

PROPOSAL X

ON AN INTERIM CATCH DISTRIBUTION FOR YELLOWFIN TUNA

Submitted by: Pakistan and South Africa
For consideration at the 29th Session of the IOTC in April 2025

2024 SC Report

APPENDIX 11 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: YELLOWFIN TUNA (2024)

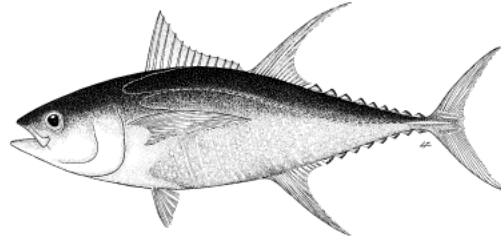


Table 1. Status of yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) in the Indian Ocean

Area ¹	Indicators		2024 stock status determination ³
Indian Ocean	Catch 2023 ² (t)	400,950	89%*
	Mean annual catch 2019-2023 (t)	423,142	
	MSY _{recent} ⁴ (1,000 t) (80% CI)	421 (416-430)	
	F _{MSY} (80% CI)	0.2 (0.16-0.26)	
	SB _{MSY_recent} ⁴ (1,000 t) (80% CI)	1,063 (890-1,361)	
	F ₂₀₂₃ / F _{MSY} (80% CI)	0.75 (0.58-1.01)	
	SB ₂₀₂₃ / SB _{MSY_recent} (80% CI)	1.32 (1.00-1.59)	
	SB ₂₀₂₃ / SB ₀ (80% CI)	0.44 (0.40-0.50)	

¹Boundaries for the Indian Ocean stock assessment are defined as the IOTC area of competence

²Proportion of 2023 catch fully or partially estimated by IOTC Secretariat: 33.4%

³2023 is the final year that data were available for this assessment

⁴Recent refers to the most recent 20 years (2003-2022)

Uncertainty surrounding the 2024 yellowfin tuna stock assessment

Key Issues on CPUE index

100. The SC **NOTED** information document [IOTC-2024-SC27-INF01](#), which outlines how analytic methods affect Longline CPUE indices. The author identified several changes in the 2024 analysis compared to 2021 and suggested that these changes might have led to more optimistic index trends up to 2020. For example, combining data from two regions R1a and R1b was advised against due to differing abundance trends and data quality issues. The author also stressed that using cluster analysis for tropical areas had been previously discouraged and could significantly affect the tropical indices.
103. **NOTING** that concerns were raised about the large difference between the 2024 and 2021 index and the methods used in the standardization process, the SC **REQUESTED** that the joint CPUE working group revise and update the yellowfin tuna CPUE in 2025 in time to be reviewed by WPTT27 assessment meeting, in accordance with the “Recommended action points related to Joint CPUE standardizations” in Appendix IX of the WPTT26 report. The SC **NOTED** that this will enable the WPTT and SC to review the CPUE standardisation and to provide clear advice to the 2026 Commission meeting on the need, if any, to update the yellowfin tuna stock assessment in 2026 to include the revised CPUE.

Uncertainty surrounding the 2024 yellowfin tuna stock assessment

108. Given the uncertainty associated with the new CPUE, the SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission set a TAC for 2026 only, of no more than the estimated median MSY, which is comparable to the average catch of the last five years, as a precautionary measure to allow time for further investigation (i.e. resolving of uncertainty associated with the new CPUE) and development of advice for 2027 onwards.

Assessment Performance

109. The SC **NOTED** that strong concerns were expressed by some CPCs regarding the results of the 2024 stock assessment for yellowfin tuna, particularly highlighting the structural changes and lack of transparency in the joint CPUE used as the primary index in the assessment, as well as the sudden shift in stock status from a high probability of red to a high probability of green in the Kobe plot. These CPCs indicated that their concerns regarding the assessment will be brought to the Commission's attention.
110. The SC **NOTED** information document [IOTC-2024-SC27-INF02](#), which summarizes a review of the yellowfin tuna stock assessment. This paper suggests that prudent management would keep catches at the previous level which supposedly allowed for the increase in biomass, before the next assessment indeed confirms recovery of biomass.

