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

Mathew O. Silas[1], Ranwel N. Mbukwah[1], Masumbuko L. Semba[2], Daniel P. Kawiche[1], Keis I. Abdalla[1] and Saleh A. Yahya[1]

[1]Deep Sea Fishing Authority (DSFA), Zanzibar, Tanzania
[2]Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST), Arusha, Tanzania.

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 30/06/2025
In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, provisional **longline data** for the previous year were 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 December 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 30/06/2025
If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions:	

Executive Summary

The 2025 National Report details Tanzania's fisheries performance and management efforts during the most recent reporting year, 2024. The sector is a cornerstone of the national economy, contributing 1.7% of Mainland Tanzania's GDP and 5.8% of Zanzibar's GDP in 2024. Tanzania provided final scientific data for non-longline fleets and provisional data for the longline fleet for the 2024 calendar year by 30 June, 2025.

In 2024, the national fishing fleet was characterised by a dominant artisanal sector comprising 17,161 vessels, operating alongside a limited industrial fleet of three authorised vessels (two longliners and one purse seine). Key artisanal catches reported for 2024 included Bigeye (1,592.57 Tons), Skipjack (1,045.62 T), Yellowfin (1,009.56 T), and Kanadi Kingfish (1,011.81 T). Industrial purse seine catches were primarily Skipjack (8,971 T) and Yellowfin (2,901 T).

Tanzania reinforced its commitment to sustainable management through enhanced oversight, including maintaining a dedicated observer team and planning the pilot implementation of electronic monitoring systems (EMS). Significant progress was made in conservation planning with the launch of the National Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Turtles (2024–2029) and the finalisation of the National Plan of Action for Sharks (NPOA-Sharks). Furthermore, the industrial fleet reported no incidents of seabird interaction south of 25°S and no bycatch of cetaceans, mobulid rays, or whale sharks in 2024. Targeted research on sharks identified five critically endangered species, highlighting the potential importance of areas near Unguja and Pemba as nursery and pupping grounds.

Table of Contents

Contents

1. Background/General fishery information 4
1.1. Fisheries of Tanzania: Sector Overview – 2024 4
2. Fleet structure 4
2.1. Tanzania National Vessel Fleet by Gear Type (2024) 4
2.2. Artisanal Fleet 4
2.3. Industrial Fleet 5
3. Catch and effort (by species and fishery) 5
3.1. Industrial Fleet 6
3.2. Monitoring and Sustainability Measures 6
4. Recreational fishery 11
5. Ecosystem and bycatch issues 11
5.1. Sharks 11
5.2. Seabirds 12
5.3. Marine Turtles 12
5.4. Other ecologically related species (e.g., cetaceans, mobulid rays, whale sharks) 13
6. National data collection and processing systems 13
6.1. Logsheet data collection and verification 13
6.2. Observer scheme 14
6.3. Port sampling programme 15
6.4. Actions taken to monitor catches & manage fisheries for Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin, and Indo-Pacific Sailfish 16
6.5. Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring [Desirable] 16
6.6. Sampling plans for mobulid rays 16
6.7. Electronic Monitoring Standards 16
7. National research programs 16
7.1. National research programs on blue shark 17
7.2. National research programs on Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin, and Indo-Pacific Sailfish 17
7.3. National research programs on sharks 17
7.4. National research programs on oceanic whitetip sharks 17
7.5. National research programs on marine turtles 17
7.6. National research programs on thresher sharks 18
8. Implementation of Scientific Committee Recommendations and Resolutions of the IOTC relevant to the SC 18
9. Literature cited 22

1. Background

1.1. Fisheries of Tanzania: Sector Overview – 2024

Tanzania's fisheries sector remains a cornerstone of national development, underpinned by a coastline stretching approximately 1,424 kilometres from Kenya in the north to Mozambique in the south. The country's marine jurisdiction includes a territorial sea of about 64,000 km² and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 223,000 km², rich in biodiversity and fisheries resources. These waters support a wide range of aquatic life, making the sector essential for food security, employment, and economic resilience.

In 2024, fisheries provided approximately 30% of the country's animal protein intake. The sector directly employed around 200,000 individuals and indirectly supported the livelihoods of over four million people. Its contribution to the national economy remained significant, accounting for roughly 1.7% of Mainland Tanzania's GDP and 5.8% of Zanzibar's GDP. These figures underscore the sector's role in sustaining coastal communities and supporting broader socio-economic objectives.

Tanzania's Fisheries activities encompass both artisanal and industrial operations, with artisanal fisheries remaining the dominant sector. These are typically conducted within territorial waters using traditional vessels such as dugout canoes, dhows, planked canoes, fibreglass boats, and catamarans (Silas 2022; MLF 2020; URT 2018; MBEF 2020). Propulsion methods vary from paddles and sails to small outboard motors. Fishers employ various gear, including gill nets, shark nets, purse seines, long lines, hand lines, cast nets, lift nets, scoop nets, traps, baskets, and ring nets (MLF 2020). These methods target a wide range of species, including reef and small pelagic fish, as well as larger pelagic species on occasion.

Industrial fishing operations are primarily conducted in the EEZ and high seas, involving large, capital-intensive vessels equipped with modern technologies. These vessels target high-value pelagic species, such as tunas and billfish (including sailfish and marlin), contributing to export earnings and regional seafood supply chains. While industrial fishing remains limited in scale compared to artisanal efforts, its strategic importance is growing, particularly in the context of blue economy initiatives and regional fisheries governance.

A comprehensive legal and policy framework governs the sector to ensure sustainable use and conservation of marine resources. Key policies include the National Fisheries Policy of 2015 for Mainland Tanzania, the Zanzibar Fisheries Policy of 2022, and the Zanzibar Blue Economy Policy of 2022. These are supported by four principal legislative instruments: The Fisheries Act, Cap. 279 of 2003 for Mainland Tanzania, the Fisheries Act No. 7 of 2010 for Zanzibar, the Marine Parks and Reserves Act, Cap. 146 of 1994, and the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Act, Cap. 388 of 2020, which regulates activities within the EEZ. Implementation is further guided by regulations and operational guidelines that promote compliance, resource stewardship, and institutional coordination.

2. Fleet structure

2.1. Tanzania National Vessel Fleet by Gear Type (2024)

Tanzania's national fishing fleet comprises artisanal and industrial vessels, each employing a range of fishing gears to target diverse marine species across territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

2.2. Artisanal Fleet

The artisanal fleet forms the backbone of Tanzania's fisheries sector. Based on the Marine Fisheries Frame Survey conducted in 2018 for Mainland Tanzania and the 2020 Frame Survey for Zanzibar, the small-scale fishing fleet consists of approximately 9,242 vessels on the mainland and 7,919 vessels in Zanzibar. These vessels typically range in length from 4 to 11 meters and are operated by crews of between one and 45 fishers, depending on the vessel type and fishing activity.

