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## **DRAFT: AGENDA FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> WORKING PARTY ON ECOSYSTEMS AND BYCATCH: ASSESSMENT MEETING**

**Last updated: August 2025**

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**Date:** 9-13 September 2025

**Location:** Sète, France

**Venue:** [Station Ifremer](#)

**Time:** 09:00 – 17:00 (France time, GMT+1)

**Chair:** Dr Mariana Tolotti (EU, France)

**Vice-Chairs:** Mr Mohammed Koya (India) and Dr Charlene da Silva (South Africa)

- 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING** (Chair)
- 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION** (Chair)
- 3. THE IOTC PROCESS: OUTCOMES, UPDATES AND PROGRESS** (IOTC Secretariat)
  - 3.1. Outcomes of the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scientific Committee (IOTC Secretariat)
  - 3.2. Outcomes of the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission (IOTC Secretariat)
  - 3.3. Review of the Conservation and Management Measures relevant to Ecosystems and Bycatch (IOTC Secretariat)
  - 3.4. Progress on the recommendations of WPEB20 (IOTC Secretariat)
- 4. REVIEW OF THE DATA AVAILABLE AT THE SECRETARIAT FOR BYCATCH SPECIES** (All)
  - 4.1. Review of data available at the Secretariat for bycatch species (all)
  - 4.2. Review of the voluntary data collection form for ALDFG recovery proposed by the Secretariat (all)
- 5. REVIEW OF NATIONAL BYCATCH ISSUES IN IOTC MANAGED FISHERIES AND NATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION** (sharks; seabirds; marine turtles) (CPCs and IOTC Secretariat)
  - 5.1. Updated status of development and implementation of NPOA for seabirds and sharks, and the implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations (CPCs)
  - 5.2. Updated status of national fisheries and bycatch (CPCs)
- 6. REVIEW INFORMATION ON BIOLOGY, ECOLOGY, FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL DATA RELATING TO SHARKS** (all)
  - 6.1. Presentation of new information available on sharks (all)
  - 6.2. Development of shark research work plan (all)
  - 6.3. Review of the minimum standards for safe handling and live release procedures (Annex III of Resolution 25/08) (all)
  - 6.4. Development of ToRs for a long-term project on sharks (all)
- 7. STOCK ASSESSMENT FOR BLUE SHARK** (all)
  - 7.1. Review of indicators for blue shark (all)
  - 7.2. Stock assessment models (all)
  - 7.3. Review of the proposed stock assessment of blue shark (all)

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7.4. Recommendations and executive summaries (all)

**8. NEW INFORMATION ON BIOLOGY, ECOLOGY, FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL DATA RELATING TO ECOSYSTEMS AND BYCATCH SPECIES (all)**

8.1. Review new information on the environment and ecosystem interactions and modelling, including climate change issues affecting pelagic ecosystems in the IOTC area of responsibility (all)

- Ecosystems and climate
- Impact of gears
- Mitigation devices/techniques

8.2. Examining the benefits of retaining non-targeted species catches (all)

8.3. Assessment of the impacts of climate change on IOTC fisheries and bycatch species (all)

**9. BYCATCH, SPECIES INTERACTIONS, AND ECOSYSTEM RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR OTHER SHARK SPECIES, MARINE MAMMALS, SEABIRDS, AND SEA TURTLES (all)**

9.1. All bycatch species (all)

9.2. Other sharks and rays (all)

- Review existing data and information relating to the life history and conservation status of whale sharks (all)

9.3. Mobulids (all)

- Review new information on mobulid biology, ecology, fisheries interactions and bycatch mitigation measures (all);
- Review of indicators for mobulids (all)
- Review of revised best practice safe release and handling guidelines (all)
- Development of management advice on the status of mobulid species – review of new Executive Summary for rays (all)

9.4. Marine mammals (all)

- Best practice guidelines for safe release and handling of cetaceans (all);
- Review new information on marine mammal biology, ecology, fisheries interactions and bycatch mitigation measures (all);
- Development of management advice on the status of marine mammal species (all)

9.5. Seabirds (all)

- Review new information on seabird biology, ecology, fisheries interactions and bycatch mitigation measures (all)
- Development of draft work plan (all)

9.6. Sea turtles

- Review new information on marine turtle biology, ecology, fisheries interactions and bycatch mitigation measures (all)

**10. WPEB PROGRAM OF WORK (RESEARCH AND PRIORITIES) (all)**

10.1. Revision of the WPEB Program of Work 2026-2030 (Chairperson and IOTC Secretariat)

10.2. Development of priorities for an Invited Expert at the next WPEB meeting (Chairperson)

**11. OTHER MATTERS (Chair)**

11.1. Date and place of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (Chair)

11.2. Nomination of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (all)

- 11.3. Review of the draft, and adoption of the Report of the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (Chairperson)