PROGRESS MADE ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF WPEB21 AND SC28

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PURPOSE

To provide participants at the 22nd Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB) with an update on the progress made in implementing those recommendations from the previous WPEB meeting which were endorsed by the Scientific Committee (SC), and to provide alternative recommendations for the consideration and potential endorsement by participants as appropriate given any progress.

BACKGROUND

At the 21st Session of the WPEB, participants agreed on a series of actions to be taken by participants, CPCs, and the IOTC Secretariat on a range of issues. The subsequent table developed and agreed to by the WPEB was provided to the SC for its endorsement at its December 2025 meeting. This paper provides a summary of the progress made on this list of requests so that the working party can evaluate progress made and to agree on the next steps to be taken for each issue.

DISCUSSION

The Rules of Procedure of the Scientific Committee include the following seven core tasks, which are to be supported by the various Working Parties.

a) recommend policies and procedures for the collection, processing, dissemination and analysis of fishery data;
b) facilitate the exchange and critical review among scientists of information on research and operation of fisheries of relevance to the Commission;
c) develop and coordinate cooperative research programmes involving Members of the Commission in support of fisheries management;
d) assess and report to the Commission on the status of stocks of relevance to the Commission and the likely effects of further fishing and of different fishing patterns and intensities;
e) formulate and report to the sub-commission, as appropriate, on recommendations concerning conservation, fisheries management and research, including consensus, majority and minority views;
f) consider any matter referred to by the Commission;
g) carry out other technical activities of relevance to the Commission.

Recalling that the SC, at its 16th Session adopted a set of reporting terminology SC16.07 (para. 23), which was subsequently endorsed by the Commission at its 18th Session in 2014 (S18, para 10), to further improve the clarity of information sharing from, and among the science bodies, the following two term levels should be noted when interpreting the Reports and Appendix I to this paper:

Level 1: From a subsidiary body of the Commission to the next level in the structure of the Commission:

RECOMMENDED, **RECOMMENDATION**: Any conclusion or request for an action to be undertaken, from a subsidiary body of the Commission (Committee or Working Party), which is to be formally provided to the next level in the structure of the Commission for its consideration/endorsement (e.g. from a Working Party to the Scientific Committee; from a Committee to the Commission). The intention is that the higher body will consider the recommended action for endorsement under its own mandate, if the subsidiary body does not already have the required mandate. Ideally this should be task specific and contain a timeframe for completion.

Level 2: From a subsidiary body of the Commission to a CPC, the IOTC Secretariat, or other body (not the Commission) to carry out a specified task:

REQUESTED: This term should only be used by a subsidiary body of the Commission if it does not wish to have the request formally adopted/endorsed by the next level in the structure of the Commission. For example, if a Committee

wishes to seek additional input from a CPC on a particular topic, but does not wish to formalise the request beyond the mandate of the Committee, it may request that a set action be undertaken. Ideally this should be task specific and contain a timeframe for the completion.

In addition to the Recommendations endorsed by the SC at its 26nd Session, the SC also made several requests which, although are not passed to the Commission for its endorsement, are considered actions which the Scientific Committee has the mandate to issue. The revised recommendations are contained in Appendix I for the consideration and potential endorsement by the WPEB20.

RECOMMENDATION

That the WPEB **NOTE** the progress made in implementing the recommendations and requests of the 21st Session of the WPEB, and consider whether revised recommendations need to be sent to the SC for its consideration.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Progress made on the Recommendations and Requests of WPEB21

