
OUTCOMES OF THE 29TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY IOTC SECRETARIAT, AUGUST 2025

PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 21st Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch Assessment meeting (WPEB21(AS)) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 29th Session, held from 13-17 April 2025, specifically relating to the work of the WPEB.

BACKGROUND

At the 29th Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 14 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (consisting of 12 Resolutions and 2 Recommendations). The Commission **ADOPTED** four new proposals for Conservation and Management Measures relevant to the WPEB.

Resolutions

- Resolution 25/01: On climate change as it relates to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
- Resolution 25/06: On a Regional Observer Scheme
- 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*

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

One further proposal relevant to the WPEB was considered but not adopted relating to the recording and reporting of data.

DISCUSSION

The Commission made a number of general comments on the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee in 2024, which have relevance for the WPEB.

Status of sharks

(para. 35) The Commission **NOTED** that the current status of sharks are as follows. Full stock status summaries are available [\[here\]](#):

Blue shark No new stock assessment was carried out for blue sharks in 2024 and so the results are based on the assessment carried out in 2021 using an integrated age-structured model (SS3) (using data up to 2019). On the weight-of-evidence available in 2021, the stock status is determined to be not overfished and not subject to overfishing .
Shortfin mako shark In 2024 a stock assessment was carried out for the shortfin mako shark in the IOTC area of competence, using data until 2022. Considering the characterized uncertainty, and on the weight-of-evidence available in 2024, the shortfin mako shark stock is determined to be overfished and subject to overfishing .
Other shark species There are no quantitative stock assessments and limited basic fishery indicators currently available for other shark species in the Indian Ocean therefore their stock status remains unknown .

(para. 36) The Commission **REQUESTED** that the consideration of operational, economic and social impacts of mitigation approaches be confined to the WPSE, not the WPEB (which considers scientific matters).

Scientific Committee Recommendations

(para. 37) The Commission **NOTED** the stock status summaries for species of tuna and tuna-like species under the IOTC mandate, as well as other species impacted by IOTC fisheries and considered the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee to the Commission. The Commission **ENDORSED** the Scientific Committee's 2024 list of recommendations as its own.

(para. 38) The Commission **RECALLED** that in 2024, it was **AGREED** that an election for the SC chair should take place at the next session of the SC in 2024 (IOTC-2024-S29-R, para 30). The Commission **NOTED** that, at its 27th Session, the SC called for nominations for the position of the Chairperson of the SC. Dr Toshihide Kitakado (Japan) was nominated and elected as Chairperson of the SC for one more year.

(para. 39) The Commission **NOTED** that the SC also called for nominations for the position of the Vice Chairperson of the SC (Dr Gorka Merino from the EU could no longer serve in this role due to personal commitments). Dr Fayakun Satria (Indonesia) was elected as Vice-Chairperson of the SC for the next biennium. The Commission **NOTED** that the new Vice Chairperson would work closely with the outgoing Chairperson to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities after the next meeting of the SC.

(para. 40) The Commission **ENDORSED** those officials elected for the SC and its subsidiary (scientific) bodies for the coming years, as listed in Appendix 7 of the 2024 Scientific Committee Report.

(para. 41) The Commission **NOTED** that Resolution 16/07 *On the use of artificial lights to attract fish* (which prohibits using artificial lights for the purpose of aggregating tuna and tuna-like species) requires further clarifications as to which fishery/gear this measure should apply. The Commission **REQUESTED** CPCs to provide proposals to revise the resolution.

(para. 42) The Commission **ACKNOWLEDGED** that Indonesia has completed the work undertaken to re-estimate the tuna catches from Indonesian fisheries. The revised catches have been endorsed by the WPDCS and SC. The Commission **NOTED** that given the importance of Indonesia's fisheries and their large volume of tuna catches, this catch reconstruction work is important to the scientific work of this Commission. The Commission also **REQUESTED** Indonesia to work with the Secretariat and to ensure that the estimation methodologies are automated. The Commission also **NOTED** the need for other fishing fleets such as Oman, which the Commission has raised concerns regarding the reported catch data, to initiate and undergo a similar process to reconstruct the catch data.

(para. 43) The Commission **URGED** all CPCs to actively participate in IOTC Scientific Committee's subsidiary body meetings.

(para. 44) The Commission **NOTED** paper IOTC-2024-SC27-18 which provided the draft updated IOTC Strategic Science Plan for 2025-2029 for the Commission to consider.

(para. 45) The Commission **NOTED** the first IOTC Strategic Science Plan 2020 - 2024 was developed in 2018 and adopted by the Commission, at its 23rd session.

(para. 46) Following a similar review process, an update of the Strategic Science Plan for 2025 – 2029 was presented to the SC in 2024, for review. The plan was then disseminated to the Commission via Circular 2025-01 in January 2025 with comments due by 28 February 2025. The comments received from Members have been addressed in the final draft.

(para. 47) The Commission **NOTED** the updated Strategic Science Plan incorporated requests made to the SC from recent resolutions and reflected emerging research activities within the IOTC scientific

community. It Included a proposed timetable for meetings from 2025 to 2029, and schedules for running stock assessments and the adopted MPs.

(para. 48) **NOTING** the importance of this work in communicating targets, objectives and indicators for monitoring progress on scientific work of the IOTC to the Commission, the Commission **ENDORSED** the IOTC Strategic Science Plan 2025-2029.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the WPEB:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2025–WPEB21(AS)–03 which outlined the outcomes of the 29th Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPEB 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 WPEB meeting.