

OUTCOMES OF 30th SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 3 AUGUST 2026

PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 24th Working Party on Billfish (WPB24) of the decision and requests made by the Commission at its 30th session held from 11–15 May 2026 respectively, specifically relating to the work of the WPB.

BACKGROUND

At the 30th Session of the Commission 8 Resolutions were adopted, as detailed below

Resolutions

- 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](#)]
- Resolution 26/03 *On the conservation of mobulid rays caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC* [[download here](#)]
- Resolution 26/04 *Concerning the IOTC record of vessels authorised to operate in the IOTC Area of Competence* [[download here](#)]
- Resolution 26/05 *On establishing a programme for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels* [[download here](#)]
- Resolution 26/06 *Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)* [[download here](#)]
- Resolution 26/07 *On the promotion of the implementation of IOTC Conservation and Management Measures* [[download here](#)]
- Resolution 26/08 *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)* [[download here](#)]

Conservation and Management Measures become binding 120 days after their distribution to all CPCs. The final versions of the newly agreed CMMs will be made available in due course at <http://iotc.org/cmms>

DISCUSSION

The Commission also made a number of general comments on the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee in 2025 (SC28), which have relevance for the WPB (IOTC–2026–S30–R):

Status of billfish

Swordfish

No new stock assessment was carried out for swordfish in 2025, thus the stock status is determined on basis of the 2023 assessment, using data up to 2021. On the weight-of-evidence available in 2023, the stock is determined to be **not overfished** and **not subject to overfishing**.

Striped Marlin

No new stock assessment was carried out for striped marlin in 2025, thus the stock status is determined on basis of the 2024 assessment, based on two different models (JABBA and SS3), using data up to 2022. On the weight-of-evidence available in 2024, the stock status of striped marlin is determined to be **overfished** and **subject to overfishing**.

Blue Marlin

A new stock assessment was carried out for blue marlin in 2025, based on two different models JABBA and SS3, using data up to 2023. On the weight-of-evidence available in 2022, the stock is determined to be **overfished** and **subject to overfishing**.

Black Marlin

No new stock assessment was carried out for black marlin in 2025, thus the stock status is determined on basis of the 2024 assessment, using data up to 2022. Progress has been made recently with black marlin catch data, particularly from coastal countries in the northern Indian Ocean, and the latest JABBA assessment shows it's now more reliable. On the weight-of-evidence available in 2024, the stock status of black marlin is determined to be **not overfished** but **subject to overfishing**.

Indo-Pacific sailfish

A new stock assessment was carried out for Indo-Pacific sailfish in 2025 using the JABBA model. To overcome the lack of standardised CPUE indices, this assessment followed the methods of the previous assessment in 2022 where length-frequency data were used to estimate the annual Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) using the length-based spawning potential ratio (LBSPR) method. However, this is a novel technique applied to overcome the paucity of abundance data for Indo-Pacific sailfish and the WPEB23 recommended that the extent of the potential bias must be evaluated with a simulation study which will inform whether this index is acceptable for use in the Indo-Pacific sailfish stock assessment. On the weight-of-evidence available in 2022, the stock status of Indo-Pacific sailfish is determined to be **not overfished nor subject to overfishing**.

Para 41. NOTING the high level of mortality and poor stock status of many marlin species, the Commission **NOTED** the SC's recommendation to encourage CPCs to contribute more high quality data to feed into stock assessments.

Para 42. The Commission **NOTED** the SC's recommendation that the Commission give consideration to how best to financially and logistically support experimental fishing trials (to be conducted by CPCs) in IOTC gillnet fisheries. The Commission **NOTED** that the intent of such trials would be to investigate the impact of different setting depths and times of setting/soaking (e.g. day/night), on catch rates and mortality of interacting species including billfish, target tuna and vulnerable species (e.g. including cetaceans, sharks, mobulids and turtles). The trials would aim to provide the Commission with a quantified understanding of the likely effects and possible trade-offs of various setting/soaking time and subsurface setting options, on each species, to inform its consideration of conservation and management options for the different species groups.

Para 43. As a first step, the Commission **ENCOURAGED** interested CPCs, including in particular those with gillnet fisheries, to collaborate intersessionally to develop a draft scoping paper that would outline the objectives, need, scope, design criteria, methodology and estimated funding required for conducting such trials. If possible, CPCs could look to identify external funding and then the remaining funding that might be needed from the Commission.

The complete report of the 30th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission is available for download from the IOTC website: <https://iotc.org/meetings/28th-session-indian-ocean-tuna-commission>

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the WPB

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2026–WPB24–04 which outlined the outcomes of the 30th Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPB 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 WPB meeting.
- 2) **NOTE** that 8 new Resolutions were adopted at the 30th Session of the Commission.