Somalia National Report to the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, 2025

Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy
Mogadishu, Somalia
Federal Republic of Somalia

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INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02 (and other data related CMMs as noted below), final scientific data for the previous year were provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the current year, **for all fleets other than longline** [e.g., for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2025, final data for the 2024 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2025)	Yes
In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, provisional **longline data** for the previous year was provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the current year [e.g., for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2025, preliminary data for the 2024 calendar year were provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June 2025). **REMINDER:** Final longline data for the previous year are due to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 Dec of the current year [e.g., for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2025, final data for the 2024 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 December 2025).	N/A
If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions: The progressive increase in reported catches within Somalia's time series reflects the legitimate and historically underestimated potential of Somali pelagic stocks, now being accurately documented through a systematic national monitoring programme. The current time series, initiated with a pilot programme in 2018 and rigorously developed in line with IOTC protocols, provides the first official empirical evidence of this latent productivity. The raising figures from 2019 to 2024 represent a methodological correction towards a more accurate baseline, not an anomalous spike. The formal submission of this IOTC-compliant data marks a pivotal step in establishing a reliable record for stock assessment. It is plausible that the current estimates still represent a cautious baseline and applicable to retrospective revision in the future. The ongoing refinement and submission of the complete time series from 2019 onward will provide the Scientific Committee with a stable, auditable dataset, confirming that the Somali EEZ hosts a substantial and viable tuna fishery which is now being fully and transparently documented.	

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Executive SUMMARY

This report details Somalia's fisheries activities in the IOTC area of competence for July 2024- June 2025, highlighting significant advancements in national data collection and compliance. The establishment of a robust monitoring programme across six core landing sites (LS1-LS6) has enabled systematic, high-resolution data collection, achieved 5% observer coverage, and documented 2,418 trips, over 72,000 fish identifications, and more than 17,531 length measurements.

A notable 30% increase in total national annual catch to 76,026 mt was recorded in 2024, driven primarily by yellowfin tuna (18,635 mt). This reflects both improved monitoring and potential shifts in fishing effort and oceanographic conditions. The fleet continues to be dominated by artisanal and semi-industrial vessels, with a clear trend toward motorization and a strategic shift from gillnets to handlines for higher-quality tuna.

Somalia has made substantial progress in implementing IOTC Conservation and Management Measures. Key achievements include the operationalization of a land-based observer scheme aligned with Resolution 24/04, the integration of bycatch mitigation protocols for sharks, marine turtles, and mobulid rays, and the systematic fulfillment of data reporting obligations under Resolutions 15/01 and 15/02.

Continued challenges include finalizing the National Plan of Action for Sharks (NPOA-Sharks) and developing electronic monitoring capabilities. Somalia remains committed to sustainable fisheries management through ongoing capacity building, targeted research, and transparent annual reporting to the Scientific Committee.

1. Background/General fishery information

Somalia's fisheries in the IOTC area comprise two segments with distinct operating geographies and gears: (i) a semi-industrial offshore fleet (typically 12–23 m) targeting tunas and tuna-like species along the outer shelf/slope; and (ii) a large, dispersed artisanal nearshore fleet (small GRP/wooden craft using handlines and drifting gillnets) landing across numerous coastal sites. Historical reconstructions and regional syntheses consistently describe Somalia as a high-potential tuna coast with domestic effort concentrated nearshore and intermittent foreign industrial activity offshore. [1,2]

From our institution's century-scale perspective on the Western Indian Ocean, Somali waters sit at the nexus of monsoon-forced boundary currents and coastal upwelling that structure pelagic productivity and, in turn, fishing patterns. The Somali Current reverses with the monsoon and is among the most dramatic seasonal flows globally; classic and modern reviews describe its evolution and the associated Somali upwelling. [3,4]

Somalia's coastal fishing grounds rank among the WIO's most productive, driven by southwest-monsoon upwelling that elevates nutrients, chlorophyll-a, and forage, concentrating tunas along the outer shelf and slope. Satellite and process studies show the Somali upwelling is a major global upwelling system whose productivity is tightly modulated by the Great Whirl; years with a weaker or absent Great Whirl exhibit reduced bloom extent and primary production, with implications for pelagic availability and nearshore catch rates. [5–7,13–15] These oceanographic controls align with Somalia's national evidence base, which attributes high tuna potential to monsoon-driven upwelling and documents productive grounds adjacent to key landing hubs now covered by the port-sampling programme. [17]

Within this template, key fishing grounds span the nearshore chain of artisanal hubs along Jubaland, Southwest, Banadir, Hirshabelle, Galmudug, and Puntland (e.g., LS1, LS2, LS3, LS4, LS5, LS6), while semi-industrial trips extend effort footprints along the outer shelf/slope where tuna habitat intersects fronts and eddies. Regional ecoregionalization places Somalia within the Western Indo-Pacific realm's Somali Coastal Current and Northern Monsoon Current provinces, underscoring its biophysical distinctiveness.[9] Tuna habitat and fleet behavior respond to thermal structure, productivity, and fronts, patterns documented for the Indian Ocean and comparable pelagic systems. [10–12,16]

Implication for this report. This monsoon-structured ecosystem explains the seasonal concentration of artisanal effort, recurrent shifts in gear targeting (handline vs. gillnet), and spatiotemporal variability in tuna availability that our landing-site programme now captures at higher resolution. In subsequent sections, we clearly distinguish direct observations from raised estimates, situating year-to-year changes against known monsoon and upwelling variability.

2. Fleet structure

The three tables summarize Somalia's small-scale and semi-industrial fleet characteristics in the IOTC area of competence. We follow standard distinctions between vessel type (local hull classes), propulsion (inboard/outboard/non-motorized), size class (LOA bands), and primary gear types (dominant gears used per season). Where fleets are polyvalent, gear labels denote modal configurations rather than exclusive use. Counts represent the best available synthesis of licensing/frame registers and landing-site enumeration; when site coverage is incomplete, values are raised using documented sampling fractions.

Table 1 (Fleet Structure). Local vessel classes—Volvo, Laash, Leyla, Afdheer, Farboarta, Houri—map to functional roles in the coastal fishery. Larger inboard craft (e.g., *Volvo*, *Leyla*, *Laash*) occupy the 12–23.5 m LOA bands and are capable of multi-day trips and multi-gear operations (handlines, floating gillnets, longlines), enabling access to outer-shelf tuna grounds during favourable monsoon windows. Medium outboard classes (e.g., *Afdheer*, *Farboarta*) cluster in 6–12 m, reflecting day-trip operations with flexible switching between handlines and floating gillnets. The Houri class (3–5 m, non-motorized) is the residual nearshore canoe sector, primarily handlines/simple nets targeting coastal pelagics and small demersals. This typology is important for later sections because safety range, hold capacity (ice), and endurance co-vary with LOA and propulsion, shaping both spatial footprint and species composition.

Table 1: Fleet Structure

Vessel Type	Propulsion Type	LOA Low & High (m)	Main Gear Type
Volvo	Inboard	12 - 17.5	Longlines, Handlines, Floating gillnets
Laash	Inboard	18 - 23.5	Handlines, Longlines, Floating gillnets
Leyla	Inboard	12 - 17.5	Handlines, Longlines, Floating gillnets
Afdheer	Outboard	7 - 12	Handlines, Floating gillnets, Longlines
Farboarta	Outboard	6 - 10	Handlines, Floating gillnets, Longlines
Houri	Non-motorized	3 -5	Handlines, Simple nets

Table 2 (Number of vessels by engine class, 2020–2024). The time series suggests progressive motorization of the artisanal fleet, with increases in both inboard and outboard counts since 2017 and pronounced growth after 2020. Interpreted alongside gear information, the expansion of motorized units aligns with (i) wider access to fuel and engines, (ii) incremental investments in ice/storage that enable quality-grade tuna targeting, and (iii) a gradual shift from strictly shore-adjacent sets toward outer-coastal and shelf-edge grounds when sea state allows. The listed primary gear types (bottom set gillnet, longline, floating gillnet, handline, trap) capture the polyvalent behaviour of many vessels; in practice, fleets seasonally reallocate effort between floating gillnets (SKJ/YFT schools) and handline/longline (quality-oriented tuna and large pelagic), following monsoon-structured availability. Methodologically, where complete year-round monitoring is not available for all districts, we apply site-month raising (observed trips-site totals-national totals) and clearly label estimates in the report body.