Proposal X

CATCH LIMITS

3. From 1 January 2026, CPCs shall ensure that their yellowfin tuna catch does not exceed the following annual catch limits:
 - a) LDCs and SIDS that caught less than 2,000 MT in 2023: 4,000 MT.
 - b) The catch limit for CPCs (excluding LDCs and SIDS) that caught less than 2,000 MT in 2023 shall be the same as their catch limit under IOTC Resolution 21/01.
 - c) CPCs that do not fall into either of the above categories:
 - i. For LDCs or SIDS, the annual yellowfin tuna catch limit shall be 90% of the average of that CPC's yellowfin tuna catch between 2014-2016. Exceptionally, SIDS and LDCs may choose to apply their respective catch limits under IOTC Resolution 21/01. SIDS and LDCs shall notify the Executive Secretary of their choice by 31 November 2025. The IOTC Executive Secretary shall notify all CPCs of these decisions.
 - ii. For Coastal States which are not LDCs or SIDS, the annual yellowfin tuna catch limit shall be 90% of the average of that CPC's yellowfin tuna catch between 2014-2016.
 - iii. For Distant-water Fishing Nations which are not REIO CPCs, the annual yellowfin tuna catch limit shall be 80% of the average of that CPC's yellowfin tuna catch between 2014-2016.
 - iv. For REIO CPCs, the annual yellowfin tuna catch limit shall be 70% of the average of that CPC's yellowfin tuna catch between 2014-2016.
 - d) Pakistan has agreed to transfer a portion of its respective catch limit under this Resolution to Indonesia and Sri Lanka. As such, and notwithstanding subparagraphs a) to c), the following CPCs shall have the following annual yellowfin tuna catch limits from 1 January 2026:
 - i. Indonesia: 42,634 MT.
 - ii. Pakistan: 12,500 MT.
 - iii. Sri Lanka: 33,245 MT.

Proposal X - Simulation

Row Labels	2014	2015	2016	2021	2022	2023	AV 14-16	RES 21/01	PROP X	PROP X vs Res21/01	PROP X vs 2023
AUSTRALIA	20	73	67	22	17	48	53	2,000	2,000	0	1,952
BANGLADESH				119	36			2,000	4,000	2,000	4,000
CHINA	13,363	15,714	18,770	12,570	13,847	13,372	15,949	10,557	12,759	2,202	-613
COMOROS	1,399	1,748	5,584	4,883	4,427	3,194	2,910	5,279	5,279	0	2,085
EU	92,504	87,344	88,372	76,296	69,058	62,653	89,407	73,078	62,585	-10,493	-68
FRANCE (OT)								500	500	0	500
INDIA	33,427	17,159	19,244	24,515	20,851	21,247	23,277	N/A	20,949	N/A	-298
INDONESIA	51,621	35,730	42,243	42,208	62,987	42,119	43,198	45,426	42,634	-2,792	515
IRAN ISLAMIC REP.	46,216	42,599	45,110	44,281	38,821	37,350	44,642	N/A	40,178	N/A	2,828
JAPAN	4,072	3,478	3,389	1,028	1,626	2,529	3,647	4,003	2,917	-1,086	388
KENYA	71	108	972	608	1,958	969	384	3,654	3,654	0	2,685
KOREA REP.	10,409	9,183	11,721	6,208	4,259	4,616	10,438	9,056	8,350	-706	3,734
MADAGASCAR	735	747	736	704	704	694	739	N/A	4,000	N/A	3,306
MALAYSIA	77	144	156	391	339	716	126	2,000	2,000	0	1,284
MALDIVES	49,212	52,439	53,705	24,548	28,083	30,776	51,785	47,195	47,195	0	16,419
MAURITIUS	4,908	5,530	7,585	9,711	11,191	9,891	6,008	10,490	10,490	0	599
MOZAMBIQUE	5	69	174	259	75	462	83	2,000	4,000	2,000	3,538
OMAN	7,208	15,183	20,983	75,080	77,821	70,072	14,458	N/A	13,012	N/A	-57,060
PAKISTAN	16,441	18,817	25,560	7,314	6,763	8,279	20,273	14,468	12,500	-1,968	4,221
PHILIPPINES	69						69	700	700	0	700
SEYCHELLES	25,079	41,468	43,261	34,101	35,959	34,066	36,603	39,577	39,577	0	5,511
SOMALIA								N/A	4,000	N/A	4,000
SOUTH AFRICA	83	182	183	308	329	521	149	2,000	2,000	0	1,479
SRI LANKA	37,778	32,673	33,735	31,318	30,038	30,310	34,729	33,254	33,245	-9	2,935
SUDAN								2,000	4,000	2,000	4,000
TANZANIA	3,441	4,011	4,013	3,907	3,468	3,314	3,822	3,905	3,905	0	591
THAILAND	187	109		1	6	37	148	2,000	2,000	0	1,963
UK	88	87	44	3	2	1	73	500	500	0	499
YEMEN	29,180	24,518	21,253	21,370	24,575	24,575	24,984	26,262	26,262	0	1,687

Resolution 21/01 - Objections

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
INDIA	33,427	17,159	19,244	13,932	37,488	33,554	20,795	24,515	20,851	21,247
IRAN ISLAMIC REP.	46,216	42,599	45,110	56,102	58,650	58,047	48,315	44,281	38,821	37,350
MADAGASCAR	735	747	736	703	704	715	709	704	704	694
OMAN	7,208	15,183	20,983	19,499	28,837	37,033	68,785	75,080	77,821	70,072
SOMALIA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	87,586	75,688	86,074	90,236	125,680	129,349	138,603	144,581	138,197	129,363

Catches taken by countries that have objected to Resolution 21/01 amounted to almost a third of the 2023 yellowfin tuna catch total.