Artisanal vessels deploy a variety of gear types, including hand lines, longlines, troll lines, bottom-set and drift gill nets, ring nets, and purse seines. These gears support a multispecies fishery, targeting a wide array of marine resources, including tuna and tuna-like species, rays, sardines, anchovies, mackerel, and sharks. Fishing trips typically last from a few hours to several days, depending on the location of the fishing grounds and the species being targeted (MLF 2020).

The table below summarises the number of artisanal fishing vessels operating within the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) area of competence by gear type and vessel size:

Table 1a: Artisanal Fishing Vessels in the IOTC Area by Gear Type and Size
Gear category: Others

Year	Size (<24m)	Size (>24m)	Registered Vessels
2018	9,571	–	9,571
2019	9,571	–	9,571
2020	9,571	–	9,571
2021	9,571	–	9,571
2022	17,161*	–	17,161*
2023	17,161*	–	17,161*
2024	17,161*	–	17,161*

*Note: From 2022 to 2024, figures represent the combined total of artisanal vessels recorded in the 2018 Mainland Tanzania Frame Survey and the 2020 Zanzibar Frame Survey.

2.3. Industrial Fleet

Tanzania's industrial fleet operates within the EEZ and ABNJ, targeting high-value pelagic species such as tuna and billfish. As of 2024, the fleet under the national flag comprised three authorised industrial vessels. These include two longliners, each with a length overall (LOA) of 24.5 meters, registered and operational since September 2022, and one purse seiner with a LOA of 92.11 meters, registered in January 2022 and operational since March 2022. Of the two longliners, one—Biostar 507—operated for nearly six months before it caught fire and sunk, resulting in its removal from the list of authorized vessels in the IOTC area of competence.
The following table outlines the number of authorised fishing vessels (AFVs) operating in the IOTC area of competence by gear type and vessel size:

Table 1b: Industrial Fishing Vessels in the IOTC Area by Gear Type and Size (the two vessels, one of which was deregistered from the list of authorized vessels, on 20 November 2024, after it caught fire and sank)*

Year	Size (<24m)	Size (>24m)	Registered Vessels	Gear Type
2019	–	1	1	Longline
2020	1	1	2	Longline
2021	1	–	2	Longline
2022	–	2	2	Longline
2022	–	1	1	Purse Seine
2023	–	2	2	Longline
2023	–	1	1	Purse Seine
2024	–	2*	2*	Longline
2024	–	1	1	Purse Seine

3. Catch and effort (by species and fishery)

Artisanal Fleet

Tanzania's artisanal fishing fleet comprised approximately 17,000 vessels in 2024, operating primarily in nearshore waters. These vessels employed various gear types, including hand lines, longlines, troll lines, and gill nets. Fishing activities were closely associated with ecologically sensitive habitats such as coral reefs and seagrass beds, supporting a multispecies fishery.

Target species included both pelagic and demersal resources, notably:

- Tuna species: Yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*), Bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*), and skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*)
- Large pelagics: Kingfish (*Scomberomorus spp.*), sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*), and other billfish
- Demersal and reef-associated species: Reef fish, sharks, and rays
- Small pelagics: Sardines, anchovies, and mackerel

These small-scale operations typically involved short-duration trips, ranging from a few hours to several days, depending on the fishing grounds and target species.

3.1. Industrial Fleet

In contrast, the industrial fleet focused on high-value pelagic species in offshore waters, particularly within Tanzania's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and adjacent high seas. As of 2024, the national industrial fleet included:

- Two longliners (LOA: 24.5 meters), operational since September 2022, of which one was deregistered from the list of IOTC authorised vessels after the first half of 2024.
- One purse seiner (LOA: 92.11 meters), operational since March 2022

Fishing patterns remained consistent throughout 2024, with industrial efforts concentrated offshore and no significant shifts in spatial or temporal deployment. Meanwhile, artisanal fisheries continued to dominate nearshore zones.

3.2. Monitoring and Sustainability Measures

Tanzania has integrated electronic monitoring systems and enhanced observer programs to strengthen fisheries governance and improve data quality. These measures aim to:

- Improve the accuracy of catch and effort reporting
- Support compliance with national and regional management frameworks
- Enable evidence-based decision-making for sustainable resource use

This dual-track approach—supporting both offshore industrial oversight and nearshore artisanal resilience—reinforces Tanzania's commitment to sustainable fisheries, food security, and the livelihoods of coastal communities.

Table 2a. The annual catch and effort from the industrial longline reported between 2019 and 2024 in the IOTC area of competence, and values are expressed in Tons.

Year	BET	ALB	BLM	BUM	BSH	OCS	NEI	SFA	MLS	SWO	YFT	SKJ	DOL
2019	1,412	-	167	-	-	308	-	-	1,045	685	1,043	-	-
2020	2,191	-	85	633	325	125	-	-	2,610	1,858	1,120	-	-
2021	845	3	8	19	-	-	22	8	5	84	599	-	-
2022	7.1	0.03	0.9	0.2	-	-	-	2	0.07	6.2	92.2	-	-
2023	23.94	59.6	1.14	7.82	50.6	-	-	4.09	0.67	22.66	146.99	-	-
2024	50.56	65.51	1.22	10.61				2.76	0.18	14.52	58.92	0.15	16.64

Table 2b. Annual catch and effort from industrial purse seine reported between 2022 and 2024 in the IOTC area of competence, values are expressed in Tons.

Year	BET	ALB	FRI	BUM	BSH	OCS	NEI	SFA	MLS	SKJ	YFT	DOL	OSH
2022	1,123	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,343	2,816	-	-
2023	940.70	1.0	374.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,913	2,496.3	-	-
2024	735	-	353	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,971	2,901	12	1

Table 2c. Annual catch and effort from artisanal fisheries reported between 2019 and 2024 in the IOTC area of competence, values are expressed in Tons.

Fish group	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bigeye (BET)	2248	1180	1729	351.22	775.37	1592.57
Billfish	2420	858	538.9	39.82	467.90	-
Kawakawa (KAW)	970	3983	1931.5	39.91	1176.03	701.42
Kanadi Kingfish (KAK)	2053	2320	-	2.03	490.28	1011.81
Skipjack (SKJ)	-	568	331.1	342.51	446.19	1045.62
Sharks and rays	2155	-	-	331.17	23.21	-
Swordfish (SWO)	680	3212	564.3	150.82	702.91	229.13
Yellowfin (YFT)	2254	2321	2075.9	559.62	775.91	1009.56
Long tail tuna (LOT)	-	-	1116.1	430.1	2277.09	744.42
Kingfish (COM)	-	-	-	-	507.64	-
Frigate Tuna (FRI)	-	-	-	-	-	457.29
Indo-Pacific sailfish (SFA)	-	-	-	-	-	184.79
Silky shark (FAL)	-	-	-	-	-	43.25
BLT	-	-	-	-	-	366.41

