Japan 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/June/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/June/2026
If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions:	

Executive Summary

This Japanese national report describes the following eight relevant topics stipulated in the 2026 national report guideline mainly in recent five years (2021-2025) (2025 is provisional) , i.e. (1) Fishery information (longline and purse seine fishery), (2) fleet information, (3) catch and effort by species and fishery, (4) ecosystem and bycatch (sharks, seabirds, marine turtles), (5) national data collection and processing systems including "logbook data collection and verification", "observer scheme", "port sampling programs", "monitoring billfish catch", and "sampling plans for mobulid rays", (6) national research programs, (7) Implementation of Scientific Committee recommendations and resolutions of the IOTC relevant to the Scientific Committee", and (8) "Literature cited". Highlights from the eight topics are described as follows: Japan is currently operating longline fisheries and had operated purse seine fisheries in the Indian Ocean. Catch and effort data are collected mainly through logbooks. Bigeye, yellowfin, albacore, southern bluefin tuna are main components of the catch by longliners, while three species (skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye tuna) had been exploited by purse seiners. In recent years, catch and effort by longliners are in a low level mainly because of piracy activities off Somalia. Purse seiners have not operated in the Indian Ocean since 2021. Japan has been dispatching scientific observers in accordance with the Resolution 11/04 (superseded by 22/04, 24/04 and 25/06), whose coverage for longline fishery has been more than the 5% compliance level in recent years except for 2021-2022 due to COVID-19 pandemic. Observer coverage for purse seine fishery until 2021 is highly variable. A number of information including bycatch and biological data has been collected through the observer program. Japan has been conducting several research activities related to IOTC species.

Contents

1. BACKGROUND/GENERAL FISHERY INFORMATION----------02-03
2. FLEET STRUCTURE---------- 03
3. CATCH AND EFFORT (BY SPECIES AND FISHERY) ---------- 03-12
4. RECREATIONAL FISHERY---------- 12
5. ECOSYSTEM AND BY CATCH ISSUES---------- 13-16
6. NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING SYSTEMS---------- 17-23
7. NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS---------- 23-25
8. IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE IOTC RELEVANT TO THE SC ---------- 25-27
9. LITERATURE CITED ---------- 27

1. BACKGROUND/GENERAL FISHERY INFORMATION

Longline and purse seine fisheries are two types of Japanese tuna fisheries currently authorized in the Indian Ocean, although purse seine fishery didn't operate during 2021-2025. Longline fishery started its operation in 1952 when the limitation of operational area imposed by the GHQ*[1], was removed. Commercial purse seine fleet commenced fishing operations in the Indian Ocean in 1991 after several years of experimental fisheries. Species exploited and operating areas are stated in figure 2a and 3a.

The total fishing effort (the number of hooks) of Japanese longliners in the Indian Ocean sharply increased from 2 million (1952) to 129 million hooks (1967) (the historically highest level), and then there was no clear increasing or decreasing trend with large fluctuation (52-128 million hooks) until 2007. Thereafter, it decreased down to about 28 million hooks in 2011 due to piracy activities off Somalia. It has been kept at low level with slight decrease and was 13.5 million hooks in 2025 (preliminary). The percentage compositions of fishing effort (number of hooks) in this Ocean against the total effort in all Oceans fluctuated around 20% until 2003, afterwards it increased to 35% in 2006 and 2007. Thereafter it has drastically decreased to 11% in 2010 and kept at a low level (10-16%) to now, mainly because of piracy activities.

* *GHQ (General Headquarters) of the occupying forces of the Allies after the World War II*

As for the purse seine fisheries, operations took place mainly in the tropical western Indian Ocean until 1993. Afterwards operations shifted almost completely to the eastern Indian Ocean mainly because of economic problem derived from the rise of Japanese Yen during that time, in addition to the extra cost imposed due to the long geographical distances from Japan. Purse seiners have not operated in the Indian Ocean since 2021.

2. FLEET STRUCTURE

All Japanese longline vessels operating in the Indian Ocean have been the distant water category (400-750 GT). Historical change in the number of longline vessels from 1987 to 2025 is shown in Table 1. In the last 25 years, the number of vessels operated in this Ocean was around 172-228 per year until 2008. Although the number of operating vessels was relatively high (223-251) during 1995-1999, after that it decreased to less than 200 except for 228 in 2002. It decreased rapidly year by year until 2011 because of piracy activities off Somalia, and kept in a low level (35-59) after 2013. The number of longline vessels operated in 2025 was 35 (preliminary). Japanese longline fleet operate in the Indian Ocean throughout the year though it is rare for one vessel to stay in the Indian Ocean throughout the year.

Japanese purse seine vessels currently authorized in the Indian Ocean are the 1,090-1,890 GT class (approximately 1,100-1,900 fish hold capacity). Historical change in the number of purse seine vessels from 1987 to 2025 is shown in Table 1. Although 11-12 Japanese purse seiners operated during 1991-1994, it decreased year by year and purse seiner retreated from the Indian Ocean in 2001 leaving only one vessel "Nippon-Maru", the research vessel of Fisheries Research Agency (FRA) with a few commercial vessels. This vessel was replaced by another research vessel "No.1 Taikei-Maru" in 2013. Since 2015 a few commercial vessels have resumed their operations and the number of total vessels in each year operated during 2017-2020 was 2-3, but no vessel operated during 2021-2025.

Table 1: Number of vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence

Fleet/Year	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Longliners	272	235	245	216	184	181	206	206	224	251	243	242	223	192
Purse seiners	1	1	3	4	11	12	11	11	8	5	3	4	3	2

Fleet/Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Longliners	199	228	172	189	184	188	178	173	130	84	72	75	57	53
Purse seiners	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1

Fleet/Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Longliners	52	45	41	46	50	59	56	47	44	38	35
Purse seiners	3	3	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	0

3. CATCH AND EFFORT (BY SPECIES AND FISHERY)

Japanese longline fisheries are conducted mainly by distant water tuna longline vessels. As stated in section 1, in terms of target species, bigeye, yellowfin, albacore, southern bluefin tuna are main components of the catch by longliners, while three species (skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye tuna) had been exploited by purse seiners.

3.1 Longline fishery

The latest available longline data is that of 2025 (data for 2025 are preliminary).

Fishing effort

The longline fishery commenced in 1952 in the eastern equatorial waters in the Indian Ocean. In the late 1960s, the effort covered entire fishing ground of the longline in the Indian Ocean. The annual amount of the effort had increased until the late 1960s and fluctuated after that. However, fishing effort had been dramatically decreasing since 2008 and then kept at a low level because of the effects of piracy activities off Somalia. Fishing effort in 2025 (13,500 thousand hooks) was only about 11% of that in 2007, which is the recent highest level. Table 2-1 shows annual catch and effort by longline fishery in recent 5 years.

Table 2-1. Annual catch and fishing effort and primary species in the IOTC area of competence (longline fishery, 2021-2025) as of October 2026 (2025 is provisional)

(catch in mt, set in number and hooks in thousand)

Year	Set	Hooks	SBT	ALB	BET	YFT	SWO	MLS	BLZ	BLM	SFA	SPF	SKJ
2021	7,132	22,220	4,026	1,592	4,126	1,027	469	8	49	13	11	13	4
2022	6,106	18,702	3,140	1,704	3,218	1,373	414	13	55	12	28	25	4
2023	5,296	16,589	3,297	767	2,976	2,018	291	17	81	13	30	11	6
2024	5,103	16,026	3,133	905	3,291	2,087	297	28	108	25	22	15	7
2025	4,352	13,530	3,348	494	2,553	1,241	327	23	79	15	27	9	3

(Note) SBT (Southern bluefin tuna), ALB (albacore), BET (bigeye tuna), YFT (yellowfin tuna), SWO (swordfish), MLS (striped marlin), BLZ (blue marlin), BLM (black marlin), SFA (sailfish), SPF (shortbill spearfish), and SKJ (skipjack tuna).

Geographical distributions of longline fishing efforts for 2025 and average of 2021-2025 are shown in Fig. 2a. In 2025, the efforts were mainly in African offshore area (in the waters off South Africa to Mozambique) and in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean off Australia and Indonesia. This is similar to that for 2021-2025 average, but shrinkage of fishing ground is seen in 2025. The effort in the northwestern area has dramatically decreased since 2008 and the efforts for 2021-2025 are still almost nothing because the threats of piracy remain off Somalia.

Catch

Historical catch in weight by species and catch statistics by Japanese tuna longliners in the Indian Ocean are shown in Fig. 1a (entire period) and Table 2-1 (2021-2025), respectively, and geographical distributions of catch in 2025 and average of 2021-2025 for major tuna and billfish species are shown in Fig. 3a. Catch of albacore, yellowfin and southern bluefin tunas were very high during 1950s and 1960s, and then sharply decreased. After mid 1990s bigeye and yellowfin tunas have been main components of the catch.

Total catch (the catch of southern bluefin tuna, albacore, bigeye, yellowfin, swordfish, striped marlin, blue marlin, black marlin, sailfish, shortbill spearfish, and skipjack) in 2024 and 2025 was 9, 918 MT and 8,119 MT, respectively. It should be noted that the catch of yellowfin and bigeye drastically decreased during 2007-2010, although the catch of albacore was roughly at the same level during this period. Furthermore, yellowfin catch in 2021 was the lowest after 1980s, and this decrease was mainly derived from decrease in fishing effort especially in the tropical area especially in the piracy area (northwestern Indian Ocean).

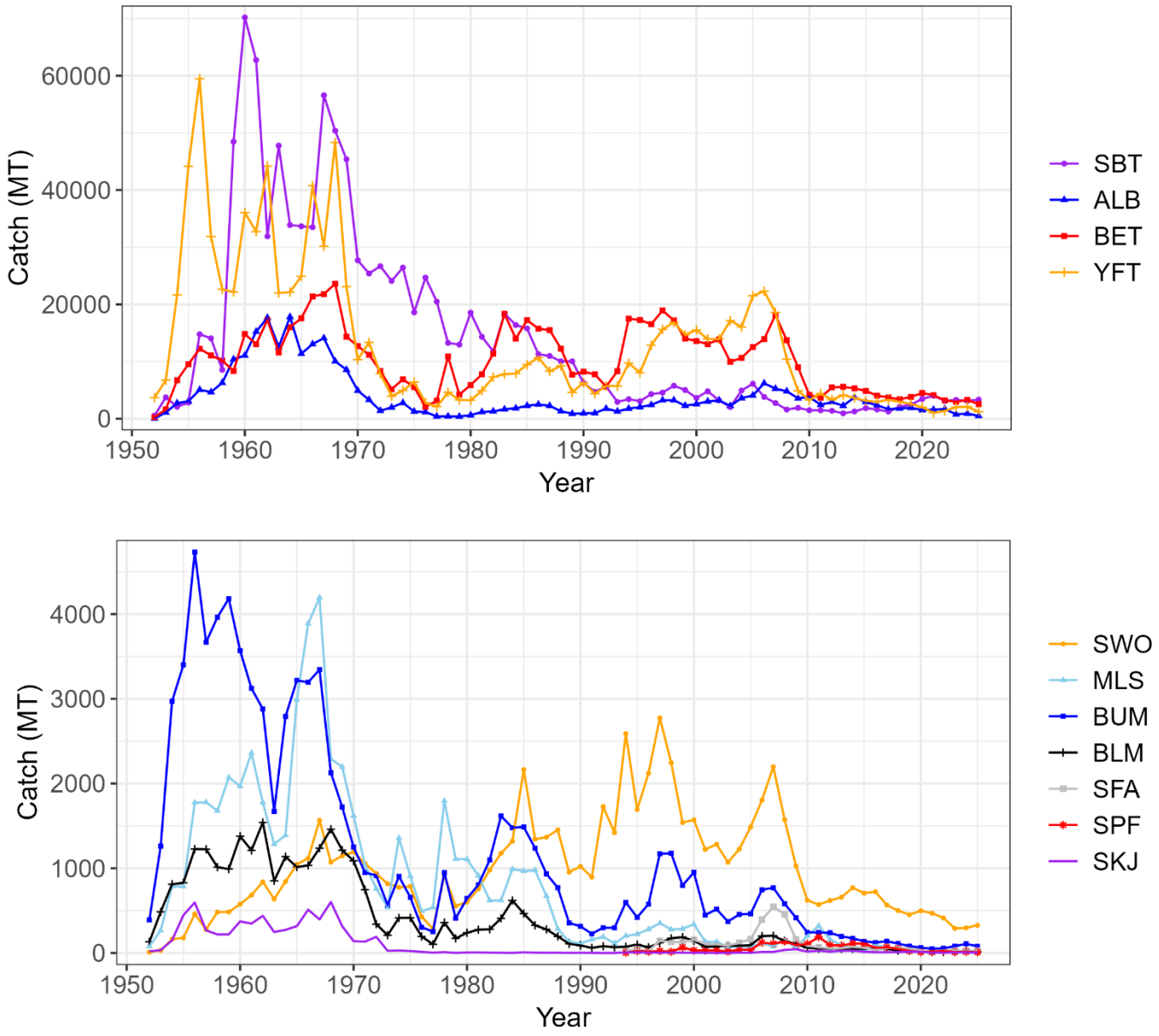

Fig. 1-1. Catch trends of tuna and tuna-like species exploited by Japanese longliners
(2025 is provisional).
Upper: tuna species, lower: billfish species and skipjack tuna

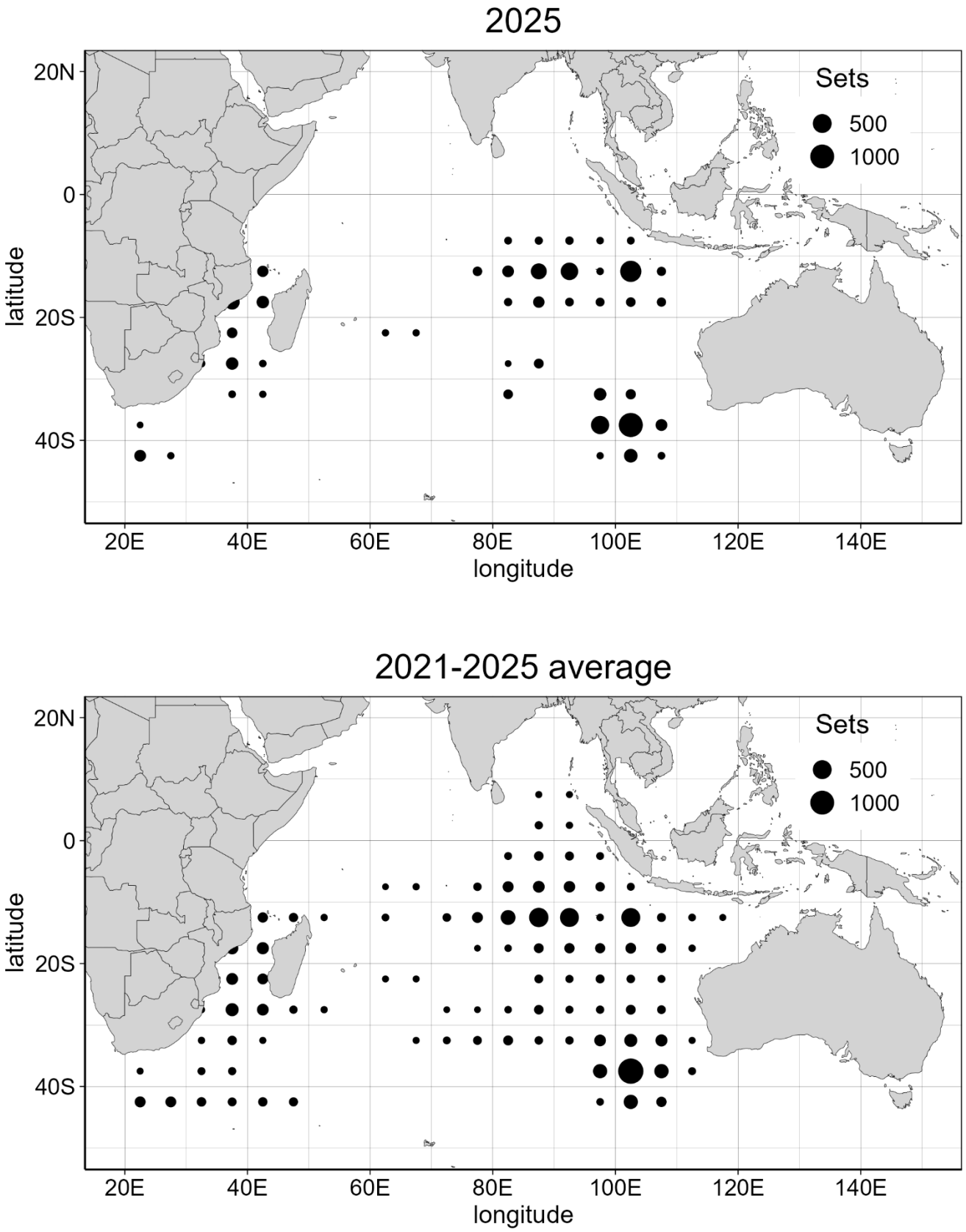

Fig 2a-1, 2b-1. Geographical distributions of longline fishing effort (in number of sets) for 2025 (upper) and in average of 2021-2025 (lower) *(2025 is provisional)*.

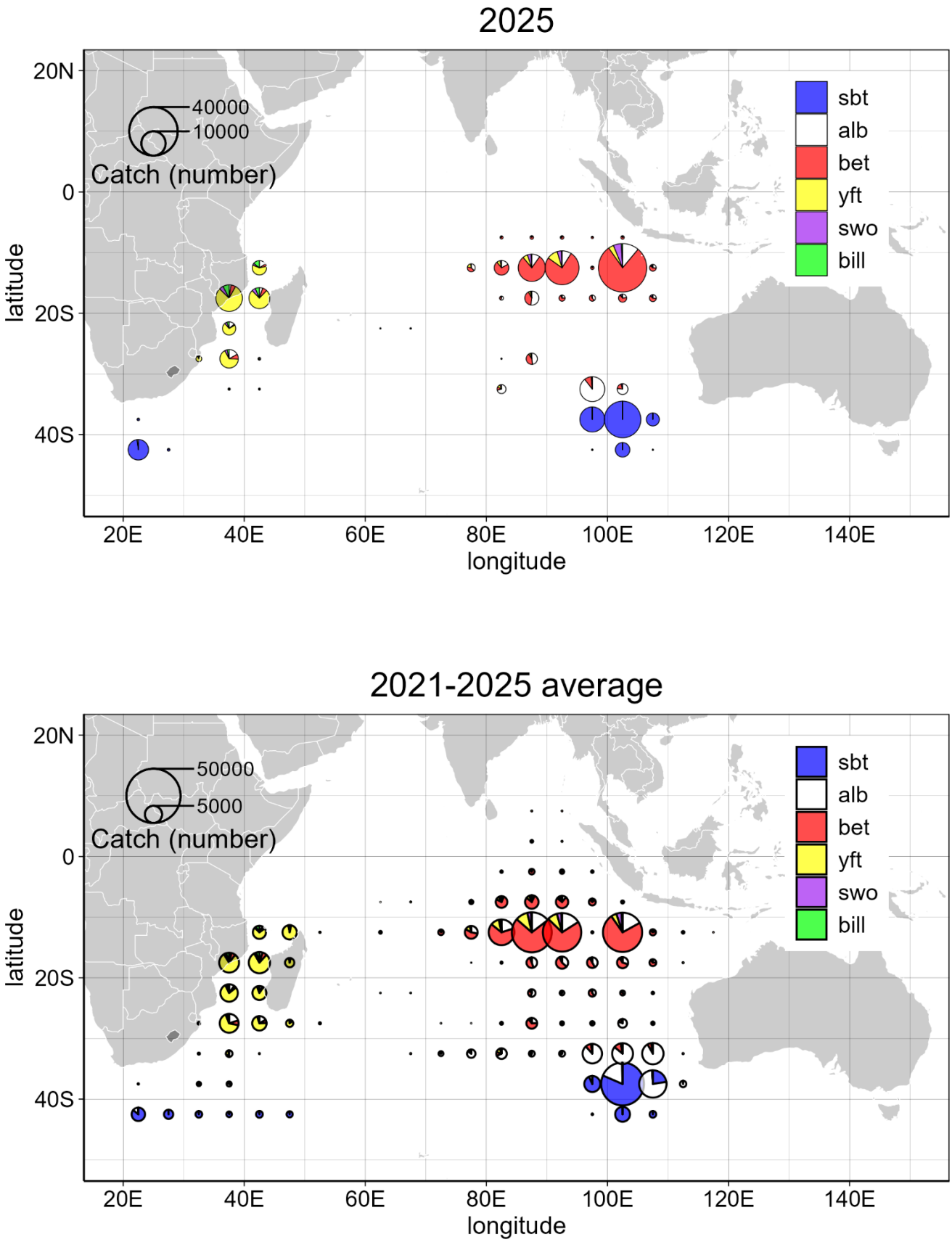

Fig. 3a-1, 3a-2. Geographical distributions of longline catch (in number) of major species in 2025 (upper) and in average of 2021-2025 (lower) *(2025 is provisional)*.

Based on the geographical distribution of the catch (Fig. 3a), yellowfin and bigeye tunas are mainly caught off Mozambique and the central-eastern tropical waters, respectively. Albacore is mainly caught in the temperate area off Australia. During 2021-2025, there was almost no effort in the northwestern area (good yellowfin fishing grounds), which has been similar situation since 2011 when the piracy activities started. Hence, longliners shifted their operations to the other waters especially off Mozambique and the southeastern Indian Ocean.

3.2 Purse seine fishery

The latest available data for Japanese purse seine fishery is for 2020.

Fishing Effort

Total fishing effort (number of set) was 201 in 2017 and 147 in 2018 (Table 2-2). This is larger than those in the early 2010s due to the increase in the number of vessels (from 1 to 3). Fishing effort (number of set) in 2019 sharply decreased to 9 because the fishing conditions were extremely poor thus fishing operations ended very quickly in a very short time then purse seine vessels shifted to the Pacific Ocean. Also in 2020, the number of set was small and so the catch was also low. No purse seine operation was conducted during 2021-2025 because all the vessels shifted to the Pacific Ocean. Geographical distributions of effort for 2020 (latest year of operation) and the average of 2016-2020 are shown in Fig. 2b. Operations were conducted almost only in the eastern part in recent years.

Table 2-2. Annual catch and effort and primary species in the IOTC area of competence (2016-2025) (purse seine fisheries).

		Catch (MT)				
Year	Number of set	SKJ	YFT	BET	others	Total
2016	146	2,357	422	258	0	3,037
2017	201	3,129	712	424	0	4,265
2018	147	2,076	407	287	0	2,770
2019	9	187	24	24	0	235
2020	34	494	58	68	0	620
2021	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	0	0	0	0	0	0

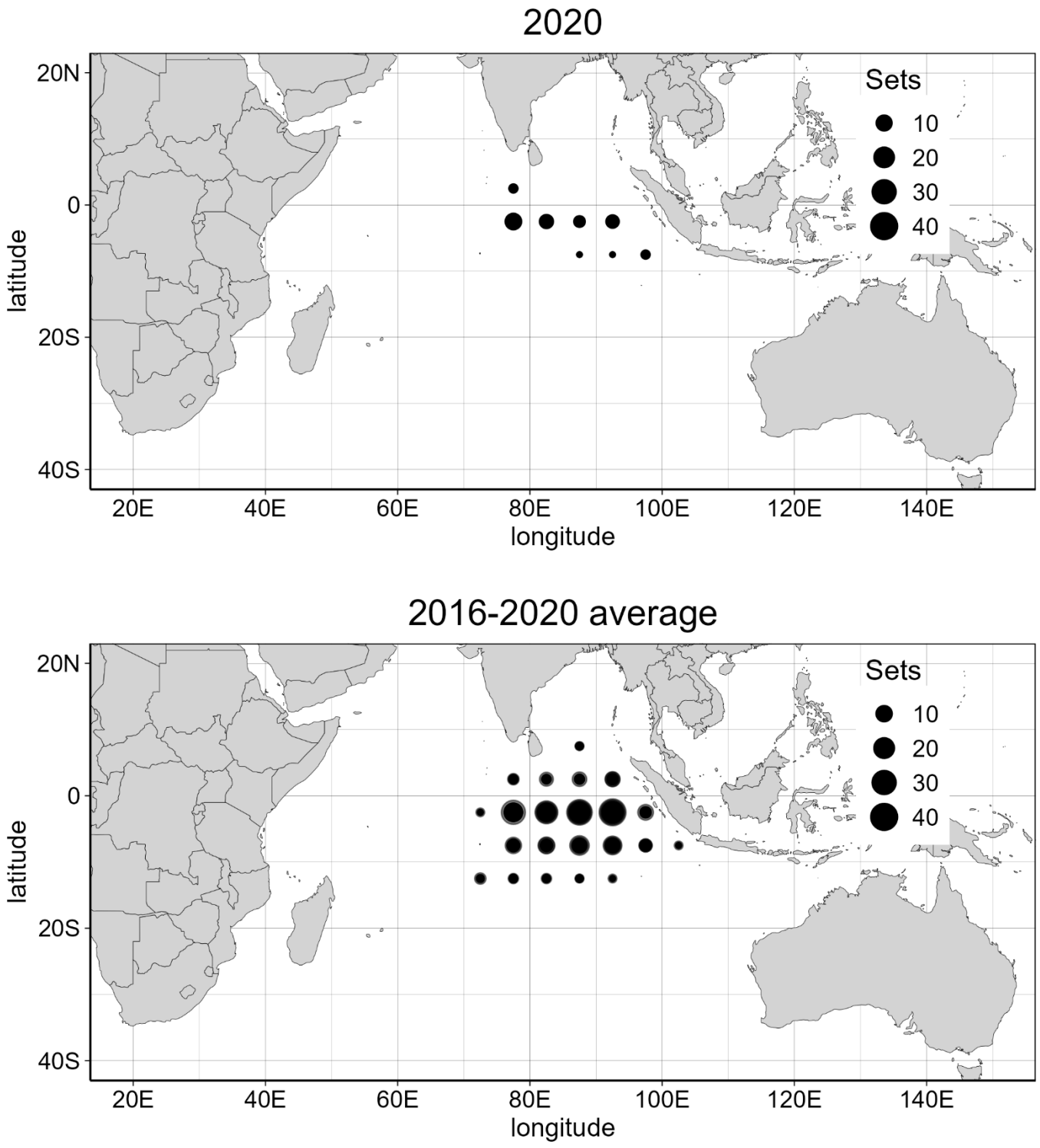

Fig. 2a-2, 2b-2. Distributions of purse seine fishing effort (number of sets) in the Indian Ocean in 2020 (upper) and average of 2016-2020 (lower). Note: distribution in and up to 2020 is shown because there was no operation during 2021-2025.

Catch

During 1972-1987, the total catch was low (< 1,000 MT except 3 years), afterwards increased rapidly to about 45 thousand MT in 1992 and 1993 (the highest record), then decreased sharply to 11 thousand MT in 1997 and 7 thousand MT in 1999 (Fig. 1b). Thereafter it had fluctuated between 2.2 and 6.2 thousand MT until 2012 and the total catch in 2013 and 2014 decreased to approximately 1 thousand MT. Total catch in 2015 increased to 2.8 thousand MT because of increase in the number of vessels operated, and further increased until 2017 (4.3 thousand MT in 2017). The catch drastically decreased in 2019 due to decrease in fishing effort as explained. Catch in weight of skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye in 2020 (2019) was 494 (187) MT, 58 (24) MT and 68 (24) MT, respectively. There was no catch during 2021-2025.

Geographical distributions of catch in 2020 (latest year of operation) and average of 2016-2020 for major tuna species are shown in Fig. 3b. The main component of the catch was usually skipjack tuna in all the areas then yellowfin and/or bigeye tuna followed.

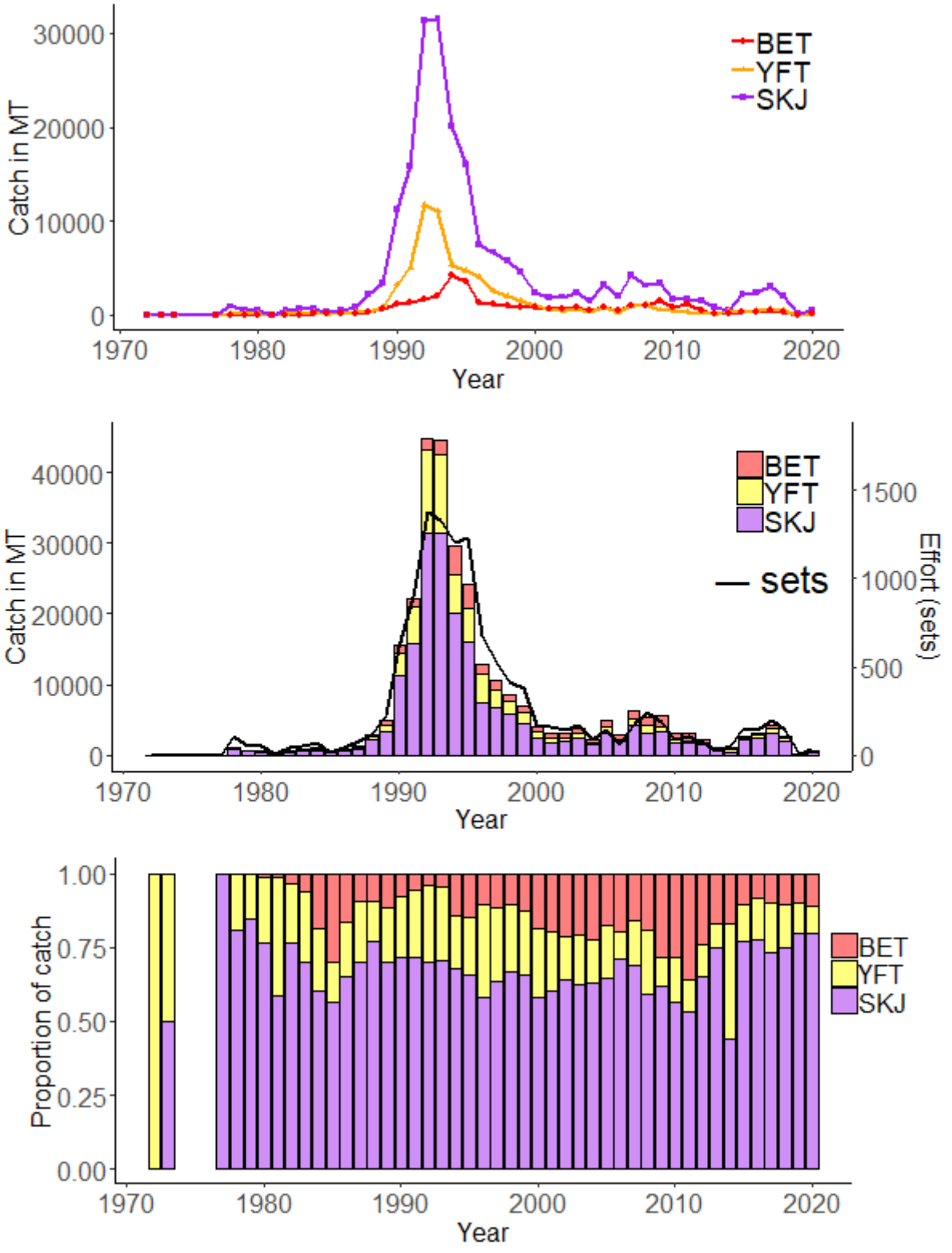

Fig1-2. Trends of SKJ, YFT and BET catch *(top: actual and middle: cumulative with number of sets*) **and trends of species compositions of catch** *(bottom)* **exploited by Japanese purse seiners (1972-2020)**

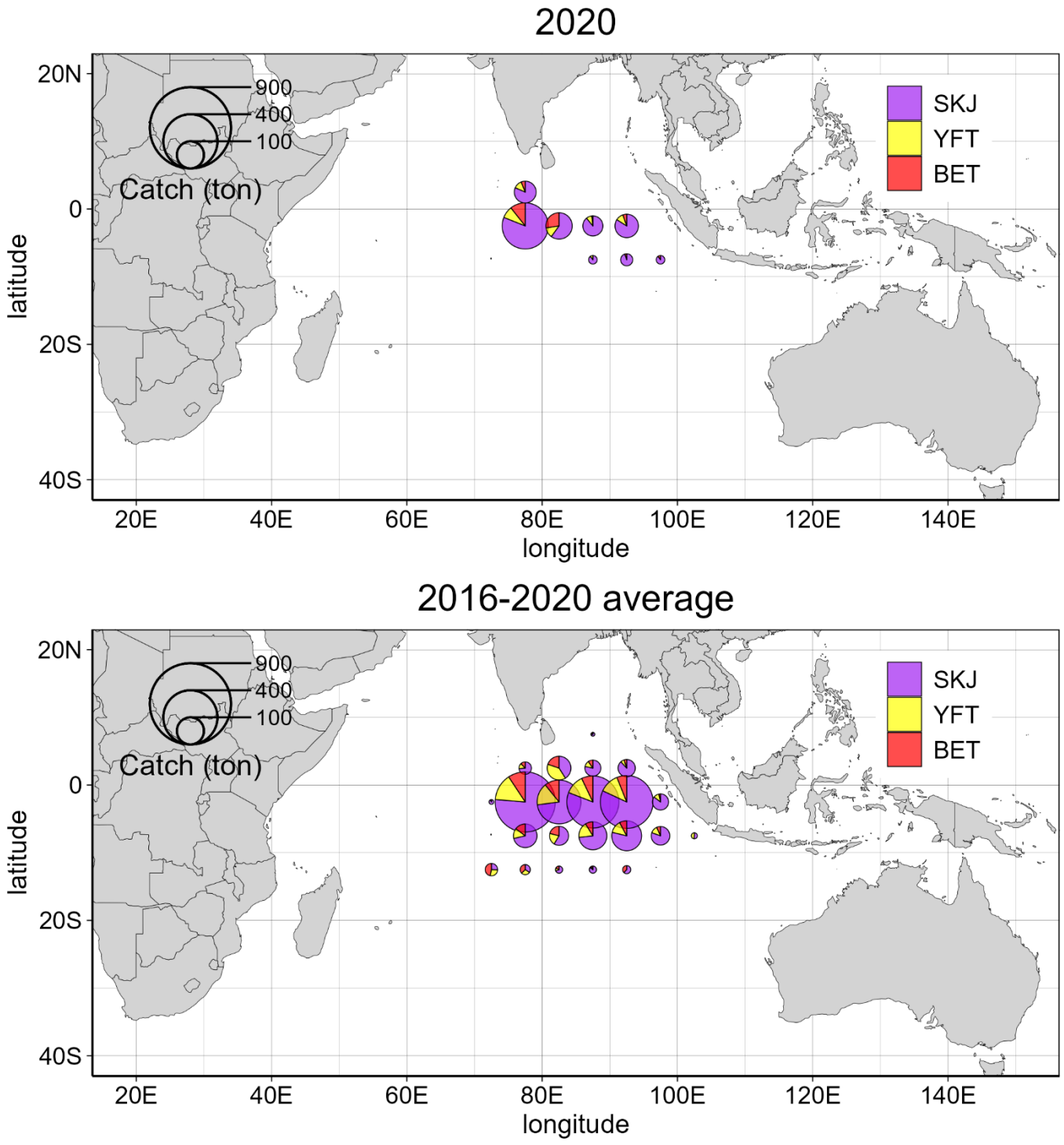

Fig. 3a-2, 3b-2. Geographical distributions of purse seine catch of SKJ, YFT and BET in 2020 *(upper)* **and average of 2016-2020** *(lower)*. Note: distribution in and up to 2020 was shown because there was no operation during 2021-2025.

4. RECREATIONAL FISHERY

No recreational fishery in the Indian Ocean.

5. ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH ISSUES

In accordance with FAO International Action Plans on sharks and seabirds, Japan established the National Action Plans on sharks and seabirds in 2001 and then revised them in 2009,2016 and 2023. In addition, Japan has been taking actions in accordance with the FAO Guidelines on sea turtle by-catch and also taking actions in accordance with IOTC conservation and management measures on bycatch of sharks, sea turtles and seabirds.

5.1 Sharks

5.1.1. NPOA sharks

Japan's National Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks was established in February 2001 and then revised in 2009, 2016 and 2023.

5.1.2. Blue shark

The Japanese longline fishery in the Indian Ocean catches blue shark. Catch data (in number and weight) of blue shark has been collected since 1994. Details of logbook data collection and verification is described in 6.1. Historical catches of three major shark species including blue shark in weight (MT) between 2021 and 2025 are shown in Table X1.

As described in 6.3., scientific observers deployed to the Japanese tuna longliners have collected catch (in number and weight), biological and other information including body size, sex, fate of blue shark caught in the Indian Ocean since 2010.

Table X1. Annual catch in weight (MT) of three major shark species caught by Japanese tuna longliners in the Indian Ocean (2021-2025) *(2025 is provisional).*

Year	Blue shark	Porbeagle	Shortfin mako
2021	371	0	9
2022	274	0	6
2023	196	0	1
2024	194	0	6
2025	186	0	1

5.2 Seabirds

National strategies, NPOA-seabirds and recovery plan
In order to reduce incidental catches of seabirds, in 2001, Japan instituted the effective and practical National Plan of Action for reducing incidental catch of seabirds in Japanese longline fishing operations to suit the NPOA-Seabirds adopted in 1999. Japan's NPOA was developed based on (a) impact analyses based on the information from the Japanese longline operations and (b) consideration of the effective and practical methods to reduce incidental catch of seabirds. After instituting NPOA-Seabirds, Japan has revised it with the aim to effectively coping with the changes of the situation surrounding this issue. The newest revision was made in 2016.

Furthermore, FAJ has been mandating fishers to comply the domestic laws on relevant measures to reduce incidental catch of seabirds, which are based on various resolutions adopted by RFMOs.

Current seabird mitigation measures used by the national longline fleet
Seabird bycatch mitigation measures stipulated in accordance with the IOTC Resolution 23/07 have been in force under a national notice on bycatch mitigation measures.

Data collection
Japan has been collecting relevant scientific information for analyses (especially the ecology and population status of seabirds) from sources such as observers onboard and logbooks.

The information of interaction of seabirds and use of seabird mitigation measures were collected by the Japanese observer program from 2021 to 2025. The observer data for the years 2021 and 2022 were not obtained because of the impact of COVID-19.

Eastern Indian Ocean
No observer coverage was available south of 25 ºS during the first quarter. Observer coverage was present south of 25 ºS during the second quarter, and no seabird bycatch was recorded. In the third and fourth quarters, observer coverage amounted to 3,569,514 and 1,884,481 observed hooks, respectively, with corresponding seabird bycatch per unit effort (BPUE) values of 0.05 and 0.03 individuals/1000 hooks.

Western Indian Ocean
Observer coverage in the Western Indian Ocean was lower than that in the Eastern Indian Ocean. Seabird bycatch had occurred off South of South Africa during the second quarter. Observer coverage in the similar area (around 47.5ºS, 22.5ºE) continued during the third quarter, although no seabird bycatch was recorded during that period.

5.3 Marine Turtles

National Strategies and recovery plan
FAJ developed and disseminated guidelines for fishers to reduce sea turtle mortality in fishing operation based on FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Reducing Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations.

Interaction
The interaction of sea turtles was examined by the Japanese observer data from 2021 to 2025. The observer data for the years 2021 and 2022 were not obtained because of the impact of COVID-19. The results are described as follows:

Eastern Indian Ocean

Observer coverage was present north of 20ºS through all quarters. Two sea turtle bycatch events were recorded off Southern Indonesia during fourth quarter, corresponding to a BPUE of 0.001.

Western Indian Ocean

Observer coverage north of 20 ºS was limited throughout all quarters. No sea turtle bycatch was recorded.

Table X2. Observed annual captures (number of individuals) of species of special interest by Japanese longline fisheries in the IOTC area, 2021-2025. No data were available for 2021 and 2022 due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

IOTC code	English name	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Seabirds						
ALZ	Large albatrosses	-	-	2	0	0
ALZ	Other albatrosses	-	-	8	0	1
DIM	Black-browed albatross	-	-	9	6	21
TQW	Campbell albatross	-	-	0	3	7
TQH	Indian yellow-nosed albatross	-	-	13	5	1
DIX	Wandering albatross	-	-	2	3	2
DBN	Tristan albatross	-	-	0	0	1
ALZ	Unidentified albatrosses	-	-	1	0	0
ALZ	Royal albatross group	-	-	2	0	4
ALZ	Black-browed albatross group	-	-	0	2	10
ALZ	Shy-type albatrosses	-	-	10	7	14
DIC	Grey-headed albatross	-	-	19	9	44
PHE	Light-mantled albatross	-	-	0	0	3
MAH	Northern giant petrel	-	-	2	2	2
MAI	Southern giant petrel	-	-	0	1	8
PCI	Grey petrel	-	-	5	11	9
PRO	White-chinned petrel	-	-	2	1	2
AG51	Parkinson's petrel	-	-	0	0	1
PFC	Flesh-footed shearwater	-	-	0	4	1
Sea Turtles						
LKV	Olive ridley turtle	-	-	0	0	2
Mammals						
AG_CETACEANS	Unidentified pinnipeds	-	-	2	9	4
ODN	Unidentified tooth whales	-	-	0	2	2

6. NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING SYSTEMS

6.1. Logsheet data collection and verification (including date commenced and status of implementation)

Longline

The logbook of longline, which started in 1952 and the format has changed several times afterwards, includes set by set data on catch number and weight in each species, and other information such as fishing date and location, fishing effort (the number of basket and hooks used), water temperature and starting/setting time of the gear. The number of hooks per basket is the important information as it is the proxy of the depth of the gear and target species. As for tuna and tuna-like fishes, six tunas (bluefin, southern bluefin, albacore, bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack), and six billfishes (swordfish, striped marlin, blue marlin, black marlin, sailfish and shortbill spearfish) are recorded by species in the logbook. In addition, information on the cruise (departure/arrival date and port names), vessel (name, size, license number and call sign), the number of crew and the configurations of the fishing gear (material of main and branch lines) are required to fill in the top part of the logbook sheet for each cruise. Japan revised the logbook format for distant water fishing vessels in accordance with IOTC Resolution 12/03,13/03 and 15/01. In recent years all vessels operated in the Indian Ocean submit electric logbooks.

Submitted logbooks are processed in the Fisheries Resources Institute (FRI) (former National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries (NRIFSF)). Various error checks such as date, location, fish weight, CPUE are also conducted by FRI before these data are finalized. Vessel characteristics (call sign, vessel name, license number, etc.) are verified with registered persons.

Purse seine

The logbooks of purse seiners, which started in 1967, are required to be submitted to the Japanese government every 10 days . The reported catch by species could be verified by comparing with the landing data, which are obtained from market receipts of three major unloading ports (Yaizu, Makurazaki and Yamagawa).

6.2. Observer scheme (including date commenced and status; number of observer, include percentage coverage by gear type)

Longline

In accordance with Resolution 11/04 (Reginal Observer Scheme; subsequently superseded by 22/04, 24/04 and 25/06), Japan began deploying observers in July 2010. The number of trained observers deployed on board vessels operating in the IOTC Convention Area during 2021-2025 were 0, 0, 10, 10 and 11, respectively.

Table 3-1 and Figure X1 show observer coverage, expressed in terms of the numbers of sets and hooks observed, during 2021-2025. No observer coverage was achieved in 2021-2022 because most observer activities were suspended during 2020-2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the resumption of observer activities, observer coverages exceeded 5% in 2023-25, meeting the level required under Resolution 11/04.

Figure 4 presents the spatial distribution of observer coverage by Japanese tuna longline fisheries within the IOTC Convention Area.

Table 3-1. Annual observer coverage based on longline sets and hooks during 2021 to 2025. No observers were deployed in 2021 and 2022 due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. Set-based coverage (%) was calculated as (observed sets / total sets) x 100, and hook-based coverage (%) as (observed hooks / total hooks) x 100.

Year	Based on number of sets			Based on number of hooks		
	Total sets	Observed sets	Set-based coverage (%)	Total hooks	Observed hooks	Hook-based coverage (%)
2021	7,132	0	0.0%	22,220,484	0	0.0%
2022	6,106	0	0.0%	18,701,935	0	0.0%
2023	5,296	672	12.7%	16,588,593	2,066,941	12.5%
2024	5,103	770	15.1%	16,025,989	2,434,006	15.2%
2025	4,352	1,034	23.8%	13,529,568	3,193,722	23.6%

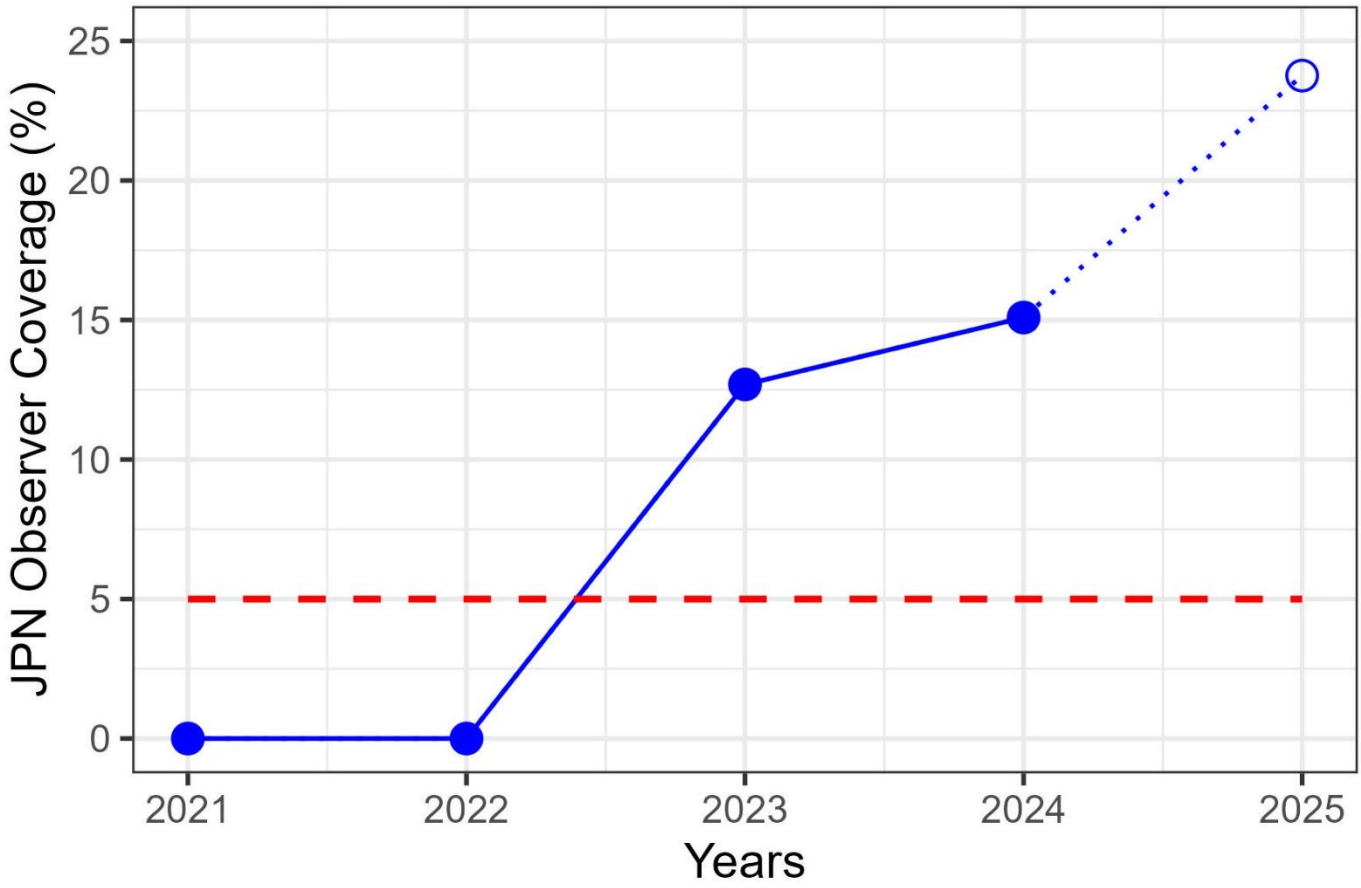

Figure X1 Annual observer coverage of Japanese tuna longline fisheries during 2021 to 2025 based on the number of sets observed. The blue circles represent observer coverage and the red line represents the 5% coverage level. The 2025 value is provisional and is shown as an open circle. No observers were deployed in 2021 and 2022, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

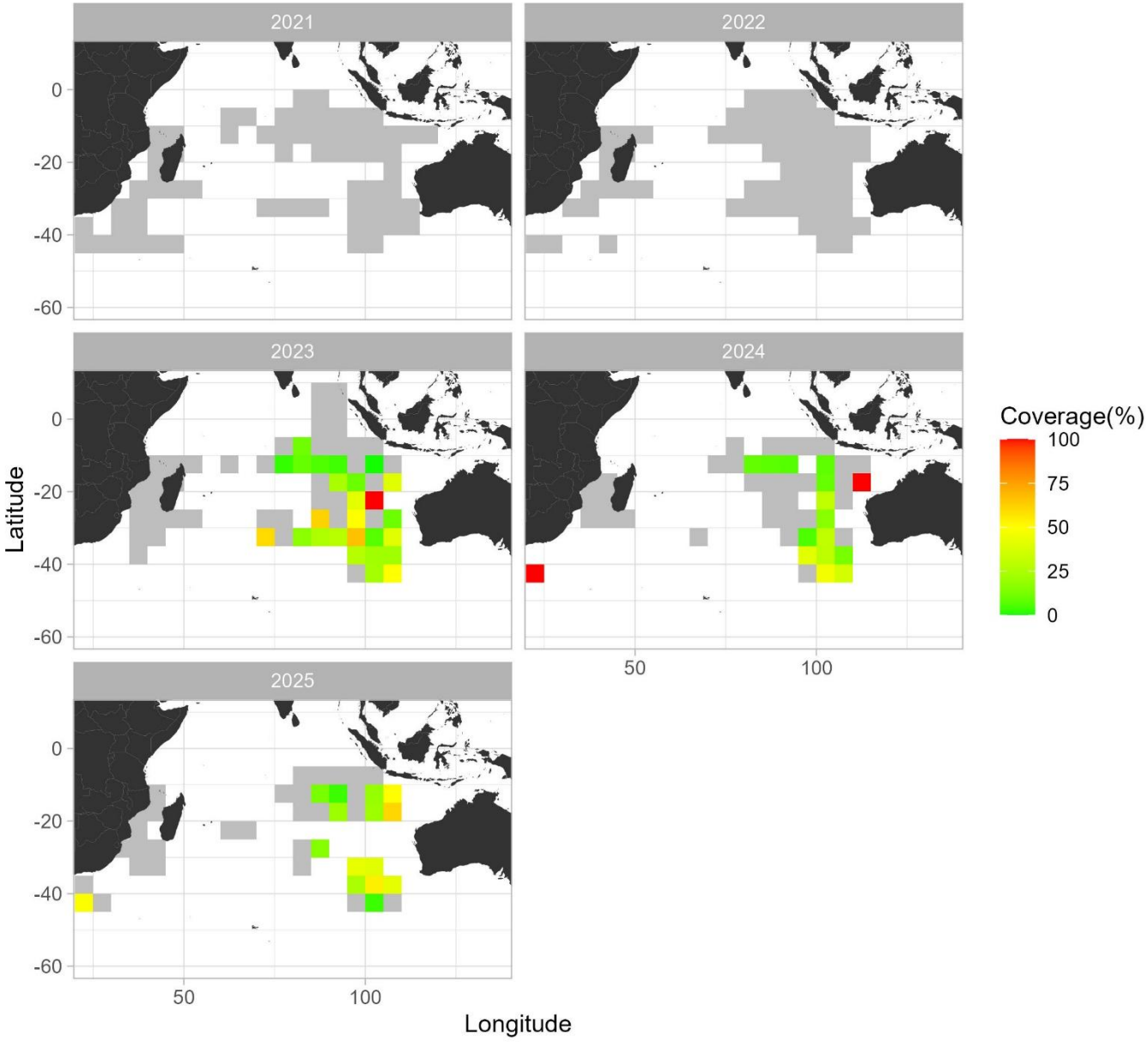

Figure 4 Spatial distribution of observer coverage by Japanese longline fisheries during 2021 to 2025. Grey tiles indicate areas with no observer deployment while green to red tiles indicate increasing levels of observer coverage. No observers were deployed in 2021 and 2022 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Purse seine

Japan deploys observers also for purse seine fishery. The number of vessels and observer coverage are shown in Table 3-2. As observer program is conducted fiscal year (starts from April) basis, annual coverage is highly variable, and no sets were monitored in some of calendar years. There was no purse seine operation during 2021-2025, and so observer was also not dispatched.

Table 3-2. Annual observer coverage by purse seine fishery from 2017 to 2024.

Year	Number of vessels observed[*1]	[A] Total sets[*1]	[B] Observed sets[*1]	coverage (%) = [B]*100/[A]
2017[*2]	1	95	0	0.0%
2018	2	50	29	58.0%
2019[*2]	1	2	0	0.0%
2020	1	10	9	90.0%
2021	0	0	0	-
2022	0	0	0	-
2023	0	0	0	-
2024	0	0	0	-
2025	0	0	0	-

[*1] Research vessels are not included, [*2] One observer was on board, but no operation was made.

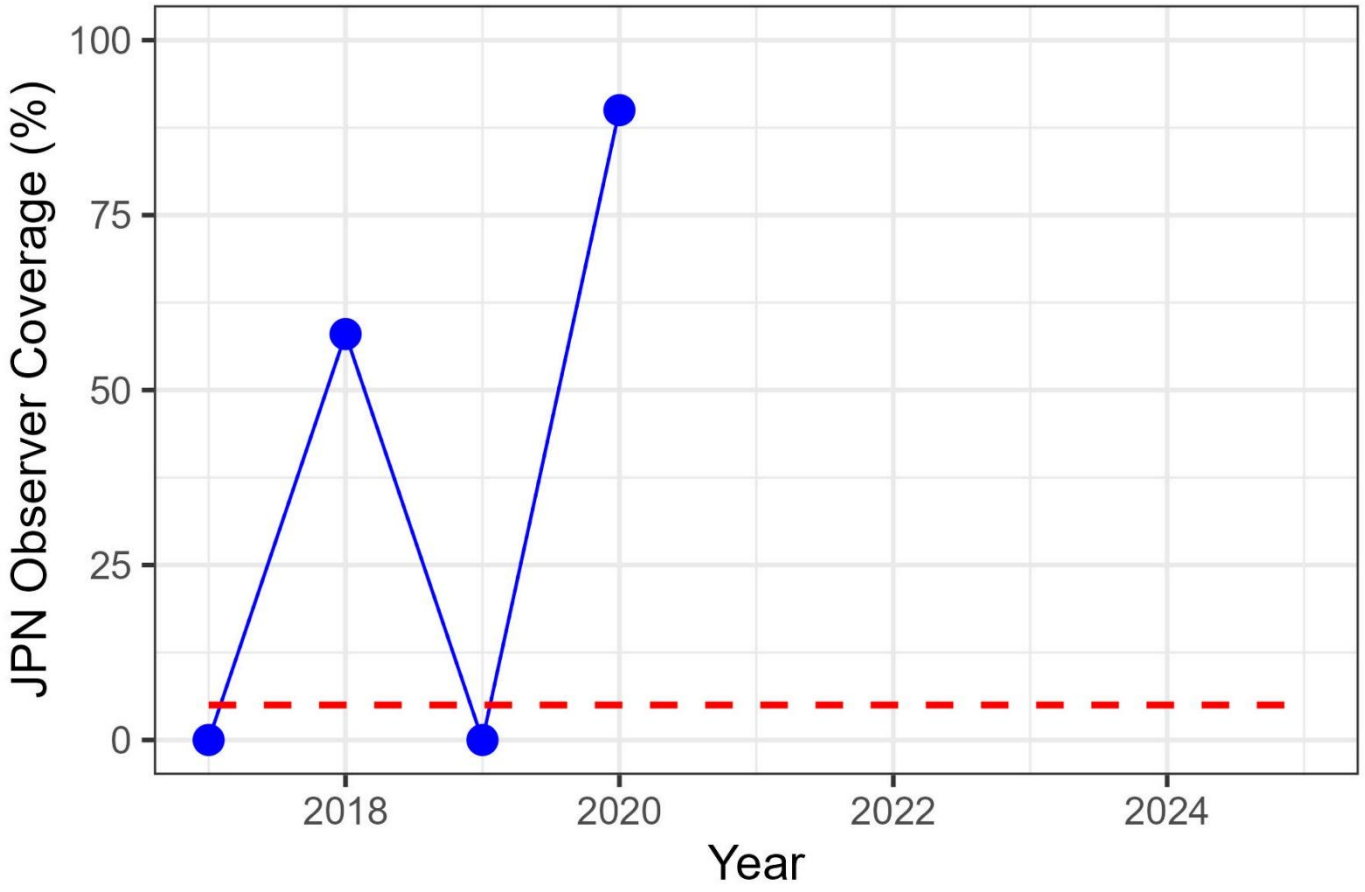

Figure X2 Annual change in purse seine observer coverage in number of sets. The blue circles indicate observer coverage of the Japanese purse seine fisheries from 2017 to 2025. The red dashed line indicates 5% coverage. Note: there was no purse seine operation during 2021-2025, and so coverage is not shown.

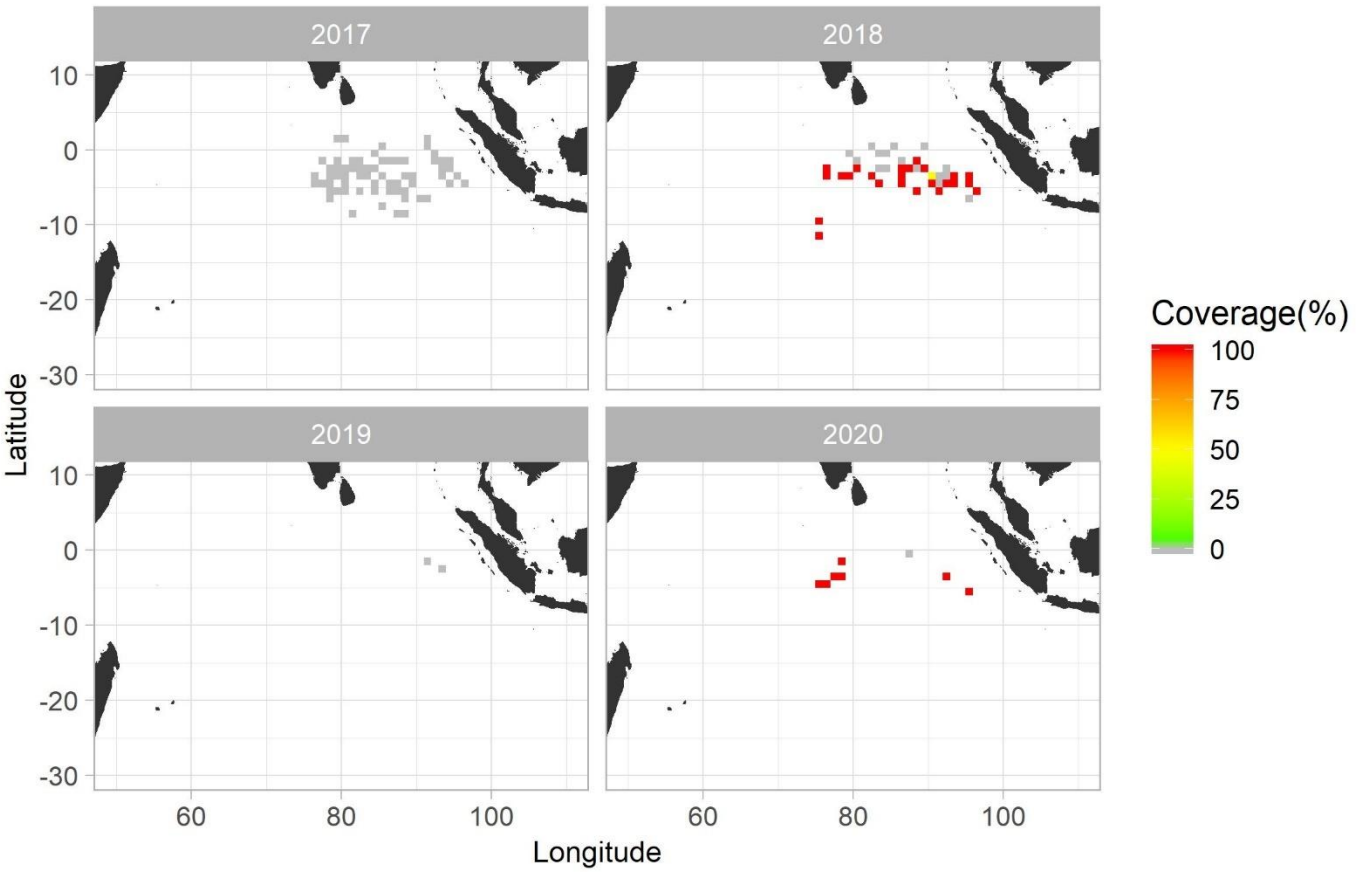

Figure 4 Map showing the spatial distribution of observer coverage from 2017 to 2020 in Japanese purse seine. The Grey tile indicates the sets without observer deployments, and Green to Red tiles indicate levels of observer coverages (low to high). Note: there was no purse seine operation during 2021-2025 and operations by research vessels are not included.

6.3. Port sampling programme

Longline

Port samplings for longline catch were only occasionally conducted (mainly at Tokyo, Shimizu and Yaizu). The date commenced is not known because there is no information of place and method for measurement in the database before 1985.

Purse seine

Japan has been conducting purse seine catch port sampling program since 1995 in the major Japanese landing ports. Because the catch in the Indian Ocean is mainly unloaded abroad, port samplings at Japanese ports have been conducted only nine years since 1995 at Makurazaki port as shown in Table 4. There are more sampling frequencies for the catch from the equatorial area of Pacific Ocean.

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

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Longline
(Not available by trip or vessel number base)

Purse seine

Year	Number of trips
1995	1
1996	1
1997	1
1998	1
1999	3
2000	2
2001	2
2002	1
2006	1

Table 5. Number of fish measured, by species and fishery.

Longline

Year	SBT	ALB	BET	YFT	BLM	BLZ	SFA	SPF
1986	15	6	284	215	130	107	89	5
1987	93	20	130	116	35	53	31	21
1988	102	22	455	198	41	133	60	0
1989	59	9	532	364	83	86	71	0
1990	0	0	0	87	8	12	6	0
1991	0	0	21	47	0	0	0	0
1993	0	0	47	21	0	0	0	0
1994	0	0	0	0	2	4	1	0

Purse seine

Year	SKJ	YFT	BET
1995	1,842	1,571	2,181
1996	1,255	1,129	3,159
1997	1,093	968	460
1998	1,122	793	370
1999	2,474	1,235	848
2000	1,547	924	655
2001	1,648	787	713
2002	894	359	506
2006	896	472	783

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

Japan has been monitoring marlin catch by logbooks and observer program. As marlins are not target species by Japanese fisheries, the catch level is low especially in recent years (see Table 2-1).

6.5. Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring

Not applicable. Japan is not operating gillnet fishery in the Indian Ocean.

6.6 Sampling plans for mobulid rays

Not applicable. Requirement in paragraph 11 on resolution 19/03 is limited to mobulid ray catches by the subsistence and artisanal fisheries. Japan has no such fisheries. However, for scientific purpose, Japan has been monitoring incidental catch of mobulid rays through the observer program.

6.7 Electronic Monitoring Standards [Mandatory for CPC implementing EMS]

Japan has not implemented EMS in the Indian Ocean until 2025.

7. NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS [Desirable]

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

No information is prepared for 7.1-7.6

7.7. Others

(1) **Development and application of joint CPUE indices**

A collaborative study has been conducted to create joint CPUE for albacore, bigeye and yellowfin tuna in the Indian Ocean based on Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese longline fisheries data. So far, CPUEs for MP, stock assessment and so on have been created and reported. This study will be continued for future stock assessment and MP input.

(2) **Trials of Electronic Monitoring System (EMS)**

Please refer to IOTC-2022-WGEMS02-06.

(3) IOTC-OFCF Japan projects (2002-2026)

The IOTC-OFCF Japan joint project (hereafter "the Project") which aims to improve tuna fisheries statistics in developing countries within the IOTC area of competence, has been implemented for over 20 years since 2002 through six phases: the 1st phase (5 years: 2002-2006); the 2nd phase (3 years: 2007-2009); the 3rd phase (3

years: 2010-2012); the 4th phase (3 years: 2013-2015, and 1 year: follow up activities for 3 years in 2016); the 5th phase (3 years: 2017-2019); and the 6th phase (2020-2026: ongoing).

The objective of the Project is to contribute to the sustainable utilization of tuna and billfish resources in the Indian Ocean by improving systems of collecting and processing data on resources related to tuna fisheries and providing technical guidance and assistance to target countries to strengthen data collection and fisheries statistics.

In September 2022, FAO/IOTC and OFCF Japan signed a five-year Cooperation Agreement to establish a new framework for the Project, covering the period from 2022 to 2027, to further advance the abovementioned objective.

In 2026, the following activities are being undertaken in line with the Cooperation Agreement (ongoing).

1) Developing billfish and swordfish species identification app.
To facilitate billfish species identification, two types of taxonomic keys were developed to accommodate different sampling situations encountered in the field. The first is designed for situations in which the entire specimen can be examined, such as onboard observer programs. The second is intended for situations in which only partial specimens are available, often lacking key diagnostic features such as fins and heads, as is common in field sampling operations. Based on these two scenarios, OFCF Japan developed two corresponding smartphone applications using Open Data Kit (ODK). Both applications were released in September 2026.

2) Publishing YouTube learning materials
A series of short instructional YouTube videos (2–4 minutes each) was produced to help personnel without prior taxonomic knowledge easily understand the key diagnostic features of major taxa. The videos cover the following topics: ①"Key points to identify tuna and tuna-like species," ②"Key points to identify billfish and swordfish," ③"Key points to identify seerfish," ④ "Introduction of species identification", explaining the importance and methodology of species identification, ⑤ "Limitation of species identification", outlining common challenges and potential sources of misidentification, and ⑥ "Morphology and Measurement of fish", explaining external morphology and standard measurement procedures.

In addition, considering the importance of otolith-based age and growth studies in fisheries research, an instructional YouTube video on how to extract otoliths from tuna ("How to extract otolith from tuna") was produced in collaboration with the Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency (FRA).

3) Adding new contents and functions to the "Guide for identification of IOTC species" website (iotcspecies.com)
The following contents were added to enhance user accessibility and functionality of the "Guide for identification of IOTC species" website:

– A size-sorting function was incorporated into the "Photo Library" section;
– Size-specific photographs and length–weight relationships, where conversion equations are available, were added to the "Characteristics of species" section;
– A link to the "IOTC Species Identification Cards" was added to the "Useful links" section;
– A "Small tuna catalog" was added to the "Identification of confusing species" section, allowing users to compare different small Thunnus species of similar sizes.

4) Implementation of IOTC species identification workshop with DFAR, Sri Lanka

A one-day workshop aimed to improve species identification skills for IOTC target species (tunas, billfishes, and seerfish) was conducted at the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR) of Sri Lanka on 1 October 2026, in cooperation with DFAR. The workshop utilized digital training materials developed by OFCF Japan under the project "WEB-based tool development for identification of IOTC species", which has been implemented since JFY2024. A total of 25 participants attended, including 12 field samplers and 2 observers.

8. IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE IOTC RELEVANT TO THE SC.

Table 6. 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 3-10**. CPCs shall collect and provide all data on interactions including estimation of **total mortality**, to report successful mitigation measures, deterioration of nesting sites and swallowing of marine debris, for fishermen to foster its recovery and use de-hooking technique. All **LL** shall carry line cutters and de-hookers, use of whole **finfish** bait. **PS** shall avoid encirclement, conduct safely release, to encourage to adopt FAD designs that reduce the incidental catch. CPCs undertake research trials of **circle hooks**, whole finfish for bait, alternative FAD design.	Japan has complied with the requirements under the Resolution except for estimation of total mortality. During 2021-2022, there were no LL observers on board due to the COVID-19 pandemic, thus no data collections nor activities were conducted. There were no PS operations during 2021-2025.
12/09	On the conservation of thresher sharks (family Alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	**Paragraphs 4-8.** CPCs shall encourage their fishers to record and report incidental catches as well as **live release** and implement research to identify potential nursery areas. Scientific observers shall be allowed to collect biological samples.	Japan has complied with the requirements under the Resolution.
13/04	On the conservation of cetaceans	**Paragraphs 7-9.** CPCs shall report the information and data collected through logbooks, or observer programs. CPCs shall report, in which cetaceans have been **encircled by PS**. For CPCs having national and state legislation for protecting these species shall be exempt from reporting.	Japan has submitted by-catch information in the national report. There were no PS operations during 2021-2025.
13/05	On the conservation of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*)	**Paragraphs 7-9.** CPCs shall report the relevant information through logbooks, or observer programs. CPCs shall report any instances in which whale sharks have been **encircled by PS.**	There were no PS operations during 2021-2025.
13/06	On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries	**Paragraph 5-6.** CPCs shall encourage their fishers to record incidental catches and live releases of **oceanic whitetip sharks.** CPCs shall implement research on oceanic whitetip sharks.	Japan has complied with the requirements.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
15/01	On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence	**Paragraphs 1–10.** Record **minimum information** on vessel, trip, gear configuration, operations, catch & effort then provide by June 30th of the following year.	Japan has complied with the requirements.
15/02	Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)	**Paragraphs 1–7.** CPCs shall provide Total catch, Catch and effort data, bycatch, **Size (1 fish/ton),** FADs data (PS) and others.	Japan has complied with the requirements except for size data: some species not complying with 1 fish/ton requirement for some past years. No size data was collected during 2021-2022 due to the COVID-19.
17/05	On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC	**Paragraphs 6, 9 and 11** CPCs shall report data for catches of sharks including all available historical data, estimates and life status of discards & size. CPCs shall undertake research to: a) effectiveness of prohibiting **wire leaders**; b) improve knowledge on key biological/ecological parameters, c) identify key shark mating….	Japan has complied with the requirements. During 2021-2022, there were no LL observers on board due to the COVID-19 pandemic, thus life status of discards & size could not be collected. There were no PS operations during 2021-2025.
18/02	On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries	**Paragraphs 2-5.** CPC shall record catch, effort, **size** and discard data. CPCs are encouraged to undertake scientific research.	Japan has complied with the requirements except for numbers of size for some past years.
18/05	On management measures for the conservation of the Billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish	**Paragraphs 7-11**. CPCs shall collect and report information of **5 billfish species** (*Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish)*, i.e. catches, released alive and/or discarded, together with effort, size and discard.	Japan has complied with the requirements. During 2021-2022, there were no LL observers on board due to the COVID-19 pandemic, thus life status of discards & size could not be collected.
18/07	On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC	**Paragraphs 1 and 4.** CPCs shall include information in their Annual Reports on actions taken to implement their reporting **obligations** including shark species in particular steps taken to improve their data collection for direct and incidental catches.	Japan has complied with the requirements.
19/01	On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence	**Paragraph 22.** CPCs shall set their gillnets at 2m depth from the surface in **gillnet** fisheries by 2023 to mitigate ecological impacts.	Not applicable. Japan has no gillnet fisheries.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
19/03	On the Conservation of Mobulid Rays Caught in Association with Fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence	**Paragraph 11.** CPCs shall develop sampling plans for the monitoring of the mobulid rays catches. The sampling plans, including their scientific and operational rationale, shall be reported in the national scientific reports to the SC **starting in 2020.**	Not applicable. Requirement in paragraph 11 is limited to mobulid ray catches by the subsistence and artisanal fisheries. Japan has no such fisheries.
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**. CPCs are encouraged to increase their observer coverage or field sampling in gillnet fishing vessels by 10% using alternative data collection methodologies (electronic or human) verified by the IOTC Scientific Committee by 2023.	Not applicable. Japan has no gillnet fisheries.
23/07	On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries.	**Paragraphs 3-7.** CPCs shall provide the information on how they are implementing this measure and achieve reductions in levels of seabird bycatch across through the use of effective mitigation measure. In the south of 25°S, CPCs shall ensure that all LL use at least two of the three mitigation measures. The design and deployment for bird scaring lines should meet the specifications.	Japan has complied with the requirements. Japan will continue conducting research for improvement of bird scaring lines.
23/08	On electronic monitoring standards for IOTC fisheries	**Paragraphs 3c.** CPCs, who fish for species under the competence of the IOTC, and who choose to implement EMS in the IOTC area of competence to partially or fully meet the minimum ROS data requirements under Resolution 22/04 (or any subsequent revision), shall: c) submit to the IOTC Scientific Committee, as an annex to CPC National Reports to the SC, a fleet level summary of the Vessel Monitoring Plans (described in 3b) that specifies at a minimum: i. The number of CPC flagged vessels implementing EM by gear/fishery type. ii. The range of EMS configurations implemented within the fleet (including the numbers and placements of cameras for each configuration). iii. A general description of EMS requirements placed upon vessel skippers/crews by the CPC government.	Not applicable. Japan has not implemented EMS until 2025.
25/06	On a regional observer scheme	**Paragraph 12**. If the coverage referred in paragraphs 3 is not met by a CPC, any other CPC may, subject to the consent of the CPC who has not met its coverage, place an observer to fulfil the tasks defined in the paragraphs 6, 14, 15 and 16 until that CPC provides a replacement or the target coverage level is met.	Japan has complied with requirement.

9. LITERATURE CITED

IOTC–2022– WGEMS02–06 : Progress report of EMS trials by Japan