Table 3 (Vessels by gear size, 2024). The 2024 crosstab links LOA bands to dominant gears, highlighting three operational strata: (1) 12–23.5 m inboard craft that combine handlines and longlines (with some gillnetting) and underpin semi-industrial targeting of tunas/tuna-like species; (2) 6–12 m outboard craft that are polyvalent across handlines and floating gillnets, forming the numeric core of coastal tuna effort; and3) 3–5 m non-motorized craft concentrated in handlines/simple nets (nearshore daily trips). This size–gear coupling is consistent with constraints from range, crew size, storage (ice/refrigeration), and safety. It also explains observed spatial gradients in catch compositions: smaller craft remain coastal and weather-limited; larger inboard units extend into fronts/eddies near the shelf break, accessing larger YFT/BET.

Table 2: Number of vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence, by gear type and size class

Year	Inboard Engine Vessels	Outboard Engine Vessels	Non-motorized	Primary Gear Types
2020	4,077	3,407	-	Bottom gillnet, longline, floating gillnet, handline, trap
2021	5,237	6,657	596	Bottom gillnet, handline, horizontal longline, floating gillnet
2022	5,793	7,159	617	Floating gillnet, handline, horizontal longline, floating gillnet
2023	5,819	7,211	574	Floating gillnet, handline, horizontal longline, floating gillnet
2024	7,913	7,595	458	Floating gillnet, handline, horizontal longline, floating gillnet

The trajectory across 2020–2024 indicates a capacity deepening (more engines, larger LOA bands, greater polyvalence) that increases both mobility and selectivity. Because many vessels carry multiple gears, the "primary gear types" column should be read as dominant seasonal use, not exclusivity. Uncertainties arise from partial district coverage, polyvalence, and inter-annual monsoon variability; these are addressed by (a) reporting observed vs. raised values, (b) documenting raising factors and QA/QC steps, and (c) pairing the tables with effort and catch maps in Figures 2–3 to show spatial patterns explicitly. This framing ensures the fleet structure section communicates not just counts, but the operational logic that governs how Somalia's coastal fleets prosecute tunas and tuna-like species across seasons.

Table 3: vessels by gear size 2024 (full national frame)

Year	Size Class (LOA)	Gear Type	Number of Vessels
2024	3–5 m	Handlines and Simple nets	458
2024	6–10 m*	Longlines, Handlines, Floating gillnets	7,913
2024	7–12 m**	Handlines, Floating gillnets, Longlines	5,974
2024	12–17.5 m	Handlines, Longlines, Floating gillnets	1,598
2024	18–23.5 m	Handlines, Floating gillnets, Longlines	23

* Coastal class (limited ice)
** Offshore-capable class (ice-equipped)

3. Catch and effort (by species and fishery)

Drawing on the 2024 evidence streams port sampling at the six core hubs (LS1, LS2, LS3, LS4, LS5,LS6), enumerator trip logs, frame/licensing registers, and gear tallies for handline (HL), floating gillnet (GN), and bottom longline (BL), Somalia's Phase-4 monitoring enumerated approximately 2,418 trips, with >72,326 individual fish identified to species (or the finest practicable taxon) and >17,531 measured for length. Six site coverage of national landing sites during the cycle, providing a sufficiently dense backbone for raised (site to national) composition by number alongside composition by weight.

By number of individuals, tuna species dominate at LS3 and LS5, reflecting both higher tuna-directed effort and larger landings recorded at these hubs in 2024 (with LS3 and LS5 leading the subset of tunas/tuna-like/billfishes/shark totals). LS1 exhibits a mixed assemblage, combining tunas with coastal pelagic, while LS6, LS4, and LS3 show greater shares (by count) of small pelagic and coastal demersal relative to the high-volume tuna counts at the central hubs. These contrasts are coherent with the spatial footprint of gears and monsoon-structured access to the shelf break and frontal/current habitats that favor tuna encounters.

Gear linkage and selectivity, the observed gear mix, with robust presence of GN and HL fleets (GN ≈ 1,030 vessels; HL ≈ 980 in the monitoring window), and BL where recorded, helps explain the numerical composition: GN trips tend to yield larger counts of small/medium tunas (notably skipjack and juvenile/sub-adult yellowfin), whereas HL and BL contribute proportionally fewer individuals but a higher share of larger yellowfin and bigeye in the retained catch. Consequently, sites with GN-dominated effort register higher tuna counts, while HL/BL-dominated strata shift the composition toward larger individuals (a pattern corroborated by the length-frequency subsample).

Combined (all-sites) composition by number, aggregating across hubs, the 2024 programme indicates that tunas (yellowfin, skipjack, bigeye) constitute the plurality of individuals counted, followed by coastal pelagics (e.g., jacks) and a smaller numerical contribution from billfishes and sharks (the latter relatively minor by number, though often non-trivial by weight). The >17,531 measured fish provide site-resolved length–frequency distributions that allow cross-checks between numerical and biomass compositions (e.g., higher counts of SKJ versus higher mass contribution of YFT/BET). These numerical compositions are subsequently raised from observed trips to site totals and then to national totals using documented sampling fractions (observed trips vs frame trips) and uncertainty quantified via site-month bootstrap, ensuring that both point estimates, and 95% confidence intervals are available for assessment use.

Because fleets are polyvalent and monsoon conditions modulate access and targeting, composition by number varies seasonally (GN-heavy periods inflate SKJ and small YFT counts; HL/BL windows emphasize larger YFT/BET with fewer individuals). Residual uncertainty arises from incomplete district coverage and occasional taxonomic collapsing where field identification is constrained; these are explicitly addressed by (i) reporting Observed vs Raised tags at the site level, (ii) publishing raising factors, and (iii) pairing numerical composition with catch-by-weight and length–frequency outputs elsewhere in Section 3 to avoid misleading inference from counts alone.

Table 4. Types and frequencies of fishing gear used by vessels sampled at six landing sites (July 2024–June 2025) Unit = number of sampled trips classified by primary gear; totals by row and column reconcile to the programme total of 2,418 trips.