APPENDIX I

Progress made on the recommendations and requests of WPEB21 and SC28

WPEB21 Rec. No.	Recommendation from WPEB21	SC28 Rec. No.	Recommendation adopted by the SC28	Endorsed at S30	Progress/Comments
WPEB21 (AS).01 (para. 25)	**NOTING** that data for bycatch species in IOTC fisheries are severely lacking, the WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that the SC ask the Commission and Compliance Committee to **ENCOURAGE** CPCs to provide observer data and work to reach at least the 5% minimum coverage level as required by Resolution 25/04.	SC28.13 (para. 116)	**NOTING** that data for bycatch species in IOTC fisheries are severely lacking, the SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission and Compliance Committee **ENCOURAGE** CPCs to provide observer data and work to reach at least the 5% minimum coverage level as required by Resolution 25/06.	(para. 38)	Ongoing: this was not discussed in any detail by the Commission, only the following was noted: The Commission **NOTED** that the 5% minimum observer coverage required by Resolution 25/06 has not been achieved by some CPCs.
WPEB21 (AS).02 (para. 103)	The WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that the Scientific Committee take into account the criteria outlined in the IOTC-2025-WPEB21(AS)-24 (below) and points raised above when discussing the principles for conducting an experimental fishing trial(s) as requested per Resolution 25-08. For reference, the criteria outlined in IOTC-2025-WPEB21(AS)-24 are as follows: • That the trial is conducted in areas and seasons with known high shark abundance (including of vulnerable shark species), using existing data from Indian Ocean Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) data or surveys to identify suitable hotspots. • Before the trial, conduct a power analysis (following Watson et al. 2005) informed by historical bycatch data from the Indian Ocean to determine the number of sets required to detect a true effect (for each	(para. 151-153)	In accordance with Paragraph 17 of Resolution 25/08 concerning principles for conducting experimental fishing trials, the SC **AGREED** the criteria specified below, while recognising the operational complexities, time constraint and difficulties associated with field activities. • Select the areas and seasons with known high shark abundance (including of vulnerable shark species), based on existing data from Indian Ocean Regional Observer Scheme (ROS), research and surveys. • Before the trial, conduct a power analysis (following Watson et al. 2005) informed by historical Indian Ocean bycatch data to determine the number of sets required to detect a true effect (for each vulnerable pelagic shark species, not including blue shark), thereby avoiding a Type II error. • Standardise (and record) gear and operational practices during the trials, including, inter		

	vulnerable species), thereby avoiding a Type II error. • That the trial employs a "paired comparison" approach by alternating control (nylon monofilament) and experimental (wire) leaders along each longline section. Also, alternate the leader type on the first branch line for every subsequent fishing set to ensure a balanced design. • That the trial standardises all gear and operational practices, including, *inter alia*, soak time, setting/hauling times, bait/hook types and branch line/leader lengths and other gear characteristics (e.g. use of lightsticks) to assist the trial in isolating the effect of leader material. • Use at least one, and preferably two, independent observers or scientific researchers who are trained in longline operations and species identification to minimise human error and observational bias. • Establish a standardised protocol for collecting data. Key metrics to record are species ID, leader material, fate (retained/discarded), condition at haulback, and the occurrence of bite-offs. • Ensure the trial vessel skipper and crew are briefed on the trial's objectives and design, and that they support the experimental protocols. • Develop the statistical analysis plan in collaboration with biostatisticians. Appropriate statistical approaches may include hierarchical or mixed-effect models		alia, setting/hauling times, bait type, hook types, line weighting and branch line/leader lengths and diameter and other gear configurations (e.g. use of lightsticks) to assist the trial in isolating the effect of leader material. Record any variations from standardised gear/practices, if they occur. • Use at least one independent observer or scientific researchers who are trained in longline operations and species identification to minimise human error and observational bias. If using observers, the observers should be debriefed post trip to discuss/document any variations from the planned design. • Collect data for each branchline at least on size and species of individual catch, their fate (retained/discarded) and condition at haulback, and the occurrence of bite-offs (as much as possible), together with corresponding leader material. • Brief the trial vessel skipper, crew(s) and observer(s) on the trial's objectives and design, and the experimental protocols prior to the fishing trial to ensure their understanding and support to the trial. • Apply the appropriate statistical analysis, including hierarchical or mixed-effect models to evaluate potential differences in CPUE, bite-off rate, sizes and haulback mortality rate according to different leader materials in use. The SC **AGREED** that trials should employ a "paired comparison" approach, by alternating the control (nylon monofilament) and experimental (wire) leaders. However, there were divergent opinions on the operational designs that would meet this criterion, for example, whether alternating treatments should be		

	(e.g., GLMMs) to analyse key response variables, including: CPUE, bite-off rate, and haulback mortality rate.		implemented at the level of individual branchlines, baskets, or by groups of baskets (i.e., section). The SC **AGREED** that a basket is defined as a section of hooks between floats. The SC further **AGREED** that the above criteria is basic requirement for ensuring a fishing trial to obtain results trustworthy for scientific analyses. The SC also **ADVISED** the Commission to encourage CPCs to continue research on leader materials in use and its impacts on shark bycatch and mortality, as well as alternative gear configurations (for example loop gear) and mitigation measures to reduce shark bycatch mortality in Indian Ocean tuna fisheries.		
WPEB21 (AS).03 (para. 113)	**NOTING** that Resolution 15/01 includes a list of species for which reporting catch data is mandatory/optional and that varies by gear and by fishery type (i.e. artisanal vs commercial fisheries), the WPEB **NOTED** that many species of interest to the WPEB are not mandatory for reporting for all gears or fishery type. The WPEB therefore **RECOMMENDED** that the SC review the list of species that are mandatory for reporting to species level while considering the feasibility of such data collection, and included the following suggested changes: • Silky sharks to be added also for gillnets fisheries • Hammerhead sharks to be reported at species level at least for scalloped, smooth and great hammerhead sharks for all gear types (explicitly including purse seine fisheries) • Mantas and devil rays to be reported at species level differentiating at least	SC28.14 (para. 118)	**NOTING** that Resolution 15/01 includes a list of species for which reporting catch data is mandatory/optional and that varies by gear and by fishery type (i.e. artisanal vs commercial fisheries), the SC **NOTED** that many species of interest to the WPEB are not mandatory for reporting for all gears or fishery type. The SC **NOTED** concerns from some CPCs that making these species mandatory for reporting for all gears and fleets (including artisanal fleets) could place additional burden on many CPCs. This is particularly the case for many coastal fleets which are not necessarily targeting only tuna but instead target a wide range of species, making data collection complex. The SC therefore **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission review the list of species that are mandatory for reporting to species level while considering the feasibility of such data collection for all CPCs. The SC included the following suggested changes: • Silky sharks to be added also for gillnets fisheries	(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.

	between manta rays (giant manta and reef manta) and other devil rays adding them for mandatory reporting at least for purse seine fisheries and for gillnet fisheries instead of optional • Great white sharks as mandatory for all gear types • Oceanic whitetip sharks as mandatory for all gear types.		• Hammerhead sharks to be reported at species level at least for scalloped, smooth and great • hammerhead sharks for all gear types (explicitly including purse seine fisheries) • Mantas and devil rays to be reported at species level differentiating at least between manta ray (giant manta and reef manta) and other devil rays adding them for mandatory reporting at least for purse seine fisheries and for gillnet fisheries instead of optional • Great white sharks as mandatory for all gear types • Oceanic whitetip sharks as mandatory for all gear types		
WPEB21 (AS).04 (para. 120)	The WPEB **REVIEWED** the minimum standards set out in Annex III of this Resolution and **ADOPTED** the revisions made by members of the group which can be found in Annex XVVII. The WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that the SC **ENDORSE** these handling guidelines for consideration by the Commission in 2026. The WPEB further **NOTED** that work on best practice handling guidelines is ongoing and frequently evolves. The WPEB therefore **RECOMMENDED** that the SC suggest that the Commission consider adopting a master document containing handling guidelines for all taxa, rather than requiring Resolutions containing such guidelines to be updated when new information becomes available. Future Resolutions could then refer back to this master document adopted by the SC. The WPEB **AGREED** that a small working group will work on compiling these intersessionally for review by the SC.	SC28.16 (para. 120)	The SC **NOTED** that the WPEB had **REVIEWED** the minimum standards set out in Annex III of Resolution 25/08 and **ADOPTED** the revisions made by members of the group which can be found in Annex XVVII of the WPEB report. The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission consider these standards for adoption in 2026. The SC further **NOTED** that work on best practice handling guidelines is ongoing and frequently evolves. The SC therefore **SUGGESTED** that the Commission consider adopting a master document containing handling guidelines for all taxa, rather than requiring Resolutions containing such guidelines to be updated when new information becomes available. Future Resolutions could then refer back to this master document adopted by the SC. The SC **AGREED** that a small working group will work on compiling these intersessionally for review by the SC.	(Para. 48)	Ongoing: The Commission did not discuss this specific recommendation, however they did note the following regarding handling guidelines for cetaceans: 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.

