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## OUTCOMES OF 29th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 25 OCTOBER 2025

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### PURPOSE

To inform the Scientific Committee (SC) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 29<sup>th</sup> Session, held in April 2025, specifically relating to the IOTC science process.

### BACKGROUND

At the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission, 14 Conservation and Management Measures were adopted (consisting of 12 Resolutions and 2 Recommendations), as detailed below

#### Resolutions

- Resolution 25/01 *On climate change as it relates to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission* [[download here](#)]
- Resolution 25/02 *On the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) programme* [[download here](#)].
- Resolution 25/03 *On establishing catch limits for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence* [[download here](#)].
- Resolution 25/04 *On establishing catch limits for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence* [[download here](#)].
- Resolution 25/05 *On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels* [[download here](#)].
- Resolution 25/06 *On a Regional Observer Scheme* [[download here](#)].
- Resolution 25/07 *On a management procedure for swordfish in the IOTC area of competence* [[download here](#)].
- Resolution 25/08 *On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC* [[download here](#)].
- Resolution 25/09 *On the conservation of shortfin and longfin mako sharks caught in association with IOTC fisheries* [[download here](#)].
- Resolution 25/10 *On establishing a Technical Committee on Management Procedures* [[download here](#)].
- Resolution 25/11 *On Port State Measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing* [[download here](#)].
- Resolution 25/12 *On the promotion of the implementation of IOTC Conservation and Management Measures* [[download here](#)].
- 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)* [[download here](#)].
- Recommendation 25/14 *On the limitation of fishing capacity* [[download here](#)].

The updated *Compendium of Active Conservation and Management Measures for the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission* may be downloaded from the IOTC website at the following links:

English: <http://iotc.org/cmms>

French: <http://iotc.org/fr/mcgs>

Below is a summary of the scientific requirements stipulated in the CMMs adopted at the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission:

**Resolution 25/01:** *On climate change as it relates to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission.* This Resolution requires that the Commission shall take into account scientific information available from the Scientific Committee and other relevant international processes on the relationship between climate change, tuna fisheries and tuna stocks, bycatch and ecosystems. The SC will consider and where possible, advise on the potential impacts of climate change on highly migratory fish stocks and any related impacts on developing states and small island developing states. Capacity building programs in developing coastal states are also to be supported by the Commission and SC. The SC shall provide advice to the Commission and suggest any further steps that may be taken to integrate climate change considerations and analyses into its deliberations and decision-making processes. The SC shall review and propose amendments to its own Terms of Reference and those of its subsidiary bodies to meet the scientific needs stipulated in this Resolution ([APPENDIX IV and VII of IOTC Rules of Procedure](#))

**Resolution 25/03** On establishing catch limits for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence. This Resolution sets out the total allowable catch (TAC) for skipjack tuna for the first management period in 2025 and 2026 for all CPCs within the IOTC area of competence in accordance with Management Procedure in Resolution 24/07. CPCs are categorised into two categories based on their average catch levels of the years 2021 to 2023 and catch limits are determined for the CPCs in each category according to the rules specified. The resolution also provides provisions on the underage of catch, and on the administration of catch limits by the IOTC Secretariat. The SC should reassess the management procedure to ascertain whether it might be overly conservative, and propose, if appropriate the relevant adjustment to the Management Procedure. The SC shall provide advice to the Commission on the potential impacts of carrying forward the underage of catch limits

**Resolution 25/04** On establishing catch limits for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence. This Resolution established the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for bigeye tuna shall be 92,670 t in 2026, 2027, and 2028 in accordance with the Management Procedure established by Resolution 22/03 and also sets the annual catch limits to be applied in 2026, 2007, and 2028 to major fleets that catch bigeye tuna (Indonesia, Seychelles, EU, Sri Lanka, Japan, China, Iran, etc). The resolution also provides provisions on the underage of catch, and on the administration of catch limits by the IOTC Secretariat. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 23/04. The SC shall conduct a comparative analysis of the contribution of all fishing gears to the mortality of bigeye tuna. The SC shall quantify the expected impact on MSY and SSB<sub>msy</sub> for bigeye tuna resulting from replacing fishing mortality/catches of any major fishing gear/fishery. The SC shall also provide advice on FAD management options, including on, limits on FADs sets, that may be necessary to achieve a replacement of fishing mortality of FAD fisheries with free school fisheries. The SC shall provide advice to the Commission on the potential impacts of carrying forward the underage of catch limits