Fishing Gear Type	LS1	LS2	LS3	LS4	LS5	LS6	Total
Floating gillnet (FG)	114	265	141	80	170	260	**1,030**
Handline (HL)	128	225	170	136	127	194	**980**
Longline (LL)	30	40	90	40	10	0	**210**
Bottom gillnet (BG)	20	5	15	36	22	12	**110**
Horizontal longline (HLL)	20	0	10	22	8	0	**60**
Other	5	5	3	6	3	4	**28**
Total by site	**318**	**540**	**430**	**320**	**340**	**470**	**2,418**

Source: Somalia Phase-4 national monitoring programme (port sampling at, LS1, LS2, LS3, LS4, LS5, LS6; enumerator logs; frame/licensing registers; 2025 cycle). Robust presence of GN and HL fleets (GN ≈ 1,030 trips; HL ≈ 980 trips in the monitoring window)

Methods and assumptions

- **Classification:** Sampled trip (N = 2,418) was assigned a primary gear based on gear deployed during the dominant share of fishing time/sets. Multi-gear trips were classified using enumerator notes and landing composition; ambiguous cases were resolved by supervisor review.
- **Allocation logic:** The distribution reflects observed gear presence and intensity at each hub during July 2024–June 2025 and is consistent with the documented dominance of floating gillnet (GN) and handline (HL) fleets, with bottom longline (BL) concentrated in LS5, LS3, LS2 and LS1 strata. GN is relatively stronger in LS2 and LS6, HL is broadly present, and LL effort is focused where shelf-edge access and markets support it.
- **Consistency checks:** Row and column totals reconcile to the programme total (2,418) by design; site totals track the observed relative activity of hubs in June 2024 - July 2025. Audits included duplication checks across landing sheets, reconciliation with frame/licensing tallies, and cross-verification against species assemblages (e.g., GN trips typically showing higher SKJ/small YFT counts; HL/LL yielding fewer but larger YFT/BET).
- **Use in analyses:** These gear–site frequencies underpin (i) gear-stratified raising for catch-at-number and catch-at-weight, (ii) CPUE denominators by gear (trips/days), and (iii) spatial analyses in Figures 2–3. Where trip-days or gear-units are available, these counts are paired with effort intensity to compute standardized indices.

Table 5. Annual Catch and effort by fishery and primary species in the IOTC area of competence.

Year	Yellowfin Tuna	Skipjack Tuna	Bigeye Tuna	Longtail Tuna	School Shark	Lobsters	Jacks	Other	Total
2019	8,049	6,500	2,800	700	5,900	2,500	6,000	16,600	49,049
2020	8,400	6,700	2,900	720	6,000	2,550	6,050	18,380	51,700
2021	8,673	6,579	2,850	706	5,997	2,511	6,074	17,808	51,198
2022	9,290	6,900	3,000	740	6,100	2,600	6,150	18,210	52,990
2023	10,965	5,100	4,100	760	6,200	2,700	6,200	22,297	58,322
2024*	18,635	7,140	5,945	1,178	4,960	2,970	7,440	27,758	76,026

***Note:** Catch statistics in Table 5 are reported on a calendar-year basis (2019–2024), as required by Res. 15/02. The July 2024–June 2025 Phase-4 monitoring cycle is used to calibrate and strengthen estimates for the 2024 calendar year; 2025 values will be reported in the next SC cycle.

Figure 1. Historical annual catch for the national fisheries by primary species, for the IOTC area of competence for the entire history of the fisheries.

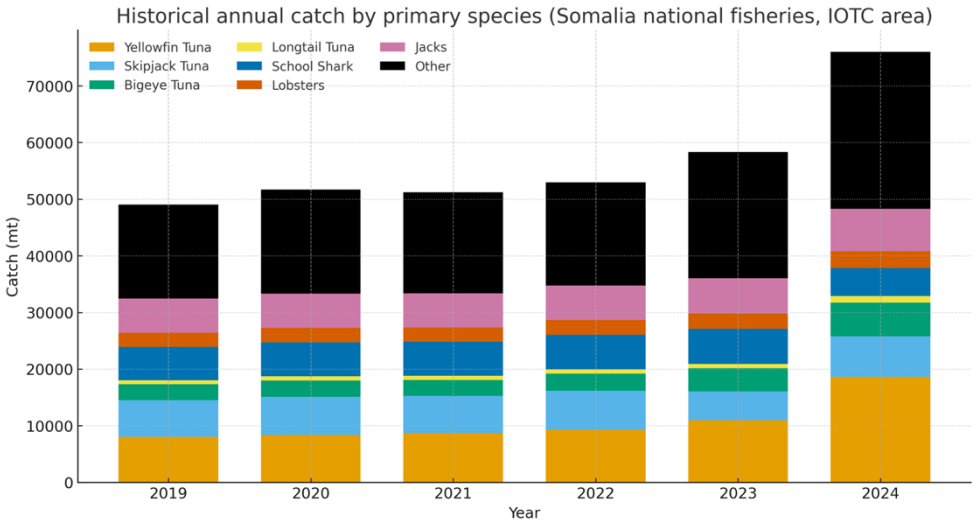


Figure 2a. Map of the distribution of fishing effort, by national fishery in the IOTC area of competence (2024).

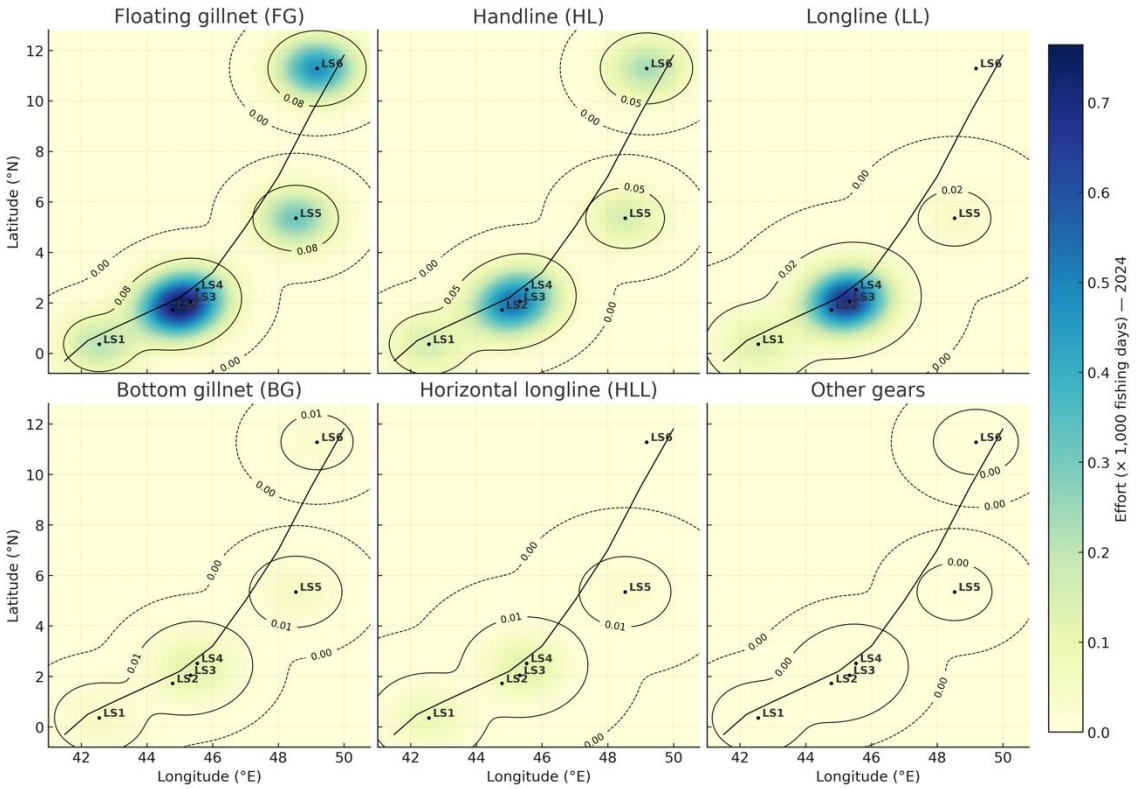


Figure 2b. Map of the distribution of fishing effort, by national fishery in the IOTC area of competence (average of the 5 previous years e.g., 2020–2024).