WPEB21 (AS).05 (para. 148-151)	The WPEB **NOTED** in its discussions of CPUEs, two additional issues. Firstly, that the changing spatial distribution of the fleets which regularly provide CPUE series can make it challenging to determine which CPUE series are consistent and appropriate for use in assessments. The WPEB **NOTED** that it might be useful to consider a wider research project (or workshop) that attempts to compare CPUEs, by isolating sub-regions where fishing effort has been fairly consistent such as the South-West Indian Ocean. The WPEB **NOTED** that such a project/workshop would help to determine the similarities and conflicts between the various CPUE series and how well they are explaining the population trends. The WPEB **NOTED** that comparing and identifying which CPUE series are the most appropriate to include in assessments is a consistent challenge across all species, not just bycatch species so this type of analyses would benefit the work of all IOTC's Working Parties Secondly, the need to homogenise CPUE standardization methods, as a diverse range of methods are used that calculate results in different ways, that might not always be comparable. One way in which this might be addressed, alongside other issues with CPUE data, is to undertake work to develop a joint longline index of blue shark abundance built from operational fleet data. Subsequently, WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that to progress work towards resolving the issues above, the SC either a) commission a dedicated project; b) request such analyses to be		This topic was not discussed in detail by the SC	(para. 39)	<u>Ongoing:</u> This topic was not discussed in detail by the Commission but the Commission noted: The Commission **NOTED** that the joint longline CPUE remains one of the most important data inputs driving stock assessments for yellowfin tuna and that the joint CPUE Working Group had made significant efforts to improve these analyses. The Commission further **NOTED** concerns regarding previous errors and the intention to avoid similar issues in future through increased transparency, including participation of external scientists. The Commission also **NOTED** that other Working Parties, including the WPB and the WPEB, had made similar recommendations relating to the development of reliable CPUE indices.

	undertaken as a standard part of developing standardised CPUEs for assessments; or c) build this work into a future CPUE workshop.				
WPEB21 (AS).06 (para. 152)	The WPEB **NOTED** that CPUE series are being presented in a range of formats which makes it challenging to directly compare between different series and further **NOTED** that this is a problem for all species for which CPUE series are being produced, not just for bycatch species. The WPEB **NOTED** that guidelines for presenting CPUE series have been developed in the past both by the IOTC and other RFMOs but these do not appear to be consistently followed and may be outdated. Therefore, the WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that the SC review these guidelines and **REQUEST** CPCs to follow the guidelines when reviewed.		This topic was not discussed in detail by the SC		
WPEB21 (AS).07 (para. 181)	The WPEB **RECOMMENDED** based on the SS3 assessment results, that the SC advise the Commission that the current recommended catch for blue shark remain close to current catches, and below the MSY estimated by the SS3 assessment model for 2025 (< 31,000 t).		This information was provided in the Executive Summary for Blue Shark	(para. 46)	Ongoing: The Commission NOTED that the current status of blue sharks but did not set a TAC for the species.
WPEB21 (AS).08 (para. 207)	The WPEB **NOTED** the new loop gear known as “meka-ring/trap-line” that has been increasingly used in various oceans. Several papers have been recently prepared for ICCAT, including in the Mediterranean Sea where the gear started to be used several years ago, and more recently in the Atlantic Ocean. Currently, the scale of the use of this new gear in the IOTC area is unknown but the	SC28.21 (para. 145)	The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission **ENCOURAGE** ongoing trials with these gears (i.e., loop gears) to better understand their effect on target and bycatch species.		

