Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
Commission des Thons de l'Ocean Indien
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Ministry of Agriculture-Jahad
Iran Fisheries Organization

Iran (Islamic Republic of) National Report to the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, 2026

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INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02 (and other data related CMMs as noted below), final scientific data for the previous year were provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the current year, for all fleets other than longline (e.g., for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2026, final data for the 2025 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2026).	**YES 30/06/2026**
In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, provisional longline data for the previous year was provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the current year (e.g., for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2026, preliminary data for the 2025 calendar year were provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June 2026). REMINDER: Final longline data for the previous year are due to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 Dec of the current year (e.g., for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2026, final data for the 2025 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 December 2026).	**YES 30/06/2026**
If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions: **Note:** The longline data submitted on 30/06/2026 pertains entirely to the coastal artisanal fleet. There is only one industrial longline vessel officially registered, which has not been active in recent years. However, a number of artisanal gillnet vessels (612 vessels, comprising 516 small boats under 3 GT and 96 dhows between 51–100 GT) actively engaged in seasonal longline fishing during 2025. Although these vessels are not yet officially categorized as longliners, this seasonal operation serves as a transitional pilot phase rather than an indefinite arrangement. Because an abrupt shift from traditional gillnetting is not feasible, the management plan is to progressively establish the necessary groundwork to permanently transition and reclassify these vessels as dedicated longliners. In the interim, their seasonal longline catch data has been reported accordingly.	

Executive Summary

Tuna and tuna-like species constitute a significant portion of Iran's large pelagic fisheries. This sector is pivotal to the nation's marine economy, operating primarily in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, and the high seas. In 2025, Iran's total aquatic production reached approximately 1.57 million metric tonnes (MT). Of this total, 818,000 MT (52.1%) originated from the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, and adjacent high seas; the Caspian Sea contributed 18,000 MT (1.1%); and inland aquaculture accounted for 734,000 MT (46.8%).

The total catch of large pelagic species, including bycatch, was 316,270 MT, representing 38.7% of southern marine landings and 37.8% of total national marine capture fisheries. Of this amount, 277,057 MT comprised tuna and tuna-like species (tropical and neritic tunas) harvested within the IOTC area of competence. The breakdown of the total large pelagic catch consisted of:

- **Tropical tunas:** 129,160 MT (40.8%)
- **Neritic tunas:** 147,897 MT (46.8%)
- **Billfish species:** 28,674 MT (9.1%)
- **Shark species:** 1,652 MT (0.5%)
- **Other non-target species:** 8,887 MT (2.8%)

Iran's marine fisheries continue to demonstrate a profound reliance on large pelagic resources particularly tuna and tuna-like species which collectively account for approximately 38% of the national marine catch. This dependence underscores both the strategic economic importance of the pelagic fleet and the biological sensitivity of these stocks to excessive fishing pressure. Overall, these findings indicate that while pelagic fisheries remain productive and economically vital, long-term sustainability challenges persist. Ensuring resilient fisheries governance will require balancing economic harvest with ecological conservation, underpinned by science-based management, temporal-spatial fishing regulations, and sustained regional collaboration under the IOTC framework.

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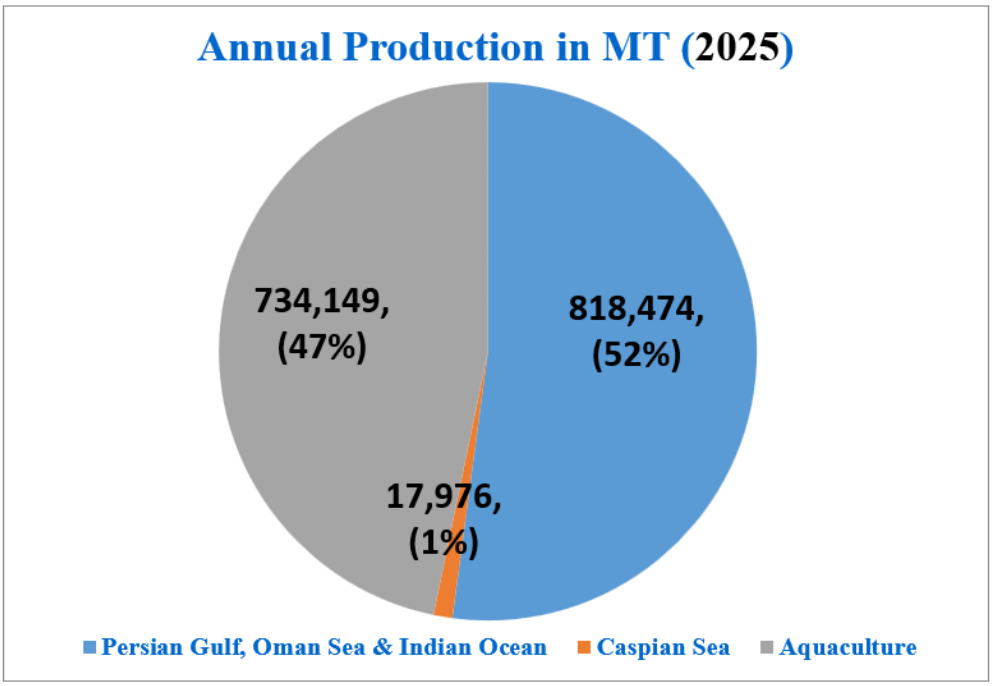
1.Background/General fishery information

Iran's extensive coastline, stretching from the Caspian Sea in the north to the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman in the south, provides a rich and diverse marine environment. The southern waters, in particular, are well known for their abundance of large pelagic species. Four coastal provinces—Khuzestan, Bushehr, Hormozgan, and Sistan & Baluchestan—border these southern waters, together offering approximately 5,800 km of coastline. Iranian fishers have a long history of offshore fishing, especially in the northwestern Indian Ocean, where they primarily use gillnets to target tuna and other large pelagic species. Iran's aquatic production consists of both aquaculture and marine capture fisheries. In 2025, total aquatic production reached 1,570,599 metric tonnes, comprising 734,149 metric tonnes from aquaculture and 836,450 metric tonnes from marine capture fisheries. Marine fisheries, primarily concentrated in the southern waters (Persian Gulf, Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean), accounted for 97.8% (818,474 metric tonnes) of the total marine catch, while the northern waters (Caspian Sea) contributed 2.2% (17,976 metric tonnes). Over 182,500 fishermen utilize a variety of vessels, including fishing boats, dhows, and ships, to engage in gillnet, longline, shrimp trawl, trolling (Hook & line), and wire-trap fishing.



Supplementary Figure 1.1: Annual aquatic production in Iran by sector in MT (2025)

2. Fleet structure

Fishing for large pelagic species in Iran is conducted mainly using gillnet and longline (Operated by traditional fishing vessels), as well as trolling by small coastal vessels. The gillnet fleet is largely composed of locally built wooden and fiberglass boats. In the southern fisheries, a total of approximately 15,488 fishing vessels operate, of which about 8,862 are engaged in catching large pelagic species within the IOTC area of competence. These include 4,138 gillnet boats (less than 20 GT), 408 gillnet dhows between 21–50 GT, 400 gillnet dhows between 51–100 GT, 590 gillnet dhows exceeding 100 GT, 2,714 trolling boats under 3 GT, 516 traditional longline boats under 3 GT, and 96 longline dhows between 51–100 GT. In recent years, there have been no active purse seine vessels. Overall, gillnet boats—particularly those under 3 GT—constitute the dominant segment of the fleet, followed by gillnet dhows across various tonnage categories. With respect to

the duration of fishing operations, traditional distant-water dhow-class vessels undertake extended round-trip fishing voyages lasting approximately 45 days (see Sections 5.4.4, 6.2, and 6.4.3).

Table 1: Number of vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence, by gear type and size class (2020–2025) (Source Report Table 2.1)

Gear Group	Capacity GT	Number of Active Fishing Vessels by Year					
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Purse seine	500 to 1000 t	2	2	0	0	0	0
	>1000 t	5	5	0	0	0	0
Coastal Artisanal Longline*	< 3	250	280	492	371	496	516
	51 to 100	70	70	85	59	92	96
	100 to 200	0	0	0	0	0	0
	>1000	1	1	1	0	0	0
Gillnet	< 3 t	3,752	2,694	3,416	4,762	3,983	3845
	3 to 20 t	230	437	247	301	289	293
	21 to 50 t	216	254	303	345	402	408
	51 to 100 t	246	506	477	261	394	400
	>100 t	487	246	248	478	582	590
Trolling	< 3 t	1,901	1,771	1,808	2,171	2,474	2714
Total fishing Craft (Excluding seasonal longline vessels in all years)		6,840	**5,916**	**6,500**	**8,318**	**8,124**	**8,250**
Total fishing Craft (Including coastal longline vessels in all years)		**7,160**	**6,266**	**7,077**	**8,748**	**8,712**	**8,862**

**It should be noted that approximately 612 gillnet vessels (516 boats < 3 GT and 96 dhows of 51–100 GT) operated as coastal artisanal longliners in 2025. Their longline operations are seasonal and temporary, operating only during certain fishing seasons.*

3. Catch and effort (by species and fishery)

Catch and effort data were collected from 43 active landing sites (out of 66 landing centres) located along Iran's southern coast. A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure that the data was representative of the entire fishing fleet. Approximately 10% of the fishing vessels, including dhows and boats of various types, were randomly selected, and their fishing data were collected through questionnaires by trained field samplers. In addition, the number of fishing days at sea is recorded in the data collection software for all active fishing vessels. These data are raised based on the total fishing effort. There is a specific scientific capture fishery statistics committee at both the provincial and national levels, and fishery research experts and administrative officers are members of these committees. In these committees, trends of data collection and raising are evaluated and ultimately approved.

Large pelagic fisheries by the Iranian fleet are conducted in coastal areas and high seas by different types of vessels; the catch results are reflected in Table 2a (Table 3.1 in the source report), and Figures 1a, 1b, and

1c (Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 in the source report) show the total yearly catch by gear type and species groups reported for the entire fleet. The catch quantity of large pelagic species (including by-catch) in Iran was 316,270 Mt in 2025 reported to the IOTC Secretariat, and around 277,057 Mt belongs to tuna and tuna-like species (tropical and neritic tunas) in the coastal and high seas. This catch consists of tropical tuna 129,160 Mt, neritic tuna 147,897 Mt, billfish 28,674 Mt, sharks 1,652 Mt, and other species 8,887 Mt. Total catch for gillnet, longline by coastal artisanal boats, and trolling in 2025 was estimated at 273,829 Mt, 13,346 Mt, and 29,095 Mt, respectively. Gillnet with 86.6% of the catch is the dominant fishing gear, followed by longline with 4.2%, and around 9.2% comes from trolling vessels.

Table 2a. Annual catch by fishery and primary species group in the IOTC area of competence (2020–2025, Mt) (Source Report Table 3.1)

GEAR GROUP	SPECIES GROUP	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Purse Seine	Neritic Species	416	220	0	0	0	0
	Tropical Species	610	305	0	0	0	0
	Billfish	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sharks	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Not elsewhere indicated – NEI (Others)	0	6	0	0	0	0
Coastal Artisanal Longline	Neritic Species	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Tropical Species *(only targeting YFT)*	8,839	5,600	9,304	8,586	11,036	13,218
	Billfish	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sharks	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Not elsewhere indicated – NEI (Others)	0	60	130	114	151	128
Gillnet	Neritic Species	129,488	129,917	117,866	122,942	130,417	127,506
	Tropical Species	79,799	103,904	106,106	101,505	98,844	112,575
	Billfish	18,370	26,077	31,470	28,950	24,201	24,139
	Sharks	3,442	4,085	2,779	1,164	1,259	1,462
	Not elsewhere indicated – NEI (Others)	22,576	29,069	29,343	19,537	13,180	8,147
Trolling	Neritic Species	12,376	5,092	11,266	8,960	18,863	20,391
	Tropical Species	5,109	3,198	3,025	1,316	3,899	3,367
	Billfish	2,142	453	3,339	2,502	4,348	4,535
	Sharks	190	55	252	365	50	190
	Not elsewhere indicated – NEI (Others)	115	188	1,371	489	901	612
Total Catch (MT)		**283,472**	**308,229**	**316,251**	**296,430**	**307,149**	**316,270**

Figure 1. Historical annual catch for the national fisheries by primary species, for the IOTC area of competence

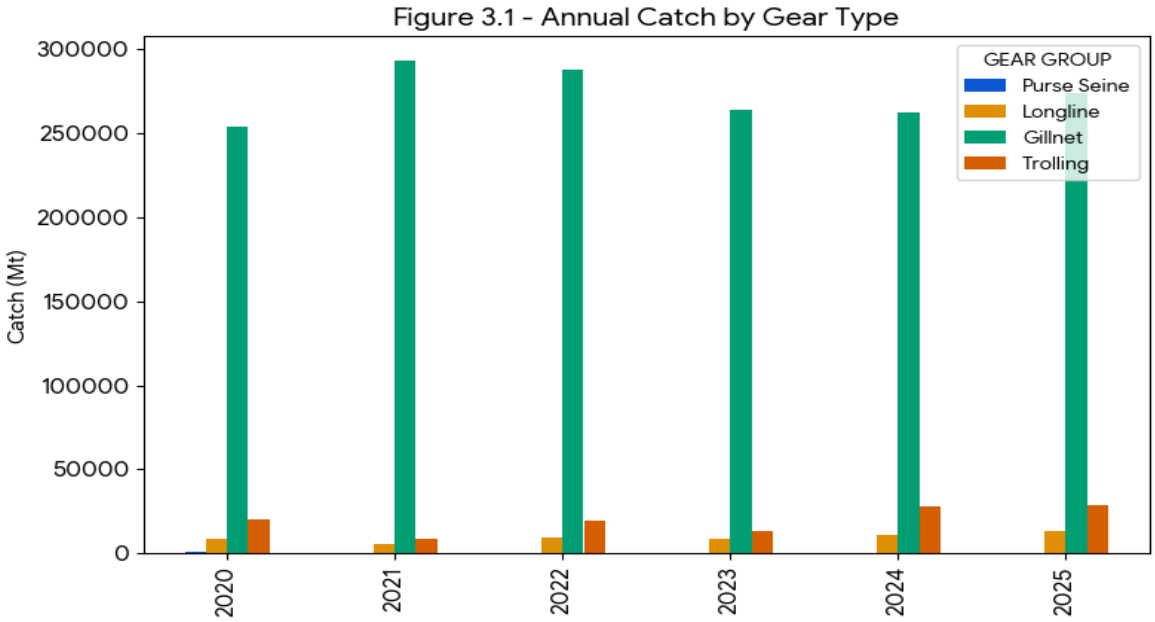


Figure 1a (Source Figure 3.1): Annual catch by gear type (Mt, 2020–2025)

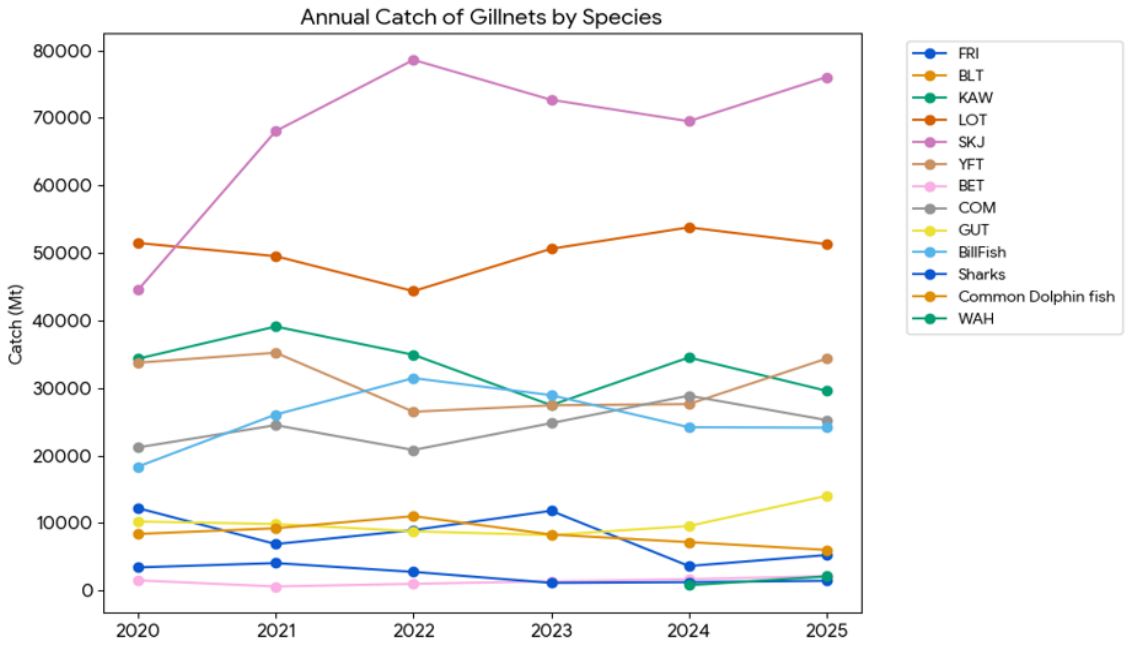


Figure 1b (Source Figure 3.2): Annual Catch of Gillnets by Species (Mt, 2020–2025)

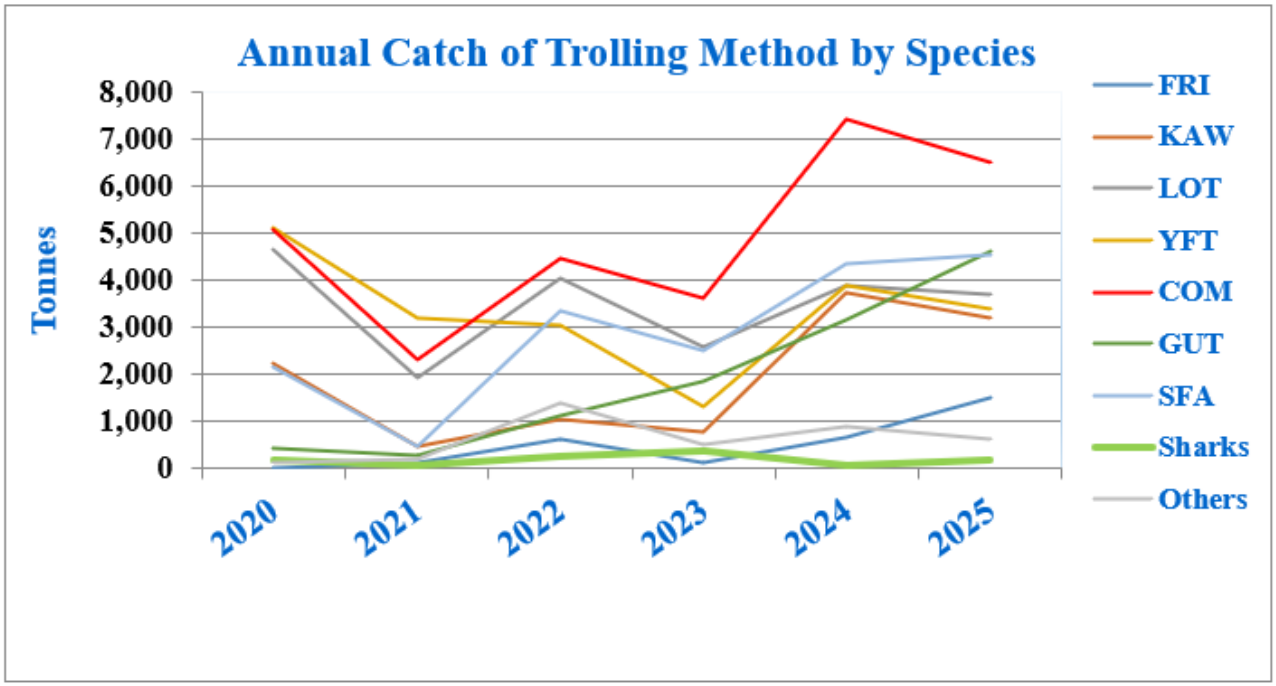


Figure 1c (Source Figure 3.3): Annual Catch of Trolling Method by Species (Tonnes, 2020–2025)

In 2025, fishing effort for large pelagic species of around 1,126,320 days was carried out by the entire fishing fleet consisting of gillnet, longline by artisanal boats, and trolling, of which 844.2 thousand days were operated by gillnet, 72.9 thousand days by seasonal and temporary longline, and about 209.2 thousand days by trolling fisheries. Table 2b (Table 3.2 in the source report) shows that the highest gillnet fishing effort is attributed to small-scale vessels (< 3 GT) operating within the Islamic Republic of Iran's coastal waters (526,616 fishing days in 2025).

To mitigate the effects of fishing effort on tuna and tuna-like populations, Iran has taken several conservation and management measures. Notably, by defining an operational model type and offering specific incentives in 2025, Iran actively managed the fleet structure to transition from gillnets to selective gears. Focusing specifically on small-scale boats (under 3 GT), this initiative successfully led to a reduction of 138 gillnet boats, while corresponding increases were achieved in selective gears with the addition of 20 artisanal longline and 240 trolling boats. These include implementing limitations on engine power and dimensions for active fishing vessels according to the Vessel Replacement Guidelines, enforcing a moratorium or cessation of all fishing activities by fishing vessels in all provincial fishing grounds, establishing a seasonal fishing cessation for specific tuna species, including Narrow-barred Spanish Mackerel (COM), and implementing a Fishing Effort Management Plan in a designated area of the fishing grounds to control and adapt fishing effort. This plan will involve managing and adjusting the activities of various groups of vessels within the active fishing fleet. Furthermore, several measures have been put into effect to decrease fishing efforts in specific regions. These measures include restricting the number of vessels permitted to fish in a particular area, regulating the use of fishing gear, shortening fishing seasons, reducing fishing days, increasing the mesh size in fishing nets, and promoting the adoption of selective fishing techniques that exclusively target the intended species. By adopting these measures, it is possible to sustainably manage tuna and tuna-like populations and guarantee the long-term sustainability of the fishing industry, which heavily depends on them.

Table 2b. Annual fishing effort by different vessel categories (days, 2020–2025) (Source Report Table 3.2)

GEAR GROUP	Capacity GT	Annual fishing effort by different vessel categories (days)					
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Purse seine	500 to 1000 t	0	0	0	0	0	0
	>1000 t	401	376	0	0	0	0
Coastal Artisanal Longline	< 3	34,000	45,000	49,200	49,920	60,690	63,116
	51 to 100	9,520	16,800	29,520	6,490	9,384	9,759
	100 to 200	0	0	0	0	0	0
	>1000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gillnet	< 3 t	764,432	541,066	568,892	600,452	545,532	526,616
	3 to 20 t	43,369	77,334	46,606	57,645	58,037	58,879
	21 to 50 t	44,594	60,629	63,268	71,066	78,731	79,875
	51 to 100 t	36,904	93,199	100,245	55,436	72,387	73,441
	>100 t	72,941	46,197	52,129	101,037	103,917	105,427
Trolling	< 3 t	133,500	127,260	135,740	183,070	190,730	209,207
Total all Gear fishing effort		**1,139,661**	**1,007,861**	**1,045,600**	**1,125,116**	**1,119,408**	**1,126,320**

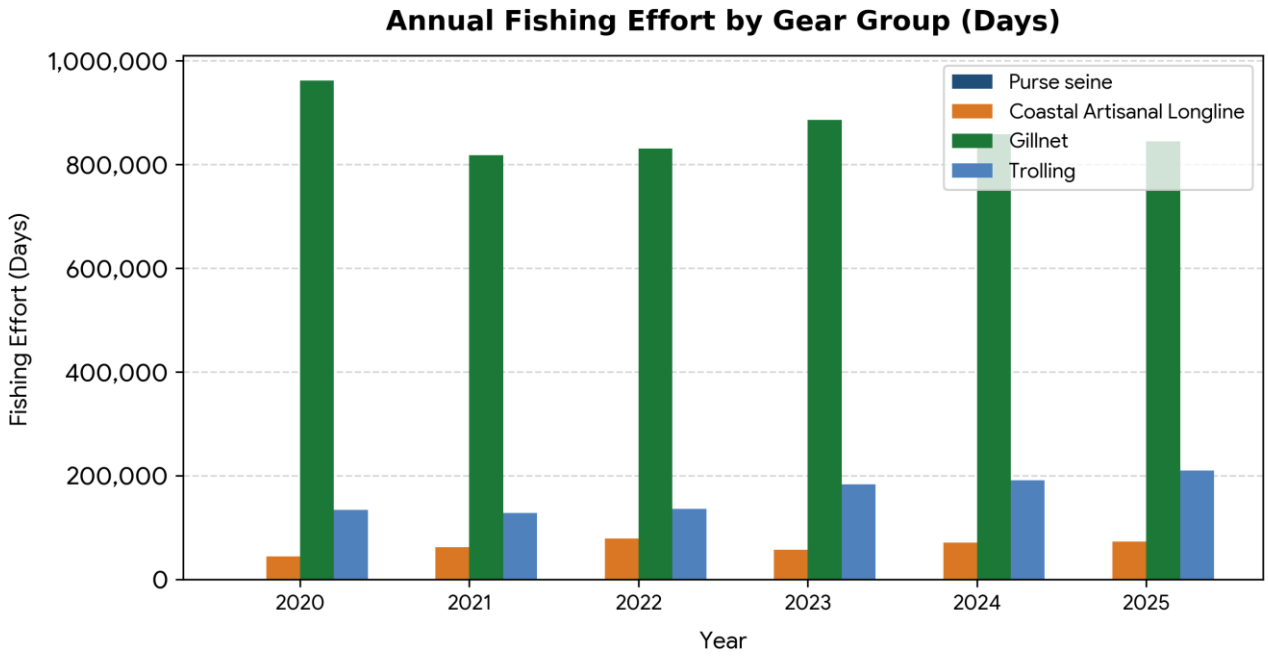


Figure 1d (Source Figure 3.4): Tuna and tuna-like fishing effort by all fleets in (fishing day) (2020–2025)

Figure 2a. Map of the distribution of fishing effort and size data, by national fishery in the IOTC area of competence (most recent year e.g., 2025)

Spatial distribution of fishing effort in 2025 across Iran's four large pelagic fleet segments is mapped using a dual-scale GIS framework integrated within the Iran Fisheries Management System (IFMS). Nearshore and EEZ artisanal fleets—comprising Coastal Gillnet (GD.AS[SS]), Trolling (TL.NM[SS]), and Seasonal Artisanal Longline (DL[SS]TR)—are geo-referenced across 29 delineated national coastal and EEZ management polygons (AR_IRN_01 to AR_IRN_30). Distant-water drifting gillnet dhows operating in the high seas (GD.AS[IN]TR) are mapped across five standard IOTC 5°x5° CWP grid squares between 0°N–25°N and 55°E–65°E.

Figure 2a-1: Coastal Gillnet Fishing Effort by National Polygons (2025; Total = 634,015 Days)

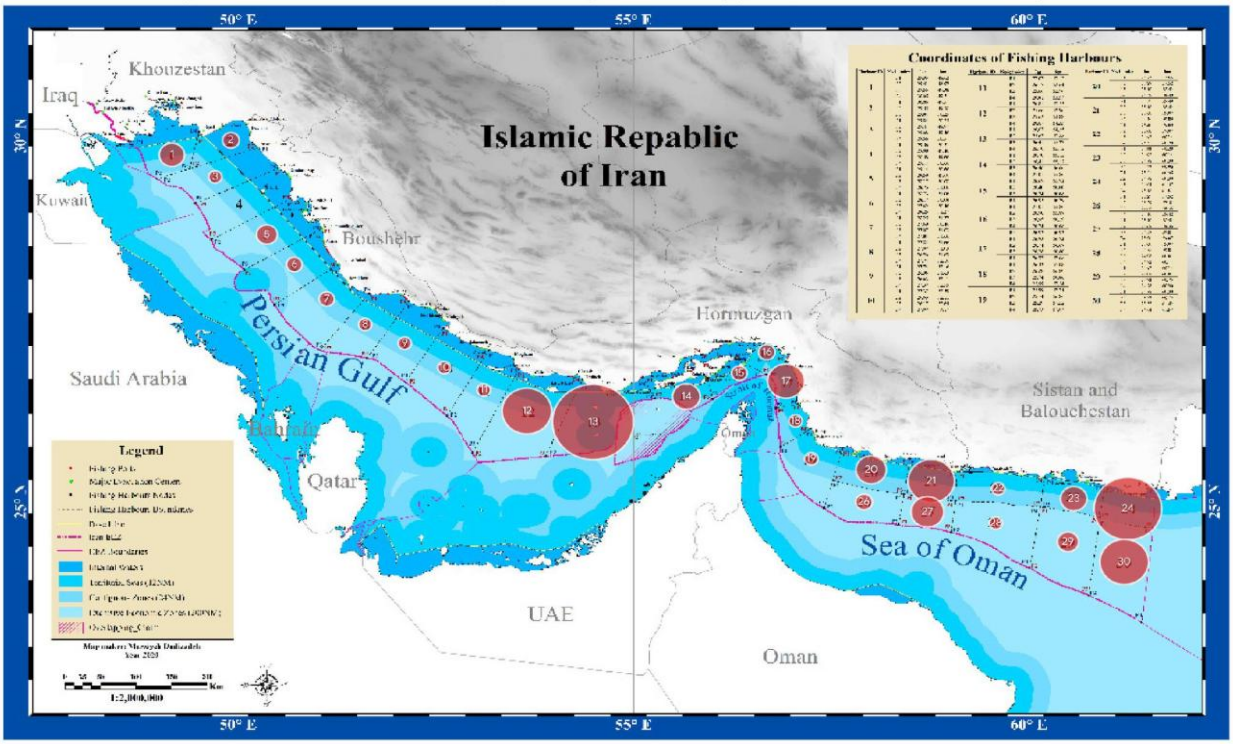


Figure 2a-2: High Seas Drifting Gillnet Effort (5°×5° IOTC Grids) – 2025
(Plate Carrée / Equal-Degree Projection; Total Effort = 237,067 Days)

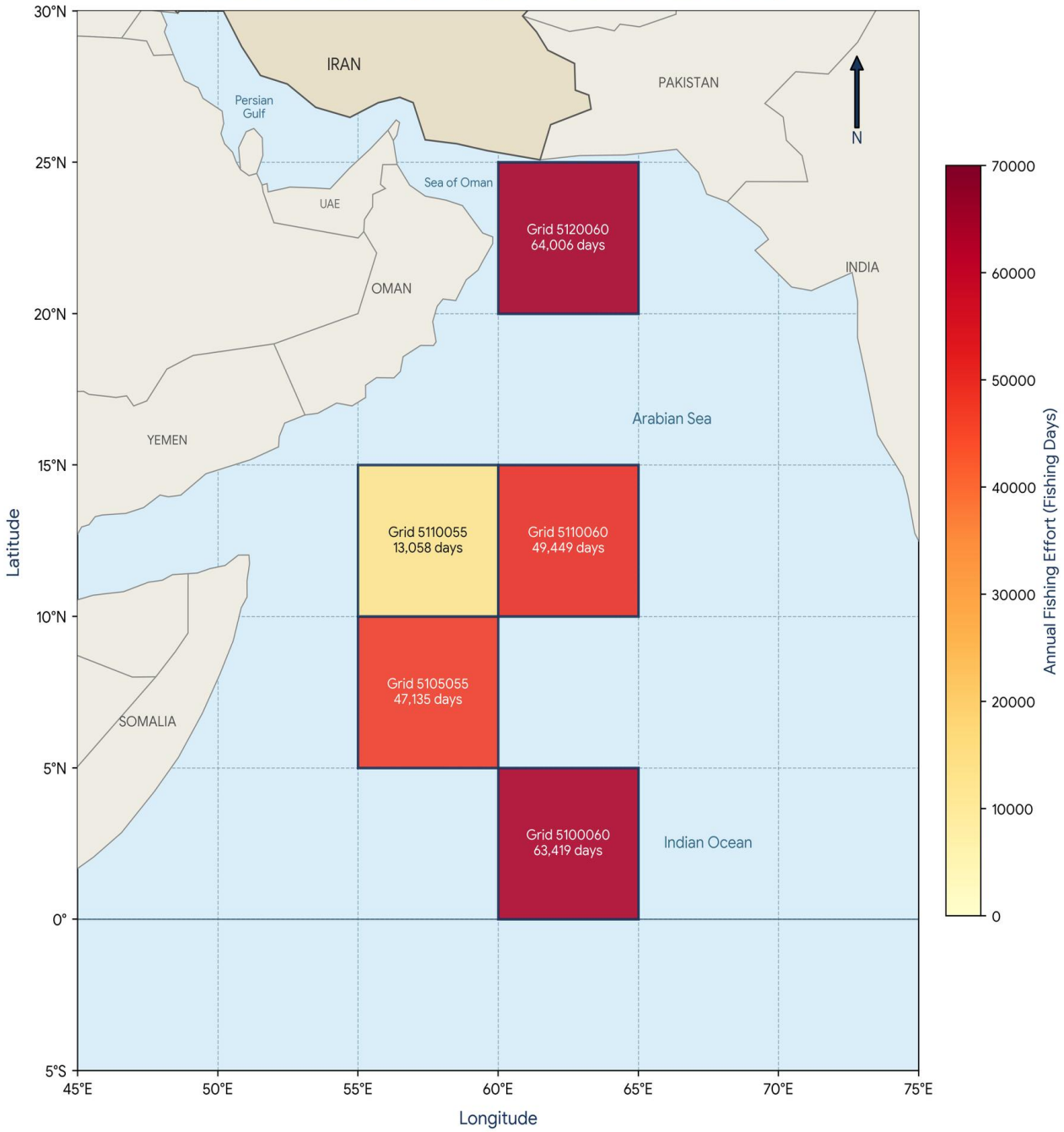


Figure 2a-3: Trolling Fishing Effort by National Polygons (2025; Total = 194,098 Days)

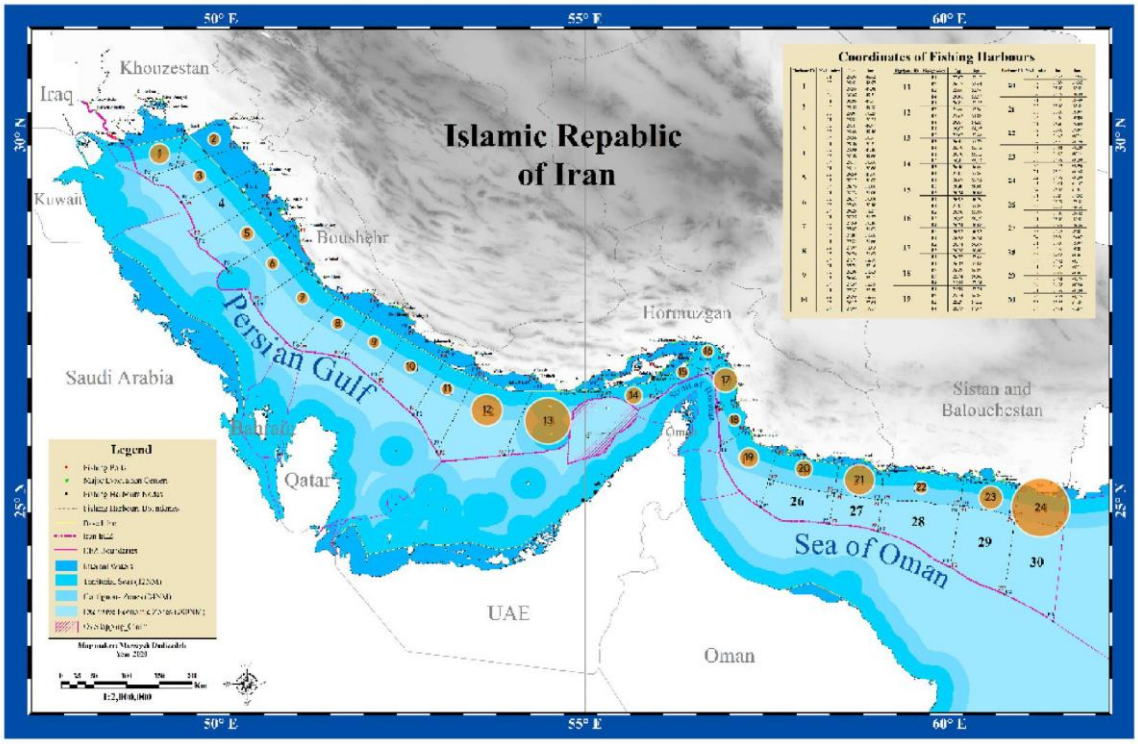


Figure 2a-4: Seasonal Artisanal Longline Fishing Effort (2025; Polygon 23 = 72,875 Days)

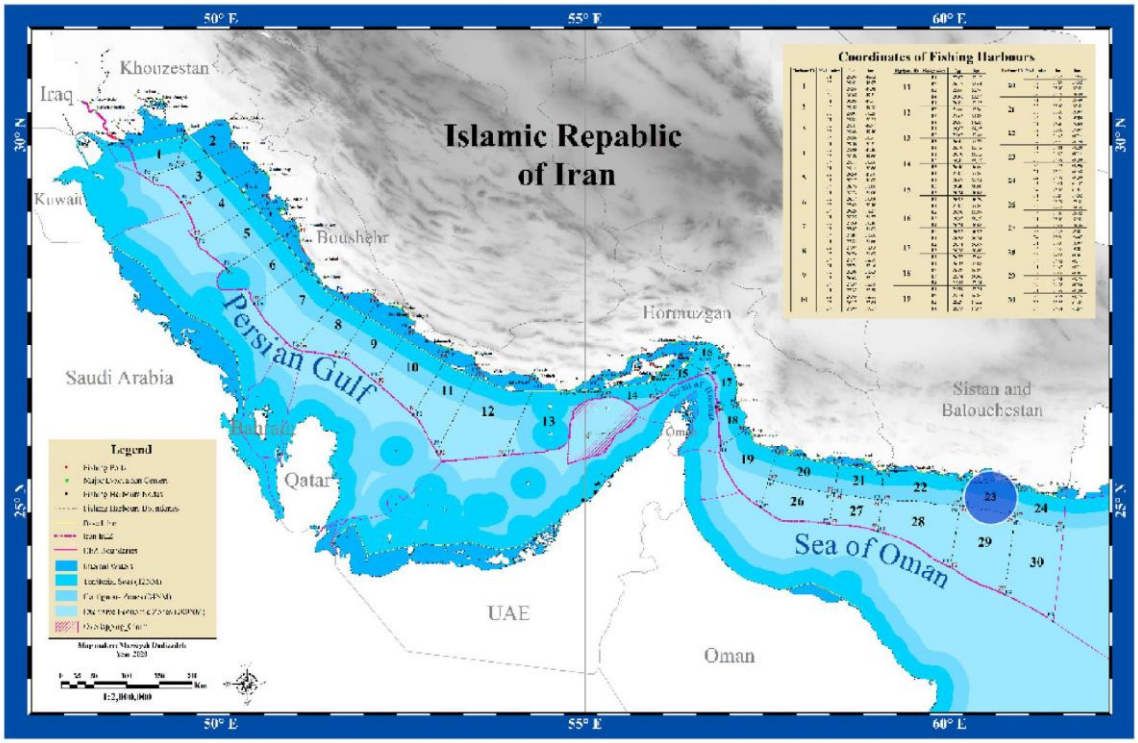


Figure 2b. Map of the distribution of fishing effort and size data, by national fishery in the IOTC area of competence (average of the 5 previous years e.g., 2021–2025)

Historical five-year average maps (2021–2025) mirror the spatial zonation established in the 2025 baseline shown in Figure 2a.

Figure 3a. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species for the national fisheries, in the IOTC area of competence (most recent year e.g., 2025)

Figure 3a-1: Spatial Distribution of Coastal/EEZ Catch by Species (2025; Total = 162,907 MT)

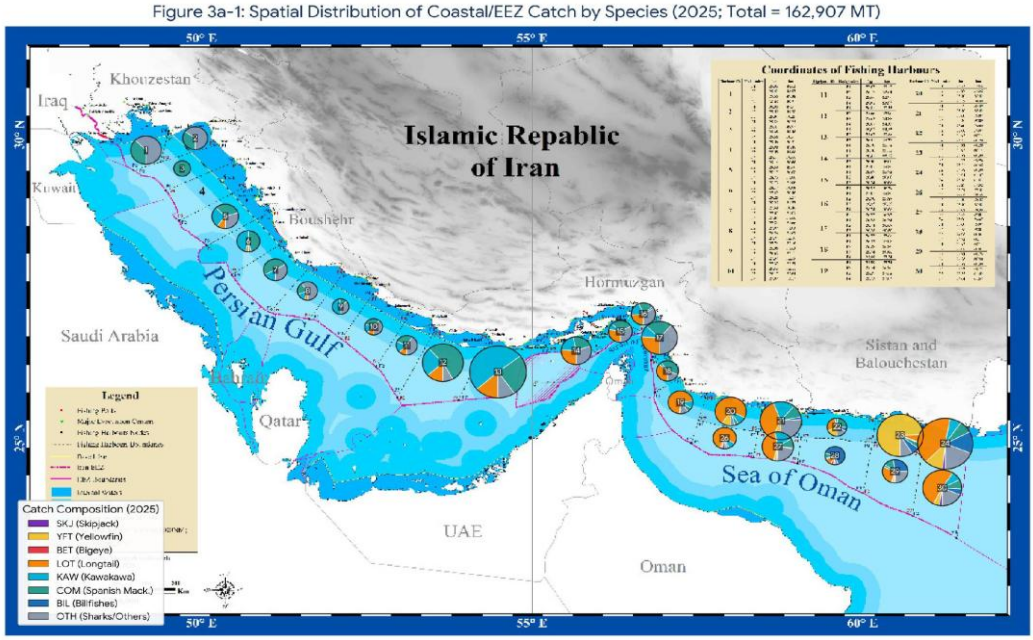
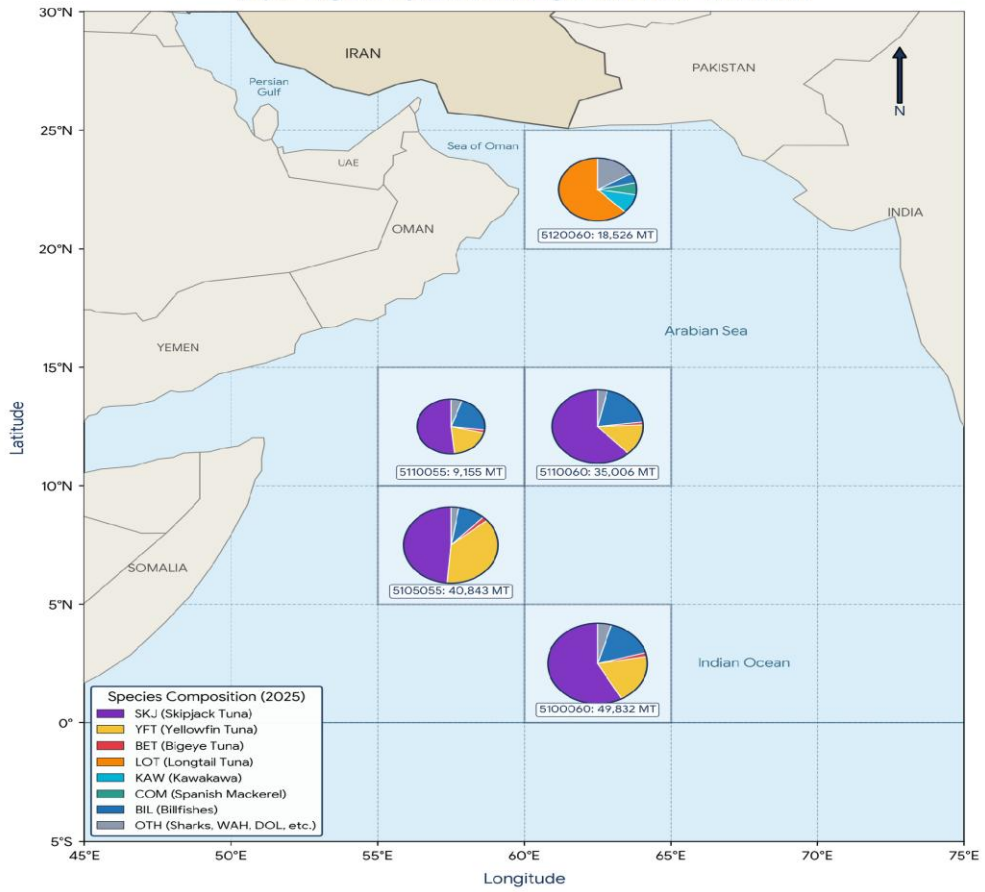


Figure 3a-2: High Seas Catch Distribution by Species (5°×5° IOTC Grids) – 2025
(Equal-Degree Projection; Total High Seas Catch = 153,361 MT)



The spatial distribution of catches by primary species in 2025 (316,270 MT total) exhibits a clear biogeographical gradient from the shallow Persian Gulf basin to the oceanic waters of the northwestern Indian

Ocean. Within the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz, catches are exclusively dominated by neritic tunas and seerfish. Transitioning eastward into the Sea of Oman, catch composition shifts toward a mixed assemblage of Longtail tuna, Yellowfin tuna, and Indo-Pacific sailfish. In the offshore high seas fishery (GD.AS[IN]TR), the equatorial grids account for oceanic catch dominated by Skipjack and Yellowfin tuna.

Figure 3b. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species for the national fisheries, in the IOTC area of competence (average of the 5 previous years e.g., 2021–2025)

Historical catch distribution averages (2021–2025) closely follow the 2025 gradients described in Figure 3a.

4. Recreational fishery

Under the current regulations established by the Iran Fisheries Organization, there are no provisions for recreational tuna fishing. Consequently, there is little interest or demand for this activity, and no licenses are being issued for recreational tuna fishing.

5. Ecosystem and bycatch issues

The Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) monitors and controls fishing vessels and their catch primarily through a port-based monitoring and inspection system. Experts at fishing ports verify fishing gears and devices, ensure compliance with national and international standards, and assess vessels before departure and upon return to evaluate catch composition and bycatch.

During landing periods, IFO conducts capacity-building workshops for fishers engaged in tuna and tuna-like fisheries. These sessions aim to strengthen awareness of IOTC resolutions and ecological obligations, with a particular focus on ecosystem protection and bycatch reduction. Moreover, IFO has trained specialized personnel in species identification (particularly sharks and sea turtles), and provides technical guidance where needed. Fishermen are also instructed on compliance with international maritime laws and fisheries regulations of other coastal States, especially in relation to "innocent passage" within the territorial waters of third parties.

According to IFO regulations and Resolution No. 380 of Iran's Supreme Environment Council, targeted shark fishing is strictly prohibited. Furthermore, the retention onboard, transshipment, and landing of sharks are strictly prohibited across the national fleet, and all sharks caught incidentally in tuna and tuna-like fisheries must be promptly released at sea. Consequently, the shark catch figures reported to the IOTC do not represent commercial landings; rather, they reflect estimated incidental bycatch encounters, which are systematically collected on a self-declaration basis through structured interviews conducted by port-based field samplers with vessel captains and crew at designated sampling ports.

5.1 Sharks

According to IFO regulations, no licenses have ever been issued for targeted shark fisheries in Iran. In alignment with national fisheries laws and regulations and IOTC conservation measures, all sharks caught incidentally must be released at sea, ensuring their highest probability of survival. Retention, transshipment, and landing of sharks are strictly prohibited across the national fleet.

Furthermore, due to national religious beliefs and cultural dietary preferences, over 90% of Iranians do not consume shark meat, virtually eliminating domestic market demand and discouraging any targeted fishing effort. In recognition of the need to protect shark species, all relevant IOTC resolutions have been translated and communicated to stakeholders at various national meetings. Shark conservation concepts and requirements have also been integrated into capacity-building workshops for fishermen. These activities are

implemented in close cooperation with Fisheries Unions, environmental organizations, and NGOs. In the absence of onboard observers across the artisanal fleet, data on incidental shark encounters are systematically gathered through fisher self-declarations during post-trip interviews conducted by trained field samplers with vessel captains and crew at designated landing sites. Based on this port-based interview and monitoring system, the estimated quantities of incidental shark bycatch by species in 2025 are presented in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1.

Table 5.1. Estimated annual incidental shark bycatch weight by species based on fisher self-declarations (Mt, 2020–2025)

Species	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
1-FAL	154	239	427	145	219	332
2-SPN	6	9	19	0	0	0
2_1_SPK	0	0	0	3	5	21
2_1_SPL	0	0	0	2	3	17
3-SMA	10	15	24	8	14	9
4-OCS	12	18	32	9	17	13
5-THR	0	0	0	0	0	0
6-CCD	325	379	204	154	114	100
7-CCQ	650	757	407	309	276	310
8-RHA	1,948	2,271	1,430	899	661	839
9-RHN	527	452	488	0	0	0
10-BSH	0	0	0	0	0	11
TOTAL	**3,632**	**4,140**	**3,031**	**1,529**	**1,309**	**1,652**

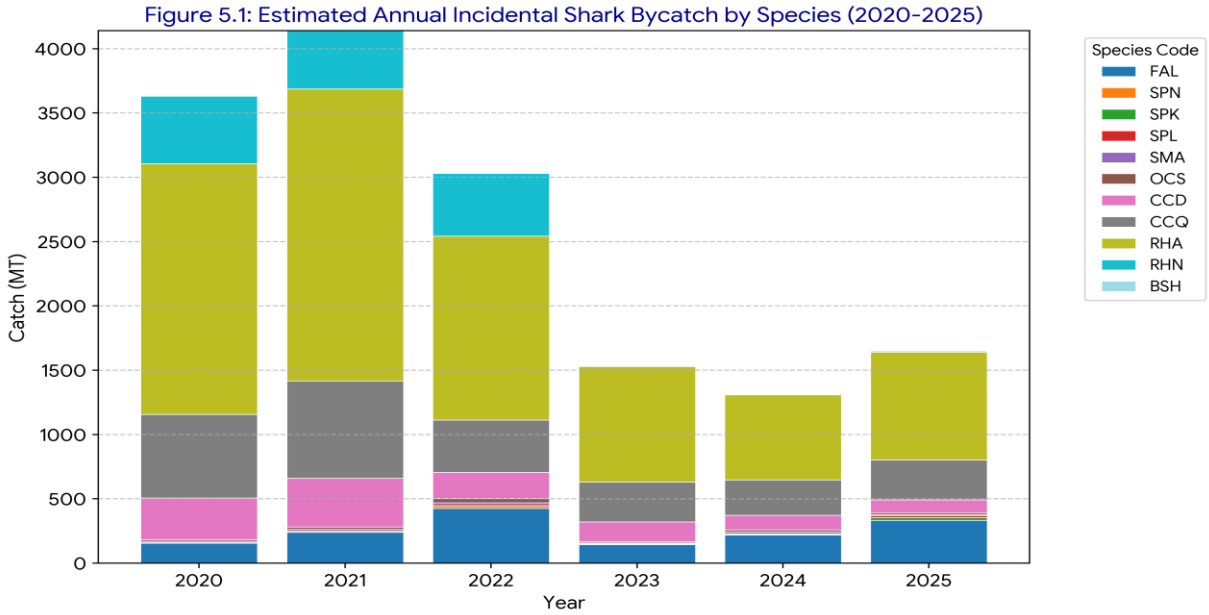


Figure 5.1. Estimated annual incidental shark bycatch weight by species (Mt, 2020–2025)

5.1.1. NPOA sharks

The National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks and Rays (NPOA-Sharks and Rays) has been newly compiled through a collaborative effort by the Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO), the Department of Environment (DoE), the Iranian Fisheries Science Research Institute (IFSRI), and academia (Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman), and is currently awaiting final official endorsement by senior authorities.

5.1.2. Blue shark

Although Iran's fishing fleet does not target blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*), the 2025 statistical records indicate an estimated unavoidable incidental bycatch of 11 tonnes, recorded through captain self-declarations during post-trip interviews conducted by port samplers at landing sites.

5.2 Seabirds

The mandatory mitigation provisions of Resolution 23/07 (and formerly Resolution 12/06) on reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds are not applicable to Iran's fishing fleet. Currently, Iran has no active industrial longline vessels operating in the Indian Ocean, and traditional longline operations are strictly limited to artisanal boats and a small number of dhows operating within nearshore coastal fishing grounds. Furthermore, Iranian distant-water fishing dhows operate exclusively in the Northern Hemisphere (strictly north of the Equator and well north of the 25°S latitude threshold).

In the oceanic pelagic fishery, vessels utilize drifting gillnets rather than longlines—a gear type that lacks baited hooks and inherently exhibits negligible attraction or interaction with seabirds compared to pelagic longlines. Furthermore, as an established technical practice, these nets are rigged and deployed as subsurface drifting gillnets, positioned 1 to 2 meters below the sea surface, which drastically reduces any potential risk of surface entanglement with diving seabirds.

Nevertheless, in alignment with the monitoring and reporting provisions under Paragraphs 3, 4, and 6 of the Resolution, national fishing logbooks and port-based landing inspections continuously monitor potential bycatch. To date, zero incidental catch or mortality of oceanic seabirds has been recorded, and compliance status has been duly maintained with the IOTC Secretariat.

- **How many vessels operated south of 25°S in the period covered by this report?** *0 vessels (Iranian vessels operate exclusively in the Northern Hemisphere, strictly north of the Equator).*
- **How many of those vessels used bird scaring lines (as a proportion of total effort)?** *Not applicable (0 vessels operated south of 25°S).*
- **How many of those vessels used line weighting (as a proportion of total effort)?** *Not applicable (0 vessels operated south of 25°S).*
- **How many of those vessels used night setting (as a proportion of total effort)?** *Not applicable (0 vessels operated south of 25°S).*

5.3 Marine Turtles

Iran implements comprehensive legal and operational measures in full alignment with IOTC Resolution 12/04. Marine turtles are strictly protected under national legislation, which strictly prohibits their capture, retention, hunting, or disturbance across all waters and enforces a significant financial penalty for violations. Under the National Regulation of Tuna Fishing (2016) and the Law of Hunting and Fishing (approved on June 6, 1967, with amendments on January 20, 1975, and December 15, 1996), the determination of statutory damages for wild animals falls under the mandate of the High Council for Environmental Protection.

Furthermore, Article 18 of this law explicitly recognizes the Department of Environment (DoE) as a private plaintiff in ecological damage claims arising from such violations.

In close coordination with the DoE and in line with the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU, critical nesting beaches and coastal foraging/spawning habitats along the northern shores of the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman have been designated as protected areas and are actively monitored. In parallel, the comprehensive draft National Action Plan (NPOA) for the Conservation of Marine Turtles has been fully developed and is undergoing final administrative processing and English translation for formal submission to the IOTC Secretariat.

With respect to gear-specific obligations under Paragraphs 6–10 of Resolution 12/04, Iran operates no purse seine fleet (Paragraph 8) and no industrial pelagic longline vessels (Paragraph 7). In the artisanal drifting gillnet fishery (Paragraphs 4 and 6), a substantial portion of Iranian distant-water fishing dhows deploy their gillnets 1 to 2 meters below the sea surface—an operational mitigation measure that significantly reduces incidental entanglement of surface-breathing marine turtles—with the Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) actively providing technical assistance, awareness brochures, and outreach to expand subsurface deployment across a broader segment of the fleet.

Furthermore, IFO conducts regular fisher training programmes utilizing translated IOTC and FAO guidelines on safe disentanglement (cutting the net mesh), onboard recovery and resuscitation procedures for comatose or exhausted specimens, and immediate live-release practices (requiring vessel crews to halt net-hauling immediately upon sighting an entangled turtle). In compliance with Paragraph 3, fishers are mandated to record all incidental turtle interactions, entanglements, and release outcomes in national fishing logbooks for port verification and annual reporting to the IOTC Secretariat.

5.4 Other ecologically related species (e.g., cetaceans, mobulid rays, whale sharks)

Legal Framework & Enforcement Mechanisms:

In full compliance with IOTC Conservation and Management Measures (including Resolutions 13/06, 17/05, 19/03, and relevant cetacean/whale shark provisions), targeted fishing, retention onboard, transshipment, or landing of cetaceans, whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*), mobulid rays, and protected shark species are strictly prohibited under national law. Specifically, Article 71 of the Executive By-Law of the Law on the Protection and Exploitation of Aquatic Resources of the Islamic Republic of Iran strictly forbids the capture, handling, or disturbance of marine mammals across all maritime zones under Iranian jurisdiction. Strict legal enforcement is executed through provincial and local Fishery Infraction Investigation Commissions. If any illegal retention of sensitive or protected species is detected onboard during port or sea inspections, vessel captains and owners are immediately referred to judicial authorities and face administrative penalties, including the suspension of fishing licenses for up to three months. The Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy and has never issued targeted fishing licenses for marine mammals, rays, or sharks. Furthermore, this regulatory stance is naturally reinforced by national religious beliefs and cultural norms, under which over 90% of the Iranian population does not consume marine mammals or shark meat, virtually eliminating commercial market demand.

5.4.1. Gear Mitigation & Operational Measures:

Iran operates no industrial purse seine fleet (eliminating any risk of set encirclement) and no industrial pelagic longliners. In the artisanal distant-water drifting gillnet fishery, IFO actively promotes operational bycatch reduction by guiding dhow operators to deploy their gillnets 1 to 2 meters below the sea surface. This

subsurface net setting substantially mitigates the incidental entanglement of surface-breathing megafauna, particularly cetaceans and whale sharks.

5.4.2. Handling Protocols & Fleet Training:

Where rare incidental entanglements occur, fishers are strictly prohibited from retaining any sharks or rays onboard and are required under national regulations to execute immediate, safe at-sea release protocols based on translated IOTC and FAO illustrative guides:

- **Cetaceans & Whale Sharks:** Immediate in-water disentanglement alongside the vessel by carefully cutting the net mesh without lifting the animal out of the water.
- **Small-bodied Sharks & Rays:** Careful and prompt disentanglement and immediate manual return to the sea.

5.4.3. Mobulid Rays & Large Pelagic Sharks:

Disentanglement alongside the hull while keeping the animal in the water to maximize post-release survival. In alignment with national fisheries laws and regulations and IOTC conservation measures, all sharks caught incidentally must be released at sea, ensuring their highest probability of survival. Retention, transshipment, and landing of sharks are strictly prohibited across the national fleet. Regardless of vital status at the time of net retrieval (whether alive or dead), all entangled individuals must be promptly discarded and returned to the sea, and under no circumstances may any carcass or body part be retained or brought to port.

5.4.4. Data Collection, Crew-Based Observer Planning & NGO Collaboration:

Due to structural limitations aboard traditional artisanal dhows (such as limited living space during 45-day voyages), deployment of independent external observers is operationally unfeasible. To address this, Iran is actively laying the groundwork for a Crew-Based Observer Scheme while leveraging an innovative virtual platform network via mobile applications to receive real-time georeferenced photographs and videos of live releases directly from sea. Furthermore, coastal landing inspections cover 10% of active vessels (see Section 6.2 for detailed ROS implementation). IFO also collaborates extensively with local NGOs and cooperatives for continuous fisher training, all consolidated under the newly compiled NPOA-Sharks and Rays.

6. National data collection and processing systems

6.1. Logsheet data collection and verification

Iran implemented a logbook program for artisanal gillnets and industrial purse seiners in 2011, and created a new logbook template based on IOTC resolutions. While logbooks were previously completed for industrial purse seiners (which have been inactive since 2022), Iran is currently expanding logbook implementation to offshore artisanal gillnet fleets, aiming to cover at least 10% of the vessels operating in the high seas.

6.2. Regional Observer Scheme (Resolution 25/06)

In accordance with the requirements of Resolution 25/06, Iran acknowledges the importance of the Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) in ensuring transparency and data quality within the IOTC area of competence.

Due to the specific structural layout and onboard living constraints inherent to traditional dhow-class vessels which lack dedicated berths, sanitary facilities, and infrastructure suitable for extended stays—the deployment of independent onboard observers as stipulated in Paragraph 3 remains operationally unfeasible.

To bridge this gap and ensure compliance with the IOTC's scientific monitoring objectives, Iran relies on a comprehensive and rigorous landing-site monitoring framework with the following historical milestones:

- **National Catch & Effort Program:** Established in 1994; standardized historical data series submitted to IOTC since 2011.
- **Size-Frequency Program:** Initiated in 2001 for selected commercial species; standardized for IOTC tuna species since 2011.

Aligned with the principles of Paragraphs 9 and 10 of Resolution 25/06, this port-based mechanism utilizes 43 trained field samplers (one assigned per site across 43 of the 66 active southern landing sites, including 19 primary tuna landing centers designated for biometric size sampling) to collect reliable data on catch composition, fishing effort, and biological parameters, primarily targeting the artisanal gillnet, trolling, and longline fleets.

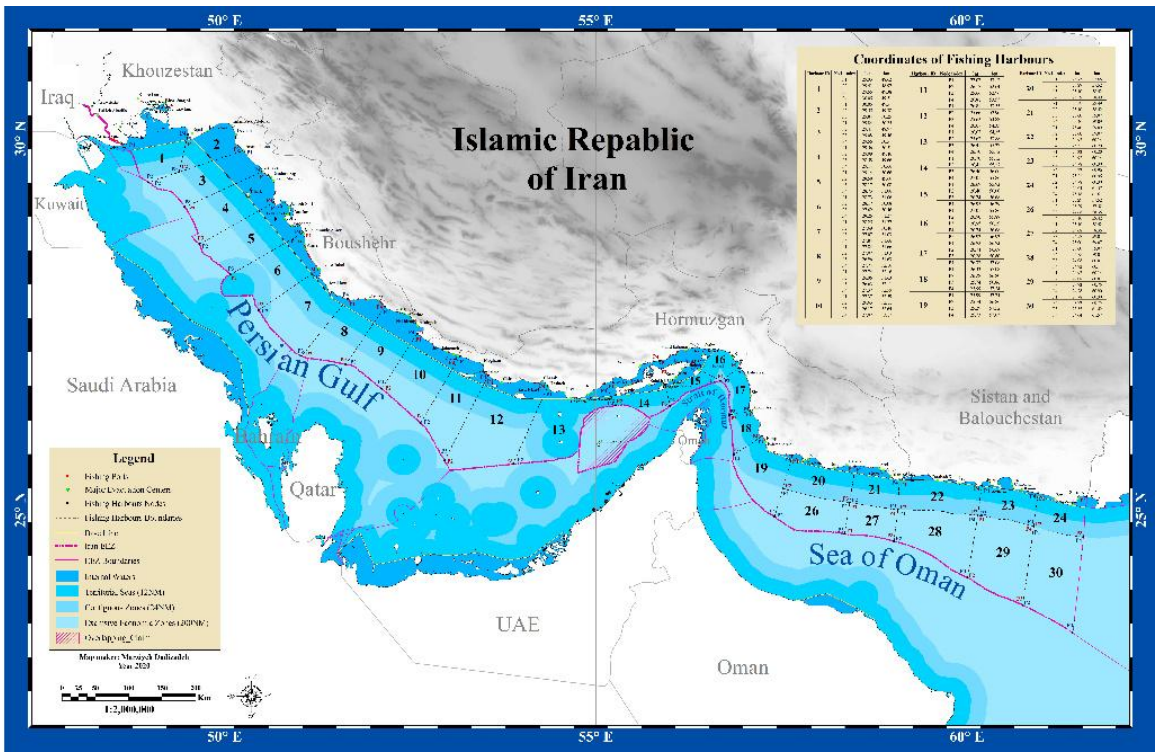
Currently, this program achieves a landing-site sampling coverage of approximately 10% of active artisanal vessels (as distinct from onboard at-sea observer coverage), effectively exceeding the 5% indicative threshold under Paragraph 9. While Iran manages its oversight through this internal landing-site verification system and has not requested the deployment of observers by other CPCs under Paragraph 12—it remains in the planning phase of developing a crew-based observer approach to further strengthen data collection. Iran continues to collaborate closely with the Secretariat to harmonize its national gillnet data collection protocols with the broader standards of the ROS.

Table 3. Annual observer coverage by operation, e.g., longline hooks, purse seine sets (2021–2025)

Fishery / Monitoring Mechanism	Coverage Metric	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Onboard At-Sea Observer Coverage (All Fleets: Gillnet, Artisanal Longline, Trolling)	% of at-sea operations (hooks / sets / days)	0% (Unfeasible on traditional dhows)	0% (Unfeasible on traditional dhows)	0% (Unfeasible on traditional dhows)	0% (Unfeasible on traditional dhows)	0% (Unfeasible on traditional dhows)
Industrial Purse Seine Sets	Number of sets observed	Not available in source report (2 active vessels)	0 (Fleet inactive)	0 (Fleet inactive)	0 (Fleet inactive)	0 (Fleet inactive)
Port-Based ROS Field Sampling Scheme (Res. 25/06, Para. 9)	% of active vessels monitored at landing sites (43 sites)	**~10%**	**~10%**	**~10%**	**~10%**	**~10%**

Figure 4. Map showing the spatial distribution of observer coverage

Figure 4 depicts the spatial distribution of the national port sampling scheme. Iran fulfills its Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) obligations under Res 25/06 via an all-inclusive coastal landing inspection program covering 10% of active vessels across 43 active southern landing sites (represented within the national coastal grid).



6.3. Port sampling programme

6.3.1. Status and implementation:

The port sampling program in Iran was established in 1994 (Catch & Effort) and 2001 (Size-Frequency), with standardized data series submitted to the IOTC since 2011. The framework operates continuously across the southern provinces based on the following core components:

- **National Catch & Effort Program:** Established in 1994; standardized historical data series submitted to IOTC since 2011.
- **Size-Frequency Program:** Initiated in 2001 for selected commercial species; standardized for IOTC tuna species since 2011.

Catch, effort, and biological data from the coastal and offshore large pelagic fishery are gathered at 43 of the 66 active fish landing sites located along the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea coasts. These sites include 10 in Khuzestan Province, 9 in Bushehr Province, 19 in Hormozgan Province, and 5 in Sistan-and-Baluchestan Province. At each landing site, port samplers are stationed during fish landing operations to record catch and effort information and to complete the prescribed data collection forms. During the same period, fish size sampling is conducted to obtain length/weight frequency data.

Data on catch and effort are collected at all the mentioned sites through a stratified random sampling method. Under this approach, approximately 10 percent of the total fishing vessels, representing different vessel categories such as fishing dhows and motorized boats, are randomly selected, and their fishing data are systematically recorded. Additionally, landing site surveys are routinely carried out to collect detailed information on artisanal fisheries catches. Port sampling activities are conducted for small-scale fisheries, where approximately 10 percent of the fishing vessels are randomly selected, and the collected sample data are raised to represent all active fishing vessels. Total catches are maintained and categorized according to vessel type, fishing gear, species composition, landing site, and month. At each landing site, one port sampler is assigned and responsible for data collection. All sampling and data processing activities are managed through the AMAR Software, the official fisheries statistics system operated by the Iran Fisheries Organization (IFMS). Additionally, control of fishing licenses and completion of questionnaires are conducted by the Head of the Fishery Statistical Unit at each respective port. These controls are subsequently verified at the provincial fisheries centres using computer-based checks, and then processed further at the national Data Centre in Tehran. To ensure data accuracy, cross-checks are carried out through complete censuses at one or two landing sites.

6.3.2. Length Frequency and Size Data Collection

The collection of size data for tuna and tuna-like species plays a fundamental role in assessing their population structure, growth patterns, and the effects of fishing activities on their stocks. Such data are essential inputs for developing sound and science-based management measures for tuna fisheries. The gathered size information serves as a key component of the scientific evidence required to support sustainable management of tuna resources. Moreover, systematic size sampling contributes to a better understanding of the conservation status and long-term sustainability of these species. To ensure accuracy and representativeness, size sampling must be conducted through rigorously defined random sampling procedures designed to eliminate bias in the size composition data. Sampling coverage should include at least one measured fish per tonne of catch, by species and fishery type, ensuring adequate representation across all fishing areas and time periods.

To enhance the assessment of tuna and tuna-like species in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, port sampling has been implemented using a random sampling design across four coastal provinces. Field samplers collected size data from 19 designated primary tuna landing centers (out of the 43 active landing sites), adhering to the standard threshold of measuring at least one fish per tonne of catch by species and fishery type. The direct measurement approach was employed, ensuring unbiased and precise size data, which are vital for estimating population structure and growth trends over time. Although this method is relatively time-intensive, it provides greater accuracy compared to estimates derived from catch records.

Size data were collected by measuring Fork Length (FL). Analyzing the size distribution of tuna populations across different fishing gears is fundamental for informed fisheries management and conservation planning. The data were gathered from multiple fishing methods, including gillnets, trolling (hook-and-line), and longline fisheries. To obtain reliable estimates, particularly for larger individuals and during spawning periods, robust statistical analyses and sufficient sample sizes are required to ensure data quality and support the development of effective stock assessment models for tuna species.

Four additional tuna and tuna-like species—Frigate tuna (FRI), Bullet tuna (BLT), Wahoo (WAH), and Indo-Pacific king mackerel (GUT)—were incorporated into the list of species reported under the IOTC framework. This progress mainly resulted from the capacity-building programs conducted for fishery cooperatives and their active participation in tuna size data collection. In addition, collaboration with the Iranian Fisheries Science Research Institute (IFSRI) significantly enhanced both the scope and accuracy of the data collection process. Size data were collected by month, year, species name, fishery type (gillnet,

trolling, longline), and within 5-degree grid squares. Fork length frequency distributions were compiled for ten economically important tuna and seerfish species. In 2025, the dominant species was Yellowfin tuna (YFT) (*Thunnus albacares*), accounting for 26.6% of the total samples (127,177 individuals), followed by Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel (COM) (*Scomberomorus commerson*) at 25.2% (120,480 individuals), Skipjack tuna (SKJ) (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) at 16.3% (77,746), Kawakawa (KAW) (*Euthynnus affinis*) at 15.8% (75,702), and Longtail tuna (LOT) (*Thunnus tonggol*) at 12.9% (61,580). Other species recorded included Bigeye tuna (BET) (*Thunnus obesus*) representing 1.17% (5,586 individuals), Frigate tuna (FRI) (*Auxis thazard*) 1.00% (4,759), Indo-Pacific king mackerel (GUT) (*Scomberomorus guttatus*) 0.69% (3,315), Bullet tuna (BLT) (*Auxis rochei*) 0.28% (1,358 individuals), and Wahoo (WAH) (*Acanthocybium solandri*) 0.08% (387 individuals). The majority of size data were obtained from gillnet fisheries, which accounted for approximately 94.9% (453,889 individuals) of the total samples, followed by longline (2.9%, 13,638 individuals) and trolling (2.2%, 10,563 individuals) operations. Tables 5a and 5b (Tables 6.1 and 6.2 in the source report) present the number of tuna and tuna-like species for which length measurements were recorded by gear type, along with the mean length data as reported in the IOTC database.

Table 4. Number of vessel trips or vessels active monitored, by species and fishery

Note: As documented in Sections 2, 3, and 6.3.1, approximately 10% of active fishing vessels—out of 8,862 active vessels including seasonal longliners, or 8,250 excluding seasonal longliners in 2025—are randomly selected and monitored across 43 active landing sites, with biometric size sampling conducted at 19 primary tuna landing centers.)

Table 5a. Number of fish measured, by species and fishery
(Size Data recorded in the IOTC Database, 2020–2025) (Source Report Table 6.1)

Size Data recorded in the IOTC Database							
GEAR GROUP	**SPECIES**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Gillnet	FRI	Nil	Nil	172	0	676	4,759
	KAW	25,230	23,448	32,295	26,807	63,728	75,702
	BLT	0	0	0	0	352	1,358
	LOT	33,735	26,840	40,008	49,210	54,408	61,580
	COM	26,946	23,254	29,068	39,597	92,071	109,917
	GUT	0	0	0	0	1,371	3,315
	SKJ	19,398	5,959	18,809	16,840	71,564	77,746
	YFT	18,063	12,470	27,994	33,761	76,289	113,539
	BET	502	465	615	1,750	3,641	5,586
	WAH	0	0	0	0	122	387
Total Gillnet Length Frequency		**123,874**	**92,435**	**148,961**	**167,964**	**364,222**	**453,889**
Purse seine	KAW	0	0	0	0	0	0
	LOT	0	0	0	0	0	0
	SKJ	0	224	0	0	0	0
	YFT	285	659	0	0	0	0
	BET	0	103	0	0	0	0

Size Data recorded in the IOTC Database							
GEAR GROUP	SPECIES	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Purse seine Length Frequency		**285**	**986**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Trolling / Hook & Line / Longline	COM	2,428	0	840	1,305	6,676	10,563
	LOT	0	0	0	0	0	0
	YFT (by Coastal_LL_Method)	7,712	2,084	5,503	3,808	12,510	13,638
	YFT (by Hook & Line_Method)	0	0	1,685	0	0	0
Total Trolling/ Hook & Line / Longline Length Frequency		**10,140**	**2,084**	**8,028**	**5,113**	**19,186**	**24,201**
Total Length Frequency		**134,299**	**95,505**	**156,989**	**173,077**	**383,408**	**478,090**

Table 5b. Mean Length Data recorded in the IOTC Database (2020–2025, cm FL) (Source Report Table 6.2)

Mean Length Data recorded in the IOTC Database							
GEAR GROUP	SPECIES GROUP	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Gillnet	FRI	Nil	Nil	36.9	0.0	35.4	30.8
	KAW	55.2	52.5	49.0	52.1	52.9	51.0
	BLT	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.5	28.5
	LOT	72.0	68.2	69.3	64.8	65.0	65.0
	COM	87.9	86.9	88.1	81.9	83.7	82.1
	GUT	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	53.2	48.6
	SKJ	60.4	59.5	58.9	56.5	57.2	53.2
	YFT	84.0	81.8	81.0	78.7	81.3	84.4
	BET	84.3	79.6	84.0	86.2	84.2	90.4
	WAH	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	116.6	107.7
Purse seine	KAW	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	LOT	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	SKJ	0.0	54.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	YFT	136.4	98.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	BET	0.0	87.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Trolling / Hook & Line / Longline	COM	83.5	0.0	86.2	96.8	97.0	104.5
	LOT	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	YFT (by coastal_LL_Method)	95.7	84.2	86.1	82.0	95.6	92.9
	YFT (by Hook & Line_Method)	0.0	0.0	83.6	0.0	0.0	0.0

6.4. Actions taken to monitor catches & manage fisheries for Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish

6.4.1 Regulatory Framework & Size Limits:

In full alignment with IOTC Resolution 18/05, Iran strictly manages billfish interactions across its fleets. Under Article 5-8 of the National Tuna Fisheries Management Regulations, a strict ban is enforced on the retention, transshipment, or landing of four major billfish species (Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin, and Indo-Pacific Sailfish) below 60 cm Lower Jaw Fork Length (LJFL). This is coupled with targeted port-side training on safe handling to maximize post-release survival of live juveniles. Billfish are treated exclusively as incidental bycatch within the tuna drifting gillnet fishery, with no targeted licensing issued. Furthermore, Iran has reported billfish catches by species since 2012.

6.4.2 Strategic Gear Transition & Effort Reduction:

Iran has instituted a deliberate policy to reduce gillnet dependency and transition toward more selective fishing gears. This management direction is clearly demonstrated by recent landings: coastal gillnet billfish catches dropped substantially from approximately 7,837 MT in 2023 to 2,580 MT in 2025, driven by the active conversion of coastal vessel permits from gillnets to trolling and handline operations (which grew from 2,502 MT to 4,535 MT over the same period). Overall recorded billfish landings decreased by approximately 9% between 2023 (31,452 MT) and 2025 (28,674 MT). The apparent magnitude of reported figures reflects Iran's rigorous monitoring framework where fuel subsidies and vessel clearances by port authorities and the Aquatic Resources Protection Unit are strictly conditional upon 100% landing registration and inspection rather than unrestrained fishing effort.

6.4.3 Port Sampling & Addressing Morphological Processing Challenges:

A prominent operational constraint aboard traditional distant-water dhows during 45-day voyages is the routine at-sea processing of large billfish into ~0.5-meter frozen sections (with heads and fins removed) due to fish-hold constraints. This prevents conventional length-frequency measurements upon landing and increases the risk of visual misidentification between morphologically similar species (e.g., Blue Marlin vs. Striped Marlin). To ensure data integrity, field samplers conduct a 100% census of landed crescent-cut trunks, utilizing a multi-attribute diagnostic key (anterior cut profile, cranial structure, skin patterns, and flesh texture) to reliably reconstruct species composition without double-counting. Furthermore, Iran is actively engaging with regional initiatives, including the OFCF (Japan) web-based species identification application, and is requesting technical cooperation and Persian language adaptation for field deployment.

6.4.4 Regional Collaboration & CPUE Standardization:

Acknowledging Iran's identification as a priority country for developing gillnet CPUE indices (Black Marlin and Sailfish) under the 2027–2031 WPB Program of Work, Iran emphasizes that robust standardization must build upon enhanced port sampling and participatory fisher-dependent reporting, given the physical unfeasibility of external observers on traditional dhows. Iran fully supports evidence-based management, the equitable recognition of artisanal fleet socio-economic realities in future Management Procedures, and calls for regional funding mechanisms to support experimental gillnet trials on setting depths and soak times.

6.5. Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring

Building upon the operational and safety constraints of traditional distant-water dhows detailed in Section 6.2, physical deployment of external observers remains unfeasible for this fleet segment. To ensure robust oversight in strict alignment with IOTC Resolution 25/06 (and formerly Resolution 24/04, Paragraph 9), Iran enforces a comprehensive, multi-tiered monitoring framework at major landing sites:

- **Exceeding Regional Benchmarks:** Iran's port inspection and biological sampling framework actively covers 10% of the active fishing fleet, comfortably exceeding the 5% indicative threshold mandated by the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme (ROS).
- **Standardized Biological Sampling:** Field samplers rigorously apply the protocol of measuring at least one fish per tonne of catch by species and fishery type, driving a major expansion in length-frequency data collection (from ~134,000 records in 2020 to 478,090 measured fish in 2025).
- **Alternative Monitoring Roadmaps:** To verify unlanded at-sea events and bycatch vital status, Iran is actively advancing pragmatic alternatives, focusing on the operational planning of a Crew-Based Observer Scheme and rigorous cross-verification with landing declarations and logbook records.

Through this balanced approach, Iran maintains catch verification, data integrity, and regional compliance while developing practical monitoring mechanisms tailored to artisanal and semi-industrial fleets.

6.6 Sampling plans for mobulid rays

In strict compliance with IOTC Resolution 19/03 (Paragraph 11) and national fisheries conservation regulations, Iran has no targeted fisheries for mobulid rays. The keeping aboard, transferring at sea, retaining, and bringing ashore of any mobulid species are strictly prohibited across the entire national fleet. Consequently, zero mobulid rays were landed at Iranian ports in 2025, a status continuously verified through the countrywide landing-site evaluation and port inspection scheme, rendering traditional landing-site biological sampling inapplicable for these species.

Where rare incidental interactions occur in artisanal drifting gillnet fisheries, fishers are instructed to apply safe handling and prompt at-sea release practices, prioritizing disentanglement alongside the hull while keeping the animal submerged to maximize post-release survivorship.

In line with Paragraph 11 of Resolution 19/03, monitoring protocols for incidental interactions have been operationalized through:

- **Standardized Data Collection:** Documenting incidental interactions utilizing fishing logbooks, specialized field questionnaires, captain interviews, and crew self-reporting mechanisms to record release condition (dead or alive), gear parameters, and estimated dimensions.
- **Capacity Building & Port Verification:** Dedicated fisher training workshops and instructional guides on safe handling and prompt live-release, reinforced by regular coastal inspector interviews during port clearance and offloading.
- **Strategic Programmatic Integration:** These monitoring and reporting mechanisms have been formally integrated into Iran's national data collection framework and will be further reinforced under the freshly prepared National Plan of Action for Sharks and Rays (NPOA-Sharks and Rays), developed collaboratively with research institutions and academia, which is currently awaiting final official endorsement by senior fisheries authorities.

6.7 Electronic Monitoring Standards

Iran has not yet deployed Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) under Resolution 23/08 (Paragraph 3c) due to significant structural, engineering, and operational constraints inherent to its artisanal and small-scale

drifting gillnet fleet (traditional dhow-class vessels). Specifically, gillnetting operations are conducted nocturnally (from sunset to sunrise) on wooden and fiberglass dhows that lack uninterrupted electrical power supplies (particularly during engine-off drifting phases), standardized hauling stations, and the superstructure or ambient deck lighting required to meet IOTC minimum EMS optical resolution and sensor standards for reliable species-level identification. To compensate for these onboard technological limitations and fulfill its conservation and management commitments, Iran implements an integrated monitoring framework comprising a thorough domestic landing-site assessment strategy across major landing sites, mandatory fishing logbooks, and Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS), while actively engaging with IOTC technical working groups to evaluate feasible monitoring solutions tailored to artisanal gillnet fisheries (see also Annex A).

7. National research programs

7.1. National research programs on blue shark

7.2. National research programs on Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish

7.3. National research programs on sharks

7.4. National research programs on oceanic whitetip sharks

7.5. National research programs on marine turtles

7.6. National research programs on thresher sharks

While no standalone, species-specific national research programs are currently funded or implemented exclusively for items 7.1–7.6, biological, biometric, and ecological data concerning these bycatch and ecologically related species are routinely collected and monitored through:

- **1. Routine Port Sampling & Monitoring:** Systematic biometric sampling (size data), logbook cross-validation, and catch composition assessments conducted across major landing sites by Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) monitoring staff (measuring at least one fish per tonne and covering active vessels well above the 5% threshold).

- **2. Broad-Scale Pelagic Research Projects:** Ongoing foundational research implemented by the Iranian Fisheries Science Research Institute (IFSRI) through its core institutional funding, notably: (i) Modelling distribution and prediction areas with high density and abundance of tuna fish species in the Indian Ocean and the Oman Sea using Gillnet data and environmental variables (2023–2026); and (ii) Comprehensive assessment of habitat suitability for pelagic fish in the Persian Gulf through integration of environmental and fishing data (2025–2026).

- **3. Strategic Conservation Plans:** Formulation of comprehensive conservation roadmaps, including the NPOA-Sharks and Rays and NPOA-Sea Turtles, which establish priority research gaps, safe handling guidelines, and standardized interaction-recording protocols across the national fleet.

Table 6. Summary table of national research programs, including dates (Source Report Table 8)

Project title	Period	Countries involved	Budget total	Funding source	Objectives	Short description*
Modelling distribution and prediction areas with high density and abundance of tuna fish species in the Indian Ocean and the Oman Sea using Gillnet data and environmental variables	2023-2026	IRAN	National Institutional Budget (IFSRI Core Funding)	Iranian Fisheries Research Institute	Modelling the relationship between tuna distribution and abundance with environmental variables	Tuna and tuna-like fisheries along the Persian Gulf, the northern Oman Sea, and adjacent Indian Ocean operational areas constitute a cornerstone of Iran's marine fishing sector. Over the past three years, through dedicated national capacity-building initiatives and specialized training, national reporting frameworks have been substantially upgraded. Iran now systematically reports catch, fishing effort, and biometric size sampling using standardized IOTC forms, achieving an 85% compliance rate, with catch-and-effort data being fully geo-referenced to operational fishing grounds.
Comprehensive assessment of habitat suitability for pelagic fish in the Persian Gulf through integration of environmental and fishing data	2025-2026	IRAN	National Institutional Budget (IFSRI Core Funding)	Iranian Fisheries Research Institute	- Investigating the relationship between habitat preferences, fishing area and catch quantities in the Persian Gulf. - Identifying sensitive and vulnerable areas to increased fishing activities by integrating habitat preferences, the location of fishing centers, and catch quantities of pelagic fish in the Persian Gulf.	Building upon this standardized data foundation, this national research initiative investigates the spatial-temporal distribution patterns and habitat preferences of major pelagic species. The study integrates geo-referenced catch statistics and length-frequency sampling with high-resolution satellite remote-sensing datasets (sea surface temperature, chlorophyll-a, salinity, and dissolved oxygen). Advanced ecological modeling tools are utilized to identify key environmental drivers, delineate critical pelagic habitats, and assess stock vulnerability to environmental fluctuations. Implemented across 2025–2026, the project provides predictive spatial mapping and robust scientific baseline data to support climate-resilient fisheries management and advance Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) in alignment with IOTC scientific frameworks.

8. Implementation of Scientific Committee Recommendations and Resolutions of the IOTC relevant to the SC

Iran has taken various actions to implement the Scientific Committee recommendations and IOTC Resolutions. Table 9 details the resolutions and how they have been implemented.

Table 9. Scientific requirements contained in Resolutions of the Commission, adopted between 2012 and 2025

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
12/04	**On the conservation of marine turtles**	Paragraphs 3, 4, 6–10	Iran implements comprehensive legal and operational measures in full alignment with Resolution 12/04. Marine turtles are strictly protected under national legislation, which prohibits their capture, retention, or disturbance across all waters and enforces strict legal penalties. In collaboration with Iran's Department of Environment (DoE) and in line with the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU, critical nesting beaches and coastal foraging habitats along the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman are designated for protection and actively monitored. With respect to gear-specific obligations under Paragraphs 6–10, Iran operates no purse seine fleet (Paragraph 8) and no industrial pelagic longline vessels (Paragraph 7). In the artisanal drifting gillnet fishery (Paragraphs 4 and 6), a substantial portion of Iranian distant-water fishing dhows deploy their gillnets 1 to 2 meters below the sea surface—an operational mitigation measure that significantly reduces incidental entanglement of surface-breathing marine turtles—with the Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) actively providing technical assistance and outreach to expand subsurface deployment across a broader segment of the fleet. Furthermore, IFO conducts regular fisher training programmes utilizing translated IOTC and FAO guidelines on safe disentanglement (cutting the net mesh), onboard recovery/resuscitation of comatose or exhausted specimens, and immediate release practices. In compliance with Paragraph 3, fishers are required to record all incidental turtle interactions and release outcomes in national fishing logbooks for port verification and annual reporting to the IOTC Secretariat.
12/09	**On the conservation of thresher sharks (family alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence**	Paragraphs 4–8	Under Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) regulations and Resolution No. 380 of Iran's Supreme Environment Council, targeted shark fishing as well as the retention onboard, transhipment, landing, or sale of any thresher shark species (family Alopiidae—whether alive or dead) are strictly prohibited and subject to severe legal penalties, with zero landings verified through strict port-based monitoring. Furthermore, Iran has no recreational or sport fisheries targeting pelagic sharks (Paragraph 5). Where rare incidental encounters occur in artisanal drifting gillnet operations, fishers are trained—through translated IOTC guidelines and outreach programmes—in species identification and safe in-water release protocols (immediately releasing entangled specimens alongside the vessel by cutting the net mesh). In full compliance with Paragraphs 4–8, fishers are instructed to record any incidental interactions and live releases in national fishing logbooks for annual reporting to the IOTC Secretariat, while scientific monitoring and biological research frameworks for *Alopias* spp. have been integrated into Iran's newly compiled National Plan of Action for Sharks and Rays (NPOA-Sharks and Rays), which is currently awaiting final official endorsement by senior authorities.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
13/04	**On the conservation of cetaceans**	Paragraphs 7– 9	Iran strictly enforces the protection of cetaceans in accordance with Article 71 of the National Fisheries Executive By-Law, which prohibits the capture, retention, handling, or disturbance of marine mammals across all fishing operations; furthermore, the country does not maintain any purse seine vessels. As a key operational bycatch mitigation measure in the drifting gillnet fishery, a substantial portion of Iranian distant-water fishing dhows set their gillnets 1 to 2 meters below the sea surface—a practice that effectively reduces incidental entanglement of surface-breathing megafauna, particularly cetaceans and sea turtles. Building on this practical measure and recent national gillnet regulations governing gear depth parameters, the Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) is continuously delivering expert guidance and educational campaigns to broaden the adoption of underwater net setting across a broader segment of the fleet. Where rare incidental encounters occur, fishers are trained to apply immediate in-water safe-release protocols, and in compliance with Paragraphs 7–9, any interactions and release outcomes are recorded via national fishing logbooks and port-based monitoring systems for reporting to the IOTC Secretariat.
13/05	**On the conservation of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*)**	Paragraphs 7– 9	Iran strictly prohibits the capture, retention, and landing of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*). Furthermore, as Iran has no active purse seine fleet, intentional or unintentional encirclement in purse seine nets does not occur. With respect to other gear types under Paragraph 8—specifically artisanal drifting gillnets—fishers are trained through translated IOTC guidelines and outreach programmes to apply safe in-water release protocols (immediately releasing any entangled specimen alongside the vessel by cutting the net mesh). In full compliance with Paragraphs 7–9, fishers are required to record any rare incidental encounters and the vital status of released animals in national fishing logbooks for port verification and annual reporting to the IOTC Secretariat, with protection measures further consolidated under Iran's newly compiled NPOA-Sharks and Rays (currently awaiting final official endorsement).
13/06	**On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries**	Paragraph 5–6	In Iran, targeted shark fishing, retention onboard, and port landing are strictly prohibited—a regulatory stance naturally reinforced by national dietary and cultural norms wherein domestic consumption and commercial demand for shark meat are virtually non-existent. In strict compliance with Paragraphs 5 and 6 of Resolution 13/06, Iran enforces a strict Zero Retention – Immediate Release policy across the national fleet, whereby sharks incidentally encountered as bycatch in drifting gillnet operations are never retained, transshipped, or landed, but are promptly released at sea to ensure their highest probability of survival. To maximize post-release survival and ensure crew safety, IFO—in collaboration with fisheries unions, cooperatives, and NGOs—has integrated size-specific safe handling protocols into fisher training programmes: small-bodied sharks unintentionally brought aboard during net hauling are carefully disentangled and immediately returned to the sea using safe manual support, whereas large-bodied specimens are kept in the water alongside the vessel and released by cutting the net mesh. Incidental encounters and live releases are recorded in national fishing logbooks within the monitoring framework of the newly compiled NPOA-Sharks and Rays.
15/01	**On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence**	Paragraphs 1–10	In compliance with Resolution 15/01, catch and effort data are systematically recorded using standardized paper and electronic logbooks. Data is categorized by vessel category, gear type (primarily gillnet, longline, and trolling), and species composition (retained and discarded). The collected data incorporates spatial-temporal parameters (e.g., grid squares) and is regularly verified through port sampling before being processed and integrated monthly into the national fisheries statistical system (AMAR) under the Iran Fisheries Management System (IFMS).

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
15/02	**Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)**	Paragraphs 1–7	In accordance with the mandatory reporting requirements of Resolution 15/02, the Iran Fisheries Organization systematically extracts and submits comprehensive statistical data to the IOTC via the IFMS database. The submissions encompass Nominal Catch (NC), detailed Catch and Effort (CE) by gear type, and Size Frequency (SF) data. Moreover, highlighting significant progress in domestic data collection frameworks, Iran has consistently submitted spatial-temporal data (grid resolution and timeline) for its active fleet over the past three years.
17/05	**On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC**	Paragraphs 6, 9, 11	In alignment with national fisheries laws and regulations and in strict compliance with Resolution 17/05, targeted shark fishing is strictly prohibited in Iran, and a strict Zero Retention – Immediate Release policy is enforced across the national fleet: all sharks caught incidentally must be released immediately at sea to ensure their highest probability of survival, and the retention onboard, transshipment, and landing of sharks (as well as shark finning or removal of fins at sea) are strictly prohibited. Driven by the fact that over 90% of the Iranian public does not consume shark meat, the domestic market demand is minimal, further discouraging any targeted effort. To ensure widespread compliance, the Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) has translated all relevant IOTC resolutions, disseminating them extensively and integrating safe handling and live-release protocols into fishermen's training programs alongside local fisheries unions. These collective conservation efforts, reinforced by the National Plan of Action for Sharks and Rays (NPOA-Sharks and Rays), have kept incidental encounter rates notably low. Detailed reports regarding these conservation and monitoring measures are regularly submitted to the IOTC Secretariat.
18/02	**On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries**	Paragraphs 2-5	Under the national regulations of the Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) and the Department of Environment (DoE), targeted shark fishing is strictly prohibited. Consequently, blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*) are caught only in small quantities as incidental bycatch. Data regarding these minimal catches are collected through self-declaration via captain interviews at landing sites and are systematically recorded in the Iran Fisheries Management System (IFMS).
18/05	**On management measures for the conservation of the Billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish**	Paragraphs 7 – 11	Iran monitors billfish species—which are strictly caught incidentally as bycatch within the traditional drifting gillnet tuna fisheries, rather than as targeted resources—through a comprehensive national port-based sampling programme. Given the logistical challenges of deploying onboard observers across a vast artisanal fleet, this port monitoring network serves as the primary mechanism to physically collect, verify, and cross-reference species-specific catch and effort data directly at major coastal landing sites. By strengthening these field collection protocols, Iran continues to improve the accuracy and resolution of its bycatch data, ensuring transparent, reliable, and timely reporting to the IOTC Secretariat in alignment with regional conservation measures.
18/07	**On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC**	Paragraphs 1, 4	Iran fulfills its mandatory IOTC reporting obligations under Paragraphs 1 and 4 through the timely annual compilation and submission of standard statistical datasets specifically Forms 1RC (Retained Catches and Zero Catch Matrix), 3CE (Catch and Effort), and 4SF (Size Frequency) to the IOTC Secretariat. Furthermore, the Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) continuously refines its data verification protocols to improve species-level disaggregation for both targeted tuna stocks and incidental bycatch, including shark and billfish species, within its coastal and offshore drifting gillnet fisheries.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
19/01	**On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence (If not provided under Res 21/01 below)**	Paragraph 22	Iran implements the provisions of Resolution 19/01 (Paragraph 22) through a suite of national regulatory and management measures aimed at conserving and rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock. The Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) has issued binding operational directives to its Provincial Directorates-General of Fisheries across the southern coastal provinces to strictly enforce conservation and management measures. Under this national regulatory framework, Iran actively promotes a gradual transition from traditional drifting gillnets to more selective hook-based gears, imposes spatial and seasonal fishing restrictions, and enforces strict technical gear regulations—including a complete ban on monofilament nets, capping maximum gillnet length at 2.5 km, and regulating gear depth parameters—alongside strict vessel licensing controls. Collectively, these measures serve to effectively regulate fishing capacity, curb excessive fishing effort, and improve the selectivity of yellowfin tuna harvests.
19/03	**On the Conservation of Mobulid Rays Caught in Association with Fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence**	Paragraph 11	Iran has no targeted fisheries for mobulid rays, and in strict compliance with Resolution 19/03, the keeping aboard, transferring at sea, and bringing ashore of any mobulid species are prohibited across the national fleet. Consequently, no mobulid rays were landed at Iranian ports in 2025, a status continuously verified through the countrywide landing-site evaluation scheme. Where rare incidental interactions occur in artisanal drifting gillnet fisheries, fishers are instructed to apply safe handling and prompt at-sea release practices. In line with Paragraph 11, monitoring protocols for incidental interactions—utilizing fishing logbooks, crew self-reporting, and port verification—have been integrated into Iran's national data collection framework and will be further reinforced under the freshly prepared NPOA-Sharks and Rays, which is currently awaiting final official endorsement by senior fisheries authorities.
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	As detailed under Resolution 19/01 (Paragraph 22) above, Iran implements comprehensive national management measures to support the conservation and rebuilding of the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock. These ongoing measures include enforcing technical gear restrictions on drifting gillnet operations, regulating vessel licensing and fishing seasons, controlling overall fishing effort, and promoting a gradual transition toward more selective hook-based gears across the southern coastal provinces.
23/07	**On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries.**	Paragraphs 3–7	The mandatory mitigation provisions of Resolution 23/07 are not applicable to Iran's fishing fleet. Currently, Iran has no active industrial longline vessels operating in the Indian Ocean, and traditional longline operations are strictly limited to a small number of artisanal boats and dhow-class vessels operating within nearshore coastal fishing grounds. Furthermore, Iranian distant-water fishing dhows operate exclusively in the Northern Hemisphere (strictly north of the Equator and well above the 25°S latitude threshold) and utilize drifting gillnets—a gear type that lacks baited hooks and inherently exhibits negligible attraction or interaction with seabirds compared to pelagic longlines. Nevertheless, in alignment with the monitoring and reporting provisions under Paragraphs 3, 4, and 6, national fishing logbooks and port-based verification systems continuously monitor potential bycatch, with zero incidental catch of seabirds recorded and duly reported to the IOTC Secretariat.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
23/08	**On electronic monitoring standards for IOTC fisheries**	Paragraphs 3c	Iran has not yet deployed Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) under Resolution 23/08 due to significant structural, engineering, and operational constraints inherent to its artisanal and small-scale drifting gillnet fleet (traditional dhow-class vessels). Specifically, gillnetting operations are conducted nocturnally (from sunset to sunrise) on wooden and fiberglass dhows that lack uninterrupted electrical power supplies (particularly during engine-off drifting phases), standardized hauling stations, and the superstructure or ambient deck lighting required to meet IOTC minimum EMS optical resolution and sensor standards for reliable species-level identification. To compensate for these onboard technological limitations and fulfill its conservation and management commitments, Iran implements an integrated monitoring framework comprising a thorough domestic landing-site assessment strategy across major landing sites, mandatory fishing logbooks, and Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS), while actively engaging with IOTC technical working groups to evaluate feasible monitoring solutions tailored to artisanal gillnet fisheries.
25/06	**On a regional observer scheme**	Paragraph 12	Iran is committed to the objectives of the Regional Observer Scheme (ROS). While structural and safety constraints prevent the deployment of independent onboard observers on traditional dhow-class vessels (Paragraph 3), Iran ensures robust monitoring of its artisanal drifting gillnet fleet through an established landing-site inspection framework (Paragraphs 9 & 10). This includes the National Catch & Effort Program (established 1994) and the Size-Frequency Program (initiated 2001), both standardized for IOTC reporting since 2011. Trained field samplers stationed at major southern landing sites achieve 10% landing-site sampling coverage of active vessels, exceeding the 5% indicative threshold. Iran has not requested another CPC to place an observer under Paragraph 12. Observer and sampling protocols, sampled vessels and effort, and coverage by gear type are reported annually under Paragraph 13.

9. Literature cited

- *Iran Fisheries Statistics yearbooks 2020–2025*
- *Data Collection System and Data Processing Method in Iran (IFMS)*

Annex A: A fleet level summary of the Vessel Monitoring Plans [Mandatory for CPC implementing EMS]

A.1 The number of CPC flagged vessels implementing EM by gear/fishery type

0 vessels (Not applicable). As detailed in Section 6.7 and Table 9 (Resolution 23/08), Iran has not yet deployed onboard Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) across its artisanal drifting gillnet fleet due to nocturnal fishing operations and structural/electrical power constraints aboard traditional wooden and fiberglass dhow-class vessels.

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

Not applicable (No EMS currently deployed; see Section 6.7).

A.3 A general description of EMS requirements placed upon vessel skippers/crews by the CPC government

Not applicable (No EMS currently deployed; monitoring and verification are enforced through mandatory fishing logbooks, VMS, and 10% port-based landing inspections across 43 active landing sites as detailed in Sections 6.1–6.3 and 6.7).