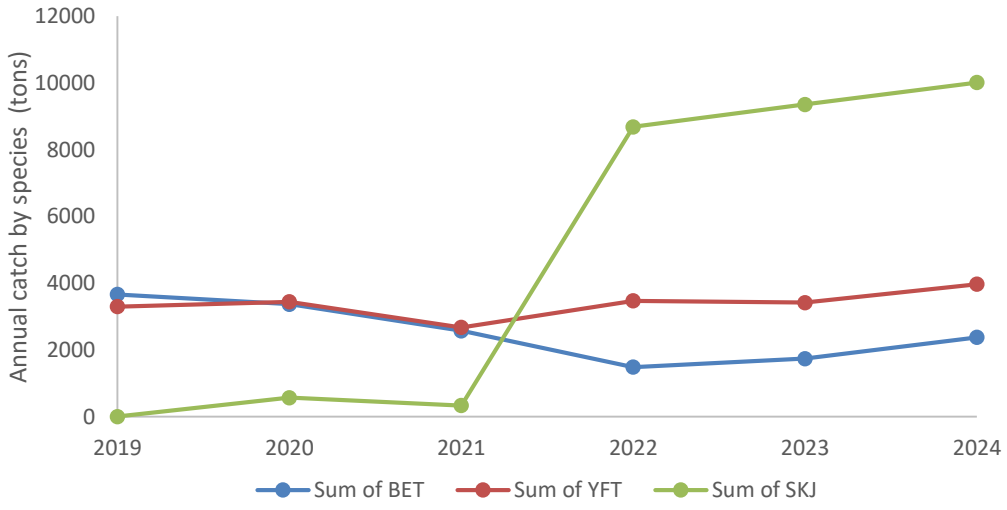

Figure 1. Historical annual catch for the national fisheries by primary species, for the IOTC area of competence, for the entire history of the fisheries.

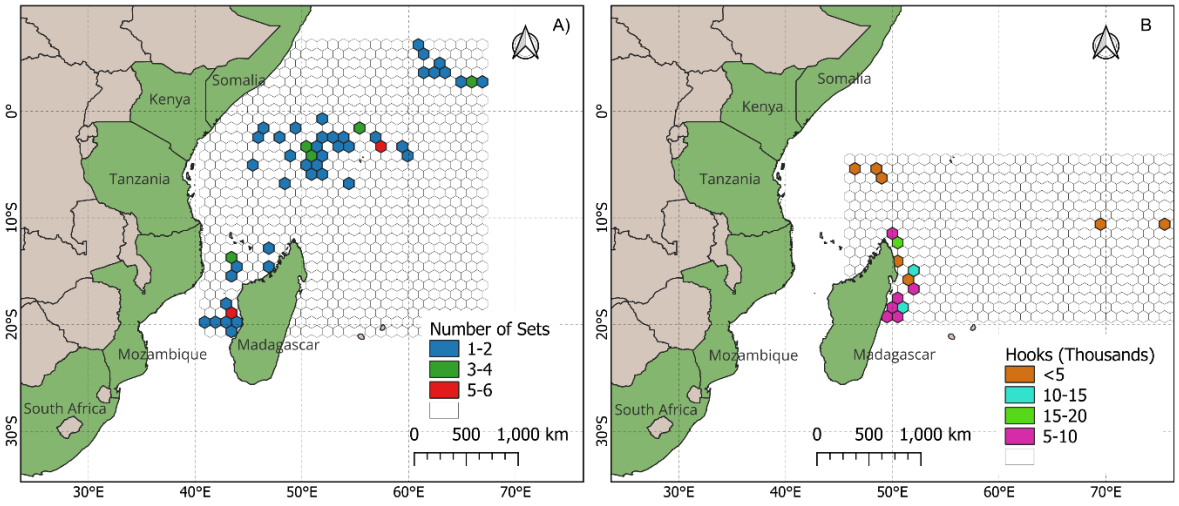

Figure 2a. Map of the distribution of fishing effort, by national fishery in the IOTC area of competence (most recent year, 2024), (a) purse seine and (b) longline.

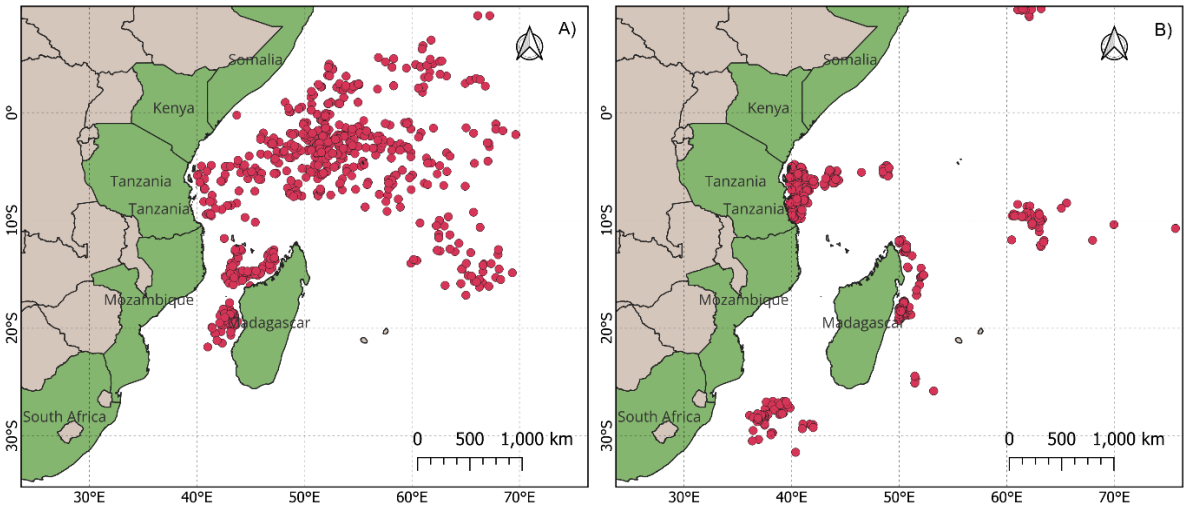

Figure 2b(1). Distribution of fishing events by national fishery in the IOTC area of competence for 5 previous years, 2020–2024), (a) purse seine and (b) longline.

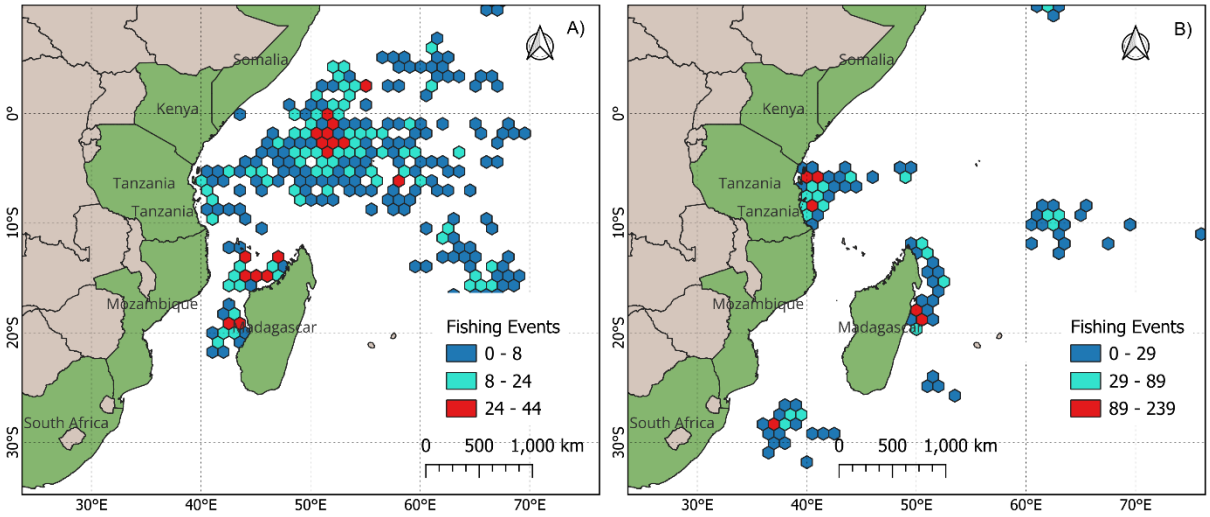

Figure 2b (2). Map of the distribution of fishing effort, by national fishery in the IOTC area of competence (average of the 5 previous years, 2020–2024, (a) purse seine and (b) longline

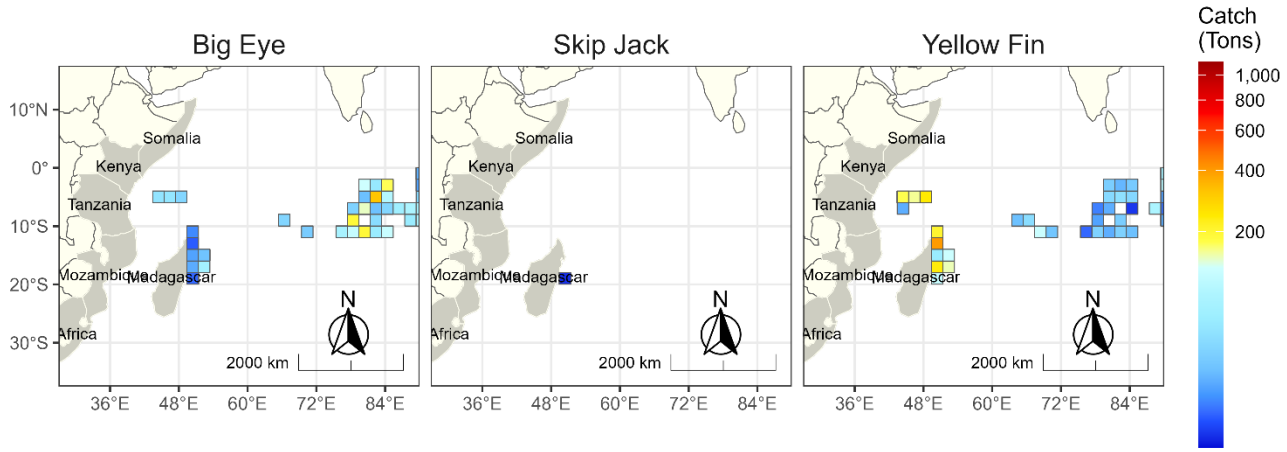

Figure 3a. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species, for the national fisheries, in the IOTC area of competence for longline (most recent year, 2024).

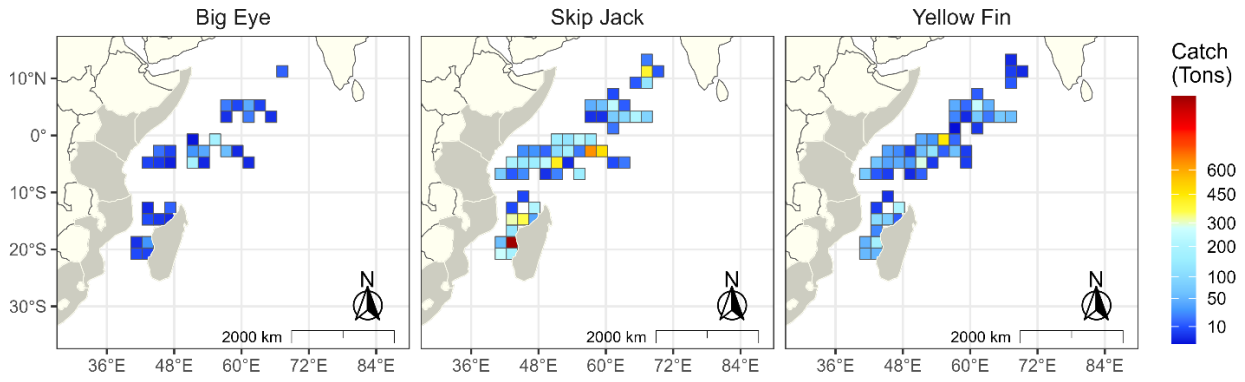

Figure 3a. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species, for the national fisheries, in the IOTC area of competence for purse seine (most recent year, 2024).

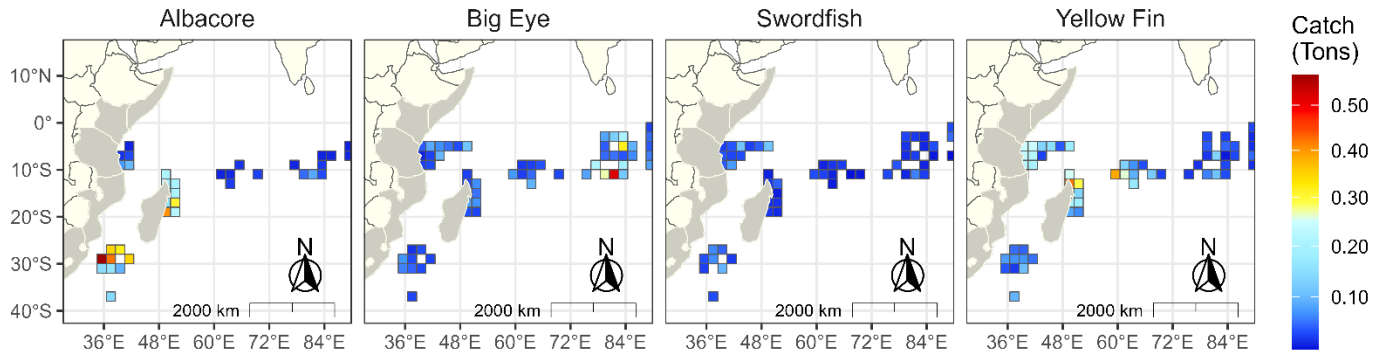

Figure 3b. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species, for the national fisheries, in the IOTC area of competence (average of the 5 previous years, 2020–2024 for longline).

