

## CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES THAT INCLUDE A REFERENCE TO THE YEAR 2026

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### PURPOSE

To draw the attention of the Commission to the IOTC Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) that include a reference to the year 2026.

### BACKGROUND

The Commission has the following 7 CMMs that make references to the year 2026.

#### 1. Resolution 25/01 On climate change as it relates to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

Para 11. At its annual session in 2026, the Commission shall consider whether to add climate change as a standing agenda item thereafter.

##### Comment:

- *The Commission will discuss the need to add climate change as a standing agenda item during the S30 session.*

#### 2. Resolution 25/03 On establishing catch limits for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence (Does not apply to India, Korea and Somalia)

Para 19. In case one or more Contracting Parties object to this Resolution pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 5 of the IOTC Agreement, and if the sum of catches of the objecting Contracting Parties is equal to or above 10% of the TAC, this Resolution shall be applicable only in 2026, and the Commission shall review this Resolution at its annual Session in 2026.

##### Comment:

- *Three Contracting Parties objected to this Resolution pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 5 of the IOTC Agreement (India, Korea and Somalia)*
- *The sum of the catches of these CPs does not exceed 10% of the TAC (India and Korea have a combined TAC of 35, 000t out of 615,633t total. Somalia does not have a TAC)*
- *The Commission does not need to review the Resolution*

#### 3. Resolution 25/04 On establishing catch limits for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence (Does not apply to India and Somalia)

Para 2. The annual catch limits as shown in the table below shall be applied in 2026, 2027 and 2028.

	Catch Limit (t)
Indonesia	21,396
Seychelles	13,664
EU	19,562
Sri Lanka	5,488
Japan	4,237
China	4,353
Iran	2,421
Mauritius <sup>1</sup>	2,482

<sup>1</sup> Mauritius, as a SIDS, shall apply the catch limit under paragraph 2 as of 1 January 2028.

Para 3. The Commission shall request Taiwan, Province of China to limit their annual bigeye tuna catch in the IOTC area of competence to 13,211 t in 2026, 2027 and 2028. Any overage or underage of their bigeye tuna catch shall be subjected to paragraphs 5, 6 and 7.

Para 4. Any CPCs with a catch limit below 5% of the TAC may implement a three-year management of their catch limits. Such CPC shall notify the IOTC Secretariat by 31 January 2026. The CPC shall not transfer its catch limit or receive transfer from other CPCs as per paragraph 9. If, at the end of the three-year management period, the CPC has exceeded its catch limit, 110% of the overage of the catch limit shall be deducted during the next management cycle. The IOTC Secretariat shall circulate the information and reflect this information in the communication of catch limits, as per paragraph 10.

Para 20. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall develop a table as shown in the Annex that quantifies the expected impact on maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and SSB<sub>msy</sub> for bigeye tuna resulting from replacing fishing mortality/catches of any major fishing gear/fishery (e.g., Longline, DFAD fisheries, AFAD fisheries, Purse seine on free school, other fisheries) for consideration by the Commission at its 2026 Session. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall also provide advice on FAD management options, including on, limits on FADs sets, that may be necessary to achieve a replacement of fishing mortality of FAD fisheries with free school fisheries. This analysis shall be conducted for DFADs and AFADs fleets separately.

**Comment:**

- *The catch limits were circulated to CPs by the Secretariat in December 2025.*
- *The Scientific Committee developed a table that quantifies the expected impact on maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and SSB<sub>msy</sub> for bigeye tuna resulting from replacing fishing mortality/catches of any major fishing gear/fishery at its special session held in February 2025. This will be presented to the Commission during the SC report.*
- *The Scientific Committee is still evaluating methods to address the advice requested on FAD management options.*

**4. Resolution 25/05 On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels**

Para 29. Considering the extraordinary and unique circumstances of the Indonesian wooden carrier vessels, Indonesia may, in place of IOTC observers, use national observers in accordance with Annex VI. Implementation of the procedure in Annex VI shall be gradually implemented to reach full compliance in time for the Compliance Committee in 2026. The Compliance Committee in 2026 shall evaluate the implementation of the procedures in Annex VI and recommend corrective actions to Indonesia as appropriate. The effectiveness of the procedures laid down in Annex VI shall be reviewed in 2027. In particular, compliance of national observers with the tasks and reporting obligations shall be reviewed and assessed by the ROP consortium and reported to the Compliance Committee in 2027. The Commission shall decide in 2027 whether the procedures in paragraph 29, 30 and Annex VI shall be continued.

