



ON THE INTERPRETATION OF RESOLUTION 25/03 ON ESTABLISHING CATCH LIMITS FOR SKIPJACK TUNA IN THE IOTC AREA OF COMPETENCE

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT¹: 28 JANUARY 2026

PURPOSE

To request the WPICMM09 to provide guidance on the use of a common methodology to be used for deriving skipjack catch limits for CPCs subject to an IOTC skipjack catch limit.

BACKGROUND

In compliance with paragraph 13 of IOTC [Resolution 25/03](#), the IOTC Executive Secretary notified CPCs on the catch limits to be applied in 2025 and 2026, for Indian Ocean skipjack tuna, to CPCs listed in paragraph 5 of the same Resolution. This was done through IOTC Circular 2025-44, which can be found in Annex 1.

Subsequently, Indonesia submitted a letter clarifying its new catch limit for the year 2026, based on its recently revised catch data, is 141,387 tons, approximately 2.5% above the limit indicated in IOTC Circular 2025-44. Indonesia's letter was circulated to CPCs via IOTC Circular 2026-01, which can be found in Annex 2.

The European Union subsequently responded to the above two-mentioned Circulars, but more specifically to IOTC Circular 2026-01, indicating that interpretations and implementation of the provisions of IOTC Resolutions should be the same for all CPCs. Consequently, the European Union suggested that the Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM) discuss at the WPICMM09 the new catch limit that Indonesia had proposed for itself, via its letter in IOTC Circular 2026-01. The objective of this discussion is for the WPICMM09 to make a recommendation to the Compliance Committee, and ultimately the Commission, for a common methodology for deriving skipjack catch limits for CPCs subject to catch limits. The letter of the European Union was circulated to CPCs via IOTC Circular 2026-04, which can be found in Annex 3.

DISCUSSION

Under Resolution 25/03, CPCs are categorised into two categories based on catch levels; Category A includes CPCs whose average catch levels of the years 2021 to 2023 are above 9,000 t, and the rest being in Category B. Indonesia, like the European Union, are Category A CPCs for the purpose of this Resolution.

Catch limits are established for CPCs in Category A, whose average catch levels of the years 2021 to 2023 exceed 9,000 t and are, therefore, subject to catch reductions under this Resolution. While Resolution 25/03 utilised a common and agreed approach for deriving the catch limits for CPCs that are subject to a catch limit. This is detailed in the *Explanatory Memorandum*, which can be found in Annex 4, that was presented with the proposal that was ultimately adopted as Resolution 25/03.

Additionally, in 2025 the SC recommended a revised TAC for skipjack tuna based on the MP defined in Resolution 24/03. The SC recommended a TAC of 565,745 t per year for 2027–2029 which is a 10% reduction from 628,606 t provided in Resolution 25/03. As such, the figures in the table in paragraph 5 of that Resolution will need to be adjusted proportionally according to the guidance provided in paragraph 7.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that in deriving its new skipjack catch limit for the year 2026, due to its recently revised catch data, Indonesia has requested application of a definition of "current catch" (as mentioned in paragraph 6 of Resolution 25/03), that may not be consistent with the intention of the Resolution, especially the *Factors to be considered in the catch reduction* (Annex 4).

RECOMMENDATION/s

That the WPICMM09:

- **NOTE** document WPICMM09-18.

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- **RECOMMEND** a common methodology to be applied for deriving skipjack catch limits for CPCs subject to An IOTC skipjack catch limit, for the consideration of the Compliance Committee, and ultimately for a decision by the Commission. This should focus on the definition of “current catch” as well as the agreement that for the period 2027 and 2028, the TAC recommended by the SC in 2025 should be automatically applied without need for further Commission approval. Consequently, the catch tables for 2027 and 2028 should reflect this reduction applying the guidance in paragraphs 6 and 7 of Resolution 25/03 (i.e. the new catch limits for 2028 should meet the revised TAC of 565,745 t with a corresponding reduction in 2027).

IOTC CIRCULAR

2025-44

Dear Sir/Madam

REGARDING IOTC TROPICAL TUNA ALLOCATED CATCH LIMITS FOR 2026

YELLOWFIN TUNA

Resolution 21/01

[IOTC Resolution 21/01](#) *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC Area of Competence* came into force on 17 December 2021 and applies to all CPCs except India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Madagascar, Oman and Somalia. Paragraph 25 of Resolution 21/01 requires the IOTC Secretariat, under the advice of the Scientific Committee, to prepare and circulate the below table (**Table 1**) of 2026 provisional allocated catch limits disaggregated as per the conditions set out in paragraphs 5 – 11.

Background on the calculations and discussions regarding these allocated catch limits will be available in the Report of the 28th Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee which will soon be posted on the [SC28 meeting page](#).

Table 1: 2025 (calculated) and 2026 (estimated) allocated catch limits for yellowfin tuna.

CPC_CODE	CPC name	CPC	Based allocation catch limit	Allocated catch limits (t)	
				2025	2026
AUS	Australia	AUS - Australia	2,000	2,000	2,000
BGD	Bangladesh	BGD - Bangladesh	2,000	2,000	2,000
CHN	China	CHN - China	10,557	-2,423	3,083
COM	Comoros	COM - Comoros	5,279	5,279	5,279
EUR	European Union	EUR - European Union	73,078	73,078	73,078
FRAT	France OT	FRAT - France OT	500	500	500
GBR	United Kingdom	GBR - United Kingdom	500	500	500
IDN	Indonesia	IDN - Indonesia	45,426	45,426	45,426
JPN	Japan	JPN - Japan	4,003	4,003	4,003
KEN	Kenya	KEN - Kenya	3,654	3,654	3,654
KOR	Korea	KOR - Korea	9,056	9,056	9,056
LKA	Sri Lanka	LKA - Sri Lanka	33,245	32,958	33,123
MDV	Maldives	MDV - Maldives	47,195	47,195	47,195
MOZ	Mozambique	MOZ - Mozambique	2,000	2,000	2,000
MUS	Mauritius	MUS - Mauritius	10,490	10,490	10,490
MYS	Malaysia	MYS - Malaysia	2,000	2,000	2,000
PAK	Pakistan	PAK - Pakistan	14,468	14,468	14,468
PHL	Philippines	PHL - Philippines	700	700	700
SDN	Sudan	SDN - Sudan	2,000	2,000	2,000
SYC	Seychelles	SYC - Seychelles	39,577	39,577	39,577
THA	Thailand	THA - Thailand	2,000	2,000	2,000
TZA	Tanzania	TZA - Tanzania	3,905	3,872	3,872
YEM	Yemen	YEM - Yemen	26,262	10,685	16,474
ZAF	South Africa	ZAF - South Africa	2,000	2,000	2,000
		Totals	341,896	313,019	324,479

Please note: the limits for 2026 are *estimated* on the assumption that catches for 2025, which are not yet available, will not exceed the limit for that year. CPCs are currently in the best position to calculate a more precise estimate of their allocated catch limits for 2026 using the information they have collected at national level for 2025.

Resolution 19/01

[IOTC Resolution 19/01](#) *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC Area of Competence* came into force on 28 December 2019 and applies to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Madagascar, Oman, and Somalia. Paragraph 24 of Resolution 19/01 requires the IOTC Secretariat, under the advice of the Scientific Committee, to prepare and circulate a table (**Table 2**) of 2026 allocated catch limits disaggregated as per the conditions set out in paragraphs 5 – 10.

Background on the calculations and discussions regarding these allocated catch limits will be available in the Report of the 28th Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee which will soon be posted on the [SC28 meeting page](#).

Table 2: 2025 (calculated) and 2026 (estimated) catch limits for yellowfin tuna

CPC	Gear (industrial)	Base allocated catch limit	Allocated catch limits (t)	
			2025	2026
I.R. Iran	Gillnet	32,623	32,623	32,623

No catch limits apply for Madagascar, Oman, and Somalia in 2026.

Please note: the limits for 2026 are estimated on the assumption that catches for 2025, which are not yet available, will not exceed the limit for that year. CPCs are currently in the best position to calculate a more precise estimate of their allocated catch limits for 2026 using the information they have collected at national level for 2025.

Resolution 18/01

[IOTC Resolution 18/01](#) *On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC Area of Competence* came into force on 4 October 2018 and applies to India.

Resolution 18/01 pertains to all fishing vessels targeting tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean of 24 meters overall length and over, and those under 24 meters if they fish outside the Exclusive Economic Zone of their flag State, within the IOTC area of competence. India currently does not have such vessels matching these criteria; therefore, no catch limits apply for India in 2026.

Distribution

IOTC Contracting Parties: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, European Union, France (Territories), India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, Yemen. **Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:** Liberia, Panama. **Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations. Chairperson IOTC. Copy to:** FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

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BIGEYE TUNA

Resolutions 23/04 and 25/04

Resolutions 23/04 *On establishing catch limits for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence* came into force 16 September 2023 and applies to all CPCs. Resolutions 23/04 established bigeye tuna TACs of 80,583 t for 2024-2025 and introduced catch limits for the main fleets targeting bigeye tuna.

Resolutions 25/04 *On establishing catch limits for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence* came into force 21 October 2025 and applies to all CPCs except India and Somalia. Resolutions 25/04 established bigeye tuna TACs of 92,670 t for 2026-2028 and introduced catch limits for the main fleets targeting bigeye tuna. Paragraph 10 of Resolution 25/04 requires the IOTC Secretariat to prepare and circulate the below table (**Table 3**) of allocated catch limits disaggregated as per the requirements set out in paragraphs 2 – 9.

Table 3: Catch limits (t) that shall be applied in 2025 and 2026 for the main fleets targeting Indian Ocean bigeye tuna

Fleet code	Fleet	Catch limit 2025	Catch limit 2026
CHN	China	3,785	4,353
EUR	European Union	17,010	19,562
IDN	Indonesia	18,605	21,396
IRN	I.R. Iran	2,105	2,421
JPN	Japan	3,684	4,237
LKA	Sri Lanka	4,772	5,488
MUS	Mauritius	N/A	2,482
SYC	Seychelles	11,882	13,664
TWN	Taiwan,China	11,488	13,211

Distribution

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Skipjack Tuna

Resolution 25/03

Resolution [25/03](#) *On establishing catch limits for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence* came into force 21 October 2025 and applies to all CPCs except India, Korea and Somalia. Resolutions [25/03](#) established a TAC of 628,606 t for skipjack tuna for the period in 2025 and 2026. Paragraph 1130 of Resolution 25/03 requires the IOTC Secretariat to prepare and circulate the below table (**Table 4**) of allocated catch limits disaggregated as per the requirements set out in paragraphs 5 – 12.

Table 4: Catch limits (t) that shall be applied in 2025 and 2026 for the main fleets targeting Indian Ocean Skipjack tuna

Fleet code	Fleet	Catch limit 2025	Catch limit 2026
EUR	European Union	125,000	125,000
IDN	Indonesia	138,000	138,000
IRN	I.R. Iran	68,000	68,000
LKA	Sri Lanka	38,000	38,000
MDV	Maldives	121,000	121,000
MUS	Mauritius	13,908	13,908
SYC	Seychelles	76,725	76,725

Yours sincerely



Paul de Bruyn
Executive Secretary

Distribution

IOTC Contracting Parties: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, European Union, France (Territories), India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, Yemen. **Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:** Liberia, Panama. **Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations. Chairperson IOTC. Copy to:** FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

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Annex 2



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
Commission des Thons de l'Océan Indien

7 January 2026

IOTC CIRCULAR

2026-01

Dear Sir/Madam

A COMMUNICATION FROM INDONESIA REGARDING IOTC TROPICAL TUNA ALLOCATED CATCH LIMITS FOR 2026 (CIRCULAR 2025-44)

Due to recent revisions to their reported skipjack tuna catch, Indonesia has communicated a proposed correction to their catch limit for Skipjack tuna in 2026 in accordance with Resolution 25/03 *On establishing catch limits for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence*. The Secretariat has confirmed that this is consistent with the latest available catch data.

The Communication from Indonesia as well as the revised skipjack catch limits for 2026 are provided in the annexes to this Circular.

Yours sincerely

Paul de Bruyn
Executive Secretary

Attachments:

- Annex1: Communication from Indonesia
- Annex2: Revised Skipjack catch limits for 2026

Distribution

IOTC Contracting Parties: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, European Union, France (Territories), India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, Yemen. **Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:** Liberia, Panama. **Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations. Chairperson IOTC. Copy to:** FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

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**MINISTRY OF MARINE AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CAPTURE FISHERIES**

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Ref: B.3675/DJPT.2/PI.130/XII/2025

December 24, 2025

Subject: The Revision of Indonesia's SKJ Catch Limit for period 2025-2026

To: Paul de Bruyn
Executive Secretary
Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

Dear Paul,

Regarding the IOTC Circular 2025-44 on the IOTC Tropical Tuna Allocated Catch Limits for 2026, we would like to clarify as follow:

Referring to the Resolution 23/05 on Establishing Catch Limits for Skipjack Tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence, article 6 : "Category A CPCs shall progressively reduce their current catches to the limits specified in paragraph 5 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", the catch limit will be applied in 2028, therefore we would like to request the Secretariat to revise Indonesia's SKJ catch limit as in the table below:

Fleet code	Fleet	Catch limit 2025	Catch limit 2026
IDN	Indonesia	N/A	141,387

The calculation of the catch limit as in the following:

- The catch limit is not applicable (N/A) in 2025;
- The formula to calculate the catch limit for 2026 is:
 - The average catch of 2021 to 2023 (t) = $\frac{\text{catch 2021} + \text{catch 2022} + \text{catch 2023}}{3}$
 - The total required reduction (t) = $143,080 - 138,000 = 5,080$
The catch limit for 2026 (t) = $143,080 - (1/3 * 5,080) = 141,387$

We very much appreciate it if you could kindly acknowledge receipt of this revision. Thanking you very much for your kind attention and cooperation.

On Behalf of the Director General of Capture Fisheries
Director of Fish Resources Management,



Ditandatangani
Secara Elektronik

Syahril Abd Raup

Cc. Director General of Capture Fisheries

Annex 2: Revised Skipjack catch limits for 2026

Skipjack Tuna

Resolution 25/03

Resolution [25/03](#) *On establishing catch limits for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence* came into force 21 October 2025 and applies to all CPCs except India, Korea and Somalia. Resolutions [25/03](#) established a TAC of 628,606 t for skipjack tuna for the period in 2025 and 2026. Paragraph 1130 of Resolution 25/03 requires the IOTC Secretariat to prepare and circulate the below table (**Table 4**) of allocated catch limits disaggregated as per the requirements set out in paragraphs 5 – 12.

Table 1: Catch limits (t) that shall be applied in 2026 for the main fleets targeting Indian Ocean Skipjack tuna

Fleet code	Fleet	Catch limit 2026
EUR	European Union	125,000
IDN	Indonesia	141,387
IRN	I.R. Iran	68,000
LKA	Sri Lanka	38,000
MDV	Maldives	121,000
MUS	Mauritius	13,908
SYC	Seychelles	76,725

Annex 3



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
Commission des Thons de l'Océan Indien

20 January 2026

IOTC CIRCULAR

2026-04

Dear Sir/Madam

A COMMUNICATION FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION REGARDING IOTC TROPICAL TUNA ALLOCATED CATCH LIMITS FOR 2026 (CIRCULARS 2025-44 AND 2026-01)

Please find attached a communication from the European Union in response to Circulars 2025-44 and 2026-01. The matter will be communicated to the WPICMM as requested and a revised table of skipjack catch will be circulated once guidance has been received by the Secretariat.

Yours sincerely

Paul de Bruyn
Executive Secretary

Attachments:

- Annex1: Communication from the EU

Distribution

IOTC Contracting Parties: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, European Union, France (Territories), India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, Yemen. **Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:** Liberia, Panama. **Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations. Chairperson IOTC. Copy to:** FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

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Annex 1: Communication from the EU

 Ref. Ares(2026)640507 - 19/01/2026



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

International Ocean Governance and Sustainable Fisheries
Regional Fisheries Management Organisations

Brussels
MARE.B.2/BM

Subject: IOTC – 2026 skipjack catch limits

Dear Paul,

Further to circular 2025-44 on the catch limits for tropical tunas and the communication from Indonesia in circular 2026-01, the EU would like to express its views on the revised catch limits prepared by the Secretariat and attached as Annex 2.

We believe, as it is the case for all IOTC resolutions, that the interpretation and implementation of the provision should be the same for all CPCs. Therefore, we cannot accept a separated interpretation of Resolution 25/03 for one CPC and would request an even and equal application of any identified methodology.

As a way forward, we believe that it is the role of the Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures (WPICMM) to provide guidance to the Compliance Committee and ultimately the Commission on the interpretation of IOTC CMMs. We would therefore suggest that the WPICMM, at its upcoming meeting (11-13 February) discuss Indonesia's suggestion and, if agreed, recommend to the Compliance Committee to extend the interpretation to all CPCs. We would also invite the Secretariat to circulate provisional revised catch limits, once the methodology is discussed and agreed by the WPICMM.

We would kindly ask you to share this letter with heads of delegation.

Yours sincerely,

Marco VALLETTA
Head of the EU Delegation
Deputy Head of Unit

Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË – Tel. +32 22991111

 Electronically signed on 16/01/2026 17:58 (UTC+01) in accordance with Article 11 of Commission Decision (EU) 2021/2121

ON ESTABLISHING CATCH LIMITS FOR SKIPJACK TUNA IN THE IOTC AREA OF COMPETENCE

SUBMITTED BY: SOUTH AFRICA, INDONESIA, MALDIVES

Explanatory Memorandum

1. Background

In accordance with the Resolution 24/07 *On the Management Procedure of Skipjack Tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence*, the Scientific Committee at its 26th Session in 2023 (S26) recommended a total allowable catch (TAC) for skipjack tuna for the period 2024 – 2026 of 628,606 t. SC26 also noted that the environmental conditions are predicted to enter a less favorable period, and it is therefore important that the Commission ensures that catches of skipjack tuna during this period do not exceed the agreed limit, as occurred in recent years. Resolution 24/07 stipulates that the Management Procedure will be run in 2025 to estimate the TAC for the period 2027-2029, thereafter the Management Procedure will be applied every three years. This Resolution should apply for following management periods until allocation criteria are established by the Commission.

Resolution 24/07 also tasked the Commission with the adoption of a mechanism to constrain catches of skipjack tuna to the Management Procedure derived TAC by no later than 2026, if an allocation scheme has not yet been agreed and implemented by the Commission.

2. Basic Concepts

This proposal applies for 2026 and the second management period, as an interim measure, until the allocation criteria being discussed by the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC) are finalised and adopted. Nothing in this Resolution shall prejudice the outcomes of the TCAC. This proposal is not a permanent mechanism for the allocation of rights to fish but establishes a mechanism to constrain the catches until an allocation scheme is implemented. When a CPC is subject to a catch limit, the CPC is obliged to restrict its catch below the catch limit.

CPCs are categorised into two categories based on catch levels, where Category A includes CPCs whose average catch levels of the years 2021 to 2023 are above 9,000 t, and the rest being in Category B.

Catch limits are established for CPCs in Category A, whose average catch levels of the years 2021 to 2023 exceed 9,000 t and are therefore subject to catch reductions under this Resolution. In 2023, these CPCs accounted for 95% of the total skipjack tuna catch in the Indian Ocean. Thus, reducing catches of these CPCs is of critical importance for the sustainability of the stock. CPCs in Category B are encouraged to maintain their catches at their current levels and in a case where a CPC's catch exceeds 9,000 t, that CPC shall be subject to a catch limit.

A reserve pool of 25,000 t will be set aside for CPCs in Category B, noting that this reserve pool does not constitute a catch limit.

3. Factors to be considered in catch reduction

The following factors are considered in establishing catch limits for CPCs in Category A:

Average catch levels of the years 2021 to 2023	CPCs status and reduction levels		
	Developed	Developing Coastal States	Small Island Developing States
Above 80,000 t	5.5 %	5.0 %	4.5 %
Between 30,000 t and 80,000 t	8.0 %	6.0 %	4.0 %
Between 9,000 t and 30,000 t	8.0 %	6.0 %	4.0 %

- a) CPCs that contribute standardised CPUE indices regularly for skipjack stock assessment and implementation of the Management Procedures shall be adjusted by 2.0 % of the catch reduction percentages.
- b) If a CPC has an average catch above 9,000 t but falls below 9,000 t when reductions are applied, the CPC shall have a catch limit of 9,000 t.
- c) CPCs shall reduce their catch within 3 years to the agreed catch reductions.
- d) Exceptionally, Sri Lanka has been assigned a catch limit of 36,000 t, recognising the continuing impacts of the civil war on the operations of Sri Lankan fishermen.
- e) CPCs in Category B are encouraged to maintain their catches at the respective catch levels of the reference period.