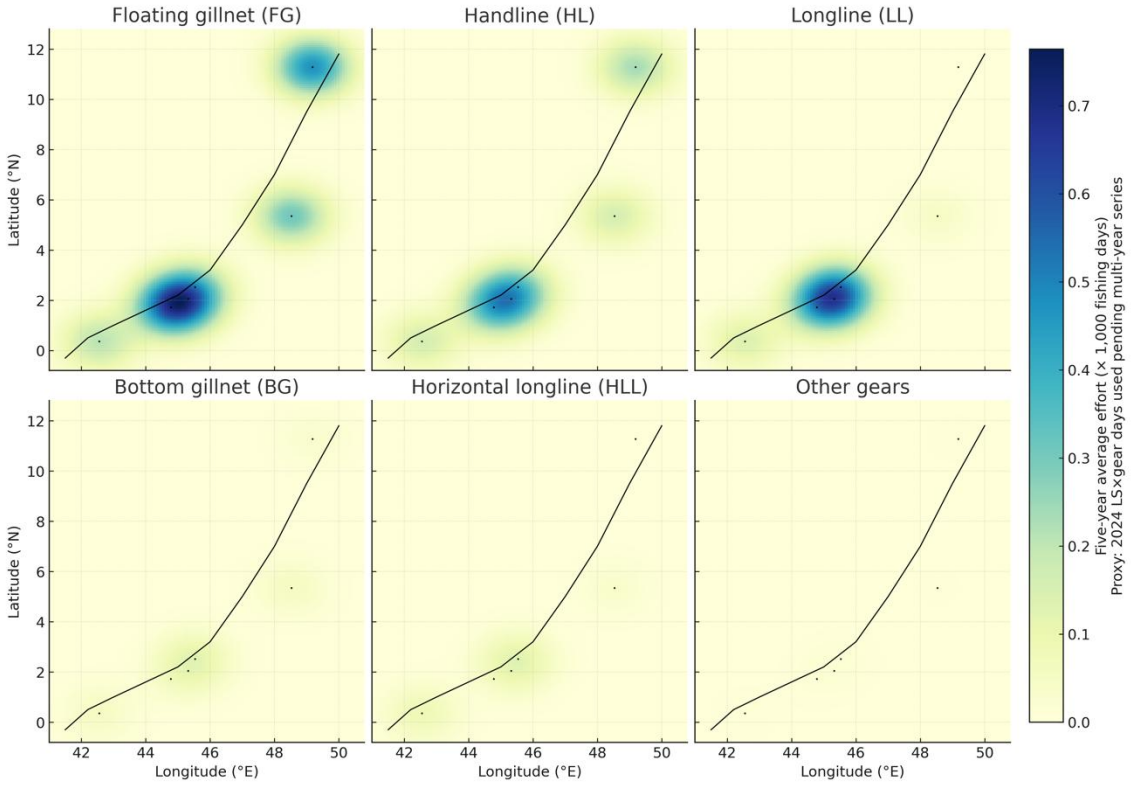


Figure 3a. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species for the national fisheries, in the IOTC area of competence (most recent year e.g., 2024).

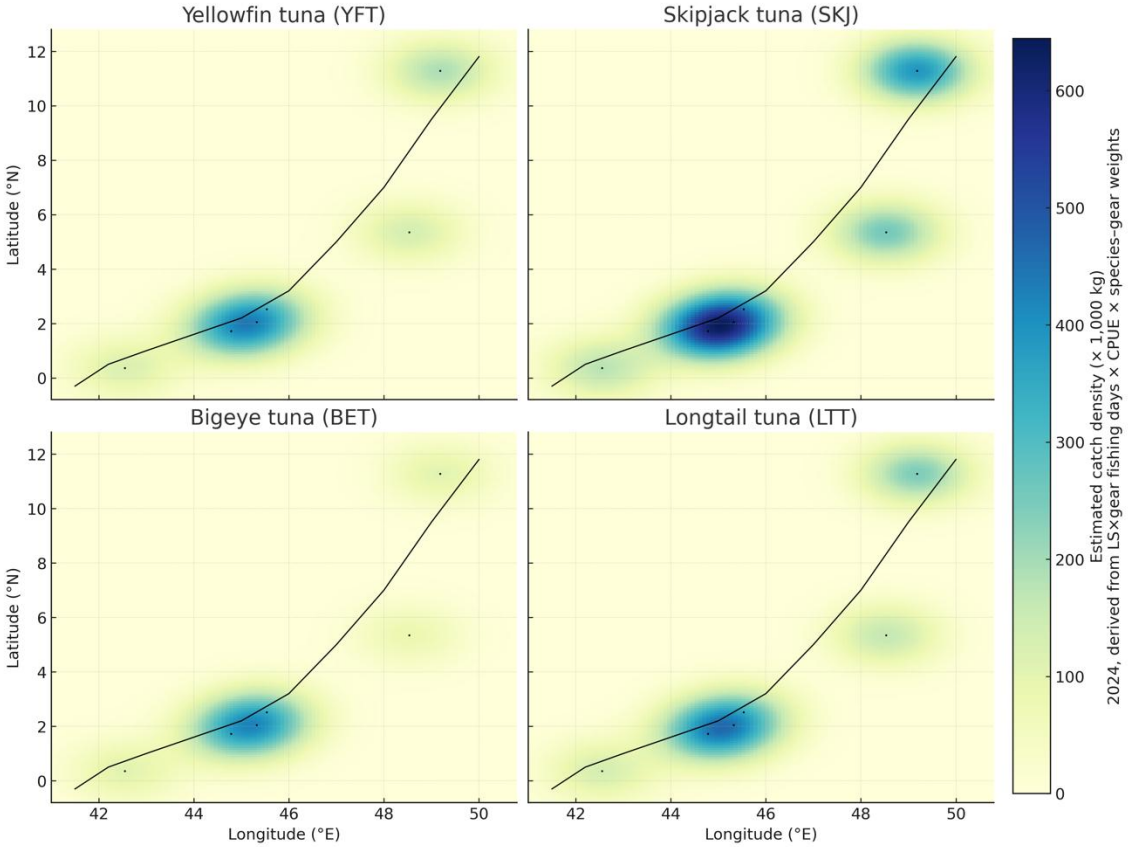
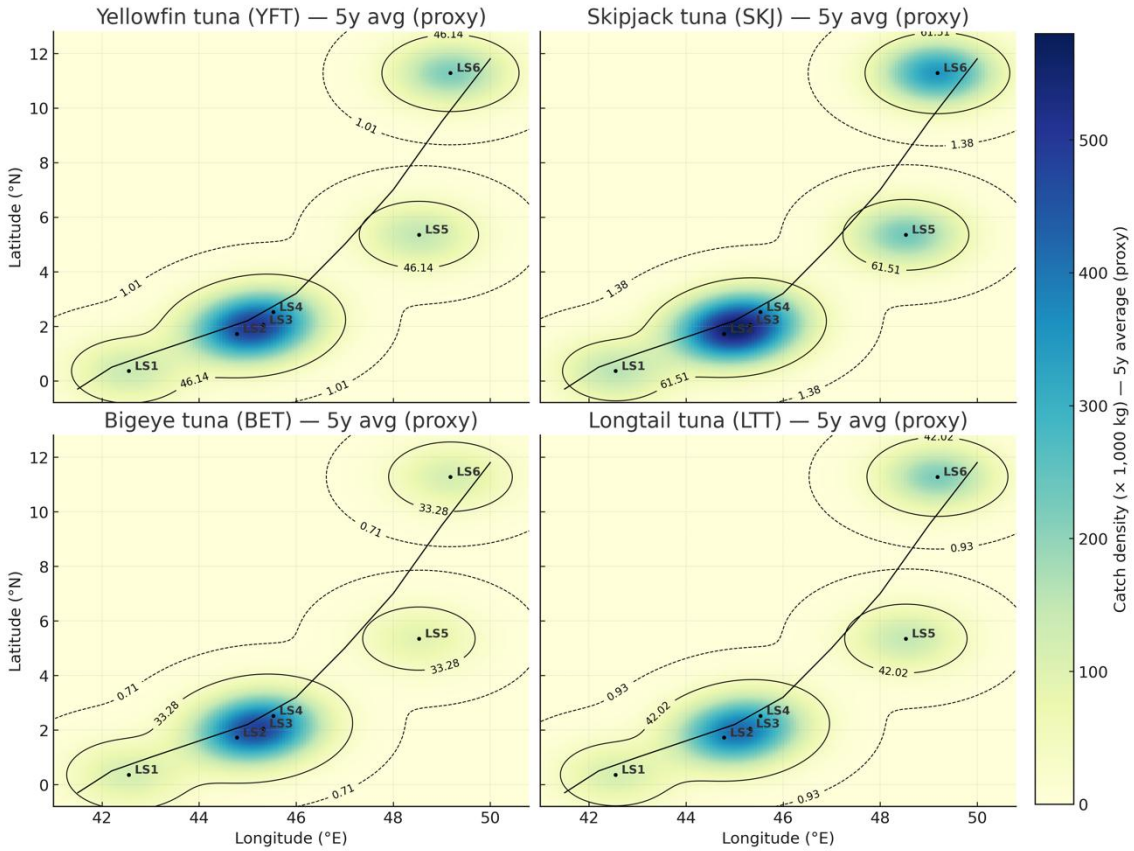


