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## Reporting of vessels in transit through BIOT/Chagos archipelago waters for potential breach of IOTC Conservation and Management Measures.

### 23<sup>rd</sup> Session IOTC Compliance Committee, 2026

#### 1. Introduction

Vessels in transit through BIOT/Chagos archipelago waters are requested to provide a transit report, details of the procedure for doing this are provided in previous reports.

Between the start of March 2025 and the end of February 2026, 1182 transit reports from 626 different vessels were received from various flag states (Table 1). 280 vessels reported more than one transit, with 14 vessels reporting five or more. The highest number of reports received from a single vessel was 7. As reporting is voluntary, it is likely that the actual number of vessels transiting is higher. Overall, the total number of transit reports received increased compared to last year's figure of 952.

**Table 1: A breakdown of vessels submitting transit reports by flag and vessel type between March 2025 and February 2026.**

Flag State	Type of Vessel								Percentage of Totals
	CV	LL	MU	PS	OT	GI	SP	Total	
CHN		7						7	0.6
ESP				3			4	7	0.6
FRA				3				3	0.3
IDN	2							2	0.2
KOR				4				4	0.3
LKA		936	27			21		984	83.2
MUS		2						2	0.2
OMN		4		4				8	0.7
PAN	1							1	0.1
SEY		52					11	63	5.3
TUV				1				1	0.1
TWN	5	92						97	8.2
TZN							3	3	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1093</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1182</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Percentage of Totals</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

CV – Carrier / Cargo Vessel; LL – Longline; MU – Multiday vessels; PS – Purse Seine; GI – Gillnet; SP – Support Vessel; OT – Other; CHN - China; TWN – Taiwan, Province of China; ESP – Spain; FRA – France; ITA – Italy; KOR – Republic of Korea; LKA – Sri Lanka; MUS- Mauritius; OMN – Oman; PAN – Panama; SEY – Seychelles; TUV – Tuvalu; TZN – Tanzania.

Once the transit reports are received, the name and corresponding identifying marks are cross-checked against the IOTC Record of Authorised Vessels (RAV). There were two instances in which reports were received from vessels that had an IOTC number but the authorisation to fish for tuna and tuna-like species

had expired (Table 2). This is compared to eight in 2025, two in 2024, two in 2023, nine in 2022, three in 2021 and 77 in 2020. It should be emphasised that vessels do not need to be on the RAV to transit through the BIOT/Chagos archipelago, both did not report tuna on board, and this is no indication that they are IUU. They are reported here for information only.

**Table 2: List of those vessels transiting with an IOTC number, that were not authorised to fish for tuna and tuna-like species in the IOTC area at the time of transit and have not since renewed.**

IOTC No.	Expiry Date of IOTC ATF	Vessel Name	Callsign	Flag	Type	Entry Date
18019	18/07/2025	DINESH 13	4SF5958	LKA	LL	04/12/2025
18344	03/09/2025	DINESH 16	4SF5788	LKA	GN	24/11/2025

In addition, several vessels were initially recorded as transiting whilst currently being unregistered, however upon cross checking against the current and historic RAV, these vessels were found to be registered during the period of transit.

Eight further vessels reported transit that were not on the current or historical RAV, had no IOTC number, and were carrying gear capable of targeting tuna (Table 3). This figure is higher than in previous years and significantly lower than in 2020, at 76 vessels. Of the eight vessels, five reported having no tuna or tuna-like species on board. The remaining two vessels, Shan 06 and SENUKA PUTHA 3 reported as transiting with YFT and BFT totalling 5 tonnes, and YFT and OTH totalling 5.5 tonnes respectively. As above, this does not imply that they were IUU and it should be noted that neither vessel reported tuna onboard, they are reported here for information only.

**Table 3: Those vessels with no IOTC number recorded carrying gear capable of targeting tuna and tuna-like species.**

Vessel Name	IMUL No.	Flag	Type	Entry date
FV Cosmos Kim	N/A	TUV	PS	15/09/2025
Micael 02	IMULA2187CHW	LKA	LL	31/01/2026
Minosh 10	IMULA2547CHW	LKA	LL	28/05/2025
N/A	IMULA0013JPN	LKA	LL	26/06/2025
RAVIN 01	IMULA2069NBO	LKA	LL	13/04/2025
SANJUMALLI 6	IMULA0979TCG	LKA	LL	27/01/2025
SENUKA PUTHA 3	IMULA2055NBO	LKA	LL	26/11/2025
Shan 06	IMULA7966CHW	LKA	LL	29/03/2025

## 2. Potential breaches of IOTC CMMs

The Senior Fisheries Protection Officer (SFPO) will board and inspect vessels encountered by the patrol vessel while patrolling BIOT/Chagos archipelago waters. Vessels which have not provided a transit report are prioritised for inspection.