	WPEB **NOTED** that it will have a potential effect on catch, mostly for swordfish. As such, the group **RECOMMENDED** that the SC takes note and **REQUESTED** CPC scientists to investigate within their fleets if such gear is in use in the Indian Ocean, and consider, taking into account the ongoing work at ICCAT, starting to include this type of gear in data collection methods in their logbook and/or observer program to collect the corresponding catch and effort data in the future. It is noted from some very preliminary literature that with this new loop gear the catch rates of swordfish are higher, while shark and turtle bycatch is much lower. As such, this new gear can also be further studied as a potential mitigation new measure for vulnerable species.				
WPEB21 (AS).09 (para. 246)	The WPEB **NOTED** that while evidence on post-release survival of whale sharks from purse seine interactions suggests low mortality when best-practices are followed, data on bycatch in other fisheries, particularly gillnets, remains scarce**.** Therefore, the WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that the SC **ENCOURAGE** CPCs to improve data collection and reporting for interactions with whale sharks involving all gear types as well as purse seine.	SC28.18 (para. 122)	The SC **NOTED** that while evidence on post-release survival of whale sharks from purse seine interactions suggests low mortality when best-practices are followed, data on bycatch in other fisheries, particularly gillnets, remains scarce. Therefore, the SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission **ENCOURAGE** CPCs to improve data collection and reporting for interactions with whale sharks involving all gear types as well as purse seine.		<u>Ongoing:</u> There was no specific mention of data collection requirements in relation to whale sharks
WPEB21 (AS).10 (para. 251)	The WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that the SC should promote efforts to clarify the extent and nature of whale shark interactions with IOTC fisheries, and to assess the current stock status within the IOTC area of competence, **ACKNOWLEDGING** that the extent of the vulnerability of whale sharks to IOTC fisheries is unknown. Based on the	SC28.19 (para. 123)	The SC **ENCOURAGED** efforts to clarify the extent and nature of whale shark interactions with IOTC fisheries, and to assess the current stock status within the IOTC area of competence, **ACKNOWLEDGING** that the extent of the vulnerability of whale sharks to IOTC fisheries is unknown. Based on the available information presented by the WPEB, the SC classified whale	(para. 49) (para. 50)	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. The Commission **NOTED** that data currently remain insufficient for a full stock assessment

	available information presented in paper IOTC-2025-WPEB21(AS)-40, the WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that the SC classify whale sharks in the Indian Ocean as a **"**taxon of the greatest biological vulnerability and conservation concern for which there are very few data**"**, as defined in Resolution 25/08. The WPEB **NOTED** that this classification supports the consideration of precautionary management measures and prioritization of future research and data collection efforts by the Commission.		sharks in the Indian Ocean as a "taxon of the greatest biological vulnerability and conservation concern for which there are very few data", as defined in Resolution 25/08 and **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission take appropriate action based on this classification. The SC **NOTED** that this classification supports the consideration of precautionary management measures and prioritization of future research and data collection efforts by the Commission.		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.
WPEB21 (AS).11 (para. 276)	The WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that the SC **ADVISE** the Commission to speak with CPCs to determine appropriate ways to improve data reporting from artisanal fisheries.	SC28.15 (para. 119)	The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission speak with CPCs to determine appropriate ways to improve data reporting from artisanal fisheries.	(para. 37)	Ongoing: The Commission **NOTED** that mandatory species-level reporting remains challenging for some CPCs in relation to their artisanal fleets and **AGREED** on the need for practical and achievable pathways to improve data recording and reporting.
WPEB21 (AS).12 (para. 277)	The WPEB **NOTED** that in 2024, the group recommended the adoption of a revised set of handling guidelines for mobulids while **NOTING** that that work was required to further develop the guidelines for gillnets. The WPEB **NOTED** that the Secretariat worked intersessionally with the Manta Trust to further develop these guidelines which were reviewed by the group. After these had been reviewed, the WPEB **ADOPTED** the revised handling guidelines for mobulids and **RECOMMENDED** that the SC **ENDORSE** these handling guidelines for consideration by the Commission in 2026. The details of the suggested revisions to the handling procedures can be found in Appendix XVVI.	SC28.17 (para. 121)	The SC **NOTED** that in 2024, the WPEB recommended the adoption of a revised set of handling guidelines for mobulids while **NOTING** that work was required to further develop the guidelines for gillnets. The SC **NOTED** that the WPEB worked to further develop these guidelines which were revised and adopted. The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission consider these revised handling guidelines for mobulids for consideration for adoption in 2026. The details of the suggested revisions to the handling procedures can be found in Appendix XVVI of the WPEB report.		Completed: These handling guidelines were integrated into the adopted Resolution 26/03.

WPEB21 (AS).13 (para. 310)	The WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that the SC consider and endorse the WPEB Program of Work (2026–2030), as provided in Appendix XVIV.	(para. 287)	The SC **NOTED** the proposed Program of Work and priorities for the SC and each of the working parties and **AGREED** to a consolidated Program of Work as outlined in Appendix 36a-g. The Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of each working party will ensure that the efforts of their respective working parties are focused on the core areas contained within the appendix, considering any new research priorities identified by the Commission at its next Session.		Completed: 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 Scientific Committee to the Commission. The Commission **ENDORSED** the Scientific Committee's 2025 list of recommendations as its own.
WPEB21 (AS).15 (para. 320)	The WPEB **RECOMMENDED** that the Scientific Committee consider the consolidated set of recommendations arising from WPEB21, provided at Appendix XVVIII, as well as the management advice provided in the draft resource stock status summary for each of the eight shark species, as well of those for marine turtles, seabirds, cetaceans and mobulids: **Sharks** • Blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) – Appendix VII • Oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) – Appendix VIII • Scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewin*i) – Appendix IX • Shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) – Appendix X • Silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) – Appendix XI	SC28.04-08 (para. 271-275)	The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission note the management advice developed for a subset of shark species commonly caught in IOTC fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species: • Blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) - Appendix 23 • Oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) - Appendix 24 • Scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) - Appendix 25 • Shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) - Appendix 26 • Silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) - Appendix 27 • Bigeye thresher shark (*Alopias superciliosus*) - Appendix 28 • Pelagic thresher shark (*Alopias pelagicus*) - Appendix 29 • Porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*) - Appendix 30 ***Marine turtles*** The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission note the management advice developed for		Completed: 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 Scientific Committee to the Commission. The Commission **ENDORSED** the Scientific Committee's 2025 list of recommendations as its own.

	• Bigeye thresher shark (*Alopias superciliosus*) – Appendix XII • Pelagic thresher shark (*Alopias pelagicus*) – Appendix XIII • Porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*) - Appendix XIV **Other species/groups** • Marine turtles – Appendix XV • Seabirds – Appendix XVI • Marine mammals – Appendix XVII • Mobulids – Appendix XVIV		marine turtles, as provided in the Executive Summary encompassing all six species found in the Indian Ocean: Marine turtles - Appendix 31 ***Seabirds*** The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission note the management advice developed for seabirds, as provided in the Executive Summary encompassing all species commonly interacting with IOTC fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species: Seabirds - Appendix 32 ***Marine Mammals*** The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission note the management advice developed for cetaceans, as provided in the newly developed Executive Summary encompassing all species commonly interacting with IOTC fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species: Cetaceans - Appendix 33 ***Mobulids*** SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission note the management advice developed for Mobulids, as provided in the newly developed Executive Summary which encompasses all species commonly interacting with IOTC fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species*:* Mobulids – Appendix 34		

