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## OUTCOMES OF THE 27<sup>TH</sup> AND 28<sup>TH</sup> SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, JUNE 2026

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### PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 16<sup>th</sup> Working Party on Neritic Tunas (WPNT16) of the decision and requests made by the Commission at its 29<sup>th</sup> Session, held from 13-17 April 2025, specifically relating to the work of the WPNT. The report from the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission held in May 2026 has yet to be adopted but the adopted Conservation and Management Measures are available. The Commission discussion on neritic tunas was very limited in 2025 and 2026 although the Commission did endorse the Recommendations from the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scientific Committee (SC28).

### BACKGROUND

At the 29<sup>th</sup> Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 14 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures., as detailed below:

### Resolutions

- Resolution 25/01: On climate change as it relates to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
- Resolution 25/02: On the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) programme
- Resolution 25/03 On establishing catch limits for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence
- Resolution 25/04 On establishing catch limits for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence
- Resolution 25/05 On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels
- Resolution 25/06 On a Regional Observer Scheme
- Resolution 25/07 On a management procedure for swordfish in the IOTC area of competence
- Resolution 25/08 On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC
- Resolution 25/09 On the conservation of shortfin and longfin mako sharks caught in association with IOTC fisheries
- Resolution 25/10 On establishing a Technical Committee on Management Procedures
- Resolution 25/11 On Port State Measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- Resolution 25/12 On the promotion of the implementation of IOTC Conservation and Management Measures

### Recommendations

- Recommendation 25/13 On promoting the objectives of IOTC through cooperation with the BBNJ Agreement (The agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction)
- Recommendation 25/14 On the limitation of fishing capacity

At the 30<sup>th</sup> Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** 8 proposals as Conservation and Management Measures., as detailed below:

- Resolution 26/01 On establishing interim catch limits for yellowfin tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence

- Resolution 26/02 On establishing interim catch limits for swordfish in the IOTC Area of Competence
- Resolution 26/03 On the conservation of mobulid rays caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC
- Resolution 26/04 Concerning the IOTC record of vessels authorised to operate in the IOTC Area of Competence
- Resolution 26/05 On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels
- Resolution 26/06 Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)
- Resolution 26/07 On the promotion of the implementation of IOTC Conservation and Management Measures
- Resolution 26/08 On promoting the objectives of IOTC through cooperation with the BBNJ agreement

These Conservation and Management Measures shall become binding 120 days after their distribution to all CPCs. The final versions of the newly agreed CMMs are available here: <http://iotc.org/cmms>

In addition to these adopted CMMs, the WPNT should also **NOTE** the following discussion by the Commission regarding changes to the Rules of Procedure.

The Commission **NOTED** paper IOTC-2026-S30-07 which provided the Commission with feedback and recommendations from the Small Working Group on reviewing IOTC Processes. The Commission **NOTED** that this small informal working group was convened by request of the Commission at its 29<sup>th</sup> Session in 2025.

The Commission **NOTED** a set of recommendations from the small working group reviewing IOTC's processes. The Commission **NOTED** general agreement with most of the recommendations.

The Commission **ENDORSED** the following process to ensure participation is properly endorsed and vetted prior to the meeting commencing:

- i. All interested participants are required to register online using the web form provided on the meeting webpage. A deadline for registration of 5 days before the meeting commences will be implemented and the ability to register online will be removed at this time.
- ii. The registration list will be sent by the Secretariat to Heads of Delegations and/or pre-specified Alternates for validation. Only registered and validated participants will be permitted to attend IOTC meetings. Should a delegation not respond to the Secretariat's request for validation, the participants will be informed and asked to contact their delegation to endorse their participation. A non-response will not constitute consent for a participant to attend the meeting for which they have registered. In such cases, participants may be granted provisional attendance status pending endorsement, but will not be able to participate in technical discussions and present documents until validation is received.
- iii. Member states may choose to submit a list of pre-authorized participants (which may be updated at any time) that may register and attend the IOTC meetings. These individuals will still be required to register online, but they will automatically be considered to be validated by the HOD/Alt.
- iv. HODs or pre-specified Alternates may submit in writing, nominations to a meeting after the 5 day deadline as it will be considered that these participants have been pre-approved by their delegations and do not require validation.

The Commission **ENDORSED** the recommendation that a cover sheet be attached to each document upon submission, ensuring that the main elements of the document are immediately clear for both the chair and participants.

The Commission **AGREED** that information papers should not be presented during meetings and should be kept for background information purposes only.

The Commission further **NOTED** the following from the updated Rules of Procedure:

All documents submitted to the Scientific Committee or its working parties shall be submitted to the IOTC Secretariat no later than 15 days prior to the start of the respective Scientific Committee or working party meeting. Any documents submitted less than 15 days prior, shall be considered for information purposes only. In exceptional circumstances, and with appropriate justification to be recorded in the report of the meeting, the Chair and Vice-Chairperson(s) may decide to accept a document submitted after the deadline as a working paper, provided that it is received no later than ten days prior to the start of the meeting and is deemed essential to the successful outcome of the meeting. Such a document may be presented at the meeting only if no opposition has been expressed by three (3) or more CPCs or delegates, as appropriate.

## DISCUSSION

(S29, Para. 30) The Commission **NOTED** that the current status of neritic tunas are as follows:

<p><b>Kawakawa</b></p> <p>No new stock assessment was conducted for longtail in 2024 and so the results are based on the results of the assessment carried out in 2023 which examined a number of data-limited methods (CMSY). Based on the weight-of-evidence available, the kawakawa stock for the Indian Ocean is classified as <b>overfished</b> but <b>not subject to overfishing</b>.</p>
<p><b>Longtail tuna</b></p> <p>A new assessment was carried out in 2023 using data-limited assessment techniques (CMSY). Based on the weight-of-evidence currently available, the stock is considered to be both <b>overfished</b> and <b>subject to overfishing</b>.</p>
<p><b>Indo-Pacific king mackerel</b></p> <p>A new assessment was conducted in 2024 using the data-limited techniques (CMSY and CMSY++). Based on the weight-of-evidence currently available, the stock is considered to be <b>not overfished</b> and <b>not subject to overfishing</b>.</p>
<p><b>Narrowed-Barred Spanish mackerel</b></p> <p>No new stock assessment was conducted in 2024 for narrow-barred Spanish mackerel and so the results are based on the results of the assessment carried out in 2023 which examined a number of data-limited methods. Based on the CMSY assessment, the stock appears to be <b>overfished</b> and <b>subject to overfishing</b>.</p>
<p><b>Bullet tuna</b></p> <p>A new assessment was carried out in 2024 using data-limited techniques (CMSY, LB-SPR, and FishBlicc). However, the catch data for bullet tuna are very uncertain given the high percentage of the catches that had to be estimated due to a range of reporting issues. Stock status in relation to the Commission's BMSY and FMSY reference points remains <b>unknown</b>.</p>
<p><b>Frigate tuna</b></p> <p>A new assessment was carried out in 2024 using data-limited techniques (CMSY, OCOM, LB-SPR and FishBlicc). However, the catch data for frigate tuna are very uncertain given the high percentage of the catches that had to be estimated due to a range of reporting issues. Stock status in relation to the Commission's BMSY and FMSY reference points remains <b>unknown</b>.</p>

(S29, para. 31) **NOTING** the advanced stock assessments that have been carried out for the tropical tuna species and some sharks, the Commission **ENCOURAGED** further analysis of data poor stocks such as neritic and marlin species. The Commission **NOTED** that data poor methods are generally required for neritic species due to data quality issues. The Commission further **NOTED** that no assessments are planned for neritic species this year so work can focus on preparing and improving the important datasets that can be used for assessments in the future.

Although the report of the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission has not been formally adopted, the stock status summaries provided by the SC in its 28<sup>th</sup> Session were endorsed. These are provided in document IOTC-2026-WPNT16-03.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the WPNT

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC-2026-WPNT16-04 which outlined the outcomes of the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPNT and **AGREE** to consider how best to provide the SC with the information it needs, in order to satisfy the Commission's requests, throughout the course of the current WPNT meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** that 14 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) were adopted at the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission (consisting of 12 Resolutions and 2 Recommendations).
- 3) **NOTE** that 8 Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) were adopted at the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission (consisting of 8 Resolutions).