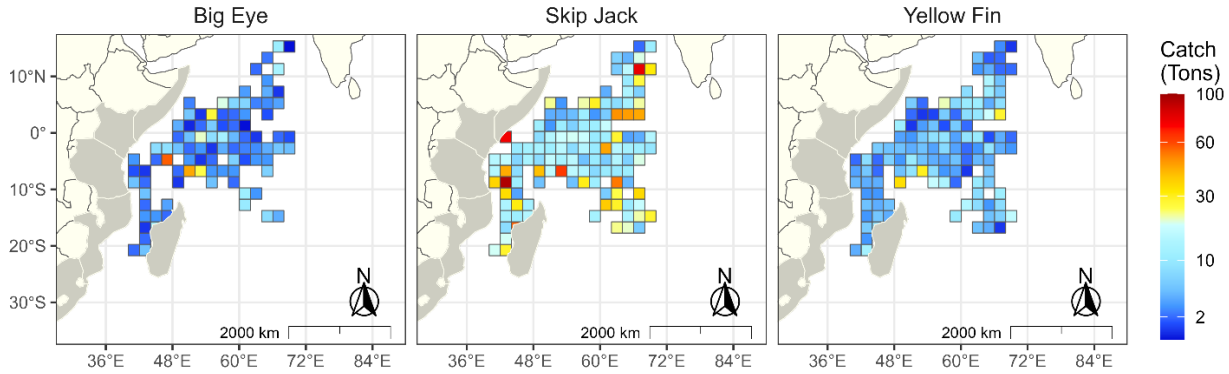

Figure 3b. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species, for the national fisheries, in the IOTC area of competence (average of the 5 previous years, 2020–2024 for purse seine).

4. Recreational fishery

Recreational fishing in Tanzania is a dynamic and multifaceted activity encompassing coastal "catch and release" sport fishing and inland freshwater angling. It is primarily concentrated in designated marine zones around Zanzibar, Mafia, and Pemba islands, where anglers target iconic pelagic species such as marlin, sailfish, swordfish, and yellowfin tuna, especially during peak migration seasons from August to October and December to March.
Beyond the islands, hotspots also include Pangani, Dar es Salaam, and the northern and eastern coasts of Unguja and Pemba, offering year-round opportunities to catch groupers, red snappers, and barracuda.
While recreational fishing contributes significantly to tourism, local livelihoods, and Tanzania's reputation as a premier angling destination, the lack of systematic catch data—especially in the marine sport fishing sector—hinders comprehensive assessments of its environmental impact and sustainability. Strengthening monitoring and reporting mechanisms could enhance resource management and support long-term conservation goals.

5. Ecosystem and bycatch issues

Tanzania has adopted a robust and integrated approach to sustainable fisheries management. It aligns its national framework with the 40 Minimum Terms and Conditions (MTC) endorsed by the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC). This alignment reflects a strategic commitment to addressing ecological risks and advancing conservation priorities across species groups and fishing sectors.
The legal foundation for this approach is anchored in the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Act, Cap. 388 of 2020 as amended, and its accompanying Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Regulations 2021, which promote responsible exploitation and long-term stewardship of marine resources within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and areas beyond national jurisdiction. These instruments explicitly support ecosystem-based management and precautionary principles.
Operationally, Tanzania has implemented a mandatory logbook system requiring daily reporting of fishing activities, including catch composition and bycatch data. This supports ongoing ecological risk assessments and informs adaptive management strategies. To further strengthen oversight, the country is preparing to pilot an electronic monitoring (EM) system to enhance transparency and compliance in offshore operations.
Bycatch mitigation remains a central priority. Tanzania is actively promoting turtle excluder devices (TEDs), specifically Juvenile Turtle Excluder Devices (JTEDs), to reduce incidental capture of undersized fish and vulnerable species such as sea turtles. These efforts are complemented by broader ecosystem management initiatives to minimise fishing impacts and safeguard biodiversity.

5.1. Sharks

Tanzania has established regulatory and strategic measures to support shark species' conservation and sustainable management. Regulations 6,7,8 and through 9 of the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Regulations (2021) outline measures for shark conservation, including gear restrictions, retention bans, and mandatory reporting of incidental catches. These are reinforced by national and Zanzibar fisheries legislation prohibiting fishing, trade, and possession of shark and ray species listed under the IUCN Red List and CITES Appendices.
Complementing these legal instruments, Tanzania has developed a National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA-Sharks), which awaits formal signing and endorsement. The NPOA-Sharks provides a strategic framework for improving data collection, mitigating bycatch, and enhancing species-specific protections.
Recent trends indicate a decline in targeted shark fishing, with most interactions occurring as incidental catch in tuna and swordfish longline fisheries. These interactions are increasingly documented through logbooks and observer reports, informing adaptive management and regional coordination efforts.

5.1.1. NPOA sharks

Tanzania has finalised its National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA-Sharks), which now awaits formal signing and endorsement. The document outlines strategic measures aligned with FAO guidelines to strengthen species protection, improve data collection, and mitigate bycatch risks.
In parallel, a specialised data collection system targeting sharks and rays in artisanal fisheries has been developed through collaborative efforts between the government and key stakeholders. These initiatives underscore Tanzania's commitment to the sustainable management and responsible utilisation of shark populations and broader marine ecosystems.

5.1.2. Blue shark

Tanzania has implemented stringent domestic measures to monitor and regulate shark catches in line with Resolution 18.02. National fisheries legislation—enforced by the Fisheries Departments, local governments, and the Deep Sea Fishing Authority (DSFA) under regulation 6 of the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Regulations of 2021—explicitly prohibits shark finning, possession, and trade. In 2024, no incidents of shark finning were recorded, reflecting strong compliance and enforcement across the fleet.
To strengthen species-specific monitoring, Tanzania revised its official fishing logbook in 2022 to include dedicated fields for recording interactions with blue sharks. This enhancement enables accurate reporting and supports ongoing efforts to assess population trends and ecological impacts. The initiative contributes to regional conservation objectives and reinforces Tanzania's commitment to transparent, science-based fisheries management.

5.2. Seabirds

In 2024, no seabird interaction records were reported by Tanzanian longline vessels operating south of 25°S. All relevant data are submitted to the IOTC Secretariat through Form 1DI, in compliance with IOTC Resolutions 23/07 and 15/02, and supplemented by the Regional Observer Scheme (ROS).
To minimise the risk of seabird bycatch, Tanzania's longline fleet implements key mitigation measures, including bird-scaring lines and line weighting. These practices align with IOTC Resolution 10/06, which has been formally adopted into national legislation.
Tanzania is also finalising its National Plan of Action for Seabirds (NPOA-Seabirds), providing a comprehensive framework for reducing incidental seabird catches and supporting species recovery south of 25°S. The NPOA-Seabirds is scheduled for completion in 2026.

5.3. Marine Turtles

Tanzania's coastal waters are home to five of the world's seven marine turtle species: Green (*Chelonia mydas*), Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), and Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*). All five are listed as endangered or critically endangered by the IUCN and are protected under Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
To address long-standing threats—including harvesting for meat, eggs, and shells; incidental capture in fishing gear; coastal development; climate change; and habitat degradation—Tanzania launched its first National Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Turtles (2024–2029). This strategic framework outlines recovery priorities, including habitat protection, community engagement, and fisheries mitigation.
In line with IOTC Resolution 12/04 and 15/02, Tanzania reports detailed data on marine turtle interactions through Form 1DI for vessels listed in the IOTC Record of Authorised Vessels and via the Regional Observer Scheme (ROS). These reports include information on successful mitigation measures and observed impacts such as nesting site deterioration and ingestion of marine debris.

The IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB) was tasked in 2017 to review the effectiveness of mitigation measures under Resolution 12/04, as part of the Commission's annual work program. Tanzania contributes to this process through its national reporting and conservation initiatives.

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

Tanzania's fisheries legislation strongly emphasises the conservation and sustainable management of ecologically significant marine species, including cetaceans (such as dolphins and whales), mobulid rays, and whale sharks. These iconic species are not only essential to the health of marine ecosystems but also hold cultural and economic importance, particularly through ecotourism and biodiversity value.

Tanzania's coastal and offshore waters—especially around Mafia Island, Zanzibar, and the Pemba Channel—serve as important habitats and migratory corridors for these species. For instance, Mafia Island is home to a small resident population of juvenile whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*), most commonly observed feeding near the surface between October and April. However, these gentle giants face growing threats from fishing activities, boat traffic, and unregulated tourism. Conservation organisations such as Sea Sense and the Marine Megafauna Foundation work closely with local communities to reduce harmful interactions, including entanglement in fishing nets and injuries from boat propellers.

In 2024, Tanzania's industrial fishing fleet reported no bycatch of cetaceans, mobulid rays, or whale sharks. This data has been submitted through the IOTC's official reporting mechanisms, including Form 1DI and the Regional Observer Scheme, in accordance with Resolutions 12/04 and 15/02. Continued monitoring and reporting are essential to ensure that these species remain protected and that any emerging threats are swiftly addressed.

Tanzania also benefits from regional research and conservation initiatives led by organisations like the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), which supports the development of national management plans for sharks and rays and contributes to broader marine protected area strategies. These efforts are helping to build a more resilient marine ecosystem and ensure that Tanzania's marine megafauna can thrive for generations.

6. National data collection and processing systems

6.1. Logsheet data collection and verification

Tanzania has established a robust system for monitoring industrial and artisanal fisheries, ensuring transparency, sustainability, and informed decision-making across its marine sector.

Licensed fishing vessels operating within Tanzania's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and on the high seas must report daily activities, including catch volumes, bycatch, transhipment operations, and vessel movements, to the Deep Sea Fishing Authority (DSFA). These reports are submitted using standardised electronic log sheets that comply with Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) requirements. The logbooks capture detailed data on catch composition, fishing effort, and operational zones, and are regularly updated to reflect evolving data needs. Once submitted, the DSFA integrates this information into the Fisheries Information System (FIS) or the Catch Assessment System, which is stored, analysed, and used to guide national fisheries policy and management.

Artisanal fisheries, which play a vital role in food security and livelihoods along Tanzania's coast, are monitored through a community-based approach. Trained data enumerators from Beach Management Units (BMUs) collect catch data at designated landing sites in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, covering all coastal districts. Data collection sites are strategically selected based on vessel density and accessibility to ensure representative sampling. In Mainland Tanzania, data collection occurs over 10 designated days per month, while Zanzibar conducts sampling over 16 days. District

Fisheries Officers review the data before it is entered into national databases, and cross-verification by fisheries scientists ensures accuracy and reliability.

The collected data support annual reporting, scientific research, and public awareness campaigns. Looking ahead, Tanzania plans to expand its artisanal fisheries data collection network by 2025, aiming to include more landing sites and improve the monitoring and management of marine resources nationwide.

6.2. Observer scheme

Tanzania remains a committed participant in the Regional Observer Scheme (ROS), deploying a dedicated team of 22 trained fisheries observers to monitor and document fishing activities across its fleet. These observers play an important role in ensuring transparency, compliance, and sustainable practices at sea.

In partnership with the IOTC Secretariat, Tanzania recently expanded its scientific capacity by training 10 additional fisheries observers. This initiative supports the country's broader goal of enhancing fisheries management and data quality.

During 2024, one observers was deployed on a purse seiner flagged vessel. Its work contributes directly to regional conservation efforts and helps inform policy decisions through accurate, first-hand reporting from the field.

Table 3. Annual observer coverage by operation, e.g., longline hooks, purse seine sets (for the most recent five years at a minimum, e.g., 2020–2024 or to the extent available).

Year	Gear	Coverage %
2019	LL	100
2020	LL	100
2021	LL	100
2022	LL	100
2022	PS	20
2023	PS	50
2023	LL	5
2024	PS	19
2024	LL	5

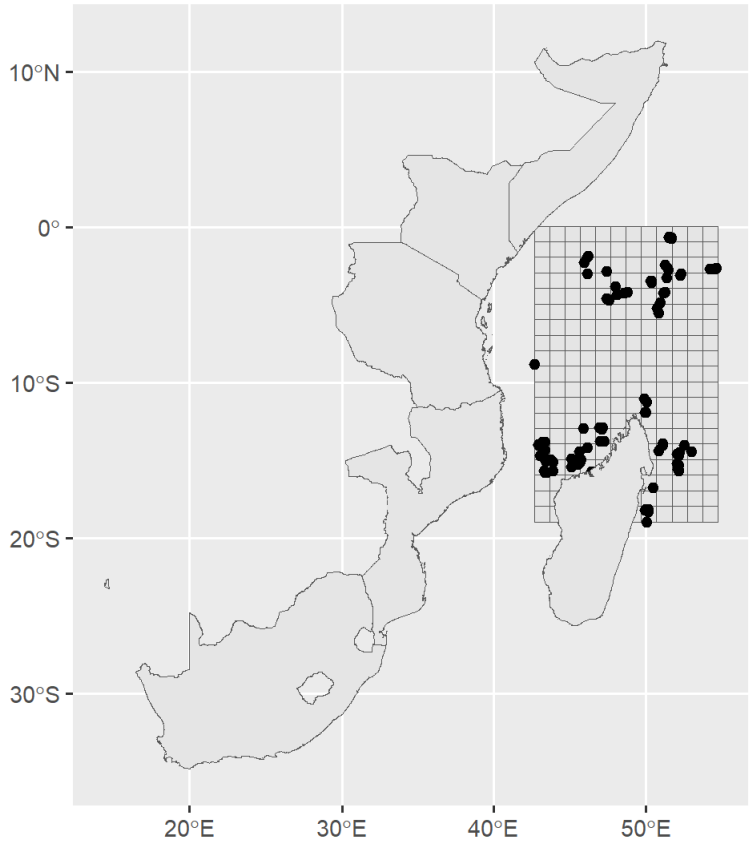

Figure 4. Map showing the spatial distribution of observer coverage.

6.3. Port sampling programme

Port sampling activities were not conducted in 2024. However, trained observers stationed at seven designated landing sites continued to collect size composition data throughout the year.