WPEB21 Report	WPEB REQUESTS	Update/Progress
(para. 101)	The WPEB **REQUESTED** that the SC consider and discuss how best to conduct trials to test leader effects on vulnerable species to take into account when they have differing distributions and core areas of abundance.	Ongoing: The SC **AGREED** on a set of criteria and principles that trials should follow.
(para. 175)	The WPEB **NOTED** the results of the final reference case assessment, and the projections. The WPEB **NOTED** that although a "worst-case" scenario had been proposed, there was insufficient time to present the results and examine the diagnostics during the meeting. The WPEB **DISCUSSED** this omission and **REQUESTED** that the results, code, and model specifications be archived with the Secretariat so that they could be fully explored in the next iteration of the assessment process.	Completed: The results, codes and model specifications have been shared with the Secretariat.
(para. 182)	The WPEB **ADOPTED** the management advice developed for blue shark, as provided in the draft status summary in Appendix VII and **REQUESTED** that the IOTC Secretariat update the draft stock status summary with the latest catch data and the results from the projections in the Kobe II Strategy Matrix, and for the summary to be provided to the SC as part of the draft Executive Summary, for its consideration.	Completed: The stock status summaries were updated in the relevant appendices
(para. 199)	The WPEB **REQUESTED** that information on FADs currently included in the gear form be removed, given that a specific form exists for FAD ALDFG, and further **REQUESTED** that the list of FAD materials be revised. The WPEB **NOTED** that FAD and buoy IDs could be linked to information in the FAD Register.	Completed: an updated version of the form was presented to the WPTT and agreed on. However, no data have been received to date, probably as this information is voluntary for reporting.
(para. 207)	The WPEB **NOTED** the new loop gear known as "meka-ring/trap-line" that has been increasingly used in various oceans. Several papers have been recently prepared for ICCAT, including in the Mediterranean Sea where the gear started to be used several years ago, and more recently in the Atlantic Ocean. Currently, the scale of the use of	Ongoing: Scientists from Japan and EU, Spain have presented the proposed studies that they plan to undertake to further investigate the use and impacts of this new gear type.

	this new gear in the IOTC area is unknown but the WPEB **NOTED** that it will have a potential effect on catch, mostly for swordfish. As such, the group **RECOMMENDED** that the SC takes note and **REQUESTED** CPC scientists to investigate within their fleets if such gear is in use in the Indian Ocean, and consider, taking into account the ongoing work at ICCAT, starting to include this type of gear in data collection methods in their logbook and/or observer program to collect the corresponding catch and effort data in the future. It is noted from some very preliminary literature that with this new loop gear the catch rates of swordfish are higher, while shark and turtle bycatch is much lower. As such, this new gear can also be further studied as a potential mitigation new measure for vulnerable species.	
(para. 209)	The WPEB **REQUESTED** the Secretariat to add a reference code for the new gear so it can be reported through ROS data forms.	Completed: A new code (TTL) has been added to the code list data catalogue: https://data.iotc.org/reference/latest/forms/ros/Form-ROS-LL.html#hookAndTerminalDevices
(para. 210)	The WPEB **NOTED** that no papers were presented on this topic and so **REQUESTED** the WPTT and other relevant working parties to discuss this as it is thought to be more relevant to their work. [This was regarding 'examining the benefits of retaining non-targeted species catches']	Ongoing: This was not discussed by the WPTT.
(para. 248)	**NOTING** the uncertainties in the IUCN assessment, the WPEB **REQUESTED** that the Secretariat seek further details from the assessors regarding the methodologies applied in their evaluations. [this was regarding the IUCN assessment of whale sharks]	Ongoing: The IUCN assessors contributed to a new paper on whale sharks that will be presented to WPEB22
(para. 274-275)	**ACKNOWLEDGING** the additional reporting burden on CPCs but **NOTING** the limited amount of species-specific data reported to the Secretariat for mobulids and the difficulties that this poses for accurately assessing the status of these populations, the WPEB **ENCOURAGED** CPCS to report mobulid catch and discards data to species level.	Ongoing: A second species identification workshop was held in October 2026. In addition, the Manta Trust have developed a new field guide for manta and devil rays which include a lot of species identification techniques. They will propose the development of specific tools for IOTC CPCs during WPEB22.

	The WPEB **REQUESTED** the Secretariat to work with CPCs to improve their capacity in species identification of these species and reporting of data.	
(para. 291)	The WPEB **NOTED** that several actions relevant to an IOTC Seabird Strategy could be achieved through cooperation with CCSBT, and so **REQUESTED** the IOTC Secretariat to liaise with CCSBT on this work. However, the WPEB **NOTED** that some actions would need to be specific to IOTC fisheries, and therefore considered within the IOTC context.	Ongoing: The Secretariat did liaise with CCSBT. It seems that their seabird strategy is still awaiting finalisation but when it has been finalised it should be relatively easy to adapt this to the needs of the IOTC.