
OUTCOMES OF THE 30TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY IOTC SECRETARIAT, AUGUST 2026

PURPOSE

To inform participants at the 22nd Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch Assessment meeting (WPEB22(AS)) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 30th Session, held from 11-15 May 2026, specifically relating to the work of the WPEB.

BACKGROUND

At the 30th Session, the Commission **CONSIDERED** and **ADOPTED** eight proposals as Conservation and Management Measures (consisting of 8 Resolutions). The Commission **ADOPTED** three new proposals for Conservation and Management Measures relevant to the WPEB.

Resolutions

[Resolution 26/03](#): *On the conservation of mobulid rays caught in associated with fisheries managed by IOTC*

[Resolution 26/06](#): *Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)*

[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)*

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

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

(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 29th 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.

(para. 18) The Commission **NOTED** that two of the remaining recommendations by the small working group were addressed in the proposed revisions to the Rules of Procedure (ROPs), as noted in Section 7.

(para. 19) Regarding the recommendation that Working Parties without a set of Terms of Reference (TOR) be guided by the TORs of the Scientific Committee, the Commission **NOTED** the suggestions that a guidance document could be developed to apply across all Working Parties (WP) rather than developing individual TORs for each WP. As no agreement was reached on the preferred approach, it was suggested that the small working group continue discussing this matter, including the possible development of such a guidance document.

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

The Commission made a number of general comments on the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee in 2024, which have relevance for the WPEB.

Status of sharks

(para. 46) The Commission **NOTED** that the current status of sharks are as follows. Full stock status summaries are available [\[here\]](#):

Blue shark

A new stock assessment was carried out for blue sharks in 2025, based on two different models JABBA and SS3, using data up to 2023. On the weight-of-evidence available in 2021, the stock status is

determined to be **not overfished** and **not subject to overfishing**. The stock should be closely monitored, especially with respect to overall catch and discard reporting.

Shortfin mako shark

No new stock assessment was carried out for Shortfin mako sharks in 2025 and so the results are based on the JABBA assessment carried out in 2024, using data until 2022. On the weight-of-evidence available in 2024, the shortfin mako shark stock is determined to be **overfished** and **subject to overfishing**.

Other shark species There are no quantitative stock assessments and limited basic fishery indicators currently available for other shark species in the Indian Ocean therefore their stock status remains **unknown**.

(para. 47) **NOTING** the importance of collecting good quality data for sharks, the Commission **ENCOURAGED** the convening of a small group of interested CPCs to update Resolution 15/01 for potential submission as a proposal for consideration at S31 in 2027.

(para. 48) The Commission **NOTED** that paragraph 7 of Resolution 23/06 requests the SC to develop best practice guidelines for the safe handling and release of cetaceans by 2025, taking into account relevant work undertaken by other RFMOs. The Commission **REQUESTED** the WPDCS, WPEB and the SC to examine the existing recommendations related to this provision and provide an updated recommendation for endorsement by the Commission in 2027, including through intersessional collaboration among interested CPCs.

(para. 49) The Commission **NOTED** that the SC identified whale shark as a “taxon of the greatest biological vulnerability and conservation concern for which there are very few data” and had advised that precautionary measures should be considered.

(para. 50) The Commission **NOTED** that data currently remain insufficient for a full stock assessment for whale shark, but that ongoing efforts to improve data collection and analysis around the status of the stock, including Close-Kin Mark-Recapture (CKMR) studies, would contribute to improved understanding of stock status and population structure. The Commission **NOTED** that the full results of this study will be presented to the WPEB this year.

Scientific Committee Recommendations

(para. 51) The Commission **NOTED** the stock status summaries for species of tuna and tuna-like species under the IOTC mandate, as well as other species impacted by IOTC fisheries and considered the recommendations made by the SC to the Commission. The Commission **ENDORSED** the SC’s 2025 list of recommendations as its own.

(para. 52) The Commission **ENDORSED** those officials elected for the SC and its subsidiary (scientific) bodies for the coming years, as listed in Appendix 7 of the 2025 Scientific Committee Report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the WPEB:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2026–WPEB22(AS)–03 which outlined the outcomes of the 30th Session of the Commission, specifically related to the work of the WPEB 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 WPEB meeting.