



20 July 2026

IOTC CIRCULAR 2026-31

Dear Madam / Sir

OBJECTION FROM INDIA TO IOTC RESOLUTIONS 26/01 AND 26/02

Please find attached a communication from India regarding its objections, in accordance with Article IX (5) of the IOTC Agreement, to:

- Resolution 26/01 On establishing interim catch limits for yellowfin tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence [[download here](#)]
- Resolution 26/02 On establishing interim catch limits for swordfish in the IOTC Area of Competence [[download here](#)]

which were adopted at the 30th Session of the IOTC.

An extension period of 60 days will therefore be applied to the entry into force of Resolutions 26/01 and 26/02. Thus they will now enter into force on the 18 November 2026, unless a total of more than one-third of the members also object before this time.

The relevant paragraphs (5, 6 and 7) of Article IX on the ensuing process are reproduced herein for your reference.

5. Any Member of the Commission may, within 120 days from the date specified or within such other period as may be specified by the Commission under paragraph 4, object to a conservation and management measure adopted under paragraph 1. A Member of the Commission which has objected to a measure shall not be bound thereby. Any other Member of the Commission may similarly object within a further period of 60 days from the expiry of the 120-day period. A Member of the Commission may also withdraw its objection at any time and become bound by the measure immediately if the measure is already in effect or at such time as it may come into effect under this article.

6. If objections to a measure adopted under paragraph 1 are made by more than one-third of the Members of the Commission, the other Members shall not be bound by that measure; but this shall not preclude any or all of them from giving effect thereto.

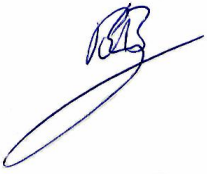
7. The Secretary shall notify each Member of the Commission immediately upon receipt of each objection or withdrawal of objection.

Yours sincerely

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.

This message has been transmitted by email only

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'P' and 'B' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Paul de Bruyn
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

- letter from India

डॉ. सुरभी राय
Dr. Surabhi Rai



संयुक्त सचिव
भारत सरकार
मत्स्यपालन, पशुपालन एवं डेयरी मंत्रालय
मत्स्यपालन विभाग
कृषि भवन, नई दिल्ली-110001
Joint Secretary
Government of India
Ministry of Fisheries, Animal
Husbandry & Dairying
Department of Fisheries
Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi-110001

File No: j-26001/23/2024-Fy

Dated 16th July 2026

To,
The Executive Secretary
Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)
Abis Centre, Providence
P.O. Box 1011
Victoria, Seychelles
Email: lotc-secretariat@fao.org

Subject: Objection from India to IOTC Resolutions 26/01 and 26/02 pursuant to Article IX (5) of the IOTC Agreement.

Dear Dr. Paul de Bruyn,

The Republic of India presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and has the honour to refer to the adoption, during the Commission's 2025 Annual Session, of:

- **Resolution 26/01** on establishing interim catch limits for yellowfin tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence; and
- **Resolution 26/02** on establishing interim catch limits for swordfish in the IOTC Area of Competence.

Pursuant to Article IX(5) of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, the Government of India hereby formally registers its objection to the above-mentioned Resolutions.

India remains firmly committed to the conservation and sustainable management of tuna and tuna-like species and supports the adoption of transparent, science-based and equitable conservation and management measures. However, India considers that the above Resolutions, in their present form, do not adequately reflect the legitimate developmental aspirations of coastal developing States, the special circumstances of small-scale and artisanal fisheries, or the sovereign rights of coastal States over the living marine resources within their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs).

1. Resolution 26/01 – On establishing interim catch limits for yellowfin tuna in the IOTC area of competence

Resolution 26/01 establishes interim country-specific catch limits pending completion of the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process and adoption of a long-term Management Procedure. India has been allocated an annual catch limit of 25,000 tonnes, which is substantially below its recent reported catches and would require a significant reduction in harvest.

India considers that the allocation methodology does not adequately recognise the circumstances of coastal developing States or the distinctive nature of India's fisheries sector, which is predominantly traditional, small-scale and artisanal, operating largely within India's EEZ and supporting the livelihoods and food security of millions of coastal communities.

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India further considers that the interim catch limits lack an adequate scientific basis and objective justification. While most major harvesting Members have been allocated catch limits exceeding their reported catches for 2024, the catch limit prescribed for India is more than 6,000 tonnes below its reported catch for the same year. India is unable to identify any transparent, objective or scientifically justified basis for this differential treatment.

2. Resolution 26/02 - On establishing interim catch limits for swordfish in the IOTC Area of Competence

India notes that Resolution 26/02 establishes interim national catch limits for swordfish pursuant to the Management Procedure adopted by the Commission. While India supports sustainable management of swordfish resources, it considers that the allocation assigned to India does not adequately reflect its current fishing activity, future harvesting potential or developmental aspirations.

India possesses an extensive EEZ, an expanding oceanic fisheries sector and considerable potential for the sustainable development of its swordfish fishery. The interim allocation does not sufficiently recognise these factors or the characteristics of India's predominantly small-scale, multi-species fisheries, in which swordfish is harvested mainly through traditional longline and gillnet operations.

India has consistently emphasised that management measures should not impose disproportionate constraints on traditional, artisanal and small-scale fisheries. Such measures, if adopted without due regard to the circumstances of developing coastal States, have significant implications for the livelihoods and food security of millions of people dependent on the marine fisheries sector.

India also considers that the interim catch limits established under Resolution 26/02 lack adequate scientific and objective justification. In particular, the reference periods and baseline years used in determining country-specific allocations were not applied uniformly across Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs), resulting in inequitable outcomes.

India believes that conservation and management measures should be founded on the best available scientific evidence and implemented in a transparent, equitable and non-discriminatory manner. Allocation frameworks should appropriately recognise, inter alia, historical catches, zonal attachment, the sovereign rights of coastal States, evolving fishing capacities, the legitimate development needs of developing States and the special circumstances of small-scale and artisanal fisheries.

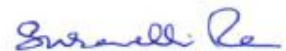
For these reasons, India considers that the interim catch allocations established under Resolutions 26/01 and 26/02 should not constitute a precedent for future allocation arrangements under the Management Procedures currently being developed by the Commission.

Accordingly, and pursuant to Article IX(5) of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, the Government of India respectfully submits its formal objection to Resolution 26/01 and Resolution 26/02.

India remains committed to engaging constructively with the Commission and all its Members in developing transparent, science-based and equitable conservation and management measures that ensure the long-term sustainability of tuna and tuna-like species while duly safeguarding the legitimate rights, interests and developmental aspirations of coastal developing States and the special needs of small-scale and artisanal fisheries.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,



(Dr Surabhi Rai)

Joint Secretary to the Government of India
and the Head of Delegation to the IOTC