billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish	Paragraphs 7 – 11	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2023.
18/07	On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC	Paragraphs 1, 4	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2023.
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	
19/03	On the Conservation of Mobulid Rays Caught in Association with Fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence	Paragraph 11	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2023, and therefore does not intentionally or incidentally catch mobulid rays. They are not caught in the recreational fishery, there is no National monitoring programme in place, however research has been undertaken (see Section 9)
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	The UK had no commercial fishery operational in 2022. Small amounts of tuna are caught in the recreation fishing in BIOT but since 2018 it has been mandatory to release these (Section 4).

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
22/04	On a regional observer scheme	Paragraph 12	The UK ran an observer programme between 2017 and 2019 (Section 6.3) but not since 2020 due to COVID and not having a fleet.
23/07	On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries.	Paragraphs 3–7	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2023.

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