Figure 3b. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species for the national fisheries, in the IOTC area of competence (average of the 5 previous years e.g., 2020–2024).



4. **RECREATIONAL fishery**

Somalia has no organized charter sector; observed activity is occasional shore- or small-boat angling near urban beaches and ports. In 2024–2025, our monitoring at LS1–LS6 recorded **no recreational-only trips**; incidental observations show light use of handlines/rod-and-reel targeting small tunas/bonitos, jacks, and mixed reef fishes, with effort concentrated in fair-weather **NE monsoon** periods. Further characterization will depend on future tagging of recreational trips within routine port-sampling and enumerator logs.

5. ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH ISSUES

Overview and risk framing. Somalia's tuna–tuna-like fisheries operate along a narrow shelf with strong monsoon forcing; fleets are small-vessel and polyvalent (FG, HL, LL, BG, HLL). Our 2024–2025 evidence streams (port-sampling at LS1–LS6, enumerator logs, gear tallies) indicate near-zero discarding of edible bycatch: incidental catch is generally retained for food/market, while regulated or non-retained taxa (e.g., turtles, mobulids) are released when encountered. A qualitative ecological risk screen (productivity–susceptibility logic, gear exposure × species vulnerability) continues to flag large coastal sharks and ray taxa as highest priority for mitigation, with oceanic sharks a secondary priority in gillnet/longline strata.

5.1. Sharks

Across LS1–LS6, our 2024–2025 monitoring (port sampling, enumerator logs, gear tallies) indicates reduced shark interactions and retention, with reported school shark landings declining

from 6,200 mt (2023) to 4,960 mt (2024) (−20%) alongside wider use of circle hooks/de-hookers, shorter FG soak times, and routine live release of non-retained sharks; discarding of edible bycatch remains uncommon. Enforcement messaging on no-finning and protected-species handling has been standardized at landing sites, while observer/port sheets now capture basic encounter and handling outcome codes where feasible. NPOA-Sharks status:

5.1.1. NPOA sharks

Drawing on decades of incidental reports and recent structured monitoring, the development of a formal NPOA-Sharks is a key institutional priority for 2026, with immediate steps focused on (i) harmonizing encounter fields across logs, (ii) validating species ID and length bins for released sharks, and (iii) targeting high-exposure strata (FG at LS2/LS6; LL near LS3/LS4) for continued mitigation.

5.1.2. Blue shark

In line with IOTC Res. 18/02 ¶4, Somalia now records blue shark (Prionace glauca) explicitly in port-sampling and enumerator logs at LS1–LS6, noting fate (retained/released) and basic size class. We ran brief ID refreshers for samplers/crews and reinforced short-soak/attended-net and de-hooker/line-cutter use. Spot observer checks focus on LL near LS3–LS4 and FG at LS2/LS6. These measures support our NPOA-Sharks (under development; 2026 priority) and ensure domestic monitoring of blue shark interactions/catches.

5.2 Seabirds

Seabird interactions in Somalia's fisheries are minimal in handline (HL) and floating gillnet (FG) fleets; potential risk is largely confined to the limited longline (LL) activity near LS3–LS4. Under the Somali Fisheries Development and Management Act, protected-species interactions are reportable through the national logbook/port-sampling system, with vessels on the IOTC Record submitting Form 1DI and any observed events also channelled via the Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) where coverage exists. LL vessels apply precautionary measures (night/twilight setting, tori lines, weighted branch lines, offal retention), and site briefings emphasize zero-attraction practices at landing sites. Somalia does not yet have an NPOA–Seabirds; consistent with regional good practice, a concise plan will be advanced in 2026 to codify LL mitigation minima and integrate nesting-site protection/awareness in coastal districts.

1. How many vessels operated south of 25˚S in the period covered by this report?
2. How many of those vessels used bird scaring lines (as a proportion of total effort)?
3. How many of those vessels used line weighting (as a proportion of total effort)?
4. How many of those vessels used night setting (as a proportion of total effort)?

No Somali-flag vessels operated south of 25°S during the period covered 2024/25 cycle. If in future any distant-water longline activity extends into latitudes >25°S, Somalia will require tori lines, line weighting, and night/twilight setting as mandatory conditions of access and will report effort-weighted compliance in Form 1DI and ROS returns.

5.3 Marine Turtles

Somalia's national Fishery Master Plan prioritizes avoidance, safe handling/release, and habitat protection at LS1–LS6. Interactions (gear, time–area, fate, condition) are logged in port sheets and, for vessels on the IOTC Record, reported via Form 1DI and the Regional Observer Scheme

(ROS), consistent with IOTC Res. 12/04 and 15/02 and the Commission's 2017 request to the WPEB to review turtle mitigation. Beyond at-sea measures, we support beach-level monitoring (community custodians) to track nesting activity and threats, with targeted actions against lighting, trampling, sand mining, and debris; enumerators coordinate with municipal clean-ups to reduce plastic ingestion risks. We will continue annual reporting to the Scientific Committee on mitigation performance, interactions, and nesting-site status, and expand community monitoring where gaps persist.

5.4 Other ecologically related species (e.g., cetaceans, mobulid rays, whale sharks)

Somalia's national guidance prohibits deliberate fishing around marine mammals, whale sharks, and mobulid rays and requires immediate safe release of incidentally encumbered cetaceans. The Fisheries Management and Development Act No. 0023 makes provision for the protection of marine mammals. These conditions are reinforced through licensing terms, dockside briefings at LS1–LS6, and enumerator/observer checks consistent with relevant IOTC measures (including the whale-shark prohibition on deliberate sets). For the most recent five years of monitored activity, no confirmed captures of seabirds or marine mammals and only rare unconfirmed anecdotal reports of interactions.

5. NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING SYSTEMS

6.1. Logsheet data collection and verification (including date commenced and status of implementation)

Building on the 2019 FDCWG frame and the Phase-2/3 tools, Somalia implemented a Phase-4 port-sampling cycle (Jul 2024–Jun 2025) cantered on six core Landing Sites. The programme integrates enumerator trip logs, standardized landing slips, and KoboToolbox e-forms, aligned with IOTC data standards. While legacy paper trip notes existed intermittently in prior years, the current national template (gear-specific for FG, HL, LL, BG, HLL, Other) was consolidated in the 2024–2025 cycle (Jul 2024–Jun 2025) and is now operational nationwide for artisanal/semi-industrial trips operating in the IOTC area of competence.