Annex VI. Para 1. In order to ensure that national observers are trained at the standards of the IOTC observers, the ROP consortium shall conduct training of trainers to ensure that new national observers are trained to the standards of the IOTC observers in 2026

**Comment:**

- *The CoC will evaluate the implementation of the procedures in Annex VI and recommend corrective actions to Indonesia as appropriate.*

**5. Resolution 25/08 On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC (Does not apply to India and Somalia)**

Para 8. In order to implement the obligation in paragraph 5 for sharks landed frozen in 2026, 2027 and 2028, CPCs shall ensure their fleets land or tranship sharks with fins naturally attached to the carcass or to use one and only one of the alternative measures listed below:

- a) Each individual shark carcass is bound to the corresponding fins using rope or wire; or

- b) Identical and uniquely numbered tags are attached to each shark carcass and its corresponding fins in a manner that inspectors can easily identify the matching of the carcass and fins at any time. Both the carcasses and fins shall be stored on board in the same hold.

Para 14. From 1 January 2026, CPCs shall ensure that their flag long-line vessels do not use branch lines running directly off the longline floats or drop lines, known as shark lines. See Annex I for a schematic diagram of a shark line.

Para 19. The IOTC Scientific Committee will also review available data and information by no later than SC29 pertaining to the spatial and temporal trends in:

- a) The relative distribution of vulnerable shark species and blue shark;
- b) The distribution of total longline fishing effort and by CPCs, by year over the past 10 years;
- c) The distribution and level of the use of wire leaders and monofilament leaders (and other leader types, if applicable) by CPC. For this point, all CPCs shall facilitate the provision of such information (best available) pertaining to their fleet to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 July 2026, to allow a summary of such spatial information to be provided to the SC.

Para 24. With the aim to reduce post-release mortality, CPCs shall ensure that their flag vessels, when a shark is released, release the shark as soon as practically possible, taking into consideration the safety of the crew and observer, in accordance with the Minimum Standards for Safe Handling And Live Release Procedures set out in Annex III. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall review these Minimum Standards by 31 December 2025 and provide recommendations to the Commission on further improvements of the Minimum Standards for consideration and adoption at its annual Session in 2026.

Para 26. Based on the review and the results of the stock assessment to be conducted in 2025, updated reported catch information by each CPC and taking into account the IOTC Scientific Committee's advice, the Commission shall consider at its 2026 Session specific conservation and management measures for blue sharks, including a total allowable catch, catch limits for each CPC to be decided taking into account among other things, the most recent reported catch information.

Para 29. CPCs shall ensure that, if a whale shark is unintentionally encircled in a purse seine net, the master of the vessel takes all reasonable steps to ensure its safe release, while taking into consideration the safety of the crew. These steps shall follow the best practice guidelines for the safe release and handling of encircled whale sharks to be developed by the IOTC Scientific Committee by 31 December 2025 and subsequently submitted to the Commission for consideration and endorsement at its annual Session in 2026.

Para 33. The Commission, on advice from the IOTC Scientific Committee, shall develop and consider for adoption at its annual Session in 2026 mechanisms to encourage CPCs to comply with their reporting requirements on sharks, notably on the most vulnerable shark species as identified by the IOTC Scientific Committee.

Para 38. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall, through the IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch, continue its work on identifying and monitoring the status of sharks until such time as comprehensive assessments are possible for all relevant sharks, including those listed in paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.**, silky sharks, hammerhead sharks and mako sharks. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall establish terms of reference for a long term-project on sharks in the IOTC area of competence to be considered by the Commission at its annual Session in 2026, with the aim to ensure the collection of data required for performing reliable stock assessments for key shark species, including those listed in paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.**, silky sharks, hammerhead sharks and mako sharks. The project will include:

- a) the identification of data gaps for key shark species in IOTC;
- b) the collection of relevant data, including through direct contacts with CPC national

administrations, research institutes and stakeholders;

- c) any other activity that could contribute to improving the collection of data required for performing stock assessments of key shark species in IOTC;
- d) the development and further improvement of shark identification guides for relevant shark species to provide a better overview on the compliance status of CPCs and thereby assist CPCs to comply with their reporting obligations. The IOTC Executive Secretary shall make these shark identification guides available on the IOTC website and distribute them among CPCs in regular intervals.

CPCs are encouraged to contribute financially to the implementation of the project.

Para 45. Notwithstanding paragraph 44, paragraph 3(c) of this Resolution shall enter into force on 1 July 2026, and only if the IOTC Scientific Committee explicitly and unambiguously recommends, in accordance with paragraph 43 of this Resolution, a retention ban for whale sharks.

