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To the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission for 2026

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02 (and other data related to CMMs as noted below), final scientific data for the previous year were provided to the Secretariat by 30 June of the current year, for all fleets other than longline (e.g. for a National report submitted to the Secretariat in 2026, final data for the 2025 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2026).	Yes
In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, provisional longline data for the previous year were provided to the Secretariat by 30 June of the current year (e.g. for a National report submitted to the Secretariat in 2026, preliminary data for the 2025 calendar year was provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2026).	Yes
REMINDER: Final longline data for the previous year are due to the Secretariat by 30 Dec of the current year (e.g. for a National report submitted to the Secretariat in 2026, final data for the 2025 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 December 2026).	

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Summary

Pelagic longline and purse seine are the two main fishing methods used by Australian vessels to target tuna and billfish in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) area of competence. The number of active longliners and levels of fishing effort are very low relative to the scale of the regional IOTC fishery. In 2025, in the IOTC area of competence, 1 Australian longliner operated exclusively in the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery, 13 operated exclusively in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery. They caught 23.2 t of albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), 38.4 t of bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*), 39.9 t of yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), 103.4 t of swordfish (*Xiphius gladius*) and 0.2 t of striped marlin (*Kajikia audax*). In addition, in 2025 the review rate for electronic monitoring of longline hooks deployed in the IOTC area of competence was 8.8%. The actual catch of southern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) in the purse-seine fishery targeting this species was 4,592.5 t in 2025. There was no skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) caught by purse-seine fishing.

Background/general fishery information

Australian fisheries targeting tuna and billfish in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) area of competence are the pelagic longline fisheries – Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (WTBF) and Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) (Appendix B) – and the purse-seine fisheries – Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery (SBTF) and the Eastern and Western Skipjack fisheries (SJF). These four fisheries are managed by the Australian Government through the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA). Other methods such as handline, dropline, trolling and gillnetting capture small amounts of tuna and related species in multi-purpose fisheries, which are managed by the Australian Government and Australian State Governments (e.g. Western Australia). Catches from the SBTF are included in this report, although this information is reported separately to the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna. It should also be noted that the eastern and western purse seine skipjack fisheries have been inactive since 2009.

Fleet structure

2.1 Longline fleet

The number of Australian longline vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence declined between 2000 (61 vessels) and 2005 (6) and has varied between 2 and 14 vessels per year in the period since (Table 1). One of the factors that drove this decline was reduced profitability, caused by lower prices and higher operating costs, particularly fuel costs.

In 2025, 14 longline vessels operated in the IOTC area of competence, including 13 vessels from the ETBF and 1 from the WTBF. The ETBF vessels operated in the IOTC-WCPFC overlap area and primarily targeted southern bluefin tuna (SBT; *Thunnus maccoyii*). Historically, most of the catch within the IOTC area of competence has been taken by the WTBF (Appendix B) with very little longline effort taking place in the ETBF between 141°E and 150°E (the overlap area between IOTC and WCPFC boundaries). However, in 2025 the majority of effort in the IOTC area was by ETBF vessels due to an increase in SBT targeted longline fishing in waters off the south-eastern coast of Australia.

In recent years, the Australian longline fleet has fished mainly within Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (97% of total effort in 2025).

Most Australian longline vessels range in length from 20 to 35 m and are less than 230 gross registered tonnes. Ice, ice slurry or brine spray systems are mostly used to chill the catch. The majority of the fishing trips undertaken by Australian longline operators are less than 10 days in length. Ninety-five trips were undertaken in the IOTC area of competence in the ETBF in 2025, while 23 trips were undertaken in the WTBF.

2.2 Purse-seine fleet

The purse-seine fleet has fluctuated from 5 to 14 vessels since 1998 (Table 1). The purse-seine vessels vary in length from 20 to 45 m and target SBT for farm cage grow-out. There were 5 active SBT purse-seine vessels in the IOTC area of competence in 2025.

Table 1 Number of Australian longline and purse-seine vessels reporting one or more fishing trips in the IOTC area of competence from 1998 to 2025

	Number of vessels		
Calendar Year	**Longline**	**Purse seine**	**> 24 m**
1998	37	5 (5)	n/av
1999	49	7 (7)	n/av
2000	61	8 (8)	n/av
2001	45	13 (8)	n/av
2002	44	9 (7)	25
2003	36	7 (7)	21
2004	22	7 (6)	17
2005	6	8 (8)	11
2006	4	14 (7)	10
2007	3	11 (6)	9
2008	5	10 (7)	8
2009	4	10 (8)	13
2010	4	9 (7)	13
2011	2	5 (5)	7
2012	4	5 (5)	8
2013	4	5 (5)	11
2014	4	6 (6)	9
2015	7	6 (6)	9
2016	7	7 (7)	10
2017	10	6 (6)	11
2018	5	7 (7)	12
2019	4	7 (7)	10
2020	2	7(7)	9
2021	4	7(7)	9
2022	11	8(8)	11
2023	6	6(6)	6
2024	11	5(5)	10
2025	14	5 (5)	10

n/av Not available.

Note: For the purse-seine fleet, the numbers in brackets represent the number of active SBT purse-seine vessels from the total number of purse seiners. The number of vessels >24 metres in length (all methods combined) for each year is also indicated.

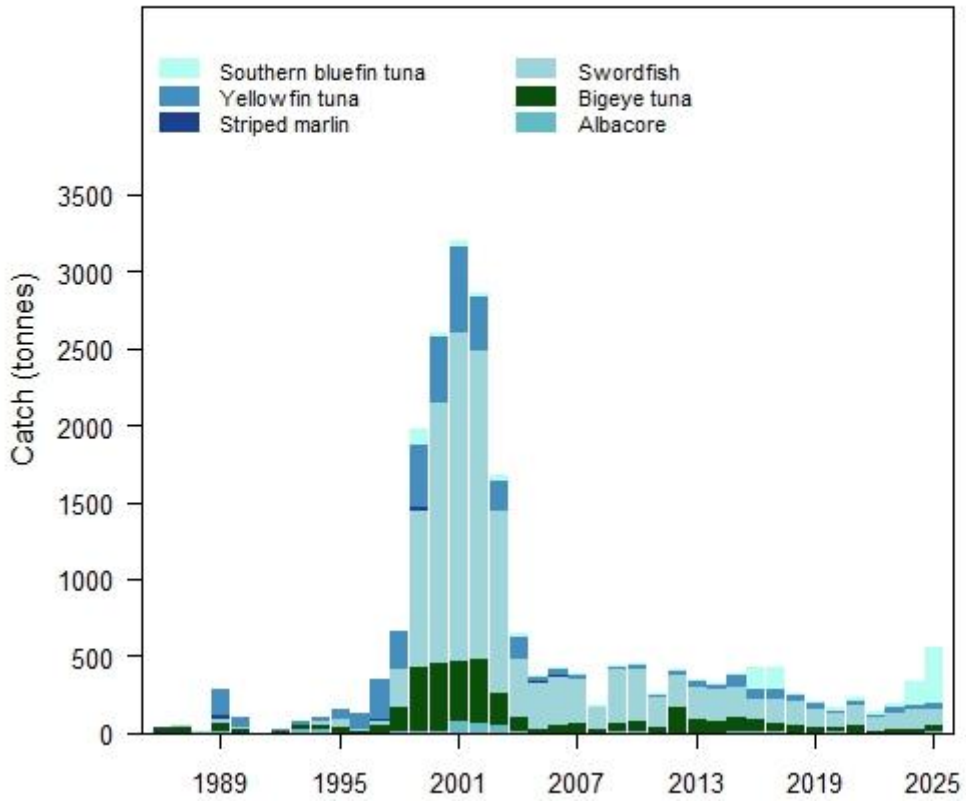
Catch and effort by species and fishery

3.1 Longline fleet

Australian longline fishing activity and associated catches of tunas and billfishes in the eastern Indian Ocean increased rapidly between 1998 and 2001, especially off Australia's western coast, south of latitude 20°S. Catch and effort then declined and have remained relatively low since 2005, with some annual variation (Figure 1). Swordfish (*Xiphius gladius*) has been a main target species since 1999 (peak catch of 2,136 t in 2001). SBT has emerged as another main target species in recent years following an increase in SBT quota available to Australia due to the continued rebuilding of SBT. Smaller catches of albacore (*Thunnus alalunga;* peak catch of 94 t in 2001), bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus;* peak catch of 436 t in 2000), yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares;* peak catch of 558 t in 2001) and striped marlin (*Kajikia audax;* peak catch of 23 t in 1999) are also taken by the longline fleet.

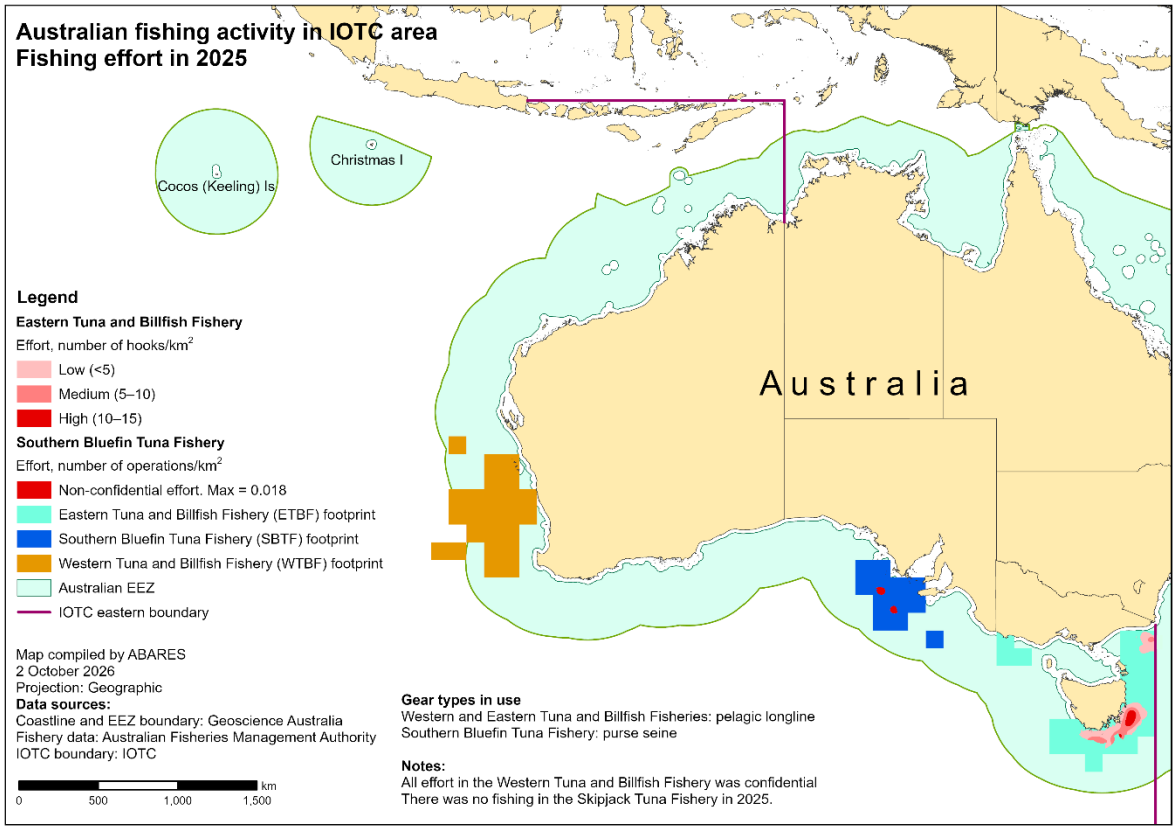
Overall, catch of the main target species in the fishery increased from 335 t in 2024 to 568 t in 2025, and longline effort increased from 416,887 hooks in 2024 to 568,273 hooks in 2025 in the IOTC area. The swordfish catch decreased from 121.1 t in 2024 to 103.4 t in 2025 (Table 2a). Bigeye tuna catch increased from 32.9 t in 2024 to 38.4 t in 2025. Yellowfin tuna catch increased from 33.7 t in 2024 to 39.9 t in 2025 (Table 2a). SBT catch increased from 136.2 t in 2024 to 357.6 t in 2025. There was 5.6 t of catch in the 'not elsewhere indicated' (NEI) category (the sum of all species that are 'not elsewhere indicated' in Table 2a) in 2025. This was a 2.8 t increase from 2024. Map 1 and Map 2 show the footprint of Australian tuna fishing effort in the IOTC area of competence for 2025 and for 2021 to 2025. Due to Australian Government confidentiality restrictions that prevent the disclosure of fishing activity by fewer than 5 vessels, fine-scale effort distribution cannot be displayed in the WTBF for 2025. Map 3 and Map 4 indicate the distribution of the catch in the IOTC area of competence where confidentiality allows.

Figure 1 Australian annual catch of primary species in the longline sector of the IOTC area of competence, 1986 to 2025

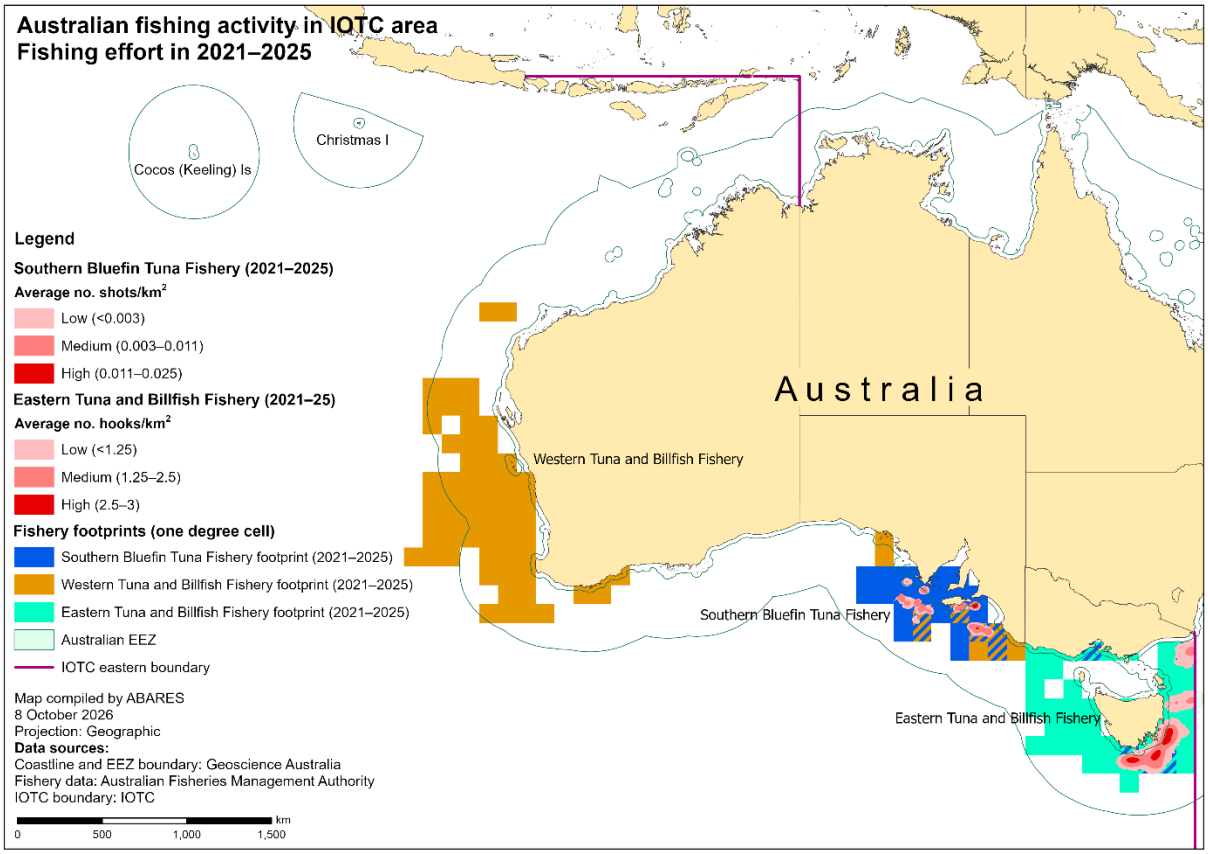


Note: From 1998 onwards, the data for the entire IOTC area of competence are shown. Prior to 1998, the data for the WTBF alone are shown. SBT catches are not included prior to 1998.

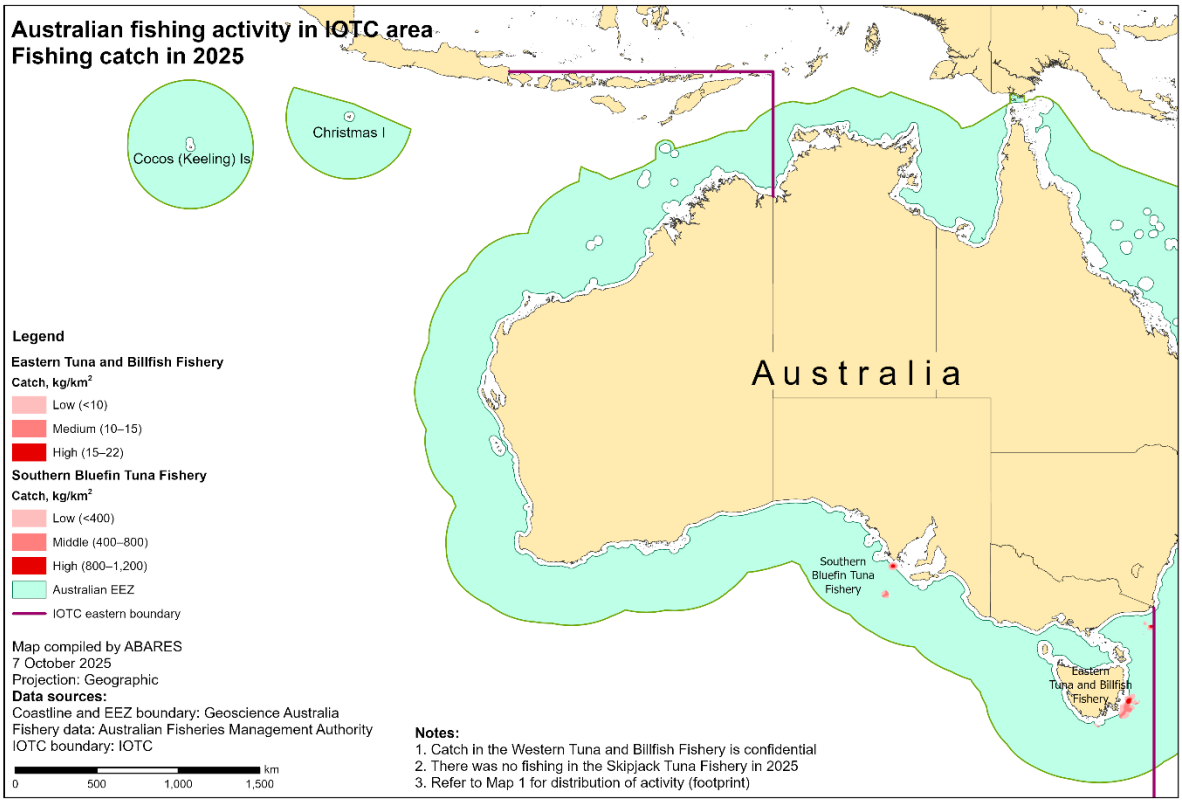
Map 1 Fishing footprint (shown as 1-degree cells) in the WTBF and ETBF (longline) and in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2025



Map 2 Aggregate fishing footprint (shown as 1-degree cells) in the WTBF and ETBF (longline) and in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2021 to 2025

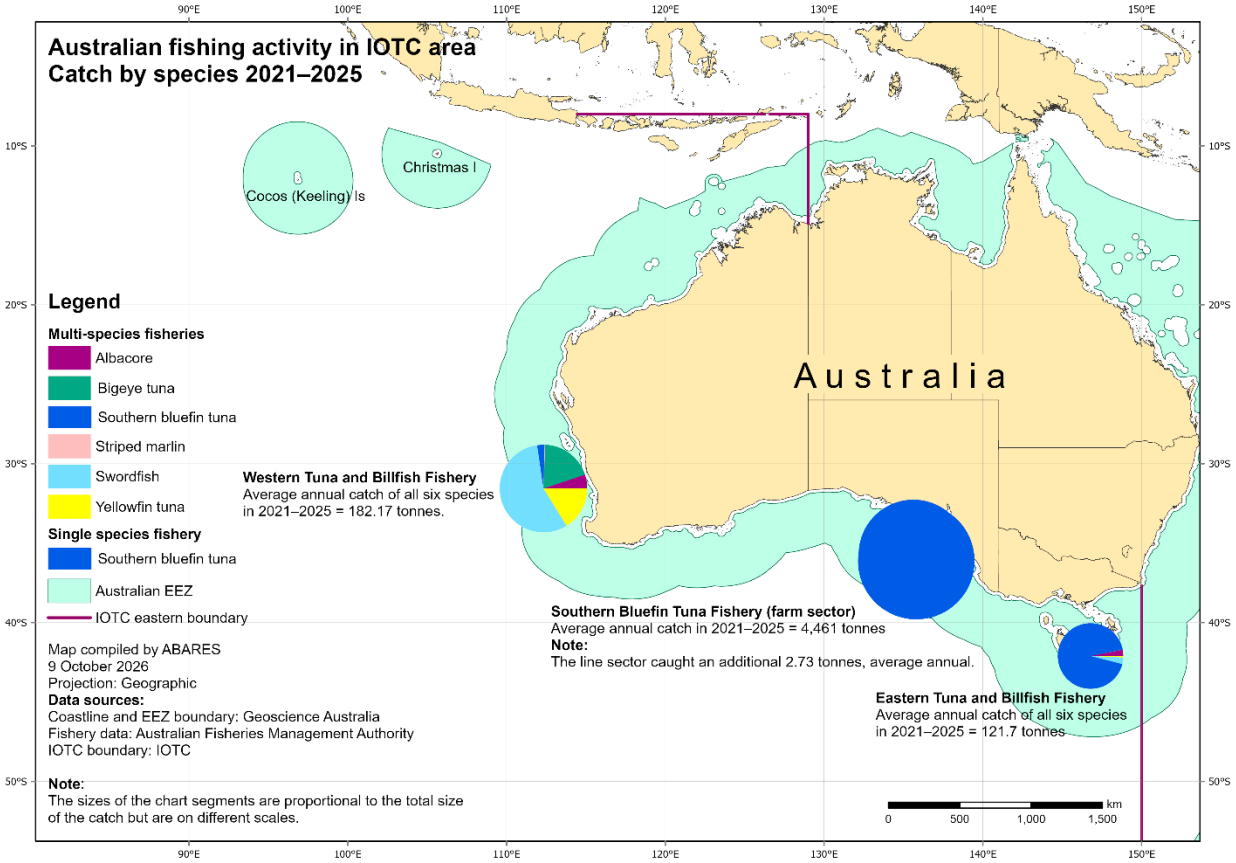


Map 3 Distribution of catch in the WTBF (longline), ETBF (longline), and SBTF (purse seine) for 2025



Note: Due to the low effort in the longline fisheries, confidentiality rules prohibit the depiction of the 2025 WTBF data.

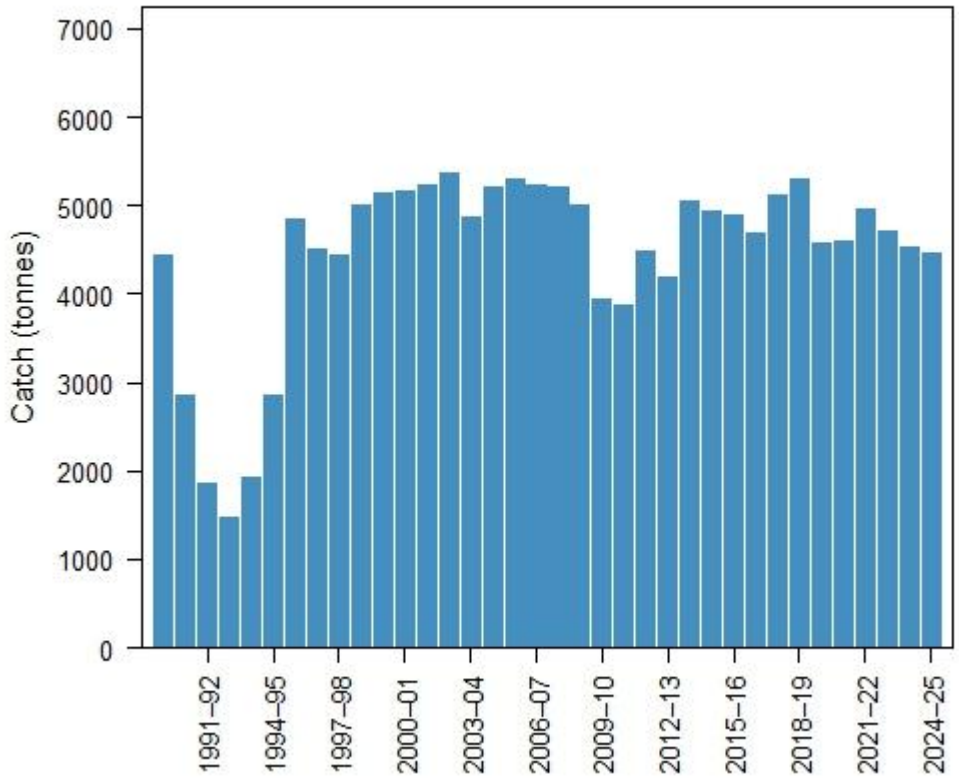
Map 4 Distribution of catch in the WTBF (longline), ETBF (longline) and in the SBTF (purse seine) for 2021 to 2025



3.2 Purse-seine fleet

Purse-seine fishing by Australian vessels in the IOTC area of competence targets SBT in the Great Australian Bight for grow-out in farm cages at Port Lincoln, South Australia. The fishery is managed in accordance with the requirements of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT). Effort in the purse-seine sector increased from 118 sets in the 2023–24 season to 130 in the 2024–25 season (Table 2b). In 2025, the actual catch was 4,592.5 t, while for the 2024–25 fishing season (1 December 2024 to 30 November 2025), the actual catch was 4,446.7 t (Table 2b; Figure 2). Distribution of the aggregated catch from 2021 to 2025 is shown in Map 4. In some previous fishing seasons, purse-seine vessels have also targeted skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) late in the SBT season. However, this sector has not caught skipjack tuna since 2015.

Figure 2 Fishing season catches of southern bluefin tuna in the purse-seine sector of the SBTF, 1989–90 to 2024–25



3.3 Multi-purpose fleets

The multi-purpose fisheries (dropline, gillnet, minor line, trawl and troll) typically target a different suite of species (e.g. Spanish mackerel) compared to the longline fishery. In 2025, total tuna catch for gillnet, troll, trawl and line (mainly handline) from state-managed Western Australian fisheries increased from 2024 (Tables 2c, 2d). In the Commonwealth-managed WTBF, SBTF and ETBF, 10 vessels (1 vessel using pole-and-line, 2 vessels using trolling, 5 vessels using rod and reel and 2 vessels using both rod and reel and trolling) mainly targeting southern bluefin tuna, operated in the IOTC area of competence in 2025. These vessels caught 19.2 t of SBT, <0.1 t of albacore, 0.1 t of skipjack and 0.2 t of undefined tunas.

Table 2a Total numbers of Australian longline vessels, hooks set, and total catch (tonnes live weight) of the six main tuna and billfish species taken by those vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence from 1998 to 2025

			Live weight (t)							
Calendar year	Vessel number	Hooks set (thousands)	Albacore	Bigeye tuna	Yellowfin tuna	Swordfish	Striped marlin	Southern bluefin tuna	NEI [a]	Total catch
1998	37	1,807	25.1	161.1	231.3	238.3	8.8	NA[b]	196.7	1,031.4
1999	49	4,031	29.2	411.6	406.2	1,013.7	22.6	96.8	57.3	2,586.0
2000	61	6,246	27.2	467.8	387.9	1,797.6	3.5	13.4	29.1	2,726.5
2001	45	6,175	93.9	386.0	557.5	2,135.7	0.0	23.6	94.9	4,702.4
2002	44	5,956	72.1	419.5	355.2	2,004.8	0.7	11.6	2.6	2,866.3
2003	36	4,000	65.7	205.5	191.3	1,184.0	0.2	30.8	69.9	2,526.3
2004	22	1,593	26.6	90.9	152.3	370.0	0.4	4.4	42.5	1,300.7
2005	6	773	7.3	31.3	35.9	301.4	4.1	1.8	11.2	393
2006	4	718	10.6	58.7	37.3	311.2	4.5	0	14.1	436.4
2007	3	738	12.1	69.1	29.3	281.2	1.6	0	15.3	404.1
2008	5	237	10.3	26.6	1.2	142.2	0.5	0	10.5	191.0
2009	4	529	19.9	61.7	11.7	349.3	0.3	0	11.3	454.3
2010	4	622	18.7	65.3	21.9	349.4	0.5	0	4.8	460.5
2011	2	360	5.8	50.0	14.1	189.9	0.7	0	1.4	261.9
2012	4	672	13.1	167.4	23.0	209.3	2.5	0	1.6	417.3
2013	4	610	14.6	90.6	40.5	203.5	2.0	0.3	0.7	352.2
2014	4	449	16.6	75.3	19.0	211.6	0.6	3.7	1.8	328.6
2015	7	430	19.3	94.3	72.6	200.6	1.5	3.1	0.8	392.3
2016	7	429	30.1	69.4	65.8	133.8	0.9	132.3	2.9	435.2
2017	10	532	18.6	59.3	65.1	155.8	1.5	123.7	2.7	426.7
2018	5	411	11.9	45.7	37.8	161.2	0.5	0.2	1.4	258.8
2019	4	374	15.6	34.5	43.9	112.7	0.8	4.0	1.1	212.4
2020	2	241	18.3	26.3	15.8	96.3	0.1	4.7	0.5	162.0
2021	2	331	17.8	50.7	19.9	131	0.7	15.7	0.4	236.2
2022	11	247	9.2	19.0	15.8	83.0	0.2	16.7	0.7	144.6
2023	6	275	7.6	34.7	44.4	98.3	1.0	13.4	1.5	200.9
2024	11	417	7.3	32.9	33.7	121.1	0.9	136.2	2.8	334.9
2025	13	568	23.2	38.4	39.9	103.4	0.2	357.6	5.6	568.3

a NEI denotes the sum of all species that are 'not elsewhere indicated' in the table.

b Species level data unavailable for this report. Data will be updated ahead of the 2027 report.

Table 2b Purse-seine effort and catch (tonnes live weight) of southern bluefin tuna (by fishing season) and skipjack tuna (by calendar year) by Australian vessels fishing in the IOTC area of competence

Southern bluefin tuna								Skipjack tuna
Fishing season	Search hours	No. of sets	Estimated catch [a]	Actual catch	Calendar year	Estimated catch	Actual catch	Estimated catch
1994–95	526	104	2,179	2,009	1995	n/av	1,840	n/av
1995–96	631	89	2,859	3,442	1996	n/av	3,121	n/av
1996–97	769	118	3,134	2,505	1997	n/av	2,998	n/av
1997–98	671	143	3,916	3,629	1998	3,290	3,584	n/av
1998–99	972	129	4,418	4,991	1999	5,120	5,325	n/av
1999–00	764	107	4,746	5,131	2000	4,616	5,132	n/av
2000–01	799	129	5,100	5,162	2001	5,319	4,767	1,039
2001–02	1,309	159	5,400	5,234	2002	4,920	4,683	1,144
2002–03	1,276	150	5,188	5,375	2003	5,587	5,792	<1
2003–04	1,202	160	5299	4,874	2004	5,178	4,834	30
2004–05	1,168	139	5,225	5,215	2005	5,330	5,210	<1
2005–06	1,304	156	5,463	5,302	2006	5,852	5,629	446
2006–07	1,459	160	5,091	5,230	2007	4,822	4,809	4
2007–08	1,217	134	4,530	5,211	2008	4,431	5,010	877
2008–09	1,156	139	4,348	5,015	2009	4,316	4,884	855
2009–10	417	78	3,323	3,931	2010	3,660	4,039	0[b]
2010–11	835	106	3,840	3,872	2011	3,909	4,114	0[b]
2011–12	1,150	156	4,328	4,485	2012	4,423	4,444	<1
2012–13	1,021	110	4,039	4,198	2013	4,210	4,561	<1
2013–14	752	101	4,381	5,039	2014	3,649	4,168	0
2014–15	1,235	154	4,789	4,950	2015	4,789	5,252	<1
2015–16	1,076	124	4,826	4,896	2016	5,012	5,222	0
2016–17	1,004	109	4,036	4,683	2017	3,951	4,571	0
2017–18	1,137	191	4,920	5,123	2018	5,281	5,367	0
2018–19	1,366	154	4,750	5,291	2019	4,700	5,388	0
2019–20	1,248	142	4,224	4,568	2020	3,652	3,906	0
2020–21	1,101	152	4,203	4,592	2021	4,030	4,395	0
2021–22	1,041	136	4,639	4,942	2022	4,881	5,250	0
2022–23	1,688	173	4,832	4,697	2023	4,659	4,501	0
2023–24	1,165	118	4,085	4,505	2024	4,237	4,393.5	0
2024–25	1,688	130	4,350	4,447	2025	4,483	4,592.5	0

n/av Not available.

a Estimated catch is derived from logbook data while actual catch is derived from catch disposal data. **b** There has been no effort in the skipjack tuna fisheries since 2008–09.

Table 2c Numbers of fishing vessels and catch of tuna and tuna-like species (tonnes live weight) in Western Australian state fisheries by method

Year	Dropline		Gillnet		Line[a]		Trawl		Troll	
	Catch (t)	Vessels	Catch (t)	Vessels	Catch (t)	Vessels	Catch (t)	Vessels	Catch (t)	Vessels
2004	0.6	7	2. 7	9	36.8	46	3 .4	14	435.1	34
2005	0.04	6	2.6	8	46.3	30	5.0	4	310.4	22
2006	n/av	n/av	0.9	6	10.6[b]	30	23.4	10	283.6	18
2007	0.1	5	1.2	8	23.6	24	n/av	n/av	317.8	18
2008	n/av	n/av	5.0	9	12.6	22	n/av	n/av	333.6	26
2009	n/av	n/av	1.3	7	12.0	18	n/av	n/av	285.6	16
2010	n/av	n/av	0.8	6	27.1	13	n/av	n/av	269.4	15
2011	n/av	n/av	1.1	6	14.7	14	n/av	n/av	285.5	17
2012	n/av	n/av	1.5	6	16.4	17	n/av	n/av	316.4	17
2013	n/av	n/av	0.2	6	11.9	16	n/av	n/av	300.5	25
2014	n/av	n/av	0.3	6	41.6	18	n/av	n/av	299.6	26
2015	n/av	n/av	0.4	7	36.3	18	n/av	n/av	285.1	27
2016	n/av	n/av	0.6	7	15.6	12	n/av	n/av	282.4	28
2017	n/av	n/av	0.4	8	13.8	15	<0.5	<3	287.9	19
2018	n/av	n/av	0.2	5	4.4	11	<0.5	<3	225.1	17
2019	n/av	n/av	<0.5	4	3.3	11	n/av	n/av	296.7	18
2020	n/av	n/av	<0.5	<3	1.1	15	<0.5	<3	306.6	30
2021	n/av	n/av	<0.5	5	4.0	17	n/av	n/av	244.0	31
2022	n/av	n/av	<0.5	<3	1.2	11	<0.5	<3	211.9	14
2023	n/av	n/av	n/av	n/av	4.1	13	n/av	n/av	236.8	18
2024	n/av	n/av	<0.5	<3	1.6	8	n/av	n/av	201.9	15
2025	n/av	n/av	<1.0[c]	<3	2.8	9	0.5	<3	213.4	14

n/av Not available.

a Line consists mainly of handline.

b Total includes dropline catches for this year as individual method data could not be presented because of state jurisdictional confidentiality reasons (i.e. <5 active vessels using each method).

c Includes catch from trap net.

Table 2d Catch of tuna and tuna-like species in Western Australian state fisheries, by species and method, for 2024 and 2025

Year	Species		Live weight (kg)				
	Common name	**Scientific name**	**Gillnet**	**Line[a]**	**Trolling**	**Trawl**	**Haul Net**
2024	bonitos	*Sarda australis & Cybiosarda elegans*	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av	n/av
	bonito, oriental	*Sarda orientalis*	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, grey	*Scomberomorus semifasciatus*	n/av	>500	7,369	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, shark	*Grammatorcynus bicarinatus*	n/av	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, Spanish	*Scomberomorus commerson*	n/av	525	193,783	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, spotted	*Scomberomorus munroi*	n/av	n/av	25	n/av	n/av
	mackerels, general	Scombridae	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av	n/av
	tuna, longtail	*Thunnus tonggol*	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	tuna, mackerel	*Euthynnus affinis*	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	tuna, other	Scombridae	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	tuna, skipjack	*Katsuwonus pelamis*	n/av	35	<500	n/av	n/av
	tuna, yellowfin	*Thunnus albacares*	<500	<500	79	n/av	n/av
	wahoo	*Acanthocybium solandri*	n/av	n/av	294	n/av	n/av
	TOTAL		**<500**	**1,590**	**201,871**	**0**	**0**

n/av Not available.

a Line consists mainly of handline.

Table 2d (cont.) Catch of tuna and tuna-like species in Western Australian state fisheries, by method and species, for 2024 and 2025

Year	Species		Live weight (kg)				
	Common name	**Scientific name**	**Gillnet[b]**	**Line[a]**	**Trolling**	**Trawl**	**Haul Net**
2025	bonitos	*Sarda australis & Cybiosarda elegans*	<500	53	n/av	n/av	n/av
	bonito, oriental	*Sarda orientalis*	n/av	149	1,364	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, grey	*Scomberomorus semifasciatus*	n/av	>500	8,930	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, shark	*Grammatorcynus bicarinatus*	n/av	n/av	110	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, Spanish	*Scomberomorus commerson*	n/av	<500	202,414	n/av	n/av
	mackerel, spotted	*Scomberomorus munroi*	n/av	n/av	46	n/av	n/av
	mackerels, general	Scombridae	n/av	n/av	n/av	>500	n/av
	tuna, longtail	*Thunnus tonggol*	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	tuna, mackerel	*Euthynnus affinis*	n/av	<500	<500	<500	n/av
	tuna, other	Scombridae	n/av	<500	n/av	n/av	n/av
	tuna, skipjack	*Katsuwonus pelamis*	n/av	<500	<500	n/av	n/av
	tuna, yellowfin	*Thunnus albacares*	<500	31	<500	n/av	n/av
	wahoo	*Acanthocybium solandri*	n/av	n/av	160	n/av	n/av
	TOTAL		**<500**	**2,831**	**213,383**	**>500**	**0**

n/av Not available.
a Line consists mainly of handline.
b Includes trap net catch.

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Recreational fishery

Recreational fishing is undertaken in Australian states and the Northern Territory. The Western Australian recreational gamefish fishery targets sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*), black marlin (*Makaira indica*) and yellowfin tuna, with blue marlin (*Makaira mazara*) and striped marlin caught on occasions. There is a daily bag limit of 1 billfish (sailfish and marlins combined) in Western Australia, but the majority of sailfish and marlins are tagged and released alive. There is also a mixed species daily bag limit of 3 large pelagic finfish, which includes SBT and other tuna species, among others. In South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania, gamefishers mainly target albacore, skipjack tuna and SBT. Daily bag limits or possession limits also apply in those states.

Recreational fishing surveys have been undertaken in Western Australia (Ryan et al. 2019; 2022; 2025), South Australia in 2021–22 (Beckmann et al. 2023), the Northern Territory (West et al. 2022) and in Tasmania in 2022–23 (Tracey & Stark 2024). However, these surveys have used different methodologies, have large estimation errors, and were generally focussed on species other than tunas. While estimates of total recreational catch for most tuna and tuna-like species within the IOTC area in Australian waters remain uncertain, a survey of recreational fishing for southern bluefin tuna in Australia (all areas) estimated a catch of 270 t (95% confidence interval 232–292 t) in 2018–19 (Tracey et al. 2020).

Ecosystem and bycatch issues

In Australia, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is the primary legislation that covers environmental issues, including the ecologically sustainable use of marine resources. The EPBC Act requires that:

- all Commonwealth and State/Northern Territory wild capture marine fisheries with an export component be assessed to determine the extent to which management arrangements will ensure each fishery is being managed in an ecologically sustainable way;
- all Commonwealth fisheries are also assessed to determine the impact of actions taken under a fishery management plan on matters of national environmental significance; and
- all Commonwealth fisheries and any State/Northern Territory-managed fisheries that operate in Commonwealth waters must also be assessed to determine the impacts of fishing operations on cetaceans, listed threatened species and ecological communities, migratory species and listed marine species under the EPBC Act.

The assessments consider the impacts of the fishery on target and non-target species caught and the impacts of fishing on the broader marine environment. Initial and subsequent assessments have been completed for the WTBF, ETBF, SJF and SBTF, and continue to guide the development of improved management arrangements to reduce the ecological impacts of Australian tuna and billfish fisheries.

Measures to reduce the ecological impacts of these fisheries rely initially on the analysis of fishery-dependent and -independent data collected through observer programs, logbooks, electronic monitoring (e-monitoring) and targeted research activities. As data are collected and the impacts of fishing operations on ecologically related species become clearer, strategies to reduce these impacts continue to be developed and refined.

In this context, Australia has:

- continued to use catch and effort logbooks to collect data on the catch of target and non-target species
- introduced and maintained observer and/or e-monitoring programs in the WTBF, ETBF, SJF and SBTF, which include specific reporting requirements for threatened, endangered and protected (TEP) species
- initiated a range of at-sea programs to trial strategies to reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds caught during longlining operations (e.g. increasing line sink rates)
- introduced detailed strategies to reduce bycatch and impacts on ecologically related species, performance measures to monitor progress, and reporting and review targets to assess the effectiveness of these strategies, and refine them where necessary. An important part of these strategies is the development of fishing industry codes of practice to reduce impacts on ecologically related species (see below).

Each fishery has been subject to ecological risk assessment (ERA) and an ecological risk management (ERM) process in response to the ERA.

The ERA/ERM framework aims to inform government agencies and stakeholders of priorities for research, data collection, monitoring and management, and ensure there is a high level of confidence in verifiable results.

ERAs have been completed for fisheries relevant to the IOTC (see below). The ERAs rely on existing biological and catch information and consider 5 ecosystem components: target species, byproduct and bycatch species, threatened, endangered or protected (TEP) species, habitats, and communities.

For species, there are 3 levels at which an ERA may be conducted: Level 1 (Scoping); Level 2 (Productivity and Susceptibility Assessment [PSA]; Sustainability Assessment for Fishing Effects [SAFE]) and Level 3 (fully quantitative assessments). Risks to species are categorised at high, medium or low according to the methodology.

Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery

An ecological risk assessment for the effects of fishing (ERAEF) was undertaken in 2024 for the WTBF which consisted of scoping, a level 1 assessment and a level 2 assessment (Sporcic et al. 2025b). A total of 117 species were assessed across all ecological components. With the exception of protected species and communities, all components were eliminated at level 1. The level 2 examined 38 protected species (33 with PSA and 5 with bSAFE). Of the assessed protected species, 3 were found to be at high risk (loggerhead turtle, *Caretta caretta*; hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*; false killer whale *Pseudorca crassidens*). For the two turtle species, this was partly due to life history and vulnerability parameters, and uncertainty or declining genetic stocks. After a residual risk analysis was undertaken, these 3 species remained at high risk (Sporcic et al. 2025b).

Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

An ERAEF was undertaken in 2024 for the ETBF which consisting of scoping, a level 1 assessment and a level 2 assessment (Sporcic et al. 2025a). A total of 304 species were assessed across all ecological components. The level 2 assessment examined 295 unique species (80 with PSA and 218 with bSAFE). A total of 6 out of the 186 bycatch species were assessed in the PSA, with 5 being unassessable in bSAFE. Of the assessed bycatch species, one was at high risk (sicklefin weasel shark *Hemigaleus australiensis*). Following residual risk analysis, no species remained at high risk. A total of 74 out of the 84 protected species were assessed in the PSA; 20 were at high risk. After residual risk analysis, 7 of the 20 species remained at high risk. These species included green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), flatback turtle (*Natator depressus*) and leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*). Two cetaceans were also evaluated at potential high risk due to data deficiencies and external factors such as declining stock and small and localised subpopulations with limited gene flow; these were the false killer whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*) Australian humpback dolphin (*Sousa sahulensis*).

Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery

A level 2 ecological risk assessment (ecological risk assessment for effect of fishing) of 50 species across 3 ecological components was completed in 2020. No high risks were identified for any components assessed in the southern bluefin tuna purse-seine sub-fishery from internal activities (Bulman, Sporcic & Fuller 2020).

Skipjack Tuna Fishery

Using a Level 2 PSA assessment, 320 species were assessed (Daley et al. 2007; Zhou, Fuller & Smith, 2009; AFMA 2010). After the residual risk assessment was applied, 25 species, mostly TEP species,

were deemed to be at high risk. Two TEP shark species were assessed as part of the Level 2 SAFE assessment and deemed to be at low risk from the impacts of fishing. Other TEP species found to be at high risk in the PSA did not undergo further assessment.

It should be noted that the skipjack tuna fisheries have been inactive since 2009, hence there has been no ecological risk from the fisheries since then.

5.1 Bycatch and discarding work plan

In response to bycatch issues, AFMA formulated a Bycatch and Discarding Work Plan for both the WTBF and ETBF (AFMA 2014). The work plan outlines a series of measures to improve the monitoring of bycatch and reduce fishery impacts on bycatch species identified in the ERA process as being at high risk from fishing operations. Management measures in relation to bycatch in the ETBF have more recently been incorporated into the ETBF overall Fishery Management Strategy (AFMA 2021).

5.2 Sharks

5.2.1 NPOA-Sharks

Australia's National Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA-Sharks), first released in 2004, was reviewed and revised in July 2012 (Shark-plan 2) (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry 2012). Consistent with the International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks), Shark-plan 2 incorporates scientific information and issues identified in the 2009 Shark Assessment Report (Bensley et al. 2009). Shark-plan 2 articulates how Australia manages sharks and ensures that Australia meets international conservation and management obligations. The plan identifies research and management actions across Australia for the long-term sustainability of sharks, including actions to help minimise the impacts of fishing on sharks. The most recent review in 2023 was informed by the Shark Assessment Report (Wright et al. 2022) and feedback from key stakeholders through the Shark-plan Representative Group. The Australian Fisheries Management Forum, including representatives from the Australian Government, Northern Territory and state fisheries management agencies, adopted the Revised Shark-plan 2 in April 2024. Changes to the Shark-plan recognise that many actions have been completed, including the implementation of legislation to ban the practise of shark-finning.

5.2.2 Shark catch and finning regulations

The Australian Commonwealth prohibits the possession or landing of fins separate from shark carcasses. There is a landing limit of 20 sharks per longline vessel per fishing trip, and a ban on wire traces to decrease the likelihood of retaining shark. The ban was implemented more than a decade ago, following research that demonstrated higher at-vessel catch rates of sharks on wire trace when compared to monofilament (e.g. Ward et al. 2007). Longline vessels undertaking single jurisdiction high seas trips may apply for a permit to retain 100 sharks per fishing trip, of which only 80 can be blue sharks.

Shortfin mako, longfin mako and porbeagle sharks were listed under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) in 2008, which triggered a mandatory legal obligation to list them for protection under the Australian EPBC Act. Listing under the EPBC Act came into effect on 29 January 2010. As a consequence, in February 2010 all Australian fisheries that interact with these species in Commonwealth waters were assessed under the EPBC Act. The management arrangements for each fishery were reaccredited on the basis that the arrangements in place required all reasonable steps

to be taken to ensure that shortfin and longfin makos and porbeagles are not killed or injured as a result of fishing activities. These species may be retained in accredited fisheries if the sharks are dead on hauling to the vessel. Live caught specimens must be released unharmed, and fishers are required to report interactions. Australia requires all tuna longline vessels to carry line cutters and de-hookers to ensure the safe release of shark and turtle species in the water, which may help improve their chances of survival.

A number of species for which Australia is a range state were added to Appendix I and/or II of the CMS at its 11th Conference of Parties in November 2014. Following the completion of domestic processes, the following species were included in the list of migratory species under the Australian EPBC Act:

- *Anoxypristis cuspidata* (narrow sawfish)
- *Pristis clavata* (dwarf sawfish)
- *Pristis zijsron* (green sawfish)
- *Pristis pristis* (largetooth sawfish)
- *Carcharhinus falciformis* (silky shark)
- *Manta alfredi* (reef manta ray)
- *Mobula eregoodootenkee* (pygmy devil ray)
- *Mobula japanica* (Japanese devil ray)
- *Mobula thurstoni* (bentfin devil ray).

As listed migratory species, it is now an offence to kill, injure, take, trade, keep or move these species in Commonwealth waters. Any interactions with the above species in Commonwealth waters will also need to be reported, as is currently the case with other protected species such as dugongs and whale sharks. Further information on reporting requirements is available from DCCEEW.

In the WTBF, a number of sharks and rays are not allowed to be taken. These are:

- Great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*)
- Grey nurse shark (*Carcharias taurus*)
- Oceanic whitetip (*Carcharhinus longimanus*)
- Silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*)
- Thresher shark (Family Alopiidae)
- Mobulid rays (Family Mobulidae).

5.2.3 Blue sharks

The number of sharks taken (retained or released) are monitored via compulsory logbooks, 100% e-monitoring coverage of the longline fleet, and, for retained catches, port-based catch disposal records.

5.2.4 Interactions

Longline fisheries (Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery and Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery)

Total interactions by the Commonwealth Australian longline fleet with shark species in the IOTC area of competence are provided in Tables 3a, 3b and 4. In 2025, 2 bronze whalers and 23 shortfin makos were landed (Table 3a, 3b), while 25,669 individual sharks were discarded/released (Table 4). No information is currently available from logbooks on the life status of discarded/released sharks, other than those considered to be threatened species under the EPBC Act. In 2025, e-monitoring data recorded 1,431 sharks captured in the IOTC area of competence (1,235 blue sharks, 93 crocodile sharks, 80 sharks – mixed, 4 thresher sharks – mixed, 4 shortfin mako, 3 mackerel sharks, 3 whaler and weasel sharks, 2 whaler sharks – mixed, 2 mako sharks – mixed, 2 porbeagle, 2 oceanic whitetip shark and 1 bronze whaler). Of these sharks, 31 were dead, 484 were released alive, 10 were released damaged and 906 were released with an undetermined life status.

Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery (Purse-seine fishery)

No interactions with sharks by purse-seine vessels were reported by observers in the IOTC area of competence relevant to the SBTF in 2025. All interactions with ecologically related species are reported to the CCSBT (e.g. Blake & Patterson 2026).

Minor-line fisheries

Other fisheries in Western Australia use a variety of minor line gear types (see. Tables 2c, 2d) which take small incidental catches of tuna and tuna-like species. No interactions with sharks by minor-line vessels were reported in logbooks in the IOTC area of competence in 2025. No observer data are available on the interaction of these minor line fisheries with sharks.

Table 3a Total number of sharks, by species, retained by Australian longline vessels in the IOTC area of competence from 2011 to 2025

Common name	Scientific name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Blacktip shark	*Carcharhinus* spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blue shark	*Prionace glauca*	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	17	0
Bronze whaler	*Carcharhinus brachyurus*	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	7	2
Cookiecutter shark	*Isistius brasiliensis*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crocodile shark	*Pseudocarcharias kamoharai*	0	16	20	0	10	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dusky shark	*Carcharhinus obscurus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hammerhead	*Sphyrna* spp.	13	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Oceanic whitetip	*Carcharhinus longimanus*	11	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Porbeagle	*Lamna nasus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roughskin shark	*Centroscymnus* spp.; *Deania* spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandbar shark	*Carcharhinus plumbeus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scalloped hammerhead	*Sphyrna lewini*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shortfin mako	*Isurus oxyrinchus*	43	6	34	73	0	92	20	1	0	0	3	0	3	5	23
Longfin mako	*Isurus paucus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Silky shark	*Carcharhinus falciformis*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smooth hammerhead	*Sphyrna zygaena*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thresher shark	*Alopias vulpinus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thresher shark – mixed	*Alopias spp.*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Tiger shark	*Galeocerdo cuvier*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shark – other	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
TOTAL		**69**	**35**	**58**	**73**	**10**	**92**	**50**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**3**	**1**	**36**	**33**	**25**

Note: The table refers to pelagic longline vessels.

Source: AFMA logbook data

Table 3b Total weight (tonnes trunked weight) of shark species retained by Australian longline vessels in the IOTC area of competence from 2011 to 2025

Common name	Scientific name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Blacktip shark	*Carcharhinus* spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blue shark	*Prionace glauca*	0.04	0.05	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.0	0	0	0	0.002	0	0.32	0
Bronze whaler	*Carcharhinus brachyurus*	0	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.625	0.22	0.05
Cookiecutter shark	*Isistius brasiliensis*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crocodile shark	*Pseudocarcharias kamoharai*	0	0.03	0.04	0	0.03	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dusky shark	*Carcharhinus obscurus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hammerhead	*Sphyrna* spp.	0.2	0	0.04	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.04	0
Oceanic whitetip	*Carcharhinus longimanus*	0.2	0.3	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Porbeagle	*Lamna nasus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	0.05	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roughskin shark	*Centroscymnus* spp.; *Deania* spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandbar shark	*Carcharhinus plumbeus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scalloped hammerhead	*Sphyrna lewini*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shortfin mako	*Isurus oxyrinchus*	0.6	0.1	0.5	1.5	0	2.2	0.9	0.01	0	0	0.22	0	0.09	0.12	0.738
Longfin mako	*Isurus paucus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Silky shark	*Carcharhinus falciformis*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smooth hammerhead	*Sphyrna zygaena*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thresher shark	*Alopias vulpinus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thresher sharks - mixed	*Alopias spp.*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.14	0
Tiger shark	*Galeocerdo cuvier*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shark – other	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.001	0	0
TOTAL		**1.1**	**0.5**	**0.6**	**1.5**	**0.03**	**2.2**	**1.8**	**0.07**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.22**	**0.002**	**0.716**	**0.84**	**0.788**

Note: The table refers to pelagic longline vessels.

Source: AFMA logbook data

Table 4 Total number of sharks, by species, released/discarded by Australian longline vessels in the IOTC area of competence from 2011 to 2025

Common name	Scientific name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Blacktip shark	*Carcharhinus* spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Blue shark	*Prionace glauca*	5148	5315	3333	3273	2315	3309	6013	2624	1343	1326	1163	2386	4989	5058	15188
Bronze whaler	*Carcharhinus brachyurus*	1	39	27	106	11	12	63	47	25	22	37	24	112	33	19
Cookiecutter shark	*Isistius brasiliensis*	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	3
Crocodile shark	*Pseudocarcharias kamoharai*	7167	4880	2118	2911	2716	2378	3299	3514	2720	1696	1697	1511	1363	1821	1745
Dusky shark	*Carcharhinus obscurus*	0	1	0	11	0	111	86	3	6	0	0	8	0	0	0
Hammerhead	*Sphyrna* spp.	6	96	7	39	91	45	74	48	44	11	18	4	117	16	30
Oceanic whitetip	*Carcharhinus longimanus*	51	131	12	14	11	36	34	52	50	44	42	71	123	45	56
Pelagic thresher	*Alopias pelagicus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Porbeagle	*Lamna nasus*	0	0	0	7	3	0	129	5	9	16	1	2	0	0	0
Port Jackson shark	*Heterodontus portusjacksoni*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Roughskin shark	*Centroscymnus* spp.; *Deania* spp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandbar shark	*Carcharhinus plumbeus*	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scalloped hammerhead	*Sphyrna lewini*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
School Shark	*Galeorhinus galeus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	5	0
Shortfin mako	*Isurus oxyrinchus*	525	758	290	238	361	333	425	257	142	165	112	75	0	89	184
Longfin mako	*Isurus paucus*	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Silky shark	*Carcharhinus falciformis*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smooth hammerhead	*Sphyrna zygaena*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Sharpnose sevengill shark	*Heptranchias perlo*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Thresher shark	*Alopias vulpinus*	4	14	84	19	32	18	26	45	20	19	16	8	24	28	30
Tiger shark	*Galeocerdo cuvier*	0	1	1	2	8	4	31	3	7	9	4	2	4	1	1
Whaler and Weasel Sharks	*Carcharhinidae, Hemigaleidae*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Shark – other	-	0	132	0	0	4	0	1	1	5	293	474	297	823	1281	8406
TOTAL		**12 902**	**11 371**	**5 875**	**6 621**	**5 553**	**6 247**	**10 184**	**6 599**	**4 375**	**3 603**	**3 565**	**4 388**	**7 587**	**8 382**	**25 669**

Note: The table refers to pelagic longline vessels.

Source: AFMA logbook data

5.3 Seabirds

Seabirds are opportunistic feeders and are attracted to longline vessels, particularly during line setting and hauling, when the seabirds are at risk of being caught or entangled in the fishing gear. Seabirds are also attracted to discarded offal and are at risk of ingesting discarded hooks still attached to discarded baits. The design of purse-seine nets and the way this fishing gear is deployed, means that the risk of seabird bycatch during purse-seine fishing operations is low.

5.3.1 Threat Abatement Plan

The incidental catch (or bycatch) of seabirds during oceanic longline fishing operations was listed as a key threatening process on 24 July 1995. Threat abatement plans for this key threatening process have been in place since 1998 with the current plan being the *Threat Abatement Plan for the incidental catch (or bycatch) of seabirds during oceanic longline fishing operations 2018* (Commonwealth of Australia 2018). A review was undertaken in 2023 and DCCEEW are in the process of revising the plan.

Considerable progress has been made under successive threat abatement plans to reduce the impact of pelagic longlining on seabirds (Commonwealth of Australia 2018). The incidental bycatch rates for several fisheries are well below 0.01 or 0.05 birds per 1,000 hooks, which are the bycatch rate performance criteria for different fisheries under the current plan, and which apply to individual fishing seasons and fishing areas, as relevant. This reduction in bycatch rates has been achieved through the combined efforts of the fishing industry, researchers and non-governmental stakeholders working with government to reduce seabird bycatch in longline fisheries in a feasible, effective, and efficient way. The prescriptions in the current plan recognise this success and seek to further reduce the incidental capture of seabirds.

Information on the level and nature of interactions between seabirds and fishing gear has increased significantly since 1995, and there is now extensive information available upon which to base decision-making. Considerable research and development activities have been undertaken into seabird bycatch mitigation measures including at-sea trials. The prescriptions in the latest threat abatement plan also draw on best and improving practices in seabird bycatch mitigation for pelagic longline fishing developed under the *Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels* (ACAP). This international agreement, to which Australia is a Party, aims to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels.

Threat abatement plans must specify actions needed to achieve their objective. Under the current plan:

- AFMA will require all pelagic longline tuna fishers operating within either the ETBF or WTBF, or both fisheries, southwards of the parallel of 25 degrees South to:
    a. employ a line-weighting strategy approved by AFMA that enables the bait to be rapidly taken below the reach of most seabirds;
    b. employ at least one bird-scaring line constructed to a specified standard approved by AFMA, or use another proven mitigation measure approved by AFMA for use without such a line;
    c. not discharge offal during line setting; and

d. employ, as part of an adaptive management approach to seabird bycatch mitigation, such other mitigation measures as AFMA may stipulate following consultation with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (including, but not limited to, use of bird exclusion devices and/or managing offal discharge during line hauling, night setting, and area closures).

- AFMA will continue to require domestic and foreign vessels in all longline fisheries operating within Australian jurisdiction to adopt proven mitigation measures that ensure the performance criteria for each fishery are achieved in all areas and seasons.
- AFMA will implement an appropriate management response if identified circumstances occur, or data analysis indicates that the performance criteria, defined in this threat abatement plan, have not been met in any fishing area, season or fishery, or that independent monitoring has dropped below acceptable levels. Consistent with an adaptive management approach, the management response will be implemented as soon as practical, but no later than within 3 months of identification of a problem.

5.3.2 NPOA-Seabirds

Australia has developed a *National Plan of Action for minimising incidental catch of seabirds in Australian capture fisheries* (NPOA-Seabirds) to address the potential risk posed to seabirds by all fishing methods (Department of Agriculture and Water Resources 2018). NPOA-Seabirds applies to all commercial, recreational and Indigenous capture fisheries within Australian jurisdiction, as well as to fishing undertaken by Australian-flagged fishing vessels on the high seas including areas governed by regional fisheries and conservation bodies. The goal of the NPOA–Seabirds is to minimise and, where practicable, eliminate the incidental catch of seabirds in capture fisheries. To achieve this, NPOA-Seabirds seeks to identify and understand all sources of seabird mortality from fishing practices with a view to developing an appropriate response to mitigate the effects of these practices on seabird species. The NPOA-Seabirds complements the FAO's best practice technical guidelines for member countries to use when drafting NPOAs, which recommends fishing methods apart from longline (particularly gillnet and trawl) be assessed for risk, and mitigation methods be developed and prescribed when drafting an NPOA.

5.3.3 Recovery Plan

A *National Recovery Plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels* in Australia has been in place since 2001, with the current recovery plan adopted in 2022 (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water 2022).

The recovery plan's objective is "to improve the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels so that these species are on a trajectory towards no longer being threatened in Australia's jurisdiction". The recovery plan sets out a coordinated conservation strategy for albatrosses and giant petrels listed as threatened under the EPBC Act. It considers threats to albatrosses and giant petrels both at terrestrial breeding sites and at-sea in their foraging habitat. The recovery plan also collects specific data on population trends of those threatened species found breeding in Australia.

5.3.4 Mitigation measures

The mitigation measures required in the WTBF are detailed in Appendix C and include the use of weighted lines and tori lines when fishing south of 25°S, where 100% of the longline fishing from the 14 active vessels occurred in 2025; 100% of vessels were required to use these methods in 2025. This

requirement is the same in the ETBF. Of the sets conducted in the IOTC area in 2025, 81% were at night. As a result of the implementation of e-monitoring on all WTBF and ETBF longline vessels, reporting of protected species interactions in logbooks has substantially improved in accuracy. E-monitoring allows verification of boat-level seabird interaction triggers and has improved monitoring of these triggers. Vessels that exceed trigger interaction rates are subject to additional in-season management measures/mitigation (see Appendix C).

5.3.5 Interactions

Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery

The abundance of seabirds on the west coast of Australia and the level of fishing effort for tuna-like species are considerably lower than on the east coast. In addition, the WTBF predominantly targets swordfish and operates at night, which reduces the risk of interactions with many species of seabirds vulnerable to bycatch.

In 2025, e-monitoring observed no seabird interactions in the IOTC area of competence from the WTBF. One interaction was recorded in logbooks (1 flesh footed shearwater – dead).

Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

With the implementation of the original threat abatement plan (TAP) in 1998, a large proportion of the ETBF longline fleet began to set their lines during the night to avoid interactions with albatross species. Through a number of at-sea trials and the subsequent improvements to mitigation measures, the total catch of all seabirds in the fishery was considerably reduced. Further, where vessels experience increased interaction rates, strengthened individual vessel-focussed management approaches are implemented that include in-season monitoring (via e-monitoring) and additional mitigation requirements.

In 2025, 21 seabird interactions were recorded in ETBF logbooks within the IOTC area of competence (19 unspecified albatrosses – 4 dead and 15 alive; and 2 unspecified shearwaters – dead). Three seabird interactions were observed by e-monitoring in the ETBF in the IOTC area of competence (Table 5 and Table 6). The seabird captures in the IOTC area of the ETBF in 2025 resulted from longline fishing effort targeting southern bluefin tuna in that area. A full description of seabird interactions in the ETBF (inside and outside IOTC area) is provided in Australia's national report to the WCPFC (D'Alberto & Patterson 2026).

Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery

Observers did not report any seabird interactions in the purse-seine sector in 2022–2023 or 2023–24. All interactions with ecologically related species from the SBTF are reported to the CCSBT (e.g. Blake & Patterson 2026).

Table 5 Observed seabird interactions for the Australian longline fleet, 2025

Fishery		Observed					
Area	**Total effort**	**Total observed effort**	**Observer coverage (EM review rate)**	**Captures (number)**	**Mortalities (number)**	**Live releases (number)**	**Mortality estimate (number)[1]**
IOTC area of competence – Total	568,273	50,256	8.8	3	2	1	22.8

EM electronic monitoring. Note: 1 = Raised estimate of mortality.

5.4 Marine turtles

5.4.1 Recovery Plan

The Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia has the overall objective to reduce the detrimental impacts on Australian populations of marine turtles and hence promote their recovery in the wild (Commonwealth of Australia 2017).

5.4.2 Interactions

Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery

In the WTBF, no sea turtle interactions were observed by e-monitoring in 2025 (Tables 6 and 7). Eleven turtle interactions were recorded in logbooks (4 leatherback turtles, and 7 loggerhead turtles). All were released alive.

Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

In 2025, no turtle interactions were recorded in the IOTC area of competence by the ETBF by observers or logbooks. A full description of sea turtle interactions in the ETBF can be found in Australia's national report to the WCPFC (D'Alberto & Patterson 2026).

Southern Tuna Bluefin Fishery

Observers did not report any turtle interactions in the purse-seine sector in 2023–24 or 2024–25. All interactions with ecologically related species are reported to the CCSBT (Blake & Patterson 2026).

Table 6 Observed annual estimated captures of species of special interest (seabirds, turtles and marine mammals) for the Australian longline fleet in the IOTC area of competence, for 2011 to 2025

Group	Common name	Scientific name	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Seabirds	Yellow-nosed albatross	*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Albatrosses	*Diomedeidae - undifferentiated*	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	3
	Flesh footed shearwater	*Puffinus carneipes*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Petrels, prions and shearwaters	*Procellariidae – undifferentiated*	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
Turtles	Loggerhead turtle	*Caretta caretta*	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Hawksbill turtle	*Eretmochelys imbricata*	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Leatherback turtle	*Dermochelys coriacea*	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	4	3	2	0	0	1	0	0
	Green turtle	*Chelonia mydas*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Olive Ridley turtle	*Lepidochelys olivacea*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sea turtles	*Cheloniidae - undifferentiated*	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	2	0
Mammals	Australian fur seal	*Arctocephalus pusillus doriferus*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Eared seals	*Otariidae - undifferentiated*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Haired seals	*Phocidae – undifferentiated*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Whales	*Whales - undifferentiated*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: AFMA electronic monitoring data and observer program data

Table 7 Observed annual captures and fate of marine turtles for the Australian longline fleet, in the IOTC area of competence, for 2012 to 2025

	Fishery			Observed				
Year	Lat	Long	Total effort	Total observed effort	Species	Captures (number)	Mortalities (number)	Live releases (number)
2012	10	95	672,398	119,757	Leatherback	1	0	1
2014	30	110	449,387	41,066	Hawksbill	1	0	1
2014	30	110	449,387	41,066	Leatherback	1	0	1
2016	30	110	429,288	49,875	Leatherback	1	0	1
2017	25	110	532,396	68,376	Loggerhead	1	0	1
2017	30	110	532,396	68,376	Leatherback	1	0	1
2017	25	110	532,396	68,376	Leatherback	1	0	1
2017	25	110	532,396	68,376	Unidentified	1	0	1
2018	25	110	411,101	54,010	Loggerhead	1	0	1
2018	30	110	411,101	54,010	Leatherback	3	0	3
2018	25	110	411,101	54,010	Leatherback	1	0	1
2018	30	110	411,101	54,010	Unidentified	1	0	1
2019	25	110	373,810	50,177	Leatherback	2	0	2
2019	25	110	373,810	50,177	Unidentified	2	0	2
2019	30	110	373,810	50,177	Leatherback	1	0	1
2020	30	110	241,225	29,590	Leatherback	2	0	2
2022	30	112	247,171	27,802	Sea turtle	1	0	1
2023	30	114	274,990	24,480	Leatherback	1	0	1
2023	29	113	274,990	24,480	Unidentified	1	0	1
2024	29	109	416,887	45,135	Unidentified	1	0	1
2024	30	114	416,887	45,135	Unidentified	1	0	1

Note: Since 1 July 2015 all observer coverage is by electronic monitoring.
Source: AFMA electronic monitoring data and observer program data

National data collection and processing systems

6.1 Logbook data collection

Catch and effort data continue to be collected in compulsory daily fishing logbooks for the Australian longline and purse-seine vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence. AFMA distributes, collects, and processes these logbooks. Logbooks have been in place for purse seiners in the SBTF and SJF since the 1960s. Logbooks for Australian longline fisheries first began in 1986. The current Longline Daily Fishing Log, AL06 has existed since 2007. Electronic logbooks have been implemented for the ETBF and the WTBF.

Disposal of catch in port is monitored for the WTBF and ETBF longline, and the SJF and SBT purse-seine fisheries.

6.2 Vessel monitoring system

A Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) has been required on all boats in all Commonwealth-managed fisheries since 1 July 2007, including the WTBF, ETBF, SJF and SBTF.

6.3 Electronic monitoring

In both the ETBF and WTBF, e-monitoring has been in place since July 2015 and is mandatory for all longline vessels. E-monitoring is a system of strategically placed video cameras and sensors capable of monitoring and recording fishing activities, which can be reviewed at a later point to verify reported data, such as logbooks.

6.4 Observer program

6.4.1 Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery

In 2007, an ongoing observer program was implemented in the WTBF with a target level of observer coverage set at 5%. In 2025, observer coverage (through e-monitoring) was 7.5% of hooks set.

6.4.2 Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

Thirteen longline vessels in the ETBF fished in the IOTC area of competence in 2025. As with the WTBF, these vessels were subject to compulsory e-monitoring. The total observer coverage for the ETBF in 2025 was 8.2%. Further details on the observer coverage rates in the ETBF are reported to the WCPFC (D'Alberto & Patterson 2026).

6.4.3 Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery

The target observer coverage for the SBT purse-seine fleet operating out of Port Lincoln is 10% of the total catch and effort for the fishery. During the 2024–25 quota year, Australian observers spent 44 days at sea. They observed purse-seine activities for 15 days and tow activities for 16 days (Blake & Patterson 2026). The observers monitored 18 purse-seine sets where fish were retained, representing 13.8% coverage for sets where fish were retained. This equates to 17.5% of the total

estimated catch. There were 3 sets observed where fish escaped or were released because fish were too small (Blake & Patterson 2026).

6.4.4 Regional Observer Scheme

In March 2010, the IOTC passed Resolution 10/04 on a regional observer scheme, which was superseded by Resolution 11/04, and more recently by Resolution 25/06, which specifies:

3) *In order to improve the collection of scientific data, each CPC shall ensure that all fishing vessels of 24 meters length overall and above and under 24 meters if they operate outside the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the flag CPC and in the IOTC area of competence, comply with the minimum observer coverage of 5% as defined by the number of operations/sets.*

4) *Providing CPCs meet the minimum mandatory ROS data reporting standards, the minimum human observer coverage provided for in paragraph 3 may be complemented or substituted by means of an EMS. To ensure the minimum mandatory ROS data reporting standards are met, where applicable and in line with the recommendation of the IOTC Scientific Committee on the outcomes from the ROS review of minimum data standards, the EMS shall be complemented by port sampling and/or other Commission approved data collection methods.*

Resolution 25/06 also sets out the following tasks for observers:

a) *record and report fishing activities, verify positions of the vessel;*

b) *observe and estimate catches as far as possible with a view to identifying catch composition and bycatch and to monitoring discards including their fate (e.g. released alive) and size frequency;*

c) *record the gear type, mesh size and attachments employed by the master;*

d) *collect information to enable the cross-checking of entries made to the logbooks (species composition and quantities, live and processed weight and location, where available); and*

e) *carry out such scientific work (e.g. collecting samples), as requested by the IOTC Scientific Committee.*

AFMA has recruited and trained observers since its establishment in 1992. Approximately 20 observers are currently employed in the AFMA observer program which operates across many different domestic fisheries. They are sourced from universities and maritime industries from around Australia and must be able to live and work at sea, have demonstrated experience in collecting biological data at sea, and experience in fisheries research methodologies and collection of associated scientific data. Observers must also hold current medical and functional fitness clearance, remote or advanced first aid training, fire safety training, standards of training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers (STCW) certification, and have completed an AFMA observer training course.

While AFMA maintains an ability to place observers on any vessels that it chooses, AFMA introduced compulsory e-monitoring for longline vessels in the WTBF and ETBF from 1 July 2015. This is the primary mode of observer-type data collection in both fisheries since 2015.

The AFMA specified minimum e-monitoring review rates for each vessel fitted with an e-monitoring system in the ETBF and WTBF are: all pelagic longliners, 10% catch review, 10% seabird mitigation

review, 100% threatened, endangered and protected (TEP) species verification and 100% event detection. Further information on the review types is as follows:

- A fishing event is defined as a spatially and temporally corresponding set and haul. Event detection identifies and records sets and hauls.
- Catch review is the documentation stage where all items that have interacted with the fishing gear during the haul are recorded to the lowest taxonomic level possible. When possible, fate and life status are also documented.
- All interactions with TEP species observed during an e-monitoring review are recorded as incidental take, with the details of the time, date, location, type of capture, life status of the animal.
- TEP verification requires an e-monitoring analyst to verify logbook reported TEP interactions with e-monitoring footage.
- In addition to the standard TEP review, pelagic longliners require review for the deployment of seabird mitigation devices.

Port sampling processes facilitate the collection of biological information which cannot be achieved through e-monitoring. The processes involve the collection of individual fish size data of key commercial and byproduct species, covering approximately 90% of total catch for commercial species.

In 2025, a total of 568,273 longline hooks were deployed in the IOTC area of competence by Australian vessels, of which 8.8% were observed (Table 8). Map 5 depicts the spatial distribution of the longline e-monitoring coverage in the IOTC area of competence.

6.5 Unloading/transhipment

This section is not applicable to Australia as Australian-flagged vessels were not authorised to tranship at sea in the IOTC area of competence in 2025.

6.6 Actions taken to monitor catches and manage fisheries for striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish

Per Resolution 18.05 paragraph 9, Australian operators in the WTBF are prohibited from taking black or blue marlin *under the Fisheries Management Act 1991* and must report any interactions with these species. Since 2015, there have been 4 sailfish reported through the WTBF compulsory logbooks and these were not retained. Striped marlin are subject to quota management in WTBF. In 2025, 0.2 t striped marlin was caught in the IOTC area of competence (Table 2a). The number of billfish taken are monitored via logbooks and e-monitoring coverage of the longline fleet.

6.7 Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring

Australia does not authorise the use of gillnets to target tuna.

6.8 Sampling plans for mobulid rays

Setting any gear for targeting of mobulid rays is prohibited under the EPBC Act.

Table 8 Observer coverage, by hooks in the longline sector and by sets in the purse-seine sector, in the IOTC area of competence for 2006 to 2025 (calendar year). The purse-seine coverage noted here refers only to fishing for southern bluefin tuna (SBT) where fish were retained.

Year	Longline Hooks Observed	Percentage Coverage (Hooks)	SBT Season	Purse-Seine Sets Observed [c]	Percentage Coverage (Sets) [c]
2006	n/av	n/av	2006–07	9	5.6
2007	n/av	1.42	2007–08	16	11.8
2008	n/av	n/av	2008–09	11	7.9
2009	44,790	8.46	2009–10	7	9.0
2010	15,330	2.45	2010–11	21	19.8
2011	6,232	1.7	2011–12	17	11.1
2012	119,757	17.8	2012–13	14	12.7
2013	0	0.0	2013–14	16	17.0
2014	41,066	9.1	2014–15	14	9.1
2015[a]	30,435	7.1	2015–16	25	18.9
2016[b]	49,875	11.6	2016–17	20	18.3
2017	68,376	12.8	2017–18	40	20.9
2018	54,010	13.1	2018–19	22	14.3
2019	50,177	13.4	2019–20	14	9.9
2020	29,590	12.3	2020–21	20	13.2
2021	38,619	11.7	2021–22	13	9.6
2022	27,802	11.2	2022–23	14	8.1
2023	24,480	8.9	2023–24	14	11.9
2024	45,135	10.8	2024–25	18	13.8
2025	50,256	8.8	2025–26	n/av	n/av

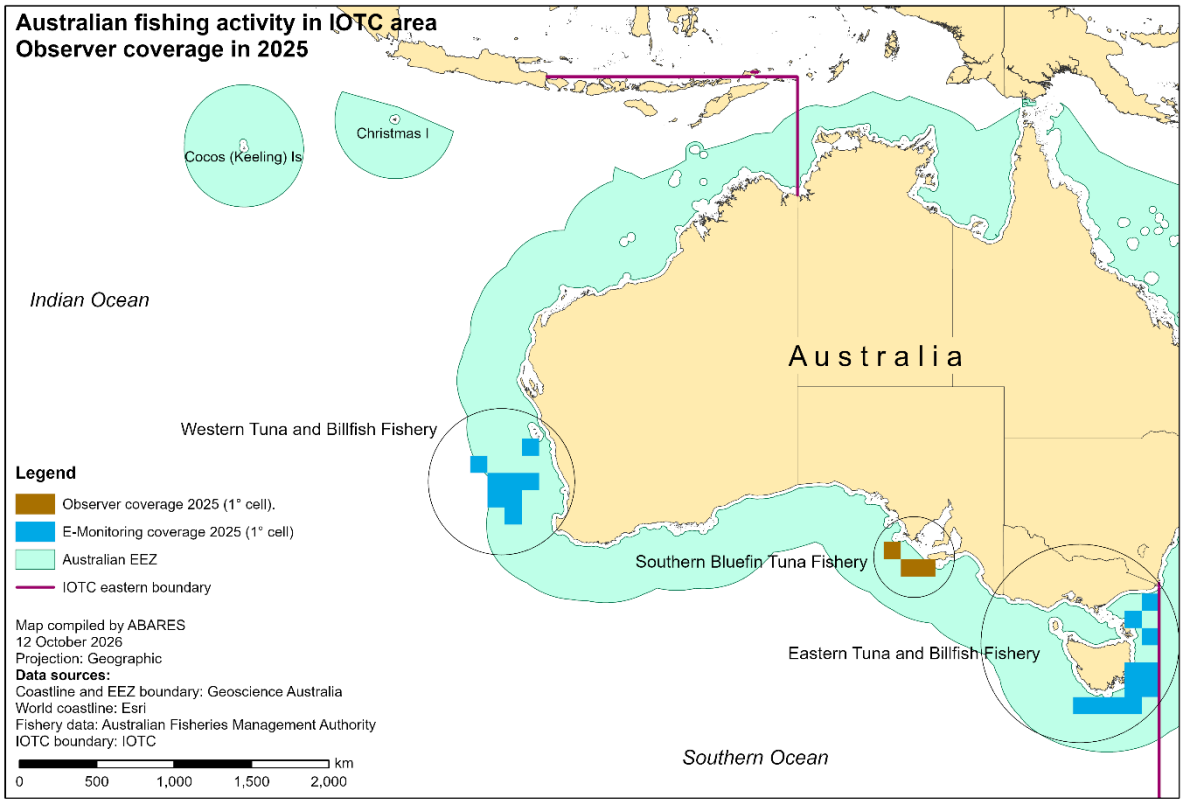
n/av Not available.

a Observer coverage in 2015 includes both human observers and data obtained from electronic monitoring systems.

b Since 1 July 2015 all coverage is by electronic monitoring.

c Where fish were retained.

Map 5 Spatial distribution of 2025 observer coverage in the IOTC area of competence



6.9 Port sampling program

As noted above, port sampling processes facilitate the collection of biological information that cannot be achieved through e-monitoring. The processes involve the collection of individual fish size data of key commercial and byproduct species, covering approximately 95% of total catch for commercial species in the WTBF and ETBF.

A fish size monitoring program for the WTBF has been conducted since 1999. Weights for target species are recorded from processors in Western Australia. In 2025 these data were obtained from 1 longline vessel and approximately 22 trips (Table 9).

Table 9 Number of individuals measured, by species, in the WTBF in 2025. Only target and bycatch species with >50 individuals measured are provided.

Common name	Scientific name	Number measured
Albacore	*Thunnus alalunga*	661
Bigeye tuna	*Thunnus obesus*	1,139
Swordfish	*Xiphias gladius*	978
Yellowfin tuna	*Thunnus albacares*	624
Mahi mahi	*Coryphaena hippurus*	152

National research programs

Australia undertakes research projects and programs that are applicable to IOTC fisheries. Details of recent projects are provided below in Table 10.

Table 10 Summary table of current or recent national research programs

Project title	Period	Countries Involved	Funding source	Objectives	Short description
Provenance and chain of custody of tropical tunas in the north-east Indian Ocean	2015–present	Australia, Indonesia, Maldives	Australia	To support current initiatives to deter and eliminate IUU in the IOTC region.	This project is assisting current initiatives to deter and eliminate IUU in the region by providing a detailed understanding of the provenance of tropical tuna stocks in the north-east Indian Ocean, operational technical tools to identify and trace the provenance and source of tropical tuna products, and expert technical advice to national governments, industry bodies, international certifiers and IOTC on the design requirements of chain of custody and Catch Documentation Schemes.
A close-kin-mark-recapture design study for shortfin mako in the Indian Ocean	2024–2026	Australia	Australia	Define shortfin populations and evaluate CKMR designs in the Indian Ocean.	This project will use next-generation sequencing approaches to better define the population structure of shortfin mako in the Indian Ocean. It will also evaluate alternative sampling designs for shortfin mako for the implementation of a CKMR study for the estimation of adult abundance. These activities will lay the groundwork for a full CKMR study which will support improved management, conservation and sustainable utilisation of stocks.

Implementation of Scientific Committee recommendations and resolutions of the IOTC relevant to the SC

Australia is compliant with IOTC resolutions relevant to the Scientific Committee. Table 11 details the resolutions and how they have been implemented.

Table 11 Scientific requirements contained in the Resolutions of the Commission, adopted between 2012 and 2024

No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
12/04	On the conservation of marine turtles	Paragraphs, 3, 4, 6–10	- Australian vessels are required to record and report interactions with marine turtles; this information is reported to the IOTC. - Research using circle hooks has been undertaken and reported to IOTC (Ward & Hall 2009). - Australia is a signatory member of Indian Ocean South-East Asia Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding and has committed to implement conservation and management measures to protect sea turtle habitat and nesting sites. - Australia requires the operators of all longline vessels to carry line cutters and de-hookers to facilitate the appropriate handling and prompt release of marine turtles that are caught or entangled.
12/09	On the conservation of thresher sharks (family Alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 4–8	- Australia provides data on interactions with thresher sharks to the IOTC. - In 2011, Australia implemented new permit conditions to prohibit licence holders from retaining, transhipping, landing, storing or selling thresher sharks in the IOTC area of competence. - Commercial interactions with thresher sharks in 2015 have been reported to the IOTC as required. Captured thresher sharks were released as required. - The results from recreational tuna catch surveys indicated that interactions with thresher sharks by recreational fishers are also extremely rare.
13/04	On the conservation of cetaceans	Paragraphs 7–9	- Resolution 13/04 has been implemented through conditions on boat statutory fishing rights in the WTBF and permit conditions in the SJF.

No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
			- The setting of purse seines around cetaceans is prohibited and concession holders are required to report all interactions with cetaceans through their daily catch and effort logbooks. This information is also collected by observers if on board. - All cetacean species are protected by Australian law (EPBC Act).
13/05	On the conservation of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*)	Paragraphs 7–9	- Resolution 13/05 has been implemented through conditions on boat statutory fishing rights in the WTBF and permit conditions in the SJF. - The setting of purse seines around whale sharks is prohibited and concession holders are required to report all interactions with cetaceans through their daily catch and effort logbooks. This information is also collected by observers if on board. - Whale sharks are protected by Australian law (EPBC Act).
13/06	On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries	Paragraphs 5–6	-The retention, transhipment, landing or storage of oceanic whitetip sharks, whole or parts of, is prohibited in the WTBF and ETBF. - Australia continues to collect data, including on ocean whitetip sharks, through Australia's scientific observer program.
15/01	On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 1–10	- Catch and effort data prescribed in the Resolution are collected in daily fishing logbooks for the Australian longline and purse-seine vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence. - Catch and effort data are also recorded in daily fishing logbooks for relevant fisheries managed by Western Australia that operate in the IOTC area of competence. - Disposal of catch is monitored using catch disposal record forms for the WTBF and ETBF longline, and the SJF and SBT purse-seine fisheries. -Australia has submitted templates of its official logbooks to record data in accordance with Annex I, II and III to the IOTC Executive Secretary for publishing on the IOTC website. - Data submitted by 30 June each year.
15/02	Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)	Paragraphs 1–7	- Data submitted including: - Total catch data - Catch and effort data - Size data. - Data submitted by 30 June each year.

No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
17/05	On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by the IOTC	Paragraphs 6, 9, 11	- Available data submitted to meet the data reporting requirements outlined in the resolution. Size frequency data are not provided as most shark catch is discarded (Table 3a, 4). - Landing requirements are in place: sharks must be landed with fins attached naturally or by other means; landing of shark livers only (i.e. without the carcass) is not permitted. - The use of wire leaders is not permitted. - In the Australian EEZ, a longline shark trip limit of 20 sharks per vessels per trip applies, as well as a 15 kg trip limit for gulper sharks. - Good handling practices are encouraged to return sharks to the sea alive and vigorous. - Research pertaining to the conservation of sharks has been conducted by Australia and reported to the IOTC (e.g. Hindmarsh 2007; Ward et al. 2007; Ward & Hall 2009; Patterson, Hansen & Larcombe 2014). - A shark bycatch mitigation guide was produced and distributed to encourage practical solutions that can be used by fishers (Patterson & Tudman 2009). - Under Australia's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, licence holders must take measures to avoid the catch of porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*), shortfin (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) and longfin (*Isurus paucus*) makos and any live animals must be returned to the water alive.
18/02	On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 2–5	- Data submitted to meet the data reporting requirements outlined in the resolution. - In the Australian EEZ, a longline shark trip limit of 20 sharks per vessels per trip applies. Longline vessels undertaking single jurisdiction high seas trips may apply for a permit to retain 100 sharks per fishing trip, of which only 80 can be blue sharks. - Research pertaining to the conservation of sharks has been conducted by Australia and reported to the IOTC (e.g. Hindmarsh 2007; Ward et al. 2007; Ward & Hall 2009; Patterson, Hansen & Larcombe 2014).
18/05	On management measures for the conservation of the billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish	Paragraphs 7–11	- Catch and effort data prescribed in Resolution 15/01 are collected in daily fishing logbooks for the Australian longline and purse-seine vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence. - Catch and effort data are also recorded in daily fishing logbooks for relevant fisheries managed by Western Australia that operate in the IOTC area of competence. - Commercial fisheries in Australia are not permitted to keep black or blue marlin. - Catch of striped marlin in the WTBF is very low (~1 t in 2020).

No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
18/07	On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC	Paragraphs 1, 4	- Australia is compliant with data reporting requirements and has implemented reporting obligations in their IOTC fisheries. - Australia has reported on the implementation of e-monitoring in its longline fisheries. This will improve the accuracy of the data recorded in logbooks, including data on shark interactions. - Such data will be reported in the implementation report and in the annual data submission to the IOTC. - Australia reports zero catches as part of the annual data submission.
19/03	On the conservation of mobulid rays caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraph 11	- Australia does not have subsistence or artisanal fisheries. - This is not applicable to Australia.
21/01	On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence (if not provided under Res 19/01 above)	Paragraph 23	- The obligation in para 23 is not applicable to Australia. - Australia does not authorise the use of gillnets to target tuna in the WTBF.
23/07	On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries	Paragraphs 3–7	- Australia has conducted research on methods to reduce seabird bycatch and reported the results to the IOTC (e.g. Robertson & Ashworth 2010; Robertson, Candy & Wienecke 2010; Robertson & Candy 2013; Robertson, Candy & Hall 2013). - In 2018, Australia implemented a revised Threat Abatement Plan for seabirds to minimise seabird interactions in pelagic longline operations. Under the 2018 plan, longline vessels are required to maintain the bycatch rate of 0.05 seabirds per 1000 hooks set in all fishing areas and fishing seasons. - Consistent with the objectives of the plan and with Resolution 23/07, Australia requires that all longline vessels fishing south of 25°S employ an approved line-weighting strategy and a bird-scaring line or another approved method; longline vessels in all other areas must use at least one mitigation method. - The design and deployment of bird scaring lines meet the specifications described in Annex I of Resolution 23/07. - Australia reports on seabird interactions and mitigation measures in its national report.
23/08	On electronic monitoring standards for IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 3c	- See Appendix A for detailed information.
25/06	On a regional observer scheme	Paragraph 12	- In both the ETBF and WTBF, e-monitoring has been in place since July 2015 and is mandatory for all longline vessels. Size data are collected at port. - A minimum of 10% of the video footage is reviewed.

Appendix A: Fleet level summary of the vessel monitoring plans (VMPs)

A.1 The number of CPC flagged vessels implementing EM by gear/fishery type [Mandatory for CPC implementing EMS].

There are 39 pelagic longline vessels implementing EM in AFMA-managed fisheries: 37 vessels operating in the ETBF and 2 vessels in the WTBF.

A.2 The range of EMS configurations implemented within the fleet (including the numbers and placements of cameras for each configuration) [Mandatory for CPC implementing EMS].

EMS that are to be used on ETBF and WTBF pelagic longline vessels must use cameras to record the occurrence of fishing events, catch interactions, including interactions with endangered, threatened and protected species, and the use of mitigation device(s).The cameras must be configured to cover and collect the following areas, actions and minimum data requirements on tuna longline vessels:

Areas covered

Areas that cameras are required to cover include:

- area of setting the longline (usually vessel stern site)
- working deck where catch is hauled and handled
- processing area where catch is cleaned and retained, and
- surrounding water area for those discarded species not brought onboard.

Actions covered

Actions that cameras are required to cover include setting and hauling of the longline, whether mitigation techniques are being used (e.g. tori lines for seabirds), all hooked catch species (both retained and not retained), the fate of the catch and catch life status.

Minimum data requirements

Within these areas and actions covered, the minimum data requirements to be collected on tuna longline vessels are outlined in Table A1.

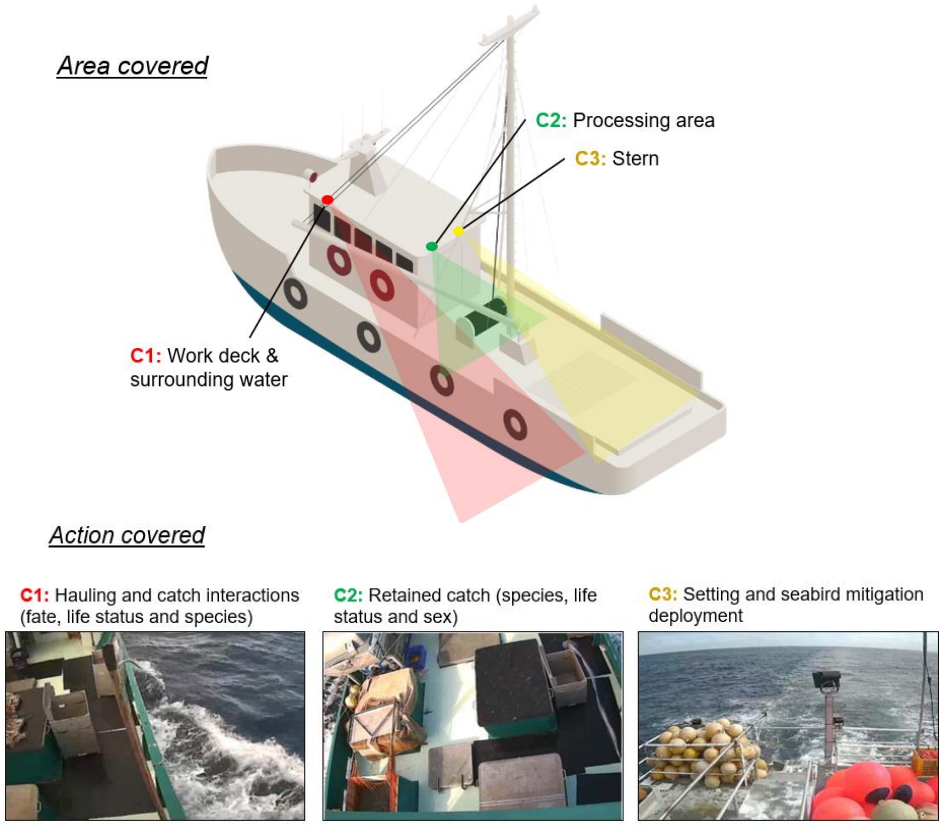
Table A1 General areas/activities monitored by onboard cameras to meet minimum data requirements for vessels operating in the ETBF and WTBF

Area covered	Action covered	Minimum data requirements to be recorded for review
Stern	Setting operation	Start/end position, date, and time
		Seabird presence or absence
		Species
		Number of seabirds viewed during set
		Type of seabird behaviour (e.g. diving, sitting on top of water)
	Seabird mitigation (if required on vessel)	Position, date, and time
		Absence or presence of seabird mitigation use
		Seabird mitigation device type (e.g. tori line)
Work deck	Catch retained and/or discarded	Position, date, and time
		Species
Processing area		Number
		Fate
		Life status
		Sex
		Predation observed
Surrounding water area	Hauling operation	Start/end position, date, and time
	Catch discarded, cut off and/or escaped	Position, date, and time
		Species
		Number
		Fate
		Life status

On most tuna longline vessels, one camera is placed at the stern to record when setting the longline, a second to record the hauling and boarding of the catch, and a third mounted over the processing deck to record catch species, life status and fate. Depending on the vessel size and configuration,

a fourth camera may be required to cover the surrounding water area for those discarded species not brought onboard. An example of possible camera placement(s) to meet minimum data requirements on a tuna vessel is shown in Figure A1 for guidance.

Figure A1 Example of camera configuration on longline vessel to meet minimum data requirements within the ETBF and WTBF



The EMS must use sensor(s) to monitor gear activity and to activate camera recording during the start and end of setting and hauling activity. For tuna longline vessels, the start of a set is defined from when the first marker buoy has been deployed from the vessel to when the end marker buoy has been deployed. The start of a haul is from when the first marker buoy is picked up by the vessel to when the end marker buoy is brought on board.

A.3 A general description of EMS requirements placed upon vessel skippers/crews by the CPC government [Mandatory for CPC implementing EMS].

The EMS requirements for concession holders (or persons acting on behalf of the concession holder) are legally enforced by the Fisheries Management (E-monitoring Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery) Direction 2021 [superseded in 2026] and Fisheries Management (E-monitoring Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery) Direction 2021 [superseded in 2026]. The intent of the Directions is summarised below: Requirement to install and operate an e-monitoring system on longline boats:

1. A concession holder (or person acting on behalf of the concession holder) fishing in the ETBF or the WTBF engaging in pelagic longline fishing must have an e-monitoring system installed and operating on a nominated boat that:
    a. is supplied to the person and installed by AFMA or the Contractor (the party contracted as AFMA's agents to provide e-monitoring systems and associated services); or
    b. complies with the standards and requirements specified in the certificate granting the statutory fishing right.
2. A concession holder (or person acting on behalf of a concession holder) must take all reasonable steps to ensure the e-monitoring system is operational at all times and capable of recording all longline fishing events.
3. An installed e-monitoring system may be powered off if:
    a. the nominated boat is in port; and
    b. the nominated boat has an operational Vessel Monitoring System installed.

Requirement to monitor function, of an e-monitoring system, arrange repair and provide e-monitoring data:

1. A concession holder (or person acting on behalf of a concession holder) must take all reasonable steps to maintain their e-monitoring system in good working order by:
    a. undertaking system function tests:
        i. immediately after a data drive exchange;
        ii. prior to starting a new trip;
        iii. when there is a reasonable suspicion of issues or fault with the system; and
        iv. after any periods of inactivity greater than 14 days.
    b. reporting suspected issues with the e-monitoring system to AFMA, or the Contractor, as soon as practicable;
    c. cleaning camera lenses to ensure that a clear field of view is maintained at all times; and
    d. ensuring camera views of fishing events remain unobstructed and well-lit.
2. If the e-monitoring system stops operating, the concession holder (or person acting on behalf of a concession holder) must:
    a. contact AFMA or the Contractor as soon as practicable after the concession holder (or person acting on behalf of the concession holder) becomes aware that the e-monitoring system has stopped operating to organise repairs of the e-monitoring system; and

    b. take all reasonable steps to make the boat available at the earliest time agreed to with AFMA or the Contractor.
3. A concession holder (or person acting on behalf of a concession holder) must exchange the e-monitoring system's data drive and return it to AFMA at the first occurrence of the following:
    a. the data drive's capacity is reached; or
    b. the data drive has failed a system test and a replacement data drive has been issued; or
    c. instructed by AFMA or the Contractor.
4. A concession holder (or person acting on behalf of a concession holder) must exchange the e-monitoring system's data drive and return it to AFMA by:
    a. removing the data drive and packaging the drive in a preaddressed, prepaid envelope; and
    b. posting the data drive within 24 hours of returning to Port.
5. A concession holder (or person acting on behalf of a concession holder) must install a new or replacement data drive by following the instructions issued by AFMA, the Contractor, or the manufacturer of the e-monitoring system.

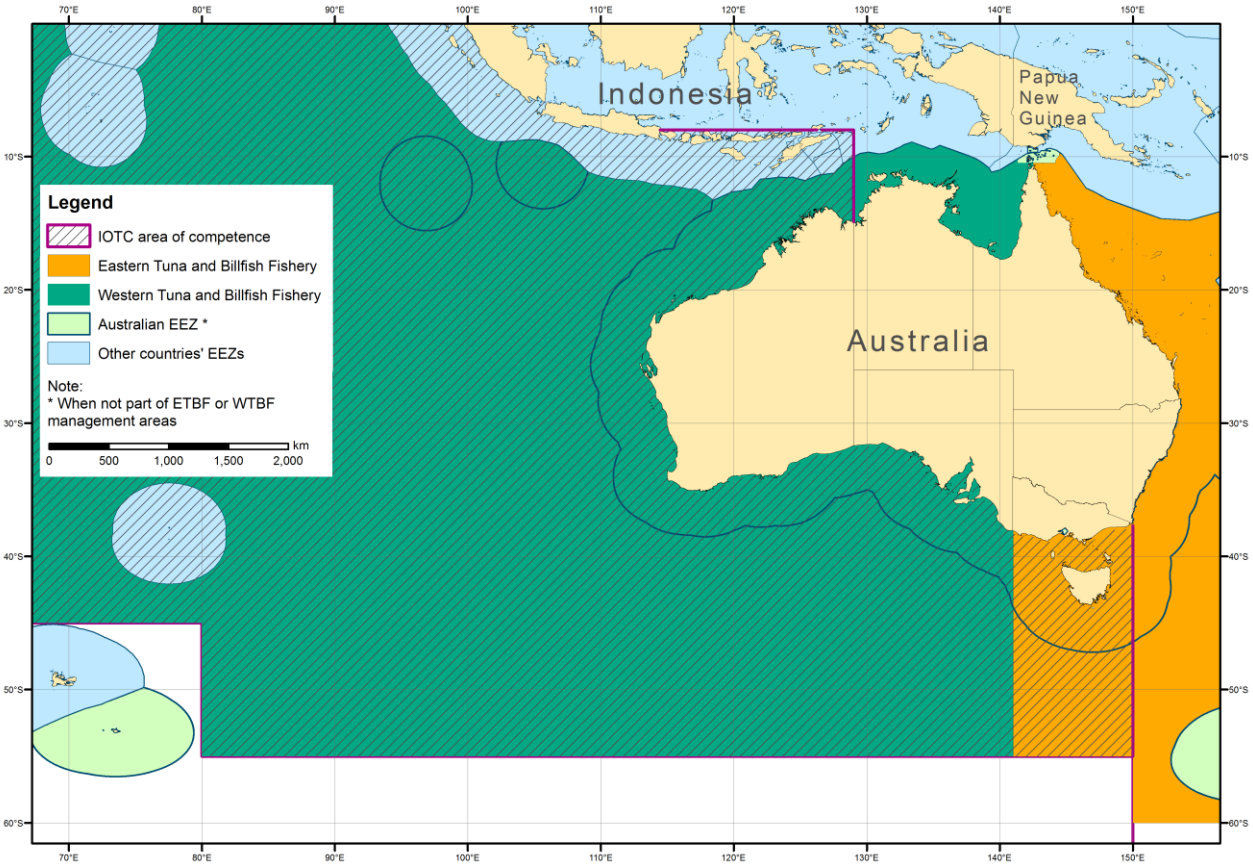
Requirement to provide certain information to AFMA

1. AFMA may require a concession holder (or person acting on behalf of a concession holder) to give a statement to AFMA setting out:
    a. the facts leading to any loss, theft or damage to the e-monitoring system or e-monitoring data;
    b. the time, date and location where the person posted or handed over the e-monitoring system or data drive to another person (including a postal worker or courier);
    c. the names and addresses of any person employed or engaged by the person who had any interactions with the e-monitoring system (whether while operating, off or in sleep or idle mode) or data drive;
    d. the reasons why the e-monitoring system was not operational at a given time; or
    e. any other matter relating to the circumstances, time, place, or manner of installation, carriage, use, handling, maintenance or monitoring of use of the e-monitoring system or data drive.
2. A concession holder (or person acting on behalf of a concession holder) must not, without reasonable excuse, fail to comply with a request to give a statement to AFMA within a reasonable time period.

Appendix B: Fishery boundaries

The fishery boundaries for the ETBF and WTBF are depicted in Map B1. The Western Skipjack Fishery and the Eastern Skipjack Fishery use the same boundary line as the WTBF and ETBF.

Map B1 Locations of the ETBF and the WTBF in relation to the IOTC area of competence



Appendix C: Mandatory mitigation measures in the WTBF 2025

Source: AFMA management arrangements booklets

Seabirds

At all times you must:

- Carry more than one assembled tori line onboard
- Not discharge offal while setting
- Comply with any further seabird interaction obligations relating to the Threat Abatement Plan.

When you are fishing south of 25°S you must:

- Deploy a tori line before commencing a shot when fishing between the hours of nautical and nautical dusk
- A tori line is not required to be deployed when performing fishing operations between the hours of nautical dusk and nautical dawn, unless instructed by AFMA
- Use only non-frozen bait
- Weight longlines with either a minimum of:
    - 60 g swivels at a distance of no more than 3.5 m from each hook; or
    - 98 g swivels at a distance of no more than 4 m from each hook; or
    - 40 g weights immediately adjacent to the hook, or no more than 0.5 m from the hook, with dead, non-frozen baits attached to the hooks; or
    - 'hook-shielding device' with a cap and weighing at least 38 g may be deployed directly at the hook as an alternative.

Note: If you are fishing south of 40°S, AFMA may require you to implement additional seabird mitigation measures as this is an area in which higher than average numbers of seabird interactions are possible.

Tori line specifications – tori lines must:

- Have an aerial extent of at least 100 m for vessels ≥35 m, or 75 m for vessels <35 m
- Set up from a position on the boat that allows it to stay above the water for at least 75 m from the stern (generally achieved by a tori pole of 6–7 m in height)
- Have streamers attached at a maximum interval 3.5 m

- Streamers should be maintained, ensuring that their lengths are as close to the water as possible
- Have a towed line, material or object at the end of the line to give sufficient drag to meet the aerial coverage criteria.

Individual vessels that fail to consistently avoid or minimise interaction rates with seabirds are subject to additional monitoring and mitigation requirements. Specifically, vessels that exceed a rate of 0.05 birds/1,000 hooks - in two of the last three consecutive Summer (or Winter) TAP seasons, or in consecutive Summer and Winter seasons, or take more than ten birds in a season - will be notified and placed on a watchlist. If that vessel then breaches the trigger again in-season, it will be required to implement additional mitigation. That will comprise either stronger line weighting, night setting, hook shields, or moving the area of operation at least 5 degrees north (to a lower seabird abundance area). Additional mitigation will be required on top of this if the vessel continues to have seabird interactions. The additional mitigations measures remain in place until AFMA notifies the SFR holder in writing that the vessel has achieved a seabird by-catch rate less than 0.05 birds per 1,000 hooks.

Turtles

Circle hooks

Large circle hooks must be used if less than eight hooks per bubble are set.

De-hooking device

At all times you must carry on board a minimum of one de-hooking device, with the following specifications:

- The device must enable the hook to be secured and the barb shielded so that the barb does not re-engage with the fish or protected species while the hook is being removed
- The device must be blunt with all edges rounded
- Where more than one size of hook is to be carried, a de-hooking device (or devices) must be carried that can be used with all hooks on the boat; and
- The shaft of the device must be a minimum of 1.5 metres in length.

Line-cutting device

At all times you must carry on board a minimum of one line cutting device. The line cutting device must be constructed and used in accordance with the following specifications:

- The device must be constructed to allow the line to be cut as close to the hook as possible
- The blade of the device must be enclosed in a blunt rounded (arc-shaped) cover with the hook exposed on the inside of the arc; and
- The shaft of the device must be a minimum of 1.5 metres in length.

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