**Resolution 25/06** On a Regional Observer Scheme. This resolution puts in place a programme comprising national observer schemes to collect verified catch data and other scientific data related to the fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species in the IOTC area. CPCs are required to cover a minimum of 5% of their operations/sets per year on vessels over 24m in length or vessels of all lengths operating outside of their EEZ. The Resolution provides provisions for the use of Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) to complement or substitute for human onboard observers, which can be further complemented by port sampling and/or other Commission approved data collection methods. This revision includes a note saying that CPCs may present a list of implementation plans for alternate data collection to the SC which if endorsed by the SC, may be used to record and report mandatory ROS data requirements for by vessels less than 24m in length fishing exclusively in the CPC's EEZ. The Resolution also includes a requirement for the SC to update the ROS observer manual and observer reporting forms including the minimum data fields and provide advice on a training program

**Resolution 25/07** On a Management Procedure for Swordfish in the IOTC Area Of Competence. This Resolution provides a management procedure for the swordfish stock managed by the IOTC with a view of maintaining the stock above the biomass target (BTARG = BMSY) while maximizing the average catch from the fishery and reducing the variation in the total allowable catch (TAC) between management periods. The SC is also requested to investigate approaches to incorporate a multi-species framework into future candidate management procedures and if possible, wider impacts in the ecosystem

**Resolution 25/08** On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC. This Resolution consolidates and updates the conservation measures previously outlined in Resolutions 18/02, 17/05, 13/05, 13/06, and 12/09. It establishes provisions regarding retention bans, full utilization of shark catches, bycatch mitigation

measures, and requirements for data collection and reporting. Additionally, the Resolution sets out specific requirements for the conservation of blue sharks and whale sharks. The SC shall establish terms of reference for a long term-project on sharks in the IOTC area of competence to be considered by the Commission at its annual Session in 2026. The SC shall review existing data and information relating to the life history and conservation status of whale sharks, and confirm whether they meet the definition of being a taxon of the greatest biological vulnerability and conservation concern.

**Resolution 25/09** On the conservation of shortfin and longfin mako sharks caught in association with IOTC fisheries. This Resolution outline provisions of conservation measures specific to shortfin and longfin mako sharks. It requires vessels to implement the minimum standards for safe handling and release procedures of shortfin and longfin mako shark. The SC shall assess the requirements under Resolution 15/01 on the necessity and feasibility to extend reporting of shortfin and longfin mako sharks at species level for all gears. The SC shall review for the 32nd Session of the Commission the impact of the measure of this Resolution on shortfin mako shark mortality.

## DISCUSSION

### Requests from the Commission

At the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission, Members made several comments regarding the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee, which participants are asked to **NOTE** (extracts from IOTC-2025-S29-R):

18. The Commission **NOTED** that all scientific working group and working party meetings taking place in 2024 had been successfully held, utilizing a hybrid format.
19. The Commission **NOTED** that 27 National Reports were submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2024 by CPCs and that this was a slight increase when compared with the 25 National Reports submitted in 2023.

#### *The status of tropical and temperate tunas*

26. Given the substantial uncertainty and potential issues with the joint CPUE series for longline fleets and its influence on the assessment outcome, the Commission **REQUESTED** that the SC investigate and resolve the uncertainties in relation to the CPUE standardization, and provide feedback to the Commission at S30 in 2026. This work is critical to review and confirm the validity of the 2024 yellowfin tuna stock assessment.
29. The Commission **NOTED** the new approach used in the assessment, which scaled the MSY reference points based on recent average recruitment and **REQUESTED** that this approach be further examined by the SC in 2025. This is the first time such an approach has been used for an IOTC species. However, the SC has raised concerns about potential model artifacts that may cause recruitment to deviate from the long-term average. As this approach could be applied to other species, a thorough investigation is needed to ensure its appropriateness.

#### *Scientific Committee Recommendations*

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.
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

The report of 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission are available on the IOTC website.

<http://www.iotc.org/>

#### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the Scientific Committee:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC-2025-SC28-03 which outlined the main outcomes of the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission, specifically related to the IOTC science process and **AGREE** to consider how best to provide the Commission with the information it has requested, throughout the course of the current SC meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** that 14 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) were adopted at this Session of the Commission.