**Comment:**

- *This will be discussed by the Commission at its 30<sup>th</sup> session. CPCs will submit their compliance to this measure which will be discussed by the CoC prior to S30.*
- *The SC discussed the data and information outlined in paragraphs 19 and 24 and this will be covered under the SC report to the S30.*
- *CPCs have been asked to submit proposals for Management Measures to be discussed at S30 for potential adoption, addressing paragraphs 26 and 33.*
- *The SC discussed safe handling techniques for sharks in general, but no specific guidelines for safe release and handling of encircled whale sharks was agreed in 2025. This will form part of an ongoing study to develop these techniques for all shark species.*
- *The SC have discussed a comprehensive long-term project on sharks and will hold a workshop in 2026 to identify the current research gaps and needs and develop a plan to address these.*
- *The SC did not explicitly recommend a retention ban on whale sharks and so paragraph 3(c) shall not enter into force.*

**6. Resolution 24/02 On management of drifting fish aggregating devices (FADs) in the IOTC area of competence**

Para 3. The IOTC Secretariat shall develop and maintain an electronic register for all instrumented buoys deployed in the IOTC area of competence (DFAD Register). The proper functioning of the DFAD Register shall be tested with a selection of vessels during the second semester of 2025. The DFAD Register shall be effective as of 1 January 2026.

Para 11. CPCs shall register buoys deployed before the entry into force of the DFAD Register and still active on the 1 January 2026 when the DFAD Register enters into force.

Para 16. CPCs shall ensure that each of their purse seine vessels does not follow more than the following number of instrumented buoys at any one time:

- a) from 1 January 2026: 250.

Para 17. CPCs shall ensure that each of their purse seine vessels does not acquire more than 400 instrumented buoys annually from 1st January 2026.

Para 18. Exceptionally, CPCs with one or two purse seine vessels actively operating in the IOTC area of competence in 2023, for as long as they operate less than three purse seine vessels, shall ensure that each of their purse seine vessels:

- a) does not follow more than the following number of instrumented buoys at any one time:
  - i. from 1 January 2026: 280

b) does not acquire more than the following number of instrumented buoys annually:

i. from 1 January 2026: 480

Para 19. Small Island Developing Coastal CPCs shall ensure that each of their purse seine vessels:

a) does not follow more than the following number of instrumented buoys at any one time:

i. from 1 January 2026: 270

b) does not acquire more than the following number of instrumented buoys annually:

i. from 1 January 2026: 440

Para 31. To reduce the amount of synthetic marine debris, CPCs shall ensure that their flag vessels:

a) as of 1 January 2026, use only DFADs of biodegradability categories I, II III, and IV as defined in Annex III

Para 40. As of 1 January 2026, and with the specific objective to collect information on how to mitigate DFAD loss and abandonment, in addition to the marking of the instrumented buoy referred to in paragraph 39, CPCs shall ensure that their vessels do only deploy DFADs that are permanently marked with a specific IOTC DFAD unique identifier. The IOTC Secretariat shall attribute the DFAD unique identifier to the CPC, which shall communicate the identifier to the master of the vessel. The marking shall be separate from the instrumented buoy. The standards for the individual marking of DFADs shall be developed by the IOTC Scientific Committee, following preparatory work by the WGFAD and in close collaboration with the IOTC Secretariat, at the latest at its 2025 session.

Para 44. CPCs shall gradually reduce supply vessels in purse seine operations targeting tropical tuna as follows:

a) By 1 January 2026: 3 supply vessels in support of not less than 12 purse seine vessels, all of the same flag State.

**Comment:**

- *The DFAD register implementation was delayed as per intersessional process outlined in Circular 2025-39. The DFAD Register will enter into full effect on 1 June 2026 and will become mandatory for all CPCs that fall within the ambit of Resolution 24/02.*
- *Paragraphs 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 31 and 44 will be evaluated by the CoC in 2027.*
- *The Scientific Committee is still discussing the standards for the individual marking of DFADs.*

**7. Resolution 24/07 On a management procedure for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence**

Para 13. The Commission will develop a mechanism to constrain catch to the MP derived TAC for skipjack tuna no later than 2026, if an allocation scheme has not yet been agreed and implemented by the Commission.

Para 15. The Scientific Committee is requested to review, and if necessary, further develop and refine (not later than 2026), the exceptional circumstances guidelines (adopted by SC27 and S30), taking into account, inter alia, the need for an appropriate balance between specificity versus flexibility in defining exceptional circumstances, and the appropriate level of robustness to ensure that exceptional circumstances are triggered only when necessary

**Comment:**

- *The mechanism referred to in Paragraph 13 was clarified under Resolution 25/03 On establishing catch limits for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence.*
- *The Scientific Committee has not provided further advice on the exceptional circumstance guidelines as this has not been considered necessary at this stage.*

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the Commission:

- a) **NOTE** paper IOTC-2026-S30-03 which lists the references to the year 2026 made in existing CMMs.
- b) **CONSIDER** any actions to be taken in response to the above CMMs.