



## OUTCOMES OF THE 27<sup>TH</sup> AND 28<sup>TH</sup> SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, JUNE 2025

### PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 15<sup>th</sup> Working Party on Neritic Tunas (WPNT15) of the decision and requests made by the Commission at its 28<sup>th</sup> Session, held from 13-17 May 2024, specifically relating to the work of the WPNT. The report from the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission held in April 2025 has yet to be adopted but the adopted Conservation and Management Measures are available. The Commission discussion on neritic tunas was very limited in 2024 and 2025 although the Commission did endorse the Recommendations from the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scientific Committee (SC27).

### BACKGROUND

At the 28<sup>th</sup> Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 11 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures., as detailed below:

#### Resolutions

- Resolution 24/01 On climate change as it relates to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission.
- Resolution 24/02 On management of drifting fish aggregating devices (FADS) in the IOTC area of competence.
- Resolution 24/03 On establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the IOTC area of competence.
- Resolution 24/04 On a regional observer scheme.
- Resolution 24/05 On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels.
- Resolution 24/06 On a ban on discards of bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna, and non- targeted species caught by vessels in the IOTC record of authorisation that operate in the IOTC area of competence.
- Resolution 24/07 On a management procedure for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence.
- Resolution 24/08 On a management procedure for swordfish in the IOTC area of competence.
- Resolution 24/09 To promote compliance by nationals of contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties with IOTC conservation and management measures.
- Resolution 24/10 On the promotion of the implementation of IOTC conservation and management measures.

#### Recommendations

- Recommendation 24/11 On conservation and management measure on marine pollution.

At the 29<sup>th</sup> Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 14 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures., as detailed below:

#### Resolutions

- Resolution 25/01: On climate change as it relates to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
- Resolution 25/02: On the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) programme
- Resolution 25/03 On establishing catch limits for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence
- Resolution 25/04 On establishing catch limits for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence

- Resolution 25/05 On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels
- Resolution 25/06 On a Regional Observer Scheme
- Resolution 25/07 On a management procedure for swordfish in the IOTC area of competence
- Resolution 25/08 On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC
- Resolution 25/09 On the conservation of shortfin and longfin mako sharks caught in association with IOTC fisheries
- Resolution 25/10 On establishing a Technical Committee on Management Procedures
- Resolution 25/11 On Port State Measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- Resolution 25/12 On the promotion of the implementation of IOTC Conservation and Management Measures

### Recommendations

- Recommendation 25/13 On promoting the objectives of IOTC through cooperation with the BBNJ Agreement (The agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction)
- Recommendation 25/14 On the limitation of fishing capacity

These Conservation and Management Measures shall become binding 120 days after their distribution to all CPCs. The final versions of the newly agreed CMMs are available here: <http://iotc.org/cmms>

### DISCUSSION

(S28, Para 19) The Commission **NOTED** that the current status of neritic tunas are as follows:

<p><b>Kawakawa</b></p> <p>A new stock assessment was carried out in 2023 using data-limited assessment techniques (CMSY). Based on the weight-of-evidence available, the kawakawa stock for the Indian Ocean is classified as <b>overfished</b> but <b>not subject to overfishing</b>.</p>
<p><b>Longtail tuna</b></p> <p>A new assessment was carried out in 2023 using data-limited assessment techniques (CMSY). Based on the weight-of-evidence currently available, the stock is considered to be both <b>overfished</b> and <b>subject to overfishing</b>.</p>
<p><b>Indo-Pacific king mackerel</b></p> <p>No new assessment was conducted in 2023 so results are based on the assessment conducted in 2021 using the data-limited techniques (CMSY and LB-SPR). Based on the weight-of-evidence currently available, the stock is considered to be <b>not overfished</b> and <b>not subject to overfishing</b>.</p>
<p><b>Narrowed-Barred Spanish mackerel</b></p> <p>A new assessment was conducted for narrow-barred Spanish mackerel in 2023 which examined a number of data-limited methods including CMSY, OCOM, and JABBA models.</p> <p>Based on the CMSY assessment, the stock appears to be <b>overfished</b> and <b>subject to overfishing</b>.</p>
<p><b>Bullet tuna</b></p> <p>No new assessment was conducted in 2023. An assessment was carried out in 2022 using data-limited techniques, however the catch data for bullet tuna are very uncertain given the high percentage of the</p>

catches that had to be estimated due to a range of reporting issues. Stock status in relation to the Commission's BMSY and FMSY reference points remains **unknown**.

#### **Frigate tuna**

No new assessment was conducted in 2023. A new assessment was carried out in 2022 using the data-limited techniques (CMSY and LB-SPR), however the catch data for frigate tuna are very uncertain given the high percentage of the catches that had to be estimated due to a range of reporting issues. Stock status in relation to the Commission's BMSY and FMSY reference points remains **unknown**.

(S28, para. 20) The Commission **NOTED** that the quality of the catch and associated data for neritic species remain poor and highly uncertain, which hampers the effective assessment and management of these species. The Commission **NOTED** that extensive discussion of data-related issues took place at the WPNT, WPDCS, and SC, and several coastal countries have been identified as priorities for data support missions to enhance the reporting of catch statistics.

(S28, para. 21) The Commission further **NOTED** that last year, a training workshop on CPUE standardization was conducted during the WPNT to improve the capacity of scientists from CPCs to develop abundance indices for these species. The Commission **ENCOURAGED** the continuation of such capacity-building workshops in the future.

(S28, para. 22) The Commission **NOTED** that, in some coastal fisheries, several neritic tuna species are captured together, therefore a multi-species approach would be more appropriate for effective management. The Commission **SUGGESTED** that the Scientific Committee should consider such an approach for the neritic tunas.

Although the report of the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission has not been formally adopted, the stock status summaries provided by the SC in its 27<sup>th</sup> Session were endorsed. These are provided in document IOTC-2025-WPNT15-03.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the WPNT

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2025–WPNT15–04 which outlined the outcomes of the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPNT and **AGREE** to consider how best to provide the SC with the information it needs, in order to satisfy the Commission's requests, throughout the course of the current WPNT meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** that 11 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) were adopted at the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission (consisting of 9 Resolutions and 1 Recommendation).
- 3) **NOTE** that 14 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) were adopted at the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission (consisting of 12 Resolutions and 2 Recommendations).