

## OUTCOMES OF 30<sup>th</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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>

### Feedback from the Small Working Group on reviewing IOTC Processes

(Para 13) 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.

(Para 14) 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.

(Para 15) 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.

(Para 16) 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.

(Para 17) The Commission **AGREED** that information papers should not be presented during meetings and should be kept for background information purposes only.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

That the WPB

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC-2026-WPB24-04 which outlined the outcomes of the 30<sup>th</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission.