PREVIOUS DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 26 OCTOBER 2026

PURPOSE

To ensure the Scientific Committee (SC) is aware that in addition to the requests made to the SC by the Commission during its 30th Session, there are a number of decisions in the form of previous Resolutions that require a response from the Scientific Committee.

BACKGROUND

The Commission has considered and adopted a range of Conservation and Management Measures (CMM) in the past that provided clear directions to the Scientific Committee (SC). The SC has responded to most and some remain outstanding or are ongoing.

The resolutions are outlined below:

Resolution 15/10 ***On target and limit reference points and a decision framework***

(para2) Where the IOTC Scientific Committee considers that MSY-based reference points cannot be robustly estimated, biomass limit reference points will be set at a rate of B0. Unless the IOTC Scientific Committee advises the Commission of more suitable limit reference point for a particular species, by default, the interim BLIM will be set at 0.2 B0 and fishing mortality rate limit reference point at F0.2 Bo (the value corresponding to this biomass limit reference point). These interim limit reference points will be reviewed no later than 2018.

(Annex 1: para 4) The initial assessment described in points 2 and 3 shall be completed, where possible, for:

b) Assessments for yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna and swordfish to be completed by 2017 and presented to the Commission meeting in 2018.

Resolution 12/04 ***On the conservation of marine turtles***

(para 17) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall annually review the information reported by CPCs pursuant to this measure and, as necessary, provide recommendations to the Commission on ways to strengthen efforts to reduce marine turtle interactions with IOTC fisheries.

Resolution 22/03 ***On a Management Procedure for Bigeye Tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence***

(para 4) The Scientific Committee shall run the MP and advise the Commission of the outcome, including a recommended TAC and any advice on exceptional circumstances in accordance with the Commission endorsed Guidelines for the Provisions of Exceptional Circumstances for IOTC MPs as documented in Appendix 6a of IOTC-2021-SC24-R.

(para 12) The Scientific Committee is requested to review, and if necessary, further develop and refine (not later than 2024), the exceptional circumstances guidelines (adopted by SC24 and S26), taking into account, inter alia, the need for an appropriate balance between specificity versus flexibility in defining exceptional circumstances, and the appropriate level of robustness to ensure that exceptional circumstances are triggered only when necessary.

Resolution 23/01 ***On Management of Anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (AFADs)***

(para 16) The IOTC Executive Secretary in consultation with the Scientific Committee shall develop a best practice guideline for construction of AFADs and submit it to the Commission for adoption no later than the 29th Annual Session of the IOTC.

(para 17) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall analyse further information, when available, and provide advice on existing, additional or alternative AFAD management options for sustainable fisheries.

(para 18) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall, no later than at its annual session in 2025, provide a set of relevant indicators that would allow monitoring the effects of AFAD fisheries and assessing the efficiency of existing/additional/alternative AFAD management options.

(para 19) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall provide scientific advice by assessing the impact of fishing using AFADs on juvenile tuna mortality and provide advice to the Commission.

Resolution 23/03 ***On Establishing a Voluntary Fishing Closure in the Indian Ocean for the Conservation of Tropical Tuna's***

(para 3) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall provide advice and recommendations no later than 31st December 2023 on appropriate fishing closures applicable to all fishing gears. These recommendations need to consider the area, closure period and any other details, with the objective of achieving a high probability of reducing fishing mortality of juvenile tropical tuna, in particular bigeye and yellowfin tuna. If the IOTC Scientific Committee concludes that it does not currently possess access to sufficient scientific data to provide recommendations to the Commission, the SC shall provide recommendations relating to the data necessary for science-based recommendations for the information of the Commission.

(para 4) In producing its advice and recommendations, the IOTC Scientific Committee shall take into account, inter alia:

a) available IOTC fisheries data;

b) fishing behaviours/ patterns in the Indian Ocean, both historically and those anticipated as a consequence of the implementation of the closure or any new management measures.

Resolution 23/06 ***On the Conservation of Cetaceans***

(para 12) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall review information on the status of cetaceans in the IOTC area of competence and provide recommendation or advice to the Commission no later than 2025 to identify appropriate measures that Commission shall take to mitigate negative effects of the interactions with cetaceans by the IOTC fisheries.

Resolution 23/07 ***On Reducing the Incidental Bycatch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries***

(para 8) The Scientific Committee will continue to review and make recommendations to the Commission on advancements and best practice in seabird bycatch mitigation as they become available. This will include, by 2024 at the latest, developing advice to the Commission on best practice branch line weighting.

Resolution 23/08 ***On Electronic Monitoring Standards for IOTC Fisheries***

(para 5) The Scientific Committee shall, no later than 2024, review the ROS minimum required data fields to

a) identify any fields that are logistically difficult for EM and/or human observers to collect, respectively; and

b) provide advice and recommendations to the Commission on the need and use of those identified fields for scientific purposes, and their collection and reporting status (i.e. mandatory, non-mandatory etc.).

c) Discuss and provide advice to the Commission on the potential need to develop a separate EM ROS minimum data fields list.

Resolution 24/02 ***On Management of Drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (DFADs) in the IOTC Area of Competence*****.**

(para 38) Until a scheme to operationalise the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear (VGMFG) is endorsed by the Commission in accordance with the Proposal of Terms of Reference for developing a scheme to operationalise the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear (VGMFG), CPCs shall implement the measures provided for in paragraphs 39 and 40.

(para 39) CPCs shall ensure that their vessels do not deploy DFADs unless the instrumented buoy attached to the DFAD is permanently marked with the unique reference number marking (ID provided by the manufacturer of the instrumented buoy) and the IOTC unique vessel identifier number is permanently and clearly visible.

(para 40) As of 1 January 2026, and with the specific objective to collect information on how to mitigate DFAD loss and abandonment, in addition to the marking of the instrumented buoy referred to in paragraph 39, CPCs shall ensure that their vessels do only deploy DFADs that are permanently marked with a specific IOTC DFAD unique identifier. The IOTC Secretariat shall attribute the DFAD unique identifier to the CPC, which shall communicate the identifier to the master of the vessel. The marking shall be separate from the instrumented buoy. The standards for the individual marking of DFADs shall be developed by the IOTC Scientific Committee, following preparatory work by the WGFAD and in close collaboration with the IOTC Secretariat, at the latest at its 2025 session.

(para 48) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall analyse further information, when available, and provide scientific advice on existing, additional or alternative DFAD management options for sustainable fisheries to be submitted for consideration by the Commission.

(para 49) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall provide scientific advice to the Commission by:

(a) assessing the impact that fishing gears or fishing using DFADs have on juvenile mortality and provide adequate advice to the Commission. This assessment shall include, but not be limited to a comparative analysis of the contribution of all fishing gears to the juvenile mortality of targeted tunas, related impacts on the MSY levels and any other advice to recover or maintain stock size above levels which can produce the MSY and keep the risk of violating/exceeding limit reference points to a low probability;

(b) providing an analysis of the efficiency of current active buoy limits and examining the potential efficiency of alternative/complementary options to limit the number of DFADs at sea. This will include, among other options, an advice on the definition and expected effectiveness of a measure to control the number of sets under DFAD.

(para 50) In producing its advice and recommendations, the IOTC Scientific Committee shall take into account, inter alia:

(a) available IOTC fisheries data;

(b) experiences of implementing similar management measures with similar objectives, including DFAD closures, DFAD Register, and DFAD-MS from other RFMOs, if any; and

(c) fishing behaviors/patterns in the Indian Ocean, both historically and those anticipated as a consequence of the implementation of any new management measures, including a DFAD closure.

Resolution 24/06 ***On a Ban on Discards of Bigeye Tuna, Skipjack Tuna, Yellowfin Tuna, and Non-Targeted Species Caught by Vessels in the IOTC Record of Authorisation that Operate in the IOTC Area of Competence****.*

(para 7) The IOTC Scientific Committee, the IOTC Working Party on Tropical Tunas, and the IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch shall as a matter of priority act on its recommendation in the Report of the 18th Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee and undertake work to examine the benefits of retaining non-targeted species catches, other than those prohibited via IOTC Resolution, and present its recommendations to the 29th Annual Session of the Commission. The work should take into account all species that are usually discarded on all major gears, and should look at fisheries that take place both on the high seas and in coastal countries and the feasibility of both retraining on-board and processing of the associated landings.

(para 8) This Resolution will be revised, according to the advice of the IOTC Scientific Committee resulting from the review of the IOTC Working Party on Tropical Tunas (for bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna and yellowfin tuna) and of the IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (for non-target species).

Resolution 24/07 ***On a Management Procedure for Skipjack in the IOTC Area Of Competence***.

(para 7) The Scientific Committee shall run the MP and advise the Commission of the outcome, including a recommended TAC and any advice on exceptional circumstances in accordance with the Commission endorsed Guidelines for the Provisions of Exceptional Circumstances for IOTC MPs as documented in Appendix 6a of IOTC-2021-SC24-R.

(para 15) The Scientific Committee is requested to review, and if necessary, further develop and refine (not later than 2026), the exceptional circumstances guidelines (adopted by SC27 and S30), taking into account, inter alia, the need for an appropriate balance between specificity versus flexibility in defining exceptional

circumstances, and the appropriate level of robustness to ensure that exceptional circumstances are triggered only when necessary.

(para 16) As part of the annual evaluation of exceptional circumstances, including the review of relevant new or updated information pertaining to Skipjack tuna, the SC is requested to monitor and evaluate the available indicators of skipjack tuna recruitment and productivity, to inform its advice to the Commission as to the potential need for bringing forward the review of the MP. This will ensure the Commission can take account of changes in recruitment/productivity that might not have been tested specifically by the MSE.

(para 17) The Scientific Committee is requested to specifically consider if catches exceed the TAC, as part of the annual evaluation of exceptional circumstances.

(para 18) The SC is also requested to investigate approaches to incorporate a multi-species framework into future candidate management procedures and if possible, wider impacts in the ecosystem such as the mortality on associated and dependant species affected by tuna fishing operations i.e. marine turtles, marine mammals, seabirds, sharks and fish species caught incidentally (bycatch).

Resolution 25/01: On climate change as it relates to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 24/01

(para 3) The IOTC Scientific Committee, and WPSE, when requested by the Commission, shall consider and, where possible, advise on the potential impacts of climate change on IOTC species and any related impacts on developing States and Small Island Developing States.

(para 4) The IOTC Scientific Committee, and WPSE, shall consider how climate change and fishing activities may be related and provide advice to the Commission on the potential implications for these relationships for the conservation and management of IOTC species, bycatch, and ecosystems.

(para 5) To support and accelerate consideration of climate change issues in the Commission:

(a) The Working Party on Socio-Economics (WPSE) shall assess the socio-economic impacts (actual or potential) of climate change on IOTC fisheries. On that basis, the WPSE shall provide information or advice to the Commission.
(b) All IOTC Working Parties reporting to the IOTC Scientific Committee shall include climate change as a standing agenda item at their regular meetings and provide any relevant information or advice to the IOTC Scientific Committee in line with their current reporting processes.
(c) The IOTC Secretariat shall continue its work to develop and keep up to date, a dedicated IOTC webpage on climate change and its impacts on IOTC fisheries.

(para 10) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall:

(a) At its annual meetings, review and consider any climate change information and advice from its subsidiary bodies, and from any other bodies or sources as relevant;
(b) On an annual basis, provide advice to the Commission based on its review and consideration of the information and advice in accordance with subparagraph a), and suggest any further steps that may be taken to integrate climate change considerations and analyses into its deliberations and decision-making processes; and;
(c) at its 28th annual meeting in 2025, review and propose amendments to its own Terms of Reference and those of its subsidiary bodies to meet the scientific needs stipulated in this Resolution.

Resolution 25/03 On establishing catch limits for skipjack tuna in the IOTC area of competence

(para 16) Taking into account the healthy status of the skipjack tuna stock, the Scientific Committee should at its 28th Session reassess the management procedure selected for the purpose of defining a TAC for skipjack tuna, to ascertain whether it might be overly conservative, and propose, if appropriate the relevant adjustment to the Management Procedure.

(para 17) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall provide advice to the Commission on the potential impacts of carrying forward the underage of catch limits under paragraph 10 on the effectiveness of the Management Procedure.

Resolution 25/04 On establishing catch limits for bigeye tuna in the IOTC area of competence. **This Resolution supersedes Resolution 23/04**

(para 19) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall conduct a comparative analysis of the contribution of all fishing gears to the mortality of bigeye tuna, which shall include both absolute and relative contributions to mortality and stock depletion.

(para 20) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall develop a table as shown in the Annex that quantifies the expected impact on maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and SSBmsy for bigeye tuna resulting from replacing fishing mortality/catches of any major fishing gear/fishery (e.g., Longline, DFAD fisheries, AFAD fisheries, Purse seine on free school, other fisheries) for consideration by the Commission at its 2026 Session. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall also provide advice on FAD management options, including on, limits on FADs sets, that may be necessary to achieve a replacement of fishing mortality of FAD fisheries with free school fisheries. This analysis shall be conducted for DFADs and AFADs fleets separately.

(para 21) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall provide advice to the Commission on the potential impacts of carrying forward the underage of catch limits under paragraph 7 on the effectiveness of the Management Procedure.

Resolution 25/06 On a Regional Observer Scheme. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 24/04

(para 13) CPCs shall provide to the IOTC Secretariat and the IOTC Scientific Committee, annually in their national scientific reports, a description of the protocols supporting their observer programs and sampling schemes mentioned in paragraphs 3, 4, 6 and 9, the number of fishing vessels and of fishing effort sampled, as well as the coverage achieved by gear type in accordance with the provisions of this Resolution.

(para 15) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall update in 2024 the IOTC ROS Observer Manual and the IOTC Observer Forms used for reporting (including minimum data fields) and provide advice on a training program.

Resolution 25/07 On a Management Procedure for Swordfish in the IOTC Area Of Competence. **This Resolution supersedes Resolution 24/08**

(para 4) The Scientific Committee shall run the MP and advise the Commission of the outcome, including a recommended TAC and any advice on exceptional circumstances in accordance with the Commission endorsed Guidelines for the Provisions of Exceptional Circumstances for IOTC MPs as documented in Appendix 6a of IOTC-2021-SC24- R.

(para 5) The Commission shall adopt the TAC based on the outcome of the MP, unless the Scientific Committee identifies exceptional circumstances that require consideration of alternate management actions to be taken by the Commission.

(para 6) Evidence of exceptional circumstances will be reviewed annually at the Working Party on Billfish and the Scientific Committee. If exceptional circumstances are triggered, then the pre-existing TAC shall remain in place until a new TAC is agreed

(para 12) The SC is also requested to investigate approaches to incorporate a multi-species framework into future candidate management procedures and if possible, wider impacts in the ecosystem such as the mortality on associated and dependent species affected by tuna fishing operations, i.e. marine turtles, marine mammals, seabirds, sharks and fish species caught incidentally (bycatch).

Resolution 25/08 On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC. **This Resolution supersedes Resolution 18/02, 17/05, 13/05, 13/06, and 12/09.**

(para 27) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall continue the development of a management strategy evaluation framework for Indian Ocean blue shark, and present to the Commission potential harvest control rules, and associated candidate limit, target and threshold reference points.

(para 38) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall, through the IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch, continue its work on identifying and monitoring the status of sharks until such time as comprehensive assessments are possible for all relevant sharks, including those listed in paragraph 3, silky sharks, hammerhead sharks and mako sharks. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall establish terms of reference for a long term-project on sharks in the IOTC area of competence to be considered by the Commission at

its annual Session in 2026, with the aim to ensure the collection of data required for performing reliable stock assessments for key shark species, including those listed in paragraph 3, silky sharks, hammerhead sharks and mako sharks. The project will include:

(a) the identification of data gaps for key shark species in IOTC;
(b) the collection of relevant data, including through direct contacts with CPC national administrations, research institutes and stakeholders;
(c) any other activity that could contribute to improving the collection of data required for performing stock assessments of key shark species in IOTC;
(d) the development and further improvement of shark identification guides for relevant shark species to provide a better overview on the compliance status of CPCs and thereby assist CPCs to comply with their reporting obligations. The IOTC Executive Secretary shall make these shark identification guides available on the IOTC website and distribute them among CPCs in regular intervals.

(para 39) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall advise the Commission on the population status of relevant sharks, on their vulnerability to overfishing, and on whether precautionary management of these species, through the application of specific measures such as the measure in paragraph 3, is recommended.

Resolution 25/09 On the conservation of shortfin and longfin mako sharks caught in association with IOTC fisheries

(para 9) At its 28th Session, the SC shall assess the requirements under Resolution 15/01 on the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence and advise the Commission on the necessity and feasibility to extend reporting of shortfin and longfin mako sharks at species level for all gears.

(para 10) The SC shall review for the 32nd Session of the Commission the impact of the measure of this Resolution on shortfin mako shark mortality

Resolution 26/01 *On establishing interim catch limits for yellowfin tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence*

(para 21) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall conduct a full stock assessment of yellowfin tuna in 2027.

(para 22) The IOTC Scientific Committee and its Working Parties shall prioritise the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process for yellowfin tuna and shall develop a management procedure 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*

(para 20) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall 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.

(para 21) The IOTC Secretariat and the Scientific Committee shall support, as appropriate, CPCs in improving their data collection systems for swordfish, with an aim to enhancing the accuracy, reliability, and robustness of these data, 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*

(para 12) Except for those CPCs that have clearly demonstrated that intentional and/or incidental catches of mobulid rays do not occur in their IOTC fisheries, CPCs shall develop, with the assistance from the IOTC Secretariat where required, catch monitoring plansfor mobulid ray catches and interactions by their flag fishing vessels carrying out subsistence and artisanal fisheries. CPCs shall report their catch monitoring plans, including their scientific and operational rationale, to the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch and in the national scientific reports to the IOTC Scientific Committee by 2027.

(para 13) At its 30th Session in 2027, the IOTC Scientific Committee shall review the soundness of the catch monitoring plans submitted by CPCs, as well as the rationale and evidence provided by CPCs that have no.

(para 14) CPCs that have developed catch monitoring plans shall submit annually in their national scientific reports to the Scientific Committee any catch and effort data collected under their catch monitoring plans during the previous year.

(para 15) CPCs are encouraged to investigate at-vessel and post-release mortality in mobulid rays including the application of satellite tagging programmes that may be provisioned primarily through national support complemented if possible by the allocation of funds from the Commission to investigate the effectiveness of this measure.

(para 16) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall review the status of mobulid rays in the IOTC Area of Competence and provide management advice to the Commission for its consideration at its annual Session in 2027, including the identification of possible hot-spots for conservation and management of mobulid rays within and beyond the EEZs of coastal CPCs

(para 17) The IOTC Scientific Committee shall provide, whenever considered adequate on the basis of evolving knowledge and scientific advice, improvements to the Minimum Standards for Safe Handling and Live Release Procedures in Annex I.

(para 18) Scientific observers shall be allowed to collect biological samples of mobulid rays caught in IOTC fisheries that are dead at haul-back, provided that the samples are a part of a research project approved by the IOTC Scientific Committee. In order to obtain such approval, a detailed document outlining the purpose of the work, number of samples intended to be collected and the spatio-temporal distribution of the sampling effect must be included in the proposal. Annual progress of the work and a final report on completion shall be presented to the IOTC Scientific Committee

DISCUSSION

The Scientific Committee should address each of the requirements detailed above by providing advice, or alternative commentary for the Commission's consideration at its 31th Session to be held in 2027.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Scientific Committee **NOTE** the requests made by the Commission in each of the Conservation and Management Measures detailed in this paper, and to develop advice to the Commission in response to each request.