South Africa National Report to the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, 2025

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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 2025, final data for the 2024 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2025)	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 2025, preliminary data for the 2024 calendar year were provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June 2025). **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 2025, final data for the 2024 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 December 2025).	YES 30/06/2026
If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions:	

Executive Summary

South Africa has two commercial fishing sectors that target tuna: the Large Pelagic Longline sector and the Tuna Pole-line (baitboat) sector. The Tuna Pole-line sector primarily targets albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) and, to a lesser extent, yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*). This sector rarely operates in the IOTC Area of Competence.

The Large Pelagic Longline sector consists of two fleet components with distinct histories. The first comprises South African-flagged vessels that traditionally used swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) targeting methods. The second includes Japanese-flagged vessels operating under joint ventures, fishing for South African right holders. In recent years, the South African-flagged longline vessels target a combination of tropical and temperate tunas alongside swordfish.

In 2025, 19 longline vessels were active in the IOTC Area of Competence. Effort (hooks set) decreased for a second year, this time by 15.9% from 2024 (1 286 034 hooks) to 2025 (1 082 112 hooks). There have been no foreign-flagged vessels operating under joint venture in the IOTC area of competence since 2021.

Since a large portion of the fleet operates on the south-west and west coasts of South Africa's EEZ, the effort within the IOTC Area of Competence is influenced by vessels' decisions to fish further south (and crossing the 20°E boundary that separates the IOTC and ICCAT management areas) or operate close to the Mozambique Channel out of Durban/Richards Bay harbours.. The large effort decrease from 2024 to 2025 is not reflected in catches for the main target species, which are either similar to 2024 or showed an increase; albacore (+12%), swordfish (+17%), bigeye tuna (-3%) and yellowfin tuna (+1%). No Tuna Pole-line vessels have crossed the 20°E longitude boundary in search of yellowfin tuna since 2021.

A total of 213 313 hooks were observed in the IOTC area of competence during 2025, which equates to 19.7% observer coverage.

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1. BACKGROUND/GENERAL FISHERY INFORMATION

1.1. Large Pelagic Longline sector

The South African Large Pelagic Longline sector was commercialized in 2005. The sector was initially split into swordfish and tuna-directed sub-sectors due to the drastic declines in swordfish catch and CPUE experienced during the period of the experimental fishery from 1997 to 2005. South Africa amended its Large Pelagic Longline sector policy in 2008 after only 9 swordfish-directed longline vessels operated in 2006, resulting in the lowest annual catch since 2001.

In 2015 the decision was taken to no longer refer to the fleet as two different fishing strategies, tuna-directed and swordfish-directed, since the fishing behaviour of the local fleet had been shifting from exclusive swordfish targeting to include tunas and sharks. The sector is now referred to as the Large Pelagic Longline sector and includes vessels that target tunas, swordfish, and sharks as bycatch. The 10-year long-term rights granted in 2005 expired in February 2015, and 15-year fishing rights have subsequently been allocated to 62 right holders. The sector is allowing an interim period for foreign vessels to operate under joint venture, to expedite skills development and as a means of acquiring suitable vessels.

Foreign vessels, mainly from Japan and Chinese-Taipei, fished in South African waters through the issuing of bi-lateral agreements in the 1970s, and re-negotiated these agreements in the 1990s until 2002 (Sauer *et al*., 2003). Joint-venture agreements with Japan have been underway since 2005, whereby these foreign-flagged fishing vessels are permitted to fish for a South African right holder. The vessel is required to adhere to South African legislation, including but not limited to, the Marine Living Resources Act (Act No. 18 of 1998) and Regulations promulgated thereunder, including Large Pelagic Longline sector specific policy. Importantly, each foreign fishing vessel is required to carry an observer onboard every trip. The catch, and observer coverage from these vessels accrues to South Africa.

The current domestic longline catch composition is a mixture of swordfish, temperate tunas (albacore, southern bluefin) and tropical tunas (bigeye, yellowfin). The general method and gear involve setting lines at night (to reduce seabird mortality) with primarily squid bait using buoy - and branch lines of 20 m length. Depending on the vessel size, 700 – 1500 hooks are set per line. Stainless steel hooks are prohibited and as of 2017 wire traces are also prohibited. In addition, there is a precautionary upper catch limit (PUCL) of 1000 t for pelagic sharks. Once the PUCL is reached, no pelagic sharks are landed, and fishing is only allowed with the presence of an onboard observer. The larger joint-venture vessels that target tropical tuna can fish further offshore and differ in their methodology. These vessels set up to 3000 hooks per set with a combination of fish and squid bait, using deeper branch lines and varying hook numbers per basket to influence the setting depth. The domestic longline vessels either carry ice or have refrigerated holds. Fish are dressed at sea and no further at-sea processing is conducted. There is no distinction in the catch areas of temperate species such as swordfish and albacore compared to tropical tunas. These species are caught interchangeably along the continental shelf edge in the areas operated by the fleet, along the west coast and the northeast of the South African EEZ.

South Africa submitted a bigeye tuna fishing plan (CoC 07/13) to the Commission meeting of the IOTC, thereby notifying the Commission of South Africa's intention to exceed 1000 t of bigeye tuna in future as the fishery develops. Prior to 2002 most of longline fishing effort was concentrated in the Atlantic Ocean. Fishing effort started increasing in the Indian Ocean from 2001 with the development of ice and processing facilities at Richards Bay, which is situated on the east coast of South Africa. The targeting and catching of tropical bigeye and yellowfin tunas has proven more successful in the Indian Ocean, resulting in a sizeable amount of the longline fishing effort being concentrated in the Indian Ocean. This component of the fleet operating in the Indian Ocean is now the most important in terms of tonnage landed.

In 2005 the shark longline sector was split into a demersal shark longline component, which predominantly targets soupfin (*Galeorhinus galeus*) and hound sharks (*Mustelus mustelus*), and a pelagic shark longline component (seven vessels), which predominantly targets shortfin mako and blue sharks. The latter catches tunas and swordfish as bycatch. This sector was split as a precursor to phase out the targeting of pelagic sharks due to the concern over the local stock status of some species. The pelagic shark fishery operated under exemptions

from 2005 until March 2011, when South Africa incorporated the pelagic shark fishery into the tuna/swordfish longline fishery. Six of the seven shark exemption holders were issued with tuna/swordfish rights in March 2011, and underwent a phase-out period to reduce shark catch and improve tuna and/or swordfish catch performance. Pelagic sharks are now considered bycatch in the Large Pelagic Longline sector. Several management measures have also been introduced to reduce shark bycatch, such as the prohibition of wire traces and the prohibition of shark targeting

1.2. Tuna Pole-line sector

Angling for tuna in South Africa dates to the 1970s when they were caught in minimal quantities as bycatch in other fisheries. Interest was sparked in 1979 when yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) became available close inshore off Cape Point (Shannon, 1968). Operators from other sectors converted their vessels to ice vessels to fish for yellowfin tuna using Pole-line or purse-seine nets, resulting in catches of over 4 500 t (Penney and Punt, 1993). By 1980, yellowfin tuna was no longer available closely inshore, resulting in these vessels targeting albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) instead in the Atlantic Ocean on the south-west and west coasts of South Africa. Albacore catches peaked at 6000 t in 1989, although these catches were under-reported and were probably closer to 10 000 t (Penney and Punt, 1993). The sector has continued to exploit juveniles and sub-adult albacore of between 2 and 3 years old (average of 86 cm FL) in the Atlantic Ocean and larger yellowfin tuna (average of 133 cm FL). Catches of albacore in the Atlantic Ocean have experienced periods of low catches of <2500t (2016-2018 and 2023) over the last decade, otherwise averaging approximately 4 000 t per year, and over 5000 t in 2022. Yellowfin tuna become periodically available inshore ca.every10 years, with the fleet left to harvest this species opportunistically.

The sector operates along the south-west and west coasts of South Africa in the Atlantic Ocean where albacore is available close inshore from October to May, and vessels make few forays (<3 fishing days per year) into the Indian Ocean depending on target species distribution. Traditionally the South African fleet has been characterized into three different categories (1) Skiboats, (2) Pole-line and (3) Freezer vessels (Leslie *et al.*, 2004). Skiboats are less than 25 GRT and are mostly confined to day trips within a range of 40 nm. Pole-line boats, which represent the bulk of the fleet, are mainly older displacement-type vessels converted from other fisheries. These vessels can undertake multiday trips of limited duration and range, as the catch is kept on ice. Freezer vessels are mainly vessels up to 30 m and 230 GRT. Due to their large size and freezing facilities, these vessels can stay out at sea for long periods and reach the farthest fishing grounds (West *et al.*, 2013). In more recent years, improvements in navigational gear, the use of live bait and sonar equipment has improved the performance of these vessels (West *et al*., 2013). Over the last decade, 22 of the larger vessels with the capability to fish further offshore and with freezer capacity have converted to longline gear.

