

## CATCH LIMITS FOR INDIAN OCEAN TROPICAL TUNAS

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### Purpose

To inform participants at the 21<sup>st</sup> 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

Resolutions [23/04](#) and [25/04](#) established bigeye tuna TACs of 80,583 t and 92,670 t for 2024-2025 and 2026-2028, in accordance with the Management Procedure (MP) set out under Resolution [22/03](#). The Resolutions also introduced catch limits for the main fleets targeting bigeye tuna, while encouraging other CPCs to maintain their catch and effort at their recent average levels, without prejudice to the development aspirations of those CPCs, in particular developing coastal States (**Table 1**).

**Table 1.** Catch limits (t) that shall be applied in 2024-2025 and 2026-2028 for the main fleets targeting Indian Ocean bigeye tuna. Difference = difference between the catches reported for 2024 and the limit set in Resolution 2023/04 for that year

| Fleet code | Fleet          | Limit 2024-2025 | Limit 2026-2028 | Catch 2020-2024 | Catch 2024 | Difference |
|------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|------------|
| CHN        | China          | 3,785           | 4,353           | 4,506           | 4,295      | 510        |
| EUR        | European Union | 17,010          | 19,562          | 18,369          | 14,000     | -3,010     |
| IDN        | Indonesia      | 18,605          | 21,396          | 17,183          | 16,744     | -1,861     |
| IRN        | I.R. Iran      | 2,105           | 2,421           | 1,255           | 1,739      | -366       |
| JPN        | Japan          | 3,684           | 4,237           | 3,635           | 3,290      | -394       |
| LKA        | Sri Lanka      | 4,772           | 5,488           | 5,648           | 5,348      | 576        |
| MUS        | Mauritius      |                 | 2,482           | 2,967           | 4,852      |            |
| SYC        | Seychelles     | 11,882          | 13,664          | 13,902          | 10,506     | -1,376     |
| TWN        | Taiwan,China   | 11,488          | 13,211          | 13,132          | 10,999     | -489       |
|            | Main fleets    | 73,331          | 86,814          | 80,597          | 71,772     | -1,559     |

As of November 2025, the total catch reported for bigeye tuna for all fleets for 2024 was 87,040 t, more than 6,400 t below the limit of 80,583 t set in Resolution 23/04 for that year.

## 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. India and Korea not included in the table as they objected to Resolution 25/03. Difference = difference between the catches reported for 2024 and the limits set in Resolution 2025/03 for 2025 and 2026

| Fleet code | Fleet          | Limit 2025-2026 | Catch 2020-2024 | Catch 2024 | Difference |
|------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|------------|
| EUR        | European Union | 125,000         | 123,906         | 106,912    | -18,088    |
| IDN        | Indonesia      | 138,000         | 139,830         | 144,325    | 6,325      |
| IRN        | I.R. Iran      | 68,000          | 66,682          | 69,510     | 1,510      |
| 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      |
|            | Main fleets    | 580,633         | 572,813         | 544,626    | -36,007    |

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 for the years 2025-2026. 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 35,000 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.