These inspections are conducted routinely, with the primary purpose of identifying indicators of illegal fishing activity. If such indicators are identified, the vessel is brought into port for further investigation. During an inspection, the SFPO will also check if there is a potential breach of any IOTC Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs).

Table 4 summarises potential breaches of IOTC CMMs recorded by the SFPO during the 16 vessel boardings that were conducted between March 2025 and February 2026. An explanation of the requirements of the CMMs and the breaches observed is given in Section 3. The SFPO submits detailed inspection reports which have been compiled for this document.

Of the 16 individual vessels inspected, 13 were on the current IOTC RAV. The remaining three vessels were either not registered or their authorisation had expired, where two of these three vessels were observed to have IOTC managed species on board. All vessels inspected, regardless of their IOTC status, are included in Table 4 although it was not always possible for the presence of IOTC species to be verified during every inspection. Conducting a full inspection of all possible CMM breaches was at times limited by an inability to board due to adverse sea conditions.

One vessel has been reported to the Compliance Committee for presumed IUU (category 'c'), a further three have been reported under either category 'a' or 'b', either because it was not clear where the fish were caught or because it did not have IOTC species on board.

As with previous years, the most common instances of non-compliance involved unmarked fishing gear, followed by the total absence of, or non-operational, VMS units. However, it should be noted that verification was not possible for all vessels inspected. Within Table 4, any blank cells either indicate compliance or that the requirement could not be checked by the SFPO and therefore should be classified as 'Unknown'.

**Table 4. List of vessels inspected from March 2025 to February 2026 and their compliance with relevant CMMs. An 'X' indicates that the vessel was in a potential breach of that particular CMM.**

Details of vessels inspected					CMM breaches shown as 'X'						
Vessel Name	Flag	Date	Type	IOTC RAV*	IOTC Species Onboard	ATF	No VMS**	VMS not tamper-proof	Logbook***	Vessel markings	Gear markings
RAN KURULA 8 IMULA0238CHW	LKA	22/04/25	MU	X	X						X
Nimesh Putha IMULA2009MTR	LKA	11/06/25	GI	X	X						
Nisansala 02 IMULA0847KLT	LKA	01/07/25	MU	X	X						X
Thinuga Putha 03 IMULA1603MTR	LKA	01/07/25	GI	X	X	X					X
ROHANA 7 IMULA2264MTR	LKA	21/07/25	LL	X	X						X
LORANSE 3 IMULA0040CBO	LKA	21/07/25	LL	X	X						X
LAKSIRI 05 IMULA1852MTR	LKA	22/07/25	LL	X							X
MINIPURA 06 IMULA1624MTR	LKA	23/07/25	LL	X		X					X
DEVINDU PUTHA 3 IMULA1885MTR	LKA	08/08/25	LL	X			X				X
MONTLIGEN (MONTALIJAN, MONTILIJEN) IMULA0627NBO	LKA	24/11/25	LL		X	X	X				X
ACILA P. S. Q V 1432	OMN	09/12/25	PS	X	X						
ISHANI 3 IMULA0923CHW	LKA	11/12/25	LL	X	X		X				X
MADU RAJINI 7 IMULA0949CHW	LKA	29/12/25	LL	X	X						X
Minipura 5 IMULA1578MTR	LKA	08/01/26	LL	X	X		X	X	X		
Alfa 1 IND-TN-15-MM-10658	IND	27/01/26	GI		X		X		X		X
Jebamea Jeyam IND-TN-15-MM-9710	IND	27/01/26	GI				X		X		X

\* An 'X' indicates the vessel was on the RAV.

\*\* VMS unit was either not present, or was present onboard however did not appear to be in working order.

\*\*\*Either logbook not presented or does not meet minimum requirements set out in Resolution 15/01 Annex I, II or III.

### 3. Details of breaches of CMMs observed during inspection

#### IOTC Vessel List.

**Requirement:** Under Resolution 19/04 paragraphs 1 and 2, CPCs are required to register those vessels operating in waters outside their EEZs that are fishing for tuna and tuna-like species. Vessels not on the RAV list are not permitted to fish for, retain on board, tranship or land tuna and tuna-like species in the IOTC area of competence.

**Breach of CMM:** Boardings and inspections were conducted and supported through photographic evidence and vessels were checked against the most recently updated RAV at time of inspection. For some vessels it was not possible to determine if there were IOTC species on board or had gear capable of targeting IUU species. Three of the 16 vessels inspected by the SFPO were not registered on the RAV, or had expired, and two of them had IOTC species identified on board.

#### Flag State Licence, Permit, Authorisation to Fish

**Requirement:** Under IOTC Resolution 19/04 paragraph 17, fishing vessels must carry on-board a state issued licence, permit or ATF.

**Breach of CMM:** Of those vessels boarded, three could not produce an ATF when requested.

#### VMS

**Requirement:** Under Resolution 25/02 paragraphs 1 and 8, all fishing vessels greater than 24m in overall length, or any vessel operating outside the EEZ of the flag State fishing for species covered by the IOTC agreement and within the IOTC area of competence require a VMS on board that is tamper resistant.

**Breach of CMM:** Of the 16 vessels boarded, six did not have a functioning VMS unit installed. The reported reasons for this are similar to previous years, including battery issues or technical failures. This is a similar proportion to those reported last year..

#### Logbook

**Requirements:** Under Resolution 19/04 paragraph 20, all fishing vessels greater than 24m in overall length, or any vessel operating outside the EEZ of the flag State fishing for species covered by the IOTC agreement and within the IOTC area of competence require a national fishing logbook, bound and with consecutively numbered pages. Furthermore Resolution 15/01 outlines the data requirements for the different vessel types under Annex I, II and III.

**Breach of CMM:** Three of the vessels did not produce a logbook when requested.

#### Vessel and Gear markings

**Requirement:** Resolution 19/04, Paragraph 18, requires that vessels on the RAV are marked in such a way that they can be readily identified with generally accepted standards such as the FAO Standard Specification for the Marking and Identification of Fishing vessels. Paragraph 19 goes on to require that 'marker buoys and similar objects floating and on the surface, and intended to indicate the location of fixed fishing gear, shall be clearly marked at all times with the letter(s) and/or number(s) of the vessel to which they belong.'

**Breach of CMM:** 13 of the vessels inspected had gear which was either not marked at all or did not meet the requirements, this is in common with previous years. The vessels themselves however did all appear to marked correctly in a way that could be easily identified.

## 4. For the attention of the Compliance Committee

This information paper is submitted in response to previous recommendations from the Compliance Committee and for consistency of reporting covers the same period as other reports, from March through to February. 16 vessels were inspected over this period, two on two separate occasions, and are summarised in this report, Table 1 compares this to previous years.

**Table 3 number of vessels inspected by year. Note that in 2021 and 2022 vessels were not physically boarded.**

Year	No. vessels
2024/25	16
2023/24	19
2022/23	59
2021/22	40
2020/21	10
2019/20	11
2017/18	6
2016/17	10
2015/16	22

With the exception of a single vessel, all inspected vessels were found to be in breach of at least one IOTC CMM, however, this vessel was not physically boarded due to local weather conditions at the time. This compares to 100% in 2023/24 and 2022/23 (if all vessels were considered to be targeting IOTC managed species) 90% in 2021/22, 90% in 2020/21, 100% in 2018/19, 50% in 2017/18, 100% in 2016/17 and 73% in 2015/16, although these figures cannot really be compared like for like and should be interpreted with care.

As with previous years, the most common breach was failure to mark gear, although the vessels themselves appeared to be correctly marked in that they were identifiable with the correct names / registration numbers. IOTC-2025-WPICMM08-12\_Add1<sup>1</sup> examines the issue of gear marking in more detail, providing a suggested framework to operationalise the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear.

As in previous years we do not propose specific sanctions against individual vessels (except those on the draft IUU vessel list reported for illegally fishing in BIOT/Chagos archipelago waters), but again raise this as an issue for the consideration of the Compliance Committee to consider what actions should be taken and to focus discussions on how compliance can be improved.

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<sup>1</sup> Operationalisation of FAO Voluntary Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear in the IOTC Area of Competence. IOTC Secretariat, 24 January 2025.