IOTC–2026–SC29–03[E]

OUTCOMES OF 30th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 25 OCTOBER 2026

PURPOSE

To inform the Scientific Committee (SC) of the decisions and requests made by the Commission at its 30th Session, held in May 2026, specifically relating to the IOTC science process.

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 transhipment 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]

The updated *Compendium of Active Conservation and Management Measures for the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission* may be downloaded from the IOTC website at the following links:

English: http://iotc.org/cmms

French: http://iotc.org/fr/mcgs

Below is a summary of the scientific requirements stipulated in the CMMs adopted at the 30th Session of the Commission:

Resolution 26/01: *On establishing interim catch limits for yellowfin tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence*. This Resolution establishes a total allowable catch (TAC) for yellowfin tuna of 436,867 t in 2027 and 2028. The TAC exceeds the estimated range of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), and for this reason, the Commission has raised concerns about the potential impact on the yellowfin stock, especially given that additional provisions within the resolution could allow the total catch to surpass the specified limit. The resolution requests that a full stock assessment of yellowfin tuna be conducted in 2027 and that the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process be prioritised for yellowfin tuna and a management procedure be developed for consideration and adoption by the Commission at its annual Session in 2028.

Resolution 26/02: *On establishing interim catch limits for swordfish in the IOTC Area of Competence*. This Resolution establishes a total allowable catch (TAC) for Swordfish tuna of 30,527 t in 2027 and 2028. The Resolution requests the SC to provide advice to the Commission on the potential impacts of carrying forward the underage of catch limits under paragraph 6 on the effectiveness of the Management Procedure. 21. The Resolution also requests that the IOTC Secretariat and the SC shall support CPCs in improving their data collection systems for swordfish and shall ensure these data are duly integrated into stock assessment and management strategy evaluation processes.

Resolution 26/03: O*n the conservation of mobulid rays caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC*. This Resolution establishes management measures for mobulid rays, including mitigation measures, data collection, and scientific research to strengthen their conservation in IOTC fisheries. It requests that CPCs develop a catch monitoring plan for mobulid rays, to be reviewed by the Scientific Committee. CPCs are encouraged to investigate at-vessel and post-release mortality, including through satellite tagging programmes. The Resolution further requests that the SC review the status of mobulid rays and provide management advice to the Commission.

DISCUSSION

Requests from the Commission

At the 30th Session of the Commission, Members made several comments regarding the recommendations made by the Scientific Committee, which participants are asked to **NOTE** (extracts from IOTC-2026-S30-R):

Para 18. The Commission **NOTED** that all scientific working group and working party meetings taking place in 2025 had been successfully held, utilizing a hybrid format.

Para 19. The Commission **NOTED** that that 28 National Reports were submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2025 by CPCs and that this was an increase when compared with the 27 reports provided by CPCs in 2024.

Matters related to ecosystems, bycatch and the status of sharks

Para 2. 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.

Feedback from the Small Working Group on reviewing IOTC Processes

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 Secretariats 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.

Report of the 30th Session of the IOTC

The report of 30th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission are available on the IOTC website.

http://www.iotc.org/

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Scientific Committee:

1) **NOTE** paper IOTC-2026-SC29-03 which outlined the main outcomes of the 30th Session of the Commission, specifically related to the IOTC science process and **AGREE** to consider how best to provide the Commission with the information it has requested, throughout the course of the current SC meeting.
2) **NOTE** that 8 Resolutions were adopted at this Session of the Commission.