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

Year	Gear Coverage %			
	LL	*PS*	*GN*	*Others (coastal fisheries)*
Trip 2018	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*120 days/selected landing sites*
Trip 2019	*1*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*120 days/selected landing sites*
Trip 2020	*1*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*90 days/selected landing sites*
Trip 2021	*1*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*90 days/selected landing sites*
Trip 2022	*2*	*1*	*N/A*	*90 days/selected landing sites*
Trip 2023	*2*	*1*	*N/A*	*90 days/selected landing sites*
Trip 2024	*1*	*1*	*N/A*	*90 days/selected landing sites*

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

Year	LL					PS					
	SKJ	YFT	BET	ALB	BLM	SKJ	YFT	BET	ALB	BLM	SWO
2018	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2019	01	44	54	8	17	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2020	02	65	122	6	23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2021	03	74	133	8	37	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022	05	61	103	7	25	70	40	20	23	N/A	N/A
2023	N/A	43	3	11	11	36	18	2	6	9	5
2024	38	27	6	11	16	421	506	8	N/A	5	N/A

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

The United Republic of Tanzania remains fully committed to the sustainable exploitation and conservation of Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin, and Indo-Pacific Sailfish, in accordance with IOTC Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) that have been formally integrated into its national legislative and regulatory frameworks. To ensure effective implementation, Tanzania employs a multi-pronged approach that includes the deployment of trained fisheries observers on licensed vessels to monitor catch composition and fishing effort, enforcement of species-specific conditions embedded within fishing licenses, and routine inspections at designated landing sites to verify compliance. These actions are supported by continuous data collection systems that inform scientific assessments and guide policy decisions, reinforcing Tanzania's domestic oversight and contribution to regional conservation efforts.

6.5. Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring [Desirable]

Artisanal fishing vessels predominantly operate in Tanzanian waters with small-scale gillnets, typically low-capacity and dispersed across numerous landing sites. Due to these vessels' limited size and operational nature, dedicated onboard observer coverage is not currently implemented. However, Tanzania continues to explore alternative data collection methodologies, including shore-based sampling and community-led reporting mechanisms, to enhance monitoring in alignment with IOTC Resolution 19.01.

6.6. Sampling plans for mobulid rays

Due to competing priorities, a dedicated sampling plan for mobulid rays was not developed in 2024; however, Tanzania remains committed to aligning future monitoring efforts with the provisions of IOTC Resolution 19/03.

6.7. Electronic Monitoring Standards

Tanzania is currently planning the pilot implementation of electronic monitoring systems (EMS) in accordance with IOTC Resolution 23/08. While the initiative aligns with broader national efforts to enhance compliance and transparency, implementation has not yet commenced.

7. National research programs

Over the past several years, Tanzania has successfully conducted research studies within its marine waters, providing valuable insights for national fisheries management. Building on this foundation, the country is preparing to launch additional research initiatives in 2026 under the Tanzania Scaling Up Sustainable Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture Management (TASFAM) Project. These upcoming programs are designed to promote sustainable fisheries practices further and strengthen the governance and stewardship of marine resources.

7.1. National research programs on *blue* shark

There were no dedicated national research programs on blue sharks in 2024.

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

In 2024 Tanzania did not undertake dedicated national research programs targeting Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin, or Indo-Pacific Sailfish, as encouraged under Resolution 18/05 paragraph 11.

7.3. National research programs on sharks

In line with Resolution 17/05 paragraph 11, the Deep Sea Fishing Authority (DSFA), in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute (TAFIRI), has undertaken targeted research on shark species within Tanzanian waters. This work includes collecting catch composition, size frequency, and genetic sampling data. DNA analysis was employed to identify species and assess abundance and distribution patterns.

Preliminary findings indicate the presence of five critically endangered shark species in Tanzania's marine ecosystem: oceanic whitetip (*Carcharhinus longimanus*), ragged tooth (*Carcharias taurus*), short-tail nurse (*Pseudoginglymostoma brevicaudatum*), scalloped hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*), and great hammerhead (*Sphyrna mokarran*). Notably, artisanal landings near Unguja and Pemba suggest these areas may serve as potential nursery and pupping grounds for juvenile *C. longimanus* and *S. lewini.*

Given its endemic status in the Western Indian Ocean, the short-tail nurse shark warrants prioritised conservation attention in future national research programs. These findings underscore the importance of continued efforts to improve species identification, understand life-history traits, and identify critical habitats to inform gear selectivity and post-release survival strategies.

7.4. National research programs on oceanic whitetip sharks

Although no national research programs targeted oceanic whitetip sharks in 2024, this gap has been acknowledged. Under the EEZ research agenda for 2020–2030, Tanzania plans to initiate targeted studies in alignment with Resolution 13/06 paragraph 6, which encourages CPCs to identify potential nursery areas for this species within the IOTC area of competence. These efforts will contribute to improved understanding and conservation of oceanic whitetip sharks in national and regional waters.

7.5. National research programs on marine turtles

While no national research programs were specifically dedicated to marine turtles in 2024, it is worth noting that Sea Sense continues to play an active role in turtle monitoring and conservation along Tanzania's coastline. Although formal trials on mitigation measures—such as circle hooks, bait alternatives, and gear modifications—have not yet been initiated under Resolution 12/04 paragraph 10, these areas remain a priority for future research planning within the national EEZ framework.

7.6. National research programs on thresher sharks

As of 2024, Tanzania has not implemented dedicated national research programs focused on thresher sharks (*Alopias spp*). However, this gap has been noted, and future initiatives under the EEZ research agenda may consider targeted studies to support Resolution 12/09 paragraph 6, particularly in identifying potential nursery areas within the IOTC area of competence.

Table 6. Summary table of national research programs, including dates.

Project title	Period	Countries involved	Budget total	Funding source	Objectives	Short description
Strengthening Data Collection at Small-Scale Fisheries Landing Sites	2020-2024	Tanzania	200,000	Government	Enhance the accuracy and comprehensiveness of data collection at designated landing sites to support informed decision-making and sustainable fisheries management.	This work aims to improve data collection at small-scale fisheries landing sites to address data gaps, ensure accurate reporting, and provide a solid foundation for sustainable management of marine resources. Enhanced data collection will help inform policy, support conservation efforts, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of fisheries in Tanzania.

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 2024.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
12/04	On the conservation of marine turtles	Paragraphs 3, 4, 6–10	Tanzania has reinforced its marine turtle conservation efforts through the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Regulations of 2021. Regulation 10on conservation of marine turtles helps reduce harmful interactions with marine wildlife. A major step forward is launching the National Action Plan for Conservation of Marine Turtles (2024–2029), which addresses threats like habitat degradation and promotes cross-sector collaboration. The plan prioritises nesting and foraging habitat protection, stronger enforcement, and community involvement to safeguard endangered species, including green, hawksbill, loggerhead, leatherback, and olive ridley turtles. These efforts reflect Tanzania's proactive approach to ensuring the long-term survival of its marine turtle populations.
12/09	On the conservation of thresher sharks (family Alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 4–8	Tanzania has reinforced protections for thresher sharks (Alopiidae) and oceanic whitetip sharks through the regulation 8 of the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Regulations of 2021. The law strictly prohibits fishing, retaining, transhipment, landing, or storing these species within Tanzania's EEZ and RFMO-managed areas. Fishing operators must release individuals of these species unharmed if caught, and record all interactions, including live releases and incidental catches, in their logbooks.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
			These measures reflect Tanzania's commitment to conserving vulnerable shark species, which is aligned with IOTC objectives.
13/04	On the conservation of cetaceans	Paragraphs 7–9	Tanzania has strengthened protections for cetaceans and whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*) through Section 9 of the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Act, Cap 388 of 2020, and its accompanying regulations. The law mandates that if these species are unintentionally encircled or captured, vessel operators must take all reasonable measures to ensure their immediate and safe release, following best practices recommended by relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). Operators must submit detailed incident reports to the Director General, including species identification, number of individuals involved, geographic coordinates, actions taken for release, and the post-release condition of the animal. Additionally, any interactions involving other fishing gear targeting tuna and tuna-like species must be reported, ensuring comprehensive monitoring across gear types. These legal provisions reflect Tanzania's commitment to the sustainable management of marine megafauna and align with international conservation standards within and beyond its Exclusive Economic Zone.
13/05	On the conservation of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*)	Paragraphs 7–9	Same as above
13/06	On a scientific and management framework for the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC-managed fisheries	Paragraph 5–6	Tanzania has implemented robust conservation measures for shark species caught in association with IOTC-managed fisheries, guided by the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Regulations of 2021. These measures are designed to align with national legislation and international best practices, ensuring the sustainable management of shark populations. Under these regulations, Tanzanian-flagged vessels operating within the EEZ or in areas beyond national jurisdiction must adhere to strict handling protocols. The landing, retention, transhipment, or carriage of shark fins is prohibited unless the fins remain naturally attached to the carcass until the first point of landing for fresh sharks. For frozen sharks, the total fin weight onboard must not exceed 5% of the total shark weight, which aligns with international standards. To support compliance, operators must cooperate with monitoring mechanisms such as observer programs, certification systems, or other verification tools as directed by the Director General. Additionally, any shark fins harvested violating these rules are strictly prohibited from being retained, transhipped, or landed. A key conservation measure includes the live release of sharks—particularly juveniles and pregnant individuals—whenever feasible. This practice helps reduce bycatch mortality and contributes to the long-term sustainability of shark populations. Together, these measures reflect Tanzania's proactive approach to shark conservation and its commitment to responsible fisheries management under the IOTC framework.
15/01	On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 1–10	Under Section 36 of the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Act, Cap. 388 of 2020, regulation 36 and 43 of the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Regulations of 2021 in line with IOTC obligations, all fishing vessels—Tanzanian-flagged and licensed foreign vessels—operating within Tanzania's EEZ or the broader IOTC area must accurately record catch and fishing effort data As a licensing condition, vessels must maintain bound logbooks documenting daily fishing activities, including species composition,

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
			quantities landed, catch location (latitude and longitude), and weight by species. These records must be submitted to the Director General of the DSFA via MTU, fax, or email in English. Vessels must also report entry and exit from the EEZ, detailing the last port of call, position, date, and time to support real-time monitoring and deter IUU fishing. Additionally, operators must release juvenile or pregnant sharks and report interactions with protected species such as thresher and oceanic whitetip sharks, in compliance with IOTC conservation measures. Failure to comply with reporting requirements is punishable under Section 36(2), reinforcing Tanzania's commitment to sustainable fisheries governance and regional conservation goals.
15/02	Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)	Paragraphs 1–7	As a condition of licensing under Section 36 of the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Act, Cap. 388 of 2020 regulation 36 and 43 of the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Regulations of 2021 all fishing vessels operating within Tanzania's EEZ or beyond national jurisdiction must submit daily records of catch, effort, and size data to the Deep Sea Fishing Authority (DSFA). This requirement ensures timely reporting and supports effective monitoring and management of fishing activities in line with national and IOTC obligations.
17/05	On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC	Paragraphs 6, 9, 11	Under regulation 7 of the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Regulations of 2021 enforces strict conservation rules for sharks caught in association with fisheries, which align with national and RFMO standards. Vessel operators must ensure shark fins remain naturally attached to carcasses until first landing for fresh sharks. Fin fins must not exceed 5% of total shark weight for frozen landings. Compliance is verified through certification, observers, or other oversight mechanisms. Retention, transhipment, or landing of fins harvested in violation of these rules is prohibited. Live sharks—especially juveniles and pregnant individuals—must be released unharmed when not intended for food or subsistence. These measures help prevent overfishing and support sustainable shark management.
18/02	On management measures for the conservation of blue sharks caught in association with IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 2-5	Same as above
18/05	On management measures for the conservation of the Billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin, and Indo-Pacific sailfish	Paragraphs 7 – 11	Tanzania actively monitors billfish catches from both industrial longline vessels and artisanal fisheries to safeguard against overexploitation and ensure the long-term sustainability of these iconic species. This conservation effort is guided by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Resolution 18/05, which establishes reference catch levels based on 2014 and 2015 data, and is further reinforced by the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Regulations of 2021, which provide the national legal framework for the responsible utilisation and protection of deep-sea resources. In line with these commitments, all vessels targeting or incidentally catching Striped Marlin, Black Marlin, Blue Marlin, and Indo-Pacific Sailfish are required to record their catches in accordance with the prescribed standards for catch and effort data reporting. To strengthen species-specific protections, Tanzania is in the process of amending its Deep Sea Fisheries regulations to prohibit the retention, trans-shipment, or landing of individuals of these species measuring less than 60 cm Lower Jaw Fork Length (LJFL). Once adopted, this provision will require such specimens to be released

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
			immediately in a manner that maximizes post-release survival potential without compromising crew safety.
18/07	On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC	Paragraphs 1, 4	Tanzania remains firmly committed to meeting its reporting obligations under the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) framework and recognising the implications of non-compliance, including potential restrictions on fishing opportunities and reduced participation in decision-making. Tanzania has prioritised improvements in the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of its submissions. The country continues strengthening its reporting infrastructure through targeted capacity-building support from the IOTC and ongoing national investments in data systems and institutional coordination. These efforts reinforce Tanzania's compliance posture and enhance its contribution to sustainable, evidence-based fisheries management in the region.
19/01	On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence (*If not provided under Res 21/01 below*)	Paragraph 22	Tanzania actively enforces the Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock, demonstrating its commitment to regional recovery efforts and sustainable tuna fisheries management under the IOTC framework.
19/03	On the Conservation of Mobulid Rays Caught in Association with Fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence	Paragraph 11	In support of the conservation of mobulid rays caught in association with fisheries within the IOTC area of competence, Tanzania has prioritised the systematic collection of catch data for these vulnerable species. This initiative contributes to regional conservation goals by enhancing the scientific basis for sustainable management and informed decision-making under the IOTC framework. To further strengthen compliance, Tanzania is currently in the process of amending its regulations to formally accommodate mitigation measures for Mobulid Rays Caught in Association with Fisherie.
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	Same as 19/01
23/07	On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries.	Paragraphs 3–7	Tanzania is developing a National Plan of Action for conserving Seabirds, reinforcing its commitment to sustainable fