

Updates and Simplified Access to the IOTC Species Identification Website: iotcspecies.com

In 2025, OFCF Japan launched an innovative online platform dedicated to the identification of IOTC species (see [IOTC-2025-WPDCS21-15_Rev2](#)).

Designed specifically for field samplers and observers, the website provides a comprehensive suite of interactive tools to support accurate species identification in the field. The platform features:

- Photo library
- Smartphone Application
- YouTube videos
- Species Characteristics Guide for confusing species

By combining visual references with practical identification guidance, the platform not only assists users in making accurate identifications of tuna, neritic tuna, and billfish species on site, but also helps them build their taxonomic knowledge and identification skills over time.

How to Access the Website

Simply enter “**iotcspecies.com**” using your preferred web browser’s search bar or address bar (Figure 1). The website titled “**Guide for identification of IOTC species**” will appear among the top search results, and can be recognized by its fish icon (Figure 2).

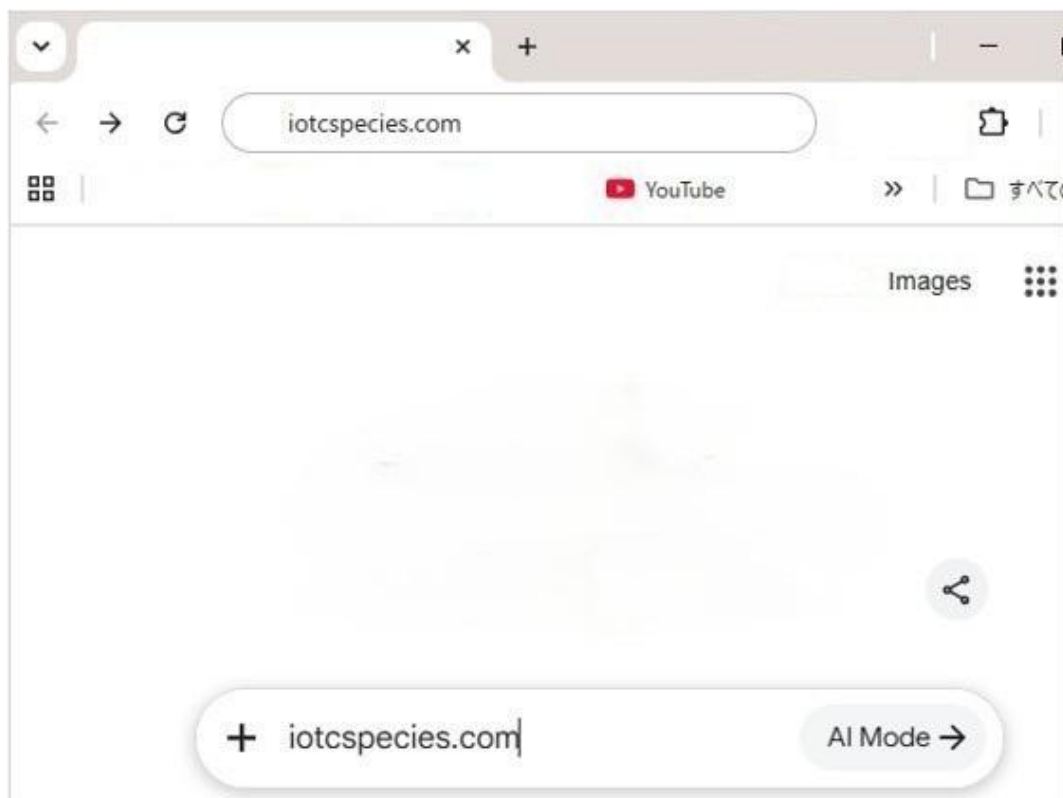


Figure 1. Entering “[iotcspecies.com](https://www.iotcspecies.com)” to the web browser’s search bar or address bar.

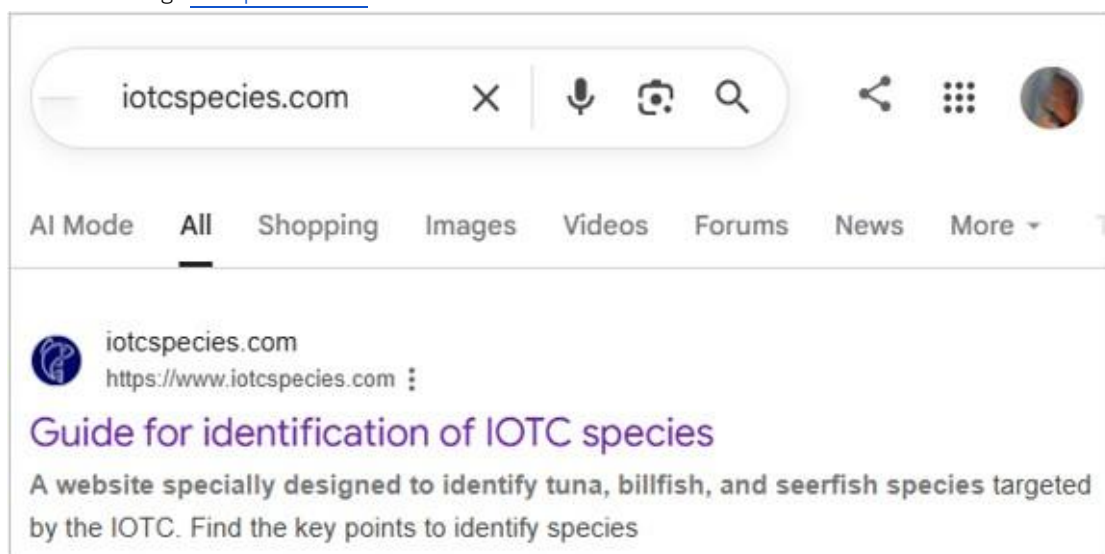


Figure 2. How the website “Guide for identification of IOTC species” will appear in the search engine results page.

OFCF Japan encourage all field personnel to make full use of this resource, which is available free of charge, and share it with colleagues involved in fisheries data collection and species identification.



QR code of the website: iotcspecies.com

Figure 3. QR code for the website “Guide for identification of IOTC species”.

Updates to Date (Since November 2025)

Since its launch in November 2025, the “Guide for identification of IOTC species” website (iotcspecies.com) has undergone continuous development, with new content and enhanced functionality being introduced to better support field samplers and onboard observers.

New and Updated Content

- Photo library
 - New photographs provided by the Sri Lanka Department of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources (DFAR) Onboard Observer Program have been added for Yellowfin Tuna (YFT), Bigeye Tuna (BET), and Indo-Pacific sailfish (SFA). The number of registered photos for tuna species has now reached 112.
 - A size-based sorting function has been added, enabling users to easily compare the appearance of tuna species within the same size range.
- YouTube video
 - A new otolith extraction tutorial video is now available, demonstrating the procedure using a small bluefin tuna (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4c8M0Xcn2Y&t=4s>).
- Characteristics of species
 - Fish appearance by size has been added for YFT, BET, Kawakawa (KAW), Bullet tuna (BLT), Frigate tuna (FRI), and Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel (COM).
 - Table of size (FL) and weight relationship has been added for YFT, BET, Albacore (ALB), Skipjack tuna (SKJ), Swordfish (SWO), Black marlin (BLM), Blue marlin (BUM), Striped marlin (MLS), and Indo-Pacific sailfish (SFA).
- Small tuna catalog

A new page, “***Small tuna catalog***”, has been added to the *Confusing species*

section. This page allows users to compare photos of similarly sized tuna species (currently limited to specimens with 29 cm fork length) including YFT, BET, ALB, and LOT, providing practical guidance for distinguishing among these difficult-to-identify species.

Upcoming contents

A new smartphone application dedicated to billfish species identification is currently under development, and is scheduled for release by March 2027. The application is being designed to support both:

- Onboard observers, who typically encounter whole, unprocessed fish
- Field samplers, who often need to identify processed specimens with bill, gut, and fin removed

Call for Cooperation

OFCF Japan is currently seeking photographs of small tuna species (approximately 20–40 cm fork length).

Accurate identification of juvenile tuna species is often challenging because distinctive morphological characteristics are not yet fully developed. High-quality photographs of multiple species at similar sizes are essential for developing effective learning materials and identification tools.

If you have photographs or information related to small tuna species, and are willing to collaborate with us, please contact OFCF Japan at:

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Acknowledgement

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