

CATCH LIMITS FOR INDIAN OCEAN TROPICAL TUNAS

Author: [IOTC Secretariat](#)

Purpose

To inform participants at the 21st Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS21) of the status of catches for the three tropical tuna species under the mandate of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), relative to the Total Allowable Catches (TAC) and associated catch limits established in IOTC Conservation and Management Measures.

Bigeye Tuna

Resolution [25/04](#) established a TAC of 92,670 t for bigeye tuna for 2026, 2027 and 2028, in accordance with the Management Procedure (MP) set out under Resolution [22/03](#). The Resolution also introduced catch limits for the main fleets targeting bigeye tuna (**Table 1**), while encouraging other CPCs to maintain their catch and effort at their recent five-year average levels (2019-2023), without prejudice to the development aspirations of those CPCs, in particular developing coastal States.

Table 1. Catch limits (t) that shall be applied in 2026, 2027 and 2028 for the main fleets targeting Indian Ocean bigeye tuna. Diff = difference between the catches reported for 2024 and the limits set in Resolution 2025/04

Fleet code	Fleet	Limit	2020-2024	2024	Diff
CHN	China	4,353	4,506	4,295	-58
EUR	European Union	19,562	18,369	14,000	-5,562
IDN	Indonesia	21,396	17,183	16,744	-4,652
IRN	I.R. Iran	2,421	1,255	1,739	-682
JPN	Japan	4,237	3,635	3,290	-947
LKA	Sri Lanka	5,488	5,648	5,348	-140
MUS	Mauritius	2,482	2,967	4,852	2,370
SYC	Seychelles	13,664	13,902	10,506	-3,158
TWN	Taiwan, China	13,211	13,132	10,999	-2,212
	All fleets	86,814	80,597	71,772	-15,042

As of November 2025, the total catch reported for bigeye tuna for 2024 was 87,040 t, more than 5,000 t below the limit set in the Resolution. Except for Mauritius, the main fleets catching bigeye tuna were all below the CPC-specific limits (**Table 1**).

Skipjack Tuna

Resolution [25/03](#) established a TAC of 628,606 t for skipjack tuna for the period in 2025 and 2026, in accordance with the Management Procedure (MP) set out under Resolution [24/07](#). The Resolution also introduced catch limits for the main fleets targeting skipjack tuna based on their average catch levels of the years 2021-2023 (**Table 2**).

Paragraph 6 of the Resolution states that these fleets shall progressively reduce their current catches to the limits specified in **Table 2** by 2028, with a reduction of one-third (1/3) of the total required reduction in the first year, two-thirds (2/3) in the second year, and the full reduction achieved in the third year.

Table 2. Catch limits (t) that shall be applied in 2025 and 2026 for the main fleets targeting skipjack tuna in the Indian Ocean. Diff = difference between the catches reported for 2024 and the limits set in Resolution 2025/03

Fleet code	Fleet	Limit	2020-2024	2024	Diff
EUR	European Union	125,000	123,906	106,912	-18,088
IDN	Indonesia	138,000	139,830	144,325	6,325
IND	India	25,000	26,450	30,943	5,943
IRN	I.R. Iran	68,000	66,682	69,510	1,510
KOR	Korea	10,000	10,269	8,331	-1,669
LKA	Sri Lanka	38,000	38,145	48,713	10,713
MDV	Maldives	121,000	111,687	80,293	-40,707
MUS	Mauritius	13,908	13,936	16,990	3,082
SYC	Seychelles	76,725	78,627	77,883	1,158
	All fleets	615,633	609,532	583,900	-31,733

As of November 2025, the total catch reported for skipjack tuna for 2024 was 624,609 t, about 4,000 t below the limit set in the Resolution. In 2024, several of the main CPCs catching skipjack tuna in the Indian Ocean were above the limit set for 2025, although the total catch was more than 30,000 t below the total limit established for those fleets. (**Table 2**).

Yellowfin Tuna

At its 20th Session, the Commission adopted Resolution [16/01](#) *On interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence*, which required IOTC CPCs with longline and surface fisheries to reduce their catches of yellowfin tuna on a gear-specific basis. Resolution 16/01 was subsequently superseded by Resolutions [17/01](#), [18/01](#), and [19/01](#) which modified the procedures used to determine per-gear catch reductions and introduced mechanisms to penalise CPCs that exceeded maximum catch levels for one or more consecutive years. These measures were further superseded by Resolution [21/01](#), which entered into force on 17 December 2021 and extended catch limits to coastal fisheries, while establishing CPC-level catch limits based on historical catch volumes, including additional flexibility in baselines for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Following objections from certain CPCs, Resolution 18/01 remains binding for India, while Resolution 19/01 continues to apply to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Madagascar, the Sultanate of Oman, and Somalia.

Table 3. Annual catch limits for yellowfin tuna computed for 2025 and estimated for 2026, assuming catches for 2025 are identical to the limit set for the year

CPC code	CPC	Based allocation catch limit	Limit for 2025	Limit for 2026
AUS	Australia	2,000	2,000	2,000
BGD	Bangladesh	2,000	2,000	2,000
CHN	China	10,557	-2,423	3,083
COM	Comoros	5,279	5,279	5,279
EUR	European Union	73,078	73,078	73,078
FRAT	France OT	500	500	500
GBR	United Kingdom	500	500	500
IDN	Indonesia	45,426	45,426	45,426
IND	India	0	0	0
IRN	I.R. Iran	0	0	0
JPN	Japan	4,003	4,003	4,003
KEN	Kenya	3,654	3,654	3,654
KOR	Korea	9,056	9,056	9,056
LKA	Sri Lanka	33,245	32,958	33,123
MDG	Madagascar	0	0	0
MDV	Maldives	47,195	47,195	47,195
MOZ	Mozambique	2,000	2,000	2,000
MUS	Mauritius	10,490	10,490	10,490
MYS	Malaysia	2,000	2,000	2,000
OMN	Oman	0	0	0
PAK	Pakistan	14,468	14,468	14,468
PHL	Philippines	700	700	700
SDN	Sudan	2,000	2,000	2,000
SOM	Somalia	0	0	0
SYC	Seychelles	39,577	39,577	39,577
THA	Thailand	2,000	2,000	2,000
TZA	Tanzania	3,905	3,872	3,872

CPC code	CPC	Based allocation catch limit	Limit for 2025	Limit for 2026
YEM	Yemen	26,262	10,685	16,474
ZAF	South Africa	2,000	2,000	2,000
	All CPCs	341,896	313,019	324,479

Details for computing and estimate the catch limits of yellowfin tuna are available MS Excel spreadsheets available for the WPDCS meeting ([IOTC-2025-WPCS21-DATA01](#)). Only the gillnet fishery of I.R. Iran was concerned by a limit for 2025 in accordance with Resolution 19/01. The total reported catch for this fishery was 25,579 t in 2024, below the base annual limit of 32,623 t. Consequently, the limit was estimated at 32,623 t for both 2025 and 2026, assuming the catch in 2025 would be less than the limit set for that year.

The annual catch limits of yellowfin tuna computed for 2025 and estimated for 2026 are below the total reference catch limit of 341,896 t established for the stock (**Table 3**). Due to some overcatch in previous years, the limits for China and Yemen are well below their respective annual limits, when they are a bit lower for Sri Lanka and Tanzania, and equal to the reference limits for all remaining CPCs.

Conclusions

CPCs are invited to assess and review the procedures adopted to produce the outputs of **Table 3**, confirm the validity of the results, and possibly provide a tentative estimate of their yellowfin tuna catches for 2025 (not yet available to the Secretariat) to update the estimates of catch limits for 2026.

All CPCs are also requested to consider how to best progress to ensure that catches of yellowfin tuna for the year 2025 are properly monitored and do not exceed the limits set overall by the resolutions they are bound to.