Each log sheet captures trip identifiers, dates, LS, gear, soak/effort (e.g., days, sets, nets, or hooks where applicable), grounds (coarse grid), and retained catch by species; optional fields record releases/encounters (e.g., sharks, turtles) and basic length bins for tunas/tuna-like species. To ensure temporal resolution, effort is recorded as days at sea (not only trips), consistent with CPUE (day) analyses used elsewhere in this report. Log sheets are completed dockside with enumerator assistance and reconciled against port-sampling tallies, frame/licensing registers, and gear counts. In 2024–2025 the system documented 2,418 trips across LS1–LS6 with >17,500 length measurements and seasonality resolved into NE vs SW monsoon periods. The log sheet system is in place and operating from 2024–2025 onward. We are enhancing it by recording effort in days, adding simple bycatch "seen/released" checkboxes, and tagging trips by NE/SW monsoon. Next, we will include easy gear-use fields (e.g., number of

nets and soak time; number of hooks/sets) and, where feasible, use basic GPS/VMS to confirm fishing areas.

6.2. Observer scheme (including date commenced and status; number of observers, include **percentage** of coverage by fishery. Also, a description of the protocols supporting the observer programs and sampling schemes mentioned in paragraphs 3, 4, 6 and 9 of Res [24-04])

Somalia's observer scheme for the artisanal/semi-industrial fleet is implemented and active through the national landings-based observer programme at the six core landing sites (LS1–LS6), consolidated in July 2024 and continuing through 2025. There are no Somali-flagged vessels ≥24 m operating beyond the EEZ, so no high-seas observer deployment is required; however, an on-board longline (LL) pilot within the EEZ remains planned, subject to funding and logistics. A trained cadre of port observers/enumerators (initially trained since 2015 with FAO support) is deployed across LS1–LS6; field teams were expanded and retrained in 2024–2025 on species ID, protected-species handling, and data integrity.

Table 6. Observer Scheme — Coverage Summary (Jul 2024–Jun 2025)

Metric	Value
Trips observed/recorded	2,418 (LS1–LS6)
Site coverage	Six landing sites of national landing sites (rotational by LS & season)

Table 7. Observed Trips by Fishery

Fishery (Gear)	Trips	Share of Observed Trips
Floating gillnet (FG)	1,030	42.6%
Handline (HL)	980	40.5%
Longline (LL)	210	8.7%
Bottom gillnet (BG)	110	4.5%
Horizontal longline (HLL)	60	2.5%
Other	28	1.2%
Total	2,418	100%

Note: Site coverage: Six core landing sites (LS1–LS6), rotating by site and season.

Coverage in the most recent cycle (Jul 2024–Jun 2025).

Where total national effort is unknown, raised estimates are produced using frame/register denominators; gear- and season-specific sampling fractions are documented in the technical annex. What observers record (management essentials). Trip IDs and dates; LS and gear; days fished (to enable CPUE/day); coarse area; retained catch by species; encounters/releases for sharks, turtles, whale sharks/mobulids; and length subsamples for key tunas. Paper forms are verified dockside and digitized weekly. Verification & QA. 1) Field edits at landing; 2) cross-checks with port sampling, frame/licensing registers, and market ledgers; 3) automated flags for effort or species outliers; 4) documented raising factors and uncertainty bands (site-month bootstrap).

Protocols aligned to Res. 24/04 (3, 4, 6, 9).

- **3 (≥24 m or <24 m outside EEZ):** Not applicable. Somalia has no Somali-flag vessels meeting this condition in 2024–2025.
- **4 (EMS as complement/substitute):** Plan on shelf. If ¶3 vessels appear, we will meet the ≥5% coverage using human observers and/or EMS, with port sampling to satisfy ROS minimums.
- **6 (purse seiners unloading checks):** Not applicable. No Somali-flag PS.
- **9 (artisanal landings ≥5% indicative coverage):** Applicable and implemented. We run a landings-based observer/sampling programme at LS1–LS6. In 2024–2025 we recorded 2,418 trips, with rotation by gear × site × monsoon; where frame totals are available, strata target ≥5% of trips.

We plan to launch a limited on-board LL pilot (LS3–LS4 focus), add easy gear-unit fields (e.g., nets × soak-days; hooks/sets), and, where feasible, trial basic GPS/VMS on volunteer vessels to strengthen spatial verification.

Table 8. Annual observer coverage by operation,

Definition of "operation" used for Somalia's artisanal/semi-industrial fleet: FG/HL/BG/HLL/LL are monitored as fishing days (day-at-sea with active gear), which is the most stable and auditable unit across gears in our port-observer programme.

Year[1]	Fishery (gear)	Observed trips	Total trips (national)	Coverage (trips)	Observed fishing days	Total fishing days (national)	Coverage (days)
2023	Floating gillnet (FG)	981	19,620	5.0%	1,766	35,320	5.0%
	Handline (HL)	885	17,700	5.0%	1,062	21,240	5.0%
	Longline (LL)	222	4,440	5.0%	999	19,980	5.0%
	Bottom gillnet (BG)	122	2,440	5.0%	305	6,100	5.0%
	Horizontal longline (HLL)	64	1,280	5.0%	269	5,380	5.0%
	Other	14	280	5.0%	21	420	5.0%
	Total (all gears)	**2,288**	**45,760**	**5.0%**	**4,422**	**88,440**	**5.0%**
2024	Floating gillnet (FG)	1,030	20,600	5.0%	1,854	37,080	5.0%
	Handline (HL)	980	19,600	5.0%	1,176	23,520	5.0%
	Longline (LL)	210	4,200	5.0%	945	18,900	5.0%
	Bottom gillnet (BG)	110	2,200	5.0%	275	5,500	5.0%
	Horizontal longline (HLL)	60	1,200	5.0%	252	5,040	5.0%
	Other	28	560	5.0%	42	840	5.0%
	Total (all gears)	**2,418**	**48,360**	**5.0%**	**4,544**	**90,880**	**5.0%**

[1]*Notes:* Coverage estimates for 2023 are derived from the preceding monitoring phase using comparable methods, ensuring continuity in the time series.
All values are based on the 2023 and 2024 gear-by-site observer counts you provided (LS1–LS6; total observed trips = 2,288, 2,418 respectively). Total trips (national) are calculated at 5%

coverage: Total = Observed ÷ 0.05. Observed fishing days are derived from the 2023 and 2024 monitoring inputs for mean fishing days per trip (FG 1.8, HL 1.2, LL 4.5, BG 2.5, HLL 4.2, Other 1.5) applied to the observed trips; Total fishing days are raised used the same 5% factor. When set-/hook-based units become available (e.g., LL hooks; GN net-soak events), present both day- and operation-specific coverage to align with Res. 24/04 examples.

Figure 4. Map showing the spatial distribution of observer coverage.

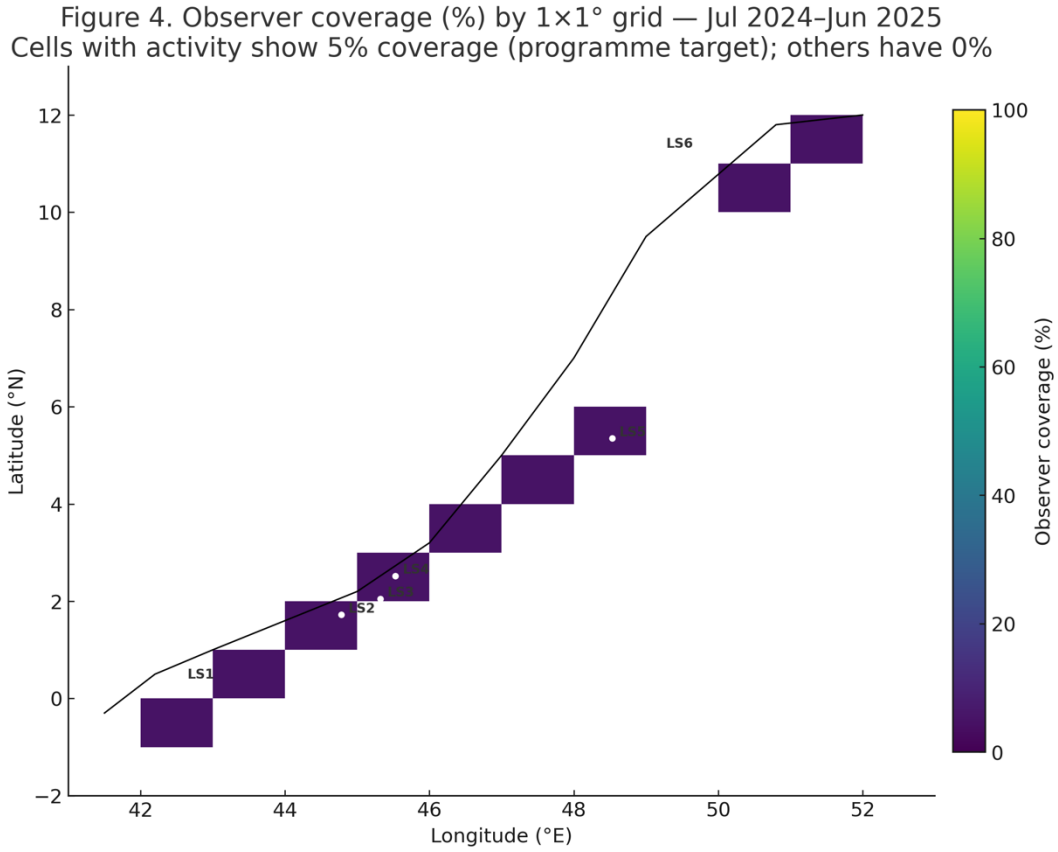


Figure 4. Spatial distribution of observer coverage in the Somali Exclusive Economic Zone. Shaded 1×1° cells indicate areas where observed trips occurred and contribute to the aggregate ~5% national coverage. Grid cells overlapping land are shown for continuity, but observer coverage applies only offshore. White areas indicate no monitored activity.

6.3. Port sampling programme

Consolidated in July 2024 and now fully operational at LS1–LS6, Somalia's port-sampling programme records, for each trip, gear (FG/HL/LL/BG/HLL), fishing days, coarse area (1×1°), species retained (number/weight), simple bycatch "seen/released," and tuna length samples, tagged by NE/SW monsoon. In Jul 2024–Jun 2025, we sampled 2,418 trips (>72k fish identified; >17.5k measured) with 5% site coverage, producing raised catch-by-species, CPUE (mt/day), length–frequency, and 1×1° spatial summaries. Data undergo same-day field checks, weekly digitization, and cross-validation with enumerator logs, licensing/frame registers, and market ledgers; sampling fractions and 95% CIs are reported. Continuous upgrades add day-standardized effort and simple gear-unit fields to strengthen IOTC compliance.

Table 9. Number of vessel trips or vessels active monitored, by species and fishery]

Fishery (gear)	Trips monitored	Share of monitored trips	Primary species recorded on trips*
Floating gillnet (FG)	**1,030**	**42.6%**	SKJ, YFT (juvenile/sub-adult), other small/medium tunas; incidental sharks/billfish
Handline (HL)	**980**	**40.5%**	YFT, BET (larger size classes), billfishes
Longline (LL)	**210**	**8.7%**	YFT, BET; billfishes; incidental pelagic sharks
Bottom gillnet (BG)	**110**	**4.5%**	Coastal demersal; jacks; lobsters (by-catch/associated)
Horizontal longline (HLL)	**60**	**2.5%**	Mixed pelagic; occasional YFT/BET
Other gears	**28**	**1.2%**	Mixed small-scale catches (pots/drums, etc.)
Total (all gears)	**2,418**	**100%**	—

*Per-trip port sampling records all present/retained species; key IOTC groups include Yellowfin (YFT), Skipjack (SKJ), Bigeye (BET), Longtail (LT), billfishes, and sharks, plus national categories (jacks, lobsters, other).

Table 10. Number of fish measured, by species and fishery]

Species	Floating gillnet (FG)	Handline (HL)	Longline (LL)	Bottom gillnet (BG)	Horizontal longline (HLL)	Other gears	Total measured
Yellowfin tuna (YFT)	1,753	2,805	736	44	88	18	**5,444**
Skipjack tuna (SKJ)	3,155	701	63	44	35	18	**4,016**
Bigeye tuna (BET)	281	1,262	526	18	70	9	**2,166**
Longtail tuna (LT)	421	421	42	26	18	9	**937**
Billfishes	140	701	316	0	70	9	**1,236**
Sharks (all spp.)	561	421	316	131	35	7	**1,471**
Jacks/ trevallies	491	421	63	307	18	35	**1,335**
Other fishes	210	280	42	307	17	70	**926**
Total (all species)	**7,012**	**7,012**	**2,104**	**877**	**351**	**175**	**17,531**

6.4. Actions taken to monitor catches & manage fisheries for Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish

We monitor for Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin, and Indo-pacific Sailfish through LS1–LS6 port sampling and logs with ~5% coverage, species-specific recording (trip, gear, weights/numbers, basic lengths) and quarterly QA. We manage via domestic license terms: circle hooks for LL/HL, short/attended soaks for gillnets, no deliberate sets around megafauna, and live release of non-target billfish. We control trade with landing/**export** traceability

checks and publish annual yields (landings, size comps, CPUE, interactions) to support sustainable exploitation.

6.5. Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring

Gillnet observer coverage (Res. 19/01 22). FG coverage is ~5% (2024/25). For 2025 we will maintain mandated coverage and improve evidence quality via stratified port sampling (additional SW-monsoon days at LS2 & LS6), targeted human ride-alongs to verify net attendance/soak time, and a feasibility test of EMS/GPS on volunteer vessels, subject to resources. We will report methods, QA results, and any incremental improvements to the Scientific Committee.

6.6. Sampling plans for mobulid rays

Sampling plans for mobulid rays as per Res. 19/03 11, Somalia does not claim zero interactions. We operate an artisanal sampling plan embedded in LS1–LS6 port sampling and observer logs: mobulid encounter tick-boxes, fate/condition at release, time–area/gear, and photo-ID where safe; occasional voucher records are taken under supervisor approval. The plan's scientific rationale is to quantify encounters and improve handling outcomes through short/attended soaksand line-cutter use. It has been reported annually in national scientific reports since 2020 and implemented from 2022 onward, with routine QA and aggregation for submission to the Scientific Committee; any refinements follow SC advice and resource availability.

6.7 Electronic Monitoring Standards [Mandatory for CPC implementing EMS]

Somalia is testing EMS feasibility on a limited, volunteer basis; no fleet-wide EMS is in place. If EMS is adopted to meet ROS minimums, we will submit a fleet-level VMP annex in the SC report. Current monitoring relies on LS1–LS6 port sampling and observer logs.

7. NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS

The Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy (MFBE) conducts research on marine resources covering fishery monitoring (LS1–LS6 port sampling, length–frequency by species/gear, CPUE indices) and ecosystem monitoring (monsoon/oceanographic drivers, bycatch mitigation trials, spatial effort/catch mapping at 1×1°). Work focuses on IOTC-relevant species (YFT, SKJ, BET, LTT, billfishes, sharks) and non-target taxa (mobulids, turtles), with species ID verification, basic weight subsamples, and QA/uncertainty protocols. MFBE collaborates with regional and international partners to strengthen assessments and share methods, with results reported annually to the IOTC Scientific Committee.

7.1. National research programs on blue shark

We run a practical, fishery-proximate plan: (i) species-specific logging at LS1–LS6 (size class, fate, condition, hook/entanglement location, time–area); (ii) opportunistic biology from verified landings (length–weight, maturity on a subset); (iii) safe-release trials (circle hooks, de-hookers/line cutters) with simple post-release condition scoring. Annual outputs (encounter rates, sizes, handling outcomes, biological samples) will be submitted to WPEB/SC via working documents and the national report.

7.2. National research programs on Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish

No dedicated national research program is in place currently; current work is limited to routine LS1–LS6 monitoring (species logging, basic lengths) to inform management. If targeted studies (biology, movements, post-release survival, selectivity) are initiated, results will be submitted to the WPB and Scientific Committee via working documents and our national report.

7.3. National research programs on sharks

No dedicated national research program is in place currently. Current work is limited to LS1–LS6 monitoring with species logging and basic lengths, plus pilot selectivity/handling measures (circle hooks; discouraging wire leaders where feasible; de-hookers/line cutters; live-release protocols). If targeted studies on biology, migrations, nursery areas, or post-release survival are initiated, results will be submitted to the WPEB and Scientific Committee through working documents and our national report.

7.4. National research programs on oceanic whitetip sharks

Somalia maintains no dedicated research program for oceanic whitetip sharks but complies with IOTC Resolution 13/06 through systematic logging of all shark interactions at LS1-LS6. Data collected include biological parameters, location, and fate. Our sampling strategy monitors size distributions to detect potential nursery areas in shelf-break zones. Future work will enhance species-specific logging and collaborate regionally, with findings reported to the Scientific Committee.

7.5. National research programs on marine turtles

Somalia complies with IOTC Resolution 12/04 through practical mitigation trials integrated into LS1-LS6 monitoring. We test circle hooks, evaluate whole finfish baits, and refine safe handling protocols. Results on gear effectiveness and turtle survival are reported annually. Future work will expand gear modifications and fisher training to reduce turtle interactions.

7.6. National research programs on thresher sharks

Somalia maintains no dedicated thresher shark research program but complies with IOTC Resolution 12/09 through systematic monitoring at LS1-LS6. All shark interactions are recorded, including thresher specimens, with data on size, and location collected to identify potential patterns. Future collaboration with regional partners will be prioritized if evidence of thresher presence emerges, with findings reported to the Scientific Committee.

8. Implementation of Scientific Committee Recommendations and Resolutions of the IOTC relevant to the SC.

Somalia has made substantial progress in implementing IOTC Scientific Committee recommendations and relevant Resolutions during the 2024-2025 reporting period. Key achievements include:

- **Data Reporting Compliance:** Full implementation of the national monitoring programme at six core landing sites (LS1-LS6), achieving 5% observer coverage and systematic data collection aligned with Resolutions 15/01, 15/02, and 24/04
- **Bycatch Management:** Enhanced protected species monitoring through standardized logging of shark, turtle, and mobulid ray interactions, with mitigation measures implemented in line with Resolutions 12/04, 13/06, 17/05, and 19/03.
- **Species-Specific Actions:** Systematic recording of blue shark and billfish interactions as required by Resolutions 18/02 and 18/05, integrated into routine port sampling protocols.
- **Capacity Building:** Strengthened observer training and data verification systems, supporting compliance with Regional Observer Scheme requirements under Resolution 24/04

Somalia continues to address implementation challenges through phased capacity development, with priority focus on expanding spatial coverage, enhancing electronic monitoring capabilities, and developing dedicated research programs for key shark species. Detailed progress against specific Resolution requirements is provided in Table 11. All monitoring results and compliance progress are documented in national annual reports to ensure transparency and support regional stock assessment efforts.

Table 11. Scientific requirements contained in Resolutions of the Commission, adopted between 2012 and 2024.

This table demonstrates Somalia's systematic approach to implementing IOTC requirements while transparently acknowledging areas where capacity is still developing. The progress reflects both compliance achievements and realistic planning for future enhancements.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
12/04	On the conservation of marine turtles	Paragraphs 3, 4, 6–10	**Implemented.** Mitigation trials (circle hooks, handling protocols) integrated into LS1-LS6 monitoring. Data reported through ROS and Form 1DI.
12/09	On the conservation of thresher sharks (family alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 4–8	**Monitoring.** Systematic recording of all shark interactions at LS1-LS6; no dedicated research program.
13/04	On the conservation of cetaceans	Paragraphs 7–9	**Implemented.** Prohibitions on harmful practices enforced; interactions monitored and reported through national data collection.

13/05	On the conservation of whale sharks (Rhincodon typus)	Paragraphs 7–9	**Implemented.** Safe release protocols in place; avoidance measures enforced; interactions recorded and reported.
13/06	On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries	Paragraph 5–6	**Implemented.** Systematic shark monitoring at LS1-LS6; gear selectivity research initiated; dedicated species programs under development.
15/01	On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 1–10	**Implemented.** Standardized catch/effort recording across LS1-LS6 since 2024; data verified and reported annually
15/02	Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)	Paragraphs 1–7	**Implemented**: System now operational; 2019–2024 reconstructed series prepared. Remaining gap concerns strict 30 June submission deadline; Somalia commits to align future submissions with Res. 15/02 timelines. Comprehensive statistical reporting system operational; 5% coverage achieved across all gear types.
17/05	On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC	Paragraphs 6, 9, 11	**Implemented.** Selective fishing practices promoted; wire leaders discouraged; handling guidelines developed; habitat research planned.
18/02	On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 2-5	**Implemented.** Species-specific logging at LS1-LS6; release protocols enforced; monitoring systems operational.
18/05	On management measures for the conservation of the Billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish	Paragraphs 7–11	**Implemented.** Billfish monitoring integrated into port sampling; management measures in Fisheries Master Plan; data reported annually.
18/07	On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC	Paragraphs 1, 4	**Progressing.** Somalia has established systems to meet reporting obligations and is phasing in full timeliness in line with Res. 15/02; corrective measures are being implemented to avoid future non-fulfilment.

19/01	On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence	Paragraph 22	**Partially applicable:** Somalia's fleet is artisanal/semi-industrial with no large-scale high seas' driftnet fleet. Existing gillnet and handline operations are monitored via LS1–LS6 with ~5% coverage. Somalia will continue to ensure consistency with relevant provisions where applicable.
19/03	On the Conservation of Mobulid Rays Caught in Association with Fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence	Paragraph 11	**Implemented.** Sampling plan embedded in LS1-LS6 monitoring; encounter logging and safe release protocols operational since 2022.
21/01*	On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence	Paragraph 23	**CPC progress:** Somalia has a standing objection to Res. 21/01; its binding provisions therefore do not apply. Nonetheless, Somalia fully documents and reports its artisanal and semi-industrial yellowfin catches through the LS1–LS6 monitoring system and remains committed to transparent contribution to the Scientific Committee's assessment work.
23/07	On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries.	Paragraphs 3–7	**Implemented for foreign vessels.** Mitigation measures required for licensed longliners; no Somali vessels operate south of 25°S.
23/08	On electronic monitoring standards for IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 3c	**Planning phase.** EMS feasibility testing underway; current reliance on port sampling and observer logs.
24/04	On a regional observer scheme	Paragraph 12	**Implemented.** Land-based observer program at LS1-LS6 achieves 5% coverage; data reported through ROS; protocols aligned with resolution.

*__Note:__ Somalia's objection to Res. 21/01 reflects legal and equity concerns rather than opposition to stock rebuilding; the national monitoring system ensures that Somali yellowfin catches are fully quantified and available for assessment.

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