This sector is effort controlled, limiting the number of vessels. Prior to 2006, the Tuna Pole-line sector was managed under the bracket of commercial linefishing. During the long-term rights allocation process in 2005, the commercial linefishery was divided into three separate sectors consisting of the traditional linefishery (452 vessels and 3 450 crew), the hake-handline sector (130 vessels and 785 crew) and the Tuna Pole-line sector (200 vessels and 3 600 crew) (Mann, 2013). Of the 200 vessels and 3 600 crew allocation available for 8 years, only 198 vessels and 2961 crew were allocated in 2005 (TAC/TAE, 2015). The reallocation of long-term rights in 2013 resulted in 164 fishing rights and a total of 165 vessels. The most recent Rights allocation process in 2021 resulted in 132 fishing rights being allocated for 140 vessels, valid for a period of 15 years and expiring in 2037.

Since vessels are small and the nature of the operation requires the vessel to maximise on crew (who work in pairs to catch and haul albacore), South Africa has not forced vessels to accommodate human scientific observers and instead catches have been monitored in port during offloading. Two industry groups in this sector, which cover the entire fleet, achieved Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification in August and December 2024, respectively. The MSC certification process includes assessing and scoring external validation of evidence and information, and the adequacy of information through methods such as observer coverage. As such, this sector has voluntarily commenced with onboard human scientific observer coverage on suitable and willing vessels and their observer coverage currently is ~3% of fishing days.

In 2014, after 6 years of experimental fishing to assess the tonnage harvested and any conflict with the Small Pelagics sector, live-bait purse-seining was officially permitted in the sector, allowing a limited number of vessels to cast a net and all vessels to hold live-bait. The live-bait are mostly anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*)

with sardine (*Sardinops sagax*) considered as accidental catch and are stored alive in tanks for up to 3 months. The vessels are authorised to use purse-seine nets that do not exceed 210 m in length and 35 m in depth.

The Tuna Pole-line sector is largely based in Cape Town, and the fleet operates in the Atlantic Ocean along the west coast as far north as Namibia and as far west as Valdivia and Vema seamounts, where they have access to albacore and yellowfin tuna in these areas.

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2. FLEET STRUCTURE

South Africa has two commercial fishing sectors which target tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean – the Large Pelagic Longline and the Tuna Pole-line sectors. The Tuna Pole-line sector, which operates mainly in the Atlantic Ocean from October – May each year, only occasionally crosses over into the Indian Ocean in search of yellowfin tuna. These vessels are relatively small (< 24m), have a limited range and the duration of trips is short (< 16 days). Since 2013, there has only been one (1) fishing day by one (1) Tuna Pole-line vessel in the IOTC area of competence. In contrast, 19 longline vessels were active in the IOTC area of competence in 2025, which is similar to the number of vessels seen in 2024.

South Africa submitted a Fleet Development Plan (FDP) in 2007 and is yet to provide information on the implementation of the initial FDP and to consult with stakeholders to provide an updated FDP.

Table 1. Number of vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence, by gear type and size, for the period 2018 - 2025.

	Fleet Structure in 2025			Fleet Structure 2020 – 2024		
Fishing Sector	No. Active Permits	Vessel size range (m)	Days at sea	No. Active Permits	Vessel size range (m)	Days at sea
Large Pelagic Longline	19 (19 vessels)	20 – 39	1 – 13	2024: 24 2023: 21 2022: 17 2021: 15 2020: 14	2024: 20 - 39 2023: 20 - 39 2022: 20 - 49 2021: 20 - 49 2020: 20 - 32	1 - 78
Pole-line	0 (0 vessel)	-	-	2024: 0 2023: 0 2022: 0 2021: 1 2020: 0	2024: - 2023: - 2022: - 2021: 11 2020: -	2
Commercial Linefishery	~115	4 - 10	1 - 2			
Recreational Linefishery	Unknown	4 - 10	1			

3. CATCH AND EFFORT (BY SPECIES AND GEAR)

In 2025, 19 longline vessels were active in the IOTC Area of Competence, which is similar to the 20 vessels in 2024. Effort decreased for a second year, by 15.9% from 2024 (1 286 034 hooks set) to 2025 (1 082 112 hooks set) (Table 2a). 2020 is considered a low effort year because of a combination of Joint-Venture vessels not operating in South African waters in that year and the impacts of the COVID19 pandemic. One Japanese-flagged vessel operated under joint-venture in South African waters in 2021, however more fishing effort was undertaken by South African flagged vessels over the last few years. Since a large portion of the fleet operates on the west coast, the effort in the IOTC Area of Competence is influenced by the vessels' desire to fish further south and out of Durban/Richards Bay on the east coast, crossing the 20°E boundary that separates the IOTC and ICCAT. The large effort decrease from 2024 to 2025 is not reflected in catches for the main target species, which are either similar to 2024 or show an increase; albacore (+12%), swordfish (+17%), bigeye tuna (-3%) and yellowfin tuna (+1%), as shown in Figure 1a. While landings of shortfin mako showed a small increase (+5%) and blue shark landings increased from 10.4t to 25.9t, the catches have been relatively stable since 2021. Targeting, vessel effects, availability of species inshore, gear configurations, effort expended on the south coast compared to the northeast have impacted the changes in catches.

No Tuna Pole-line vessels have crossed the 20°E longitude boundary in search of yellowfin tuna since 2021 (Table 2b).

Table 2a. Annual Large Pelagic Longline sector catch (tons round weight excluding sharks and NEI) and effort (number of hooks) of primary species in the IOTC Area of Competence for the last five years, 2021 - 2025.

Year	Total number of hooks	Bigeye tuna	Yellowfin tuna	Albacore	Southern bluefin tuna	Swordfish	Skipjack	Shortfin mako	Blue shark	NEI
2021	901 104	266.0	307.6	42.7	52.6	276.6	0	36.6	6.2	11.5
2022	1 295 129	327.1	341.2	47.6	105.4	432	0.3	52.9	22.2	0
2023	1 325 654	280.6	544.8	75.7	37.2	548	0	62.4	3.9	0
2024	1 286 034	220.3	441.7	35.1	77.2	377.4	0	48.6	10.4	0
2025	1 082 112	212.9	444.8	39.5	29.2	443.4	0	51.4	25.9	0

Table 2b. Annual catch (tons) and effort (number of days) of primary species from the Tuna Pole-line in the IOTC Area of Competence for the last five years, 2021 - 2025.

Year	Total number of catch days	Albacore	Yellowfin tuna	Skipjack	Bigeye tuna	Snoek	Yellowtail	NEI
2021	2	0.24	0.55	0	0	0	0	0
2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

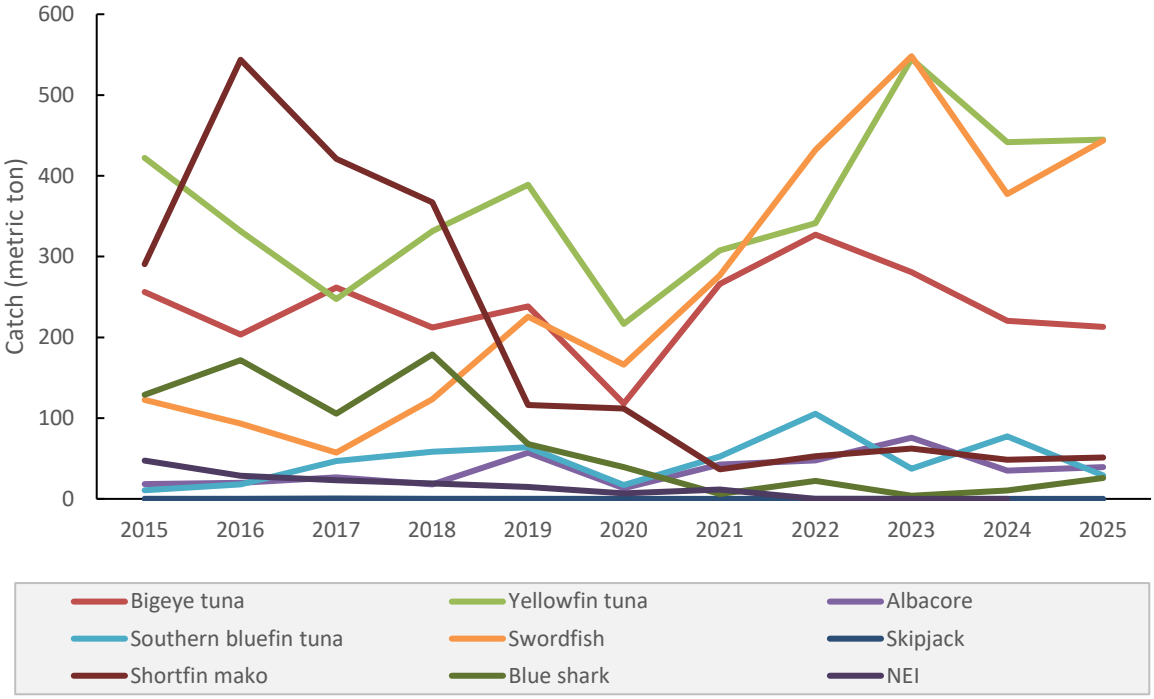

Figure 1a. Historical annual catch for the South African Large Pelagic Longline fleet for the IOTC Area of Competence of the period 2015 – 2025.

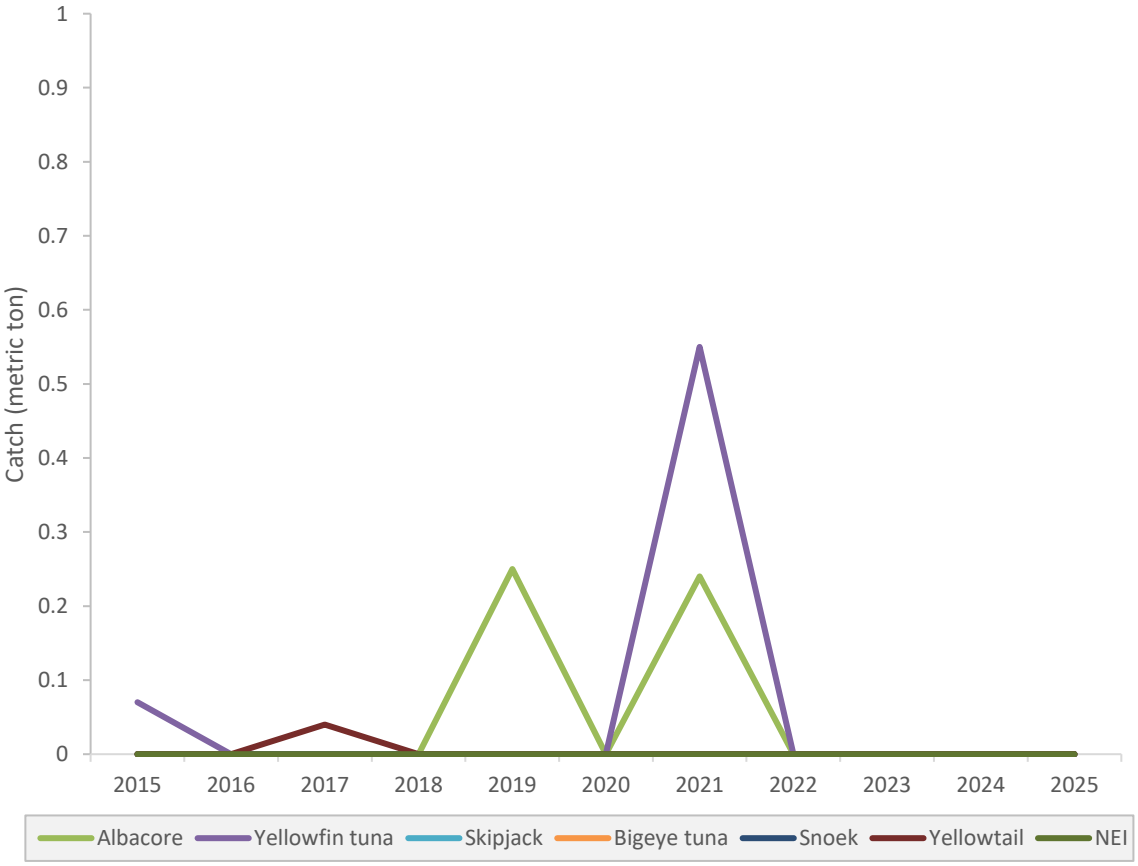

Figure 1b. Historical annual catch for the South African Tuna Pole-line fleet for the IOTC Area of Competence for the period 2015 – 2025. In 2025 there was zero Tuna Pole-line effort in the IOTC Area of Competence.

There are three areas of concentrated longline effort by the national fleet in the IOTC Area of Competence (Figure 2a): Agulhas Bank (~ 20-23 degrees longitude), Algoa Bay (~ 25-27 degrees longitude) and offshore of Richards Bay (~32 degrees longitude). The average spatial distribution of the fleet for the period 2018 to 2025 is shown in Figure 2b. The spatial distribution of species-specific catches is illustrated in Figure 3a, and the average species-specific catch distribution for the period 2018 to 2025 in shown in Figure 3b. The spatial distribution of fishing pressure and catch in 2025 illustrates an increasing importance of the fishing area offshore of Richards Bay.

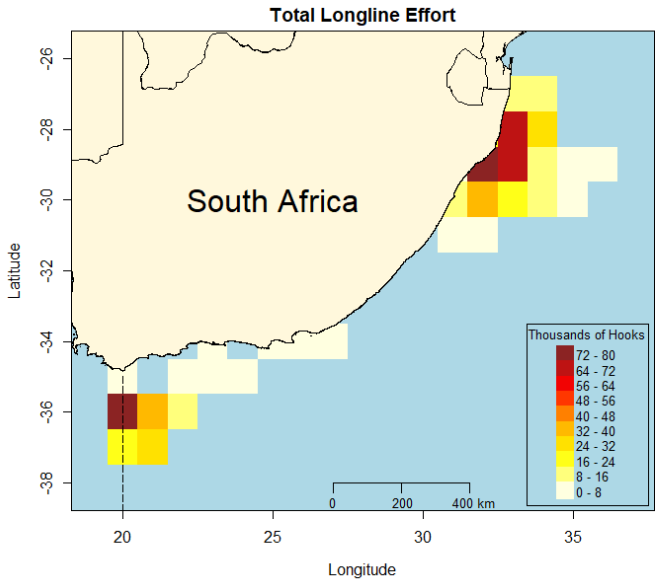

Figure 2a. Map of the distribution of effort of the South African Large Pelagic Longline fishing fleet in the IOTC Area of Competence for 2025.

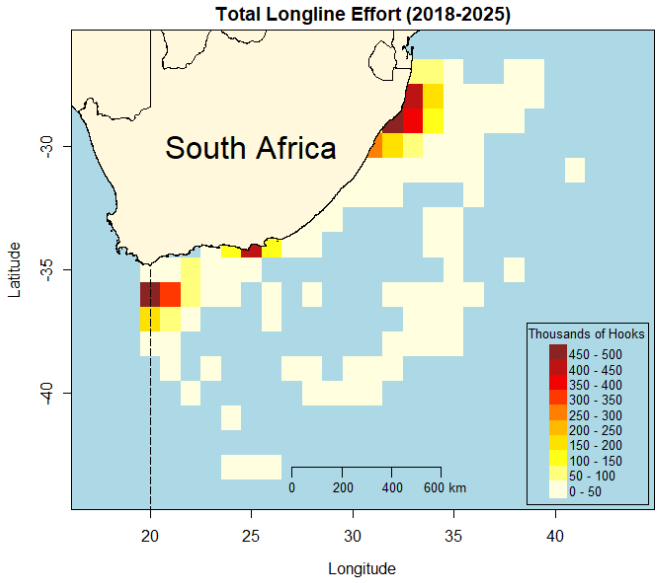

Figure 2b. Map of the distribution of average effort of the South African Large Pelagic Longline fishing fleet in the IOTC Area of Competence for the period 2018 – 2025.

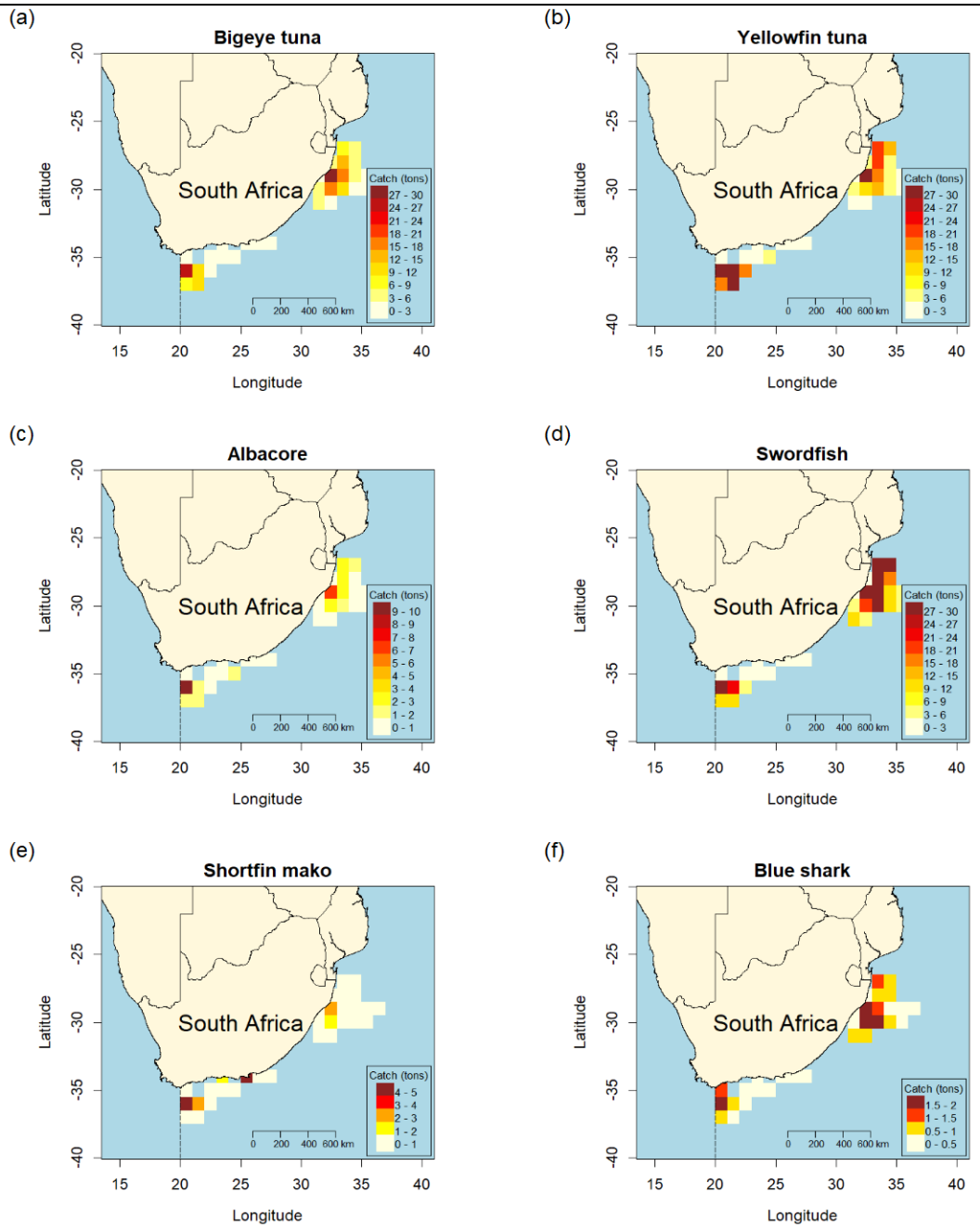

Figure 3a. Map of distribution of fishing catch (metric tons), for a) bigeye tuna, b) yellowfin tuna, c) albacore, d) swordfish, e) shortfin mako shark and f) blue shark for Large Pelagic Longline in South Africa, in the IOTC Area of Competence in 2025.

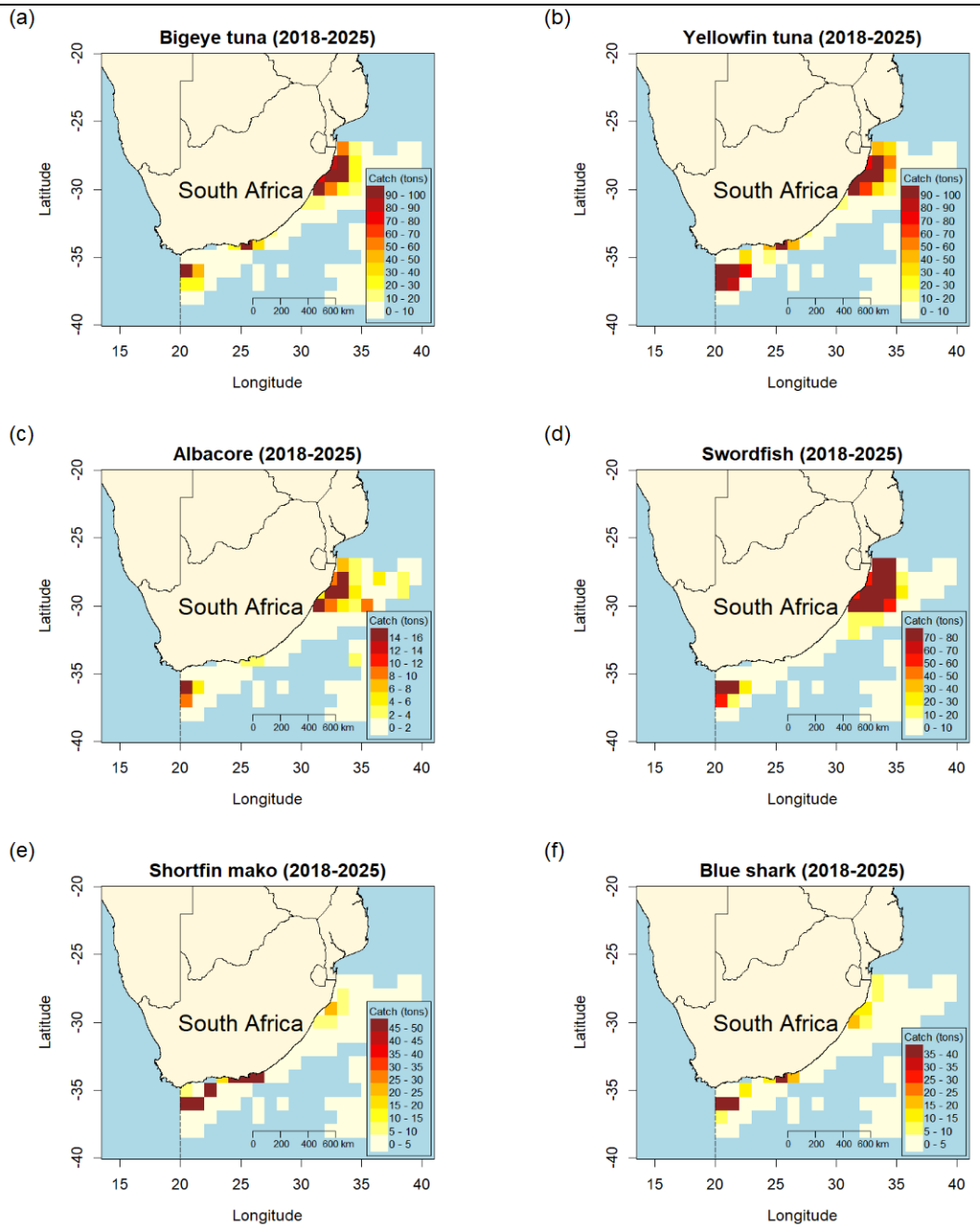

Figure 3b. Map of distribution of average fishing catch (metric tons), for a) bigeye tuna, b) yellowfin tuna, c) albacore, d) swordfish, e) shortfin mako shark and f) blue shark for Large Pelagic Longline in South Africa, in the IOTC Area of Competence for the period 2018 – 2025.

4. RECREATIONAL FISHERY

The boat-based recreational sector, including informal charter and sport fisheries using rod and reel and spear guns, also catches albacore, yellowfin, skipjack, bigeye, eastern little and southern bluefin tunas and billfish (swordfish, blue marlin *Makaira nigricans*, black marlin *Makaira indica*, longbill spearfish *Tetrapturus pfluegeri*, shortbill spearfish *Tetrapturus angustirostris* and striped marlin *Kajikia audax*), from small fishing vessels (on average 4 – 10 m in length). All recreational fishers are required to purchase a permit and are restricted to a bag-limit of 10 tunas, 5 swordfish and 5 billfish per day, with the sale of catch strictly prohibited. There are further minimum weight restrictions of 3.2 kg for yellowfin and bigeye, 6.4 kg for southern bluefin and 25 kg for swordfish caught. As there are no reporting requirements for this sector, catch and effort data are not consistently available. The angling associations have regular tuna and billfish competitions every year where they promote research (e.g., tagging), catch-and-release and responsible fishing. Most recreational fishing takes place in nearshore waters during holidays and relatively few anglers are equipped to target tuna.

The impact of the recreational fishing sector on South African large pelagic resources has resulted in several data collection initiatives being implemented. These are largely driven by NGOs, Government Research Institutes and Universities. One such initiative FishforLife (http://fishforlife.co.za/) is a citizen science initiative aimed at gathering relevant fisheries data in the recreational fishing sector via their online portal CatchReport (http://www.catchreport.co.za/). These projects also aim to collate all angling club and angling tournament catch and effort data which will be accessible for scientific research purposes.

5. ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH ISSUES

The World Wildlife Fund-South Africa (WWF-SA) Responsible Fisheries Programme, now the WWF Sustainable Fisheries, has worked since 2007 to facilitate the implementation of an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries management (EAF) in Southern Africa. An Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) was conducted in 2007 to identify the issues (e.g., ecological wellbeing, human wellbeing, and ability to achieve) in the pelagic longline, shark longline and Tuna Pole-line fisheries (Petersen, 2007). The Performance Report identified the gaps amongst research, management, compliance, and industry and has been used – and has continued relevance – as a tool to guide work plans and the implementation of EAF considerations in permit conditions.

5.1. Sharks

South Africa has one of the most diverse shark faunas in the world and many species are caught in appreciable quantities in directed and non-directed shark fisheries. South Africa has well developed fisheries management systems for most of its fisheries and many challenges regarding the sustainable management and conservation of sharks have already been identified and addressed in individual fisheries policies and management measures.

The permit conditions are amended regularly to include shark mitigation measures. As of 2017, the use of wire traces has been banned in the South African Large Pelagic Longline sector, as is the use of stainless-steel hooks. Furthermore, shark fins must be naturally attached or partially cut and folded over, and since 2026 the allowance to tether fins to the body was removed. As of 2018, the targeting of sharks (defined as 50% or more sharks per fishing season by mass) is prohibited and if quarterly landings exceeded 60% shark, the vessel would require 100% observer coverage for the remainder of the fishing season.

In addition, an initial precautionary upper catch limit (PUCL) of 2000 t dressed weight of Chondrichthyans was enforced in 2012, which has since been revised to 1 000 t dressed weight. When the PUCL has been reached, no shark shall be landed, and fishing will only be allowed with the presence of an observer onboard.

Thresher sharks belonging to the genus *Alopias*, hammerhead sharks (belonging to genus *Sphyrna*), oceanic whitetip sharks, porbeagle sharks, dusky sharks, silky sharks, great white sharks and basking sharks shall not be retained on board any vessel and all releases of these species are noted on the logbooks. Furthermore, manta-

and mobulid rays shall not be retained on board any vessel and all releases of these species are noted on the logbooks.

The trade of shark and ray products, including fins, fillets, gill rakers and other products should be carefully monitored to ensure CITES Appendix II listed species are not traded without the necessary permits.

5.1.1. NPOA sharks

South Africa is a signatory of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Under its framework an International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks) was developed in 1998, which encourages maritime states to conduct a Shark Assessment Report (SAR) and adopt a National Plan of Action for Sharks (NPOA-Sharks).The first South African National Plan of Action for sharks (NPOA-Sharks I) was finalized in 2013 and provided baseline information on the status of chondrichthyans in South Africa and assessed research, management, monitoring, and enforcement frameworks associated with shark fishing and trade of shark product in the South African context.

Following an internal review completed in 2018, the Minister of DFFE called for the review of the NPOA – Sharks SA by a Panel of International Experts, which included International expert from ICCAT and IOTC. The Panel was mandated to provide an independent critical appraisal of the NPOA – Sharks SA and to provide comments specifically on the Action Table which forms the core of the NPOA – Sharks SA to update it. The Panel commended the external review process as a unique example of accountability and transparency, and found the NPOA – Sharks SA to be comprehensive, albeit too ambitious in both extent and timeframes.

Emanating from this review, after an extensive stakeholder consultation phase, the revised NPOA (NPOA-Sharks II) was completed in 2022. The NPOA-Sharks II was presented at the 2022 IOTC WPEB (*South Africa NPOA Sharks II. C. da Silva, S.E. Kerwath. IOTC-2022-WPEB18-10*). An implementation plan has been developed to ensure the completion of the NPOA Sharks II within stipulated time- frames. Research prioritisation, gap analyses and collation of information for 103 shark species have already been accomplished, and training programmes with simplified identification guides for compliance staff to improve shark identification have started.

South Africa has contributed to several research projects investigating the life history, spatial distribution and movement patterns of blue sharks in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Recent research has expanded this focus to shortfin mako sharks, with 19 juvenile individuals tagged using satellite-linked pop-up archival transmitting (PSAT) and Smart Position or Temperature (SPOT) tags to investigate their movements in relation to the Agulhas shelf edge. The study aims to determine whether a shortfin mako nursery area exists along the south coast of South Africa. A key research priority is to improve understanding of the movement of large pelagic sharks and fishes between the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. In accordance with ICCAT Recommendation 22-11 and IOTC Resolution 25/09, South Africa's longline fleet is required to release shortfin mako sharks when brought alongside the vessel, using safe handling and release procedures to improve post-release survivability. Retention is permitted only where a shark is confirmed dead at haulback, as verified by an observer or electronic monitoring system (EMS). Retained sharks may not be transhipped, either whole or in part. All catches, including dead discards and live releases, must be recorded and reported to species level in accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/01. In addition, the methodology used to estimate live and dead discards was presenting to the IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB) in 2026.

5.1.3. Blue shark

South African Large Pelagic longline permit condition 11.2(a) includes the following:

The Permit Holder shall render statistics as required in the prescribed numbered catch statistics logbook.

South African Large Pelagic longline permit condition 11.2(f) includes the following:

The Department will not issue the 2026/27 catch permit to the Right Holder if the required monthly catch statistics data, up to and including December 2025, are not provided or are incomplete.

South African Large Pelagic longline permit condition 10.3 includes the following:

A Landing Declaration (Annexure 7 and electronic version available upon request from Large Pelagics Marine Research Technician, Table 2) is to be completed after every discharge and certified by a FCO or a DFFE appointed Monitor. The Landing Declaration is to be submitted by the right holder along with the monthly catch statistics forms (Clause 11.2).

And permit condition 16.1:

The Department shall require each Permit Holder to ensure that the vessel will carry one or more Scientific Observers on board for 15 - 20% of all fishing days per season, in order to meet Departmental objectives. At a minimum, the Permit Holder must ensure that no less than 15% of total fishing days are observed per season. Observer coverage must be spatially and temporally representative of the vessel's seasonal fishing effort. Annexure 11 provides an indicative schedule of the number of fishing days and trips to observe per season and per quarter, based on the vessel's average fishing performance over the preceding five years. Failure to comply with the minimum observer coverage requirement (i.e. 15% of total fishing days per season) may result in the Right Holder being refused a catch permit for the 2027/28 fishing season.

5.2.Seabirds

South Africa has been collecting data on seabird interaction with its longline sector since 1998. South Africa published its NPOA for seabirds in 2008 (NPOA-Seabirds, 2008). The NPOA-Seabirds specifies a maximum mortality rate of 0.05 birds/1000 hooks and lays out bycatch mitigation measures for use in longline fishing.

South Africa has introduced several bird mitigation measures through permit conditions since the start of the tuna longline sector, including no daylight setting in conjunction with the compulsory flying of tori-lines or line weighting, and the use of thawed bait to improve sink rates. South Africa does not consider the use of line shooters or offal discard management to be useful in reducing seabird incidental mortality. Furthermore, South Africa (with the Albatross Task Force of BirdLife South Africa) developed a management plan in 2008 to reduce seabird bycatch in its longline sector. This plan, integrated in the permit conditions, includes two seabird bycatch limits per vessel per year. The first limit stipulates that once a vessel reaches 25 birds killed in a year, it must adopt additional mitigation measures; it must fly a second tori line and it must place additional weights on to each branchline. If the vessel reaches the second limit of 50 seabird mortalities, the Department will review compliance with mitigation measures before deciding whether to permit further fishing by that vessel.

Vessels are encouraged to use 'hook shielding devices' (as approved by the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatross and Petrels), which in 2019 are limited to Smart Tuna Hooks® and Hookpods®. If either method is chosen, each hook set shall have the chosen device attached.

Building on the achievements and lessons of the first plan, South Africa adopted the National Plan of Action II for the Conservation and Management of Seabirds in South African Fisheries 2026–2030, in August 2026. NPOA-Seabirds II broadens the scope of action beyond longline fisheries to include all South African fisheries with significant interactions with seabirds. Its vision is "Zero impact on the sustainability of seabird populations by South African fisheries." The plan prioritises improved and modernised monitoring, quantification of the impacts of fisheries on seabird populations, the implementation of effective mitigation measures, and strengthened cooperation and capacity to support implementation.

1. How many vessels operated south of 25˚S in the period covered by this report?
   - 100% of vessels operations reported in 2025 were south of 25˚S.

2. How many of those vessels used bird scaring lines (as a proportion of total effort)?
   - 11 of the 19 active vessels flew tori lines, and 25.4% of total effort used had at least one tori line.

3. How many of those vessels used line weighting (as a proportion of total effort)?
   - 18 of the 19 active vessels used line weighting, and 97.2% of effort used line weighting.

4. How many of those vessels used night setting (as a proportion of total effort)?
   - 100% of vessels employed night setting in 2025. Upon a request received from the fishing industry to maximise on suitable opportunities to harvest catch, to improve the quality of the catch, and to reduce shark and whale predation, an exemption from the permit conditions was granted allowing vessels to conduct setting of the longline during daylight hours, in the area north of 31°S, on condition that an observer is present onboard. There are fewer occurrences of seabird bycatch in the area north of 31°S and east of 20°E from observed night setting and there have been minimal to no encounters and mortalities in recent years. The period of the exemption was from June 2024 to June 2025, and five (5) vessels utilised the exemption to conduct daytime sets (between nautical dawn and nautical dusk) on 14 trips during February and March 2025. Across the 14 trips, a total of 85 sets were completed, of which 73 conducted daylight setting (113 606 hooks).

5.3. Marine Turtles

Skippers are provided with guidelines/instructions in their permit conditions on how to safely handle and release caught turtles. The use of circle hooks is encouraged as stated in the permit conditions, as well as the release of turtles using a de-hooker. As of 2014, skippers were required to record interactions with turtles, including the fate of the turtle, in the catch statistic logbooks on board the vessel. There is high awareness among skippers on turtle handling protocols and release mortalities are thought to be low. In 2025, 71 turtle interactions (loggerhead, leatherback, olive ridley and hawksbill) were reported from logsheets and observers, all of which were released alive. And of the 71, 81% and 12% of the interactions were loggerhead and leatherback turtles, respectively.

5.4. Other ecologically related species (e.g., marine mammals, whale sharks)

South Africa encourages vessels to take cognizance of sustainable fishing practices and impacts of tuna longline operations on the ecosystem. Given that South Africa does not allow purse-seine fishing tuna fishing and large pelagics are solely targeted by longliners and baitboats, interactions with marine mammals are negligible. However, a specific concern is the impact of lost "strops" (cords used to hang fish during freezing) during discharge procedures. Marine animals subsequently become entangled in these strops, resulting in mutilation and potential mortality of entangled animals. To solve this problem, the Permit Holder is to ensure that "strops" used during freezing, and discharge do not exceed the stipulated 80 mm stretched length.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) of South Africa is collaborating with researchers from SeaSearch and Stellenbosch University on a new study focused on killer whale populations around southern Africa. While the study covers a broad range of topics, of particular interest to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) is the investigation into killer whale depredation on tuna vessels in the broader Southwest Indian Ocean and Atlantic regions. Since the early 2010s, killer whales have been increasingly depredating fish from tuna vessels off South Africa, with interactions between the tuna fleet and killer whales becoming more frequent over the past decade. Depredation, the act of marine mammals feeding on fish catches or fishing gear, has been documented across all ocean basins, particularly in longline fisheries—where it can result in significant losses. For example, depredation can reduce overall catch rates by up to 30% and even cause complete loss of catch on individual longline sets (i.e., 100% loss). Beyond the financial impacts on fisheries, depredation also raises concerns about the accuracy of fish stock abundance indices.

In South Africa, the true extent of killer whale depredation, its changes over time, and the factors driving variations between different fisheries are not well understood. This study, using data from fisheries reports and observers, aims to investigate and quantify marine mammal depredation trends on the large pelagic longline fishery over the past two decades. Researchers are also examining broader questions related to killer whale populations around southern Africa, including their numbers, migratory patterns, diet, and impacts on the ecosystem and fisheries. Additionally, the study seeks to understand how South African killer whales relate to other populations in the Southwest Indian Ocean and Atlantic regions.

Skippers are encouraged to report any interactions with killer whales in their logbooks, including details such as the location, pod size, type of interaction, and photos or videos when possible. This data will help researchers track and understand the nature of these interactions. A key component of the research is to identify potential mitigation measures to reduce the negative financial impacts of killer whale depredation on tuna fisheries and right holders.

6. NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING SYSTEMS

6.1. Logsheet data collection and verification

Vessels in the Large Pelagic Longline sector and Tuna Pole-line sector have been required to complete daily logs of catches since 1997 and 1985, respectively. The data are verified by comparing logs of catches with

landing declarations that are overseen by South African Fisheries Compliance Officers and Fisheries Monitors. Right holders are required to submit these logsheets monthly.

6.2. Observer scheme

Observer coverage of local Large Pelagic Longline vessels has been included in the permit conditions and has been steadily increasing. To improve the spatiotemporal observer coverage further, South Africa is aiming to increase its overall observer coverage to 20% per year. To achieve this, the current Large Pelagic Longline permit conditions require permit holders to carry one or more scientific observers on board for 15 - 20% of all fishing days per season.

Observer coverage for joint-venture (foreign-flagged) vessels will continue with 100% of fishing trips observed should these vessels return. In 2025, the South African large pelagic longline fleet set 213 313 hooks in the IOTC Area of Competence with an observer onboard, which equates to 19.7% of all hooks set in the IOTC Area of Competence (Table 3). The exemption from the permit conditions allowing vessels to conduct setting of the longline during daylight hours, in the area north of 31°S, on condition that an observer is present onboard (see section 5.2 above), contributed to this increase in observer coverage.

Although the Tuna Pole-line sector has achieved ~3% observer coverage voluntarily, this has taken place in the Atlantic Ocean and the fleet has not operated in the IOTC Area of Competence. There have been increased inspections and sampling of Tuna Pole-line vessels conducted during offloading in port by South Africa Fisheries Compliance Officers and Fisheries Monitors.

The observers collect all operational, catch (retained and discard), effort and length frequency data, and will collect biological material when required. The observers record data on IOTC forms (IOTC Form I-GEN, IOTC Form 2-LL, IOTC Form 4-LL etc.), and a transition to the Official IOTC ROS data reporting forms (MS Excel) is underway.

Table 3. The number of hooks observed (local and foreign-flagged joint-venture vessels) per year from 2021 to 2025 in the IOTC Area of Competence.

Year	Total number of hooks observed	Percentage hooks observed of total hooks set in IOTC region
2021	312 368	35%
2022	279 862	21.6%
2023	139 652	10.5%
2024	126 333	9.82%
2025	213 313	19.7%

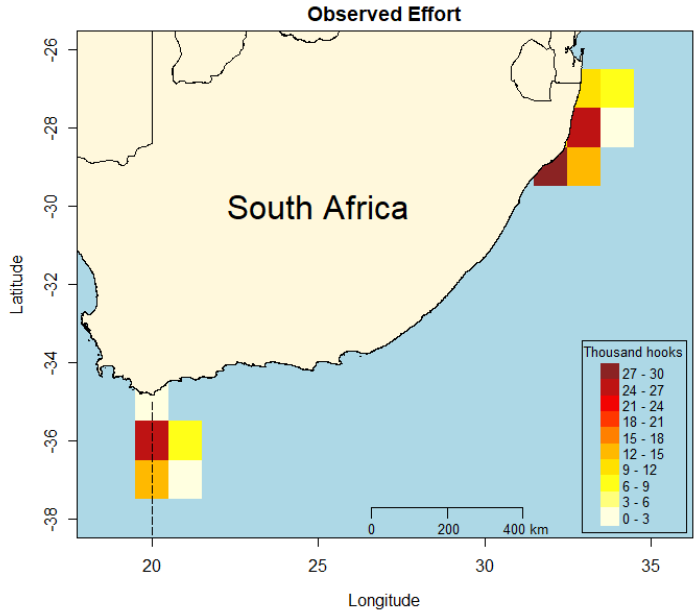

Figure 4. Map showing the spatial distribution of observer effort coverage for the IOTC Area of Competence in 2025.

6.3. Port sampling programme

Port sampling for tuna, swordfish and related species began in 1973 in South Africa. The collection of tuna length-frequency data through port sampling of Tuna Pole-line vessels has been undertaken by employees of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment since 2011, and by scientific observers since 2022, in the ICCAT region. The skippers are encouraged to collect yellowfin tuna length frequency measurements onboard Tuna Pole-line vessels prior to dressing the catch. All length frequency data on the pelagic longline vessels in the IOTC region are collected at sea by observers prior to the fish being dressed. There are no data to report for Table 4: Number of vessel trips or vessels active monitored, by species and fishery.

Table 5. Number of individuals measured by observers on Large Pelagic Longline vessels in the IOTC Area of Competence for the period 2021 - 2025. These fish are not necessarily retained.

English name	Scientific name	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Albacore	*Thunnus alalunga*	1098	264	261	234	353
Atlantic pomfret	*Brama*	66	34		85	
Atlantic sailfish	*Istiophorus albicans*					8
Bigeye tuna	*Thunnus obesus*	1211	747	404	800	774
Black marlin	*Makaira indica*	14	16	11	5	8
Blue marlin	*Makaira nigricans*	11	28	13	11	17
Blue shark	*Prionace glauca*	515	474	19	9	343
Butterfly kingfish	*Gasterochisma melampus*	5			67	
Common dolphinfish	*Coryphaena hippurus*	60	143	62		99
Copper shark	*Carcharhinus brachyurus*					
Crocodile shark	*Pseudocarcharias kamoharai*		2			13
Escolar	*L. flavobrunneum*	79	375	4	3	16
Great barracuda	*Sphyraena barracuda*		1			
Indo-Pacific sailfish	*Istiophorus platypterus*	5	9	2		3
Kawakawa	*Euthynnus affinis*					1
L. snouted lancetfish	*Alepisaurus ferox*				22	4
Longbill spearfish	*Tetrapturus pfluegeri*					1
Mako sharks	*Isurus* spp	78	19			23
Moonfish	*Mene maculate*		1	2		1
Oceanic puffer	*Lagocephalus lagocephalus*				3	
Oceanic whitetip shark	*Carcharhinus longimanus*	2		4	1	16
Oilfish	*Ruvettus pretiosus*	58	53	16	3	17
Opah	*Lampris guttatus*	1	2		2	
Pelagic stingray	*Dasyatis violacea*				3	3
Rainbow runner	*Elagatis bipinnulata*				2	
Shortbill spearfish	*Tetrapturus angustirostris*	9	6	7	1	7
Shortfin mako	*Isurus oxyrinchus*	49	24	55	298	432
Silky shark	*Carcharhinus falciformis*	30	1	7	81	56
Skipjack tuna	*Katsuwonus pelamis*	13	124	1	2	5
Southern bluefin tuna	*Thunnus maccoyii*	223		20	155	
Striped bonito	*Sarda orientalis*					4
Striped marlin	*Tetrapturus audax*	1		8	3	6
Swordfish	*Xiphias gladius*	585	939	807	868	1381
Thresher	*Alopias spp*		2	1		3
Tiger shark	*Galeocerdo cuvier*			1		
Wahoo	*Acanthocybium solandri*	1	2	1	1	8
Yellowfin tuna	*Thunnus albacares*	972	1671	849	321	1127

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

Catches of marlin species (Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish) in the South African large pelagic longline sector remains low (< 10 tons per annum for all species combined). The following permit conditions aim to further reduce catches for these species:

6.1 (a) - Billfishes of the genera Makaira (blue marlin), Tetrapturus (spearfish), Istiophorus (sailfish), Istiompax (black marlin) and Kajikia (striped and white marlin) are designated as secondary species.

6.1 (l) - The Permit Holder shall encourage the crew to release live marlins. The ICCAT catch limit for Atlantic blue marlin is 10t and the ICCAT catch limit for white marlin/roundscale spearfish is 2t combined (Recommendation 19-05).

6.1. (n) – The catching of ……. marlins less than 120cm LJFL or less than 90 cm PFL is prohibited.

6.5. Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring

South African does not have a gillnet sector that interacts with IOTC species.

6.6. Sampling plans for mobulid rays

South African does not have a gillnet or purse seine sector. No interactions with mobulid rays were reported in 2025.

6.7. Electronic Monitoring Standards [Mandatory for CPC implementing EMS]

Operators in the Tuna Pole-line and Large Pelagic Longline fleet have been funding and piloting electronic monitoring systems voluntarily on several vessels (4 in the baitboat and 3 in the pelagic longline). A number of challenges not uncommon in the trialling of EM have been experienced, e.g. camera placement, camera failure, power interruptions, radio frequency interference, data storage with hard drives, data retrieval, footage review, equipment installation and maintenance costs.

South Africa is in its infancy of forming an EM project implementation team, conducting stakeholder consultation, reviewing regulatory and policy legislation, assessing technical infrastructure requirements, and quantifying the budgeting and resource allocation requirements. South Africa's permit conditions do not require nor do they prohibit/restrict any EM observation devices.

7. NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS

7.1. National research programs on blue shark

7.1.1 South Africa does not currently have any new research programs on blue sharks in the IOTC region of competence apart from the analysis of historical satelite data previously reported to IOTC. This project aims to investigate the horizontal movement shortfin mako blue sharks around the Agulhas Bank shelf. Furthermore, this project aims to investigate the hypothesis that the Agulhas shelf acts as a nursery ground for shortfin mako sharks. To date 19 shortfin mako and 8 blue sharks have been tagged with PSAT and SPOT tags in collaboration with DFFE,

DEA (Department of Environmental affairs) and SWIOFP (South West Indian Fishery Project). One of the key research priorities involves investigating the movement of large pelagic sharks and fish between the Indian and Atlantic Ocean.

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

South Africa does not currently have any research programs on marlin or sailfish species as catches are negligible. In 2025, the combined catches for all these species was only 10.1 tons.

7.3. National research programs on sharks

7.3.1. South Africa adopted a revised shark NPOA in 2022 The NPOA was presented at the 2022 IOTC WPEB18 meeting (*South Africa NPOA Sharks II. C. da Silva, S.E. Kerwath. IOTC-2022-WPEB18-10*).

7.4. National research programs on oceanic whitetip sharks

South Africa does not currently have any research programs on oceanic whitetip. In 2025, there were 64 individual catches of oceanic whitetip sharks (31 released alive, 33 dead & discarded) reported from logsheets and observers.

7.5. National research programs on marine turtles

South Africa does not currently have any research programs on marine turtles. In 2025, 71 turtle interactions (leatherback, loggerhead, green) were reported from logsheets and observers, 100% of which were released alive.

7.6. National research programs on thresher shark

South Africa is currently involved in the IOTC research program that investigates post-release mortality of bigeye thresher sharks through the deployment of PSAT tags using observers on longline vessels. In 2025, there were 246 individual catches of *Alopias spp* (183 released alive, 63 dead & discarded) reported from logsheets and observers.

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

Table 9. Scientific requirements contained in Resolutions of the Commission, adopted between 2012 and 2023.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
12/04	On the conservation of marine turtles	Paragraphs 3, 4, 6–10	The use of circle hooks is encouraged as stated in the permit conditions. The South African Government has worked closely with WWF to educate skippers on release procedures for turtles. According to the handling and release instructions provided to vessels in their permit conditions, vessels are required, amongst others, to: • Remove the hook using a long-handled de-hooker on turtles too large to bring onboard and a de-hooker on turtles brought onboard. • Use a line-cutter when a de-hooker is not possible and to cut the line as close to the hook as possible. • Use net to bring the turtle onboard and to avoid pulling on the line. • Handle the turtle with gentle care. Release the turtle headfirst and away from fishing gear once it has recovered onboard. Trained observers are present on 100% foreign-flagged longline and up to 20% of domestic vessels and they record all interactions with marine turtles during the fishing operation. Since 2013, all vessels have been required to record interactions with marine turtles in their logbooks, and each vessel has been given a species guide to aid identification of turtles to species level.
12/09	On the conservation of thresher sharks (family alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 4–8	Thresher sharks are not permitted to be retained; this is stated in the permit conditions.
13/04	On the conservation of cetaceans	Paragraphs 7– 9	According to observer records and incidental reporting by skippers there have been minimal encounters (i.e., incidental captures) of cetaceans by longline vessels. Logging these incidents is a requirement for the fishery. South Africa endeavours to have all skippers and onboard observers collect data on all encounters with cetaceans.
13/05	On the conservation of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*)	Paragraphs 7– 9	There have been no recorded encounters (i.e., incidental captures) with whale sharks by the longline vessels. South Africa will endeavour to have all skippers and onboard observers collect data on all encounters with whale sharks.
13/06	On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries	Paragraph 5–6	South Africa's NPOA-Sharks II (2022) has grouped issues facing each fishery into clusters with proposed actions, responsibilities, priorities, and timeframes (Pg 11-17 of the NPOA-Sharks II, 2022)
15/01	On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 1–10	All Large Pelagic Longline and Tuna Pole-line vessels are required to complete a logbook of catch and effort and submit this monthly to the Department.

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	South Africa submits nominal catch data and catch and effort data for surface and longline fisheries. Size data are collected through the observer program and port sampling. Fleet characteristics are submitted annually.
17/05	On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC	Paragraphs 6, 9, 11	The following permit conditions (6.1) regulate shark catches in the South African Large Pelagic longline fishery: (b) Targeting of sharks is prohibited. Targeting is defined as landing 50% or more sharks per fishing season in terms of landed total mass. (c) The Permit Holder is restricted to landings of less than 60% sharks in terms of landed total mass in any quarter. If quarterly landings exceed 60%, the Permit Holder will be required to have 100% observer coverage for the remainder of the fishing season. (d) A Precautionary Upper Catch Limit (PUCL) of 1 000t applies to the total landed shark mass. (e) Once 80% of the PUCL has been caught, the remaining 20% of the PUCL shall be subdivided equally among active right holders. This PUCL will, in line with the prohibition on targeting of sharks, be reduced seasonally over a five-year period. (f) Once the PUCL has been reached, no pelagic sharks shall be landed, and fishing will only be allowed with the presence of an onboard Observer. (g) Thresher sharks belonging to the genus Alopias, hammerhead sharks (belonging to genus Sphyrna), oceanic whitetip sharks, porbeagle sharks, dusky sharks and silky sharks shall not be retained on board the vessel. The Permit Holder shall encourage the crew to release live sharks. It is prohibited to gaff, lift by the gill slits/ spiracles or punch holes through the bodies of prohibited species. (h) Fins may not be removed from the shark trunks (i.e., headed, gutted). Fins are to be kept attached to the specific trunk either through a partial cut and folded over or tethered to the trunk via a cord (any loop in the cord shall not exceed approximately 8 cm in diameter and shall follow similar specifications to permit condition 22.1 (b)).
18/02	On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 2-5	The following permit conditions (6.1) regulate shark catches in the South African Large Pelagic Longline sector: (b) Targeting of sharks is prohibited. Targeting is defined as landing 50% or more sharks per fishing season in terms of landed total mass. (c) The Permit Holder is restricted to landings of less than 60% sharks in terms of landed total mass in any quarter. If quarterly landings exceed 60%, the Permit Holder will be required to have 100% observer coverage for the remainder of the fishing season. (d) A Precautionary Upper Catch Limit (PUCL) of 1 000t applies to the total landed shark mass.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
			(e) Once 80% of the PUCL has been caught, the remaining 20% of the PUCL shall be subdivided equally among active right holders. This PUCL will, in line with the prohibition on targeting of sharks, be reduced seasonally over a five-year period. (f) Once the PUCL has been reached, no pelagic sharks shall be landed, and fishing will only be allowed with the presence of an onboard Observer. (h) Fins may not be removed from the shark trunks (i.e., headed, gutted). Fins are to be kept attached to the specific trunk either through a partial cut and folded over or tethered to the trunk via a cord (any loop in the cord shall not exceed approximately 8 cm in diameter and shall follow similar specifications to permit condition 22.1 (b)).
18/05	On management measures for the conservation of the Billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish	Paragraphs 7 – 11	Catches of marlin species (Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin and Indo-pacific Sailfish) in the South African large pelagic longline remains low (< 20 tons per annum for all species combined). The following permit conditions aim to further reduce catches for these species: 6.1 (a) - Billfishes of the genera Makaira (blue marlin), Tetrapturus (spearfish), Istiophorus (sailfish), Istiompax (black marlin) and Kajikia (striped and white marlin) are designated as secondary species. 6.1 (h) - Marlins (Black, Blue, Stripped and White) shall not be retained on board the vessel, West of 20 degrees. The Permit Holder shall encourage the crew to release live marlins. 6.3 – The catching of […] and marlins less than 120cm LJFL or less than 90 cm PFL is prohibited. No discarding of dead marlins is permitted.
18/07	On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC	Paragraphs 1, 4	Right holders must submit monthly logsheets of direct and incidental catches, and if they do not comply, they will not be permitted to harvest in the next fishing season. Through regular stakeholder engagements, right holders are encouraged and reminded to report on incidental catches of sharks, seabirds, turtles and mammals. 100% observer coverage is achieved on joint-venture foreign flagged vessels. Local vessels are required to take observers throughout the year, with a target of 20% observer coverage. All Large Pelagic Longline and Tuna Pole-line vessels shall be fitted with a functional vessel monitoring system (VMS). The permit holder shall ensure the VMS is fully functional and continues to transmit to the Department's Operations room. Whilst at sea, the VMS shall report without interruption.
19/01	On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence	Paragraph 22	South Africa has never exceeded 5,000 MT of yellowfin tuna landings since the inception of its tuna fisheries. South Africa only operates Longline and Pole-line vessels within the IOTC Area of Competence.
19/03	On the Conservation of Mobulid Rays Caught in Association with	Paragraph 11	South African does not have a floating gillnet or purse seine fishery.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
	Fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence		
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	South Africa has never exceeded 5,000 MT of yellowfin tuna landings since the inception of its tuna fisheries. South Africa only operates Longline and Pole-line vessels within the IOTC Area of Competence.
23/07	On Reducing the Incidental Bycatch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries	Paragraphs 3–7	Foreign flagged longline fishing vessels have mandatory 100% observer coverage. South Africa requires that each Large Pelagic longline right holder carries one or more Scientific observers on board its vessel on request for a minimum of one trip per quarter to ensure that 20% of all fishing days per quarter are monitored across both Ocean basins in which the South African fleet operates. Observers are trained on bird ID and the observer companies work closely with bird experts to ensure proper ID of captured birds. Dead birds are handed over to scientific experts for investigation and research. All bird interactions during observed trips are captured and bird interaction reporting is mandatory in the fisheries'log books. The start and completion of line setting must be conducted at night, defined by the period between nautical dusk and nautical dawn. In addition to night setting, the vessel shall choose between using a bird-scaring line or using line weighting: - If a bird-scaring line is used as the second seabird bycatch mitigation measure, vessels shall have on board an approved bird-scaring line. Instruction on the method of tori line construction and deployment is provided to each vessel to ensure that correct specifications and procedures are followed. - If line weighting is used as the second seabird bycatch mitigation measure, the branch lines (snoods) shall be properly weighted following ACAP guidelines; 40 g or greater attached within 0.5 m of the hook (to minimize gear loss from shark bite-offs), or 60 g or greater attached within 1 m of the hook, or 80 g or greater attached within 2 m of the hook. Deck lighting is to be kept to a minimum. The beams of deck lights must be directed towards the deck. All bait must be appropriately thawed, and where necessary, the swim bladder punctured to ensure rapid sinking of the bait. All birds caught must be brought onboard and, with the use of the release instructions provided, live birds are to be released. The release instructions clearly outline the procedures to follow to ensure that a seabird has a good chance of survival after release. The NPOA seabirds II aims to determine the most appropriate mitigation measures for all relevant fisheries nationally according to international best practice and local research (Goal 3.1), and to determinethe most appropriate

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
			spatio-temporal management measures to minimise negative impacts on seabird population by all relevant fisheries (Goal 3.2).
23/08	On electronic monitoring standards for IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 3c	South Africa is in its infancy of forming an EM project implementation team, conducting stakeholder consultation, reviewing regulatory and policy legislation, assessing technical infrastructure requirements, and quantifying the budgeting and resource allocation requirements. South Africa's permit conditions do not require nor do they prohibit/restrict any EM observation devices. Vessels are voluntarily trialling EM systems, and no vessels are implementing EM at present.
25/06	On a regional observer scheme	Paragraph 12	South Africa's fleet of Large Pelagic Longline vessels complies with the minimum observer coverage of 5%, as defined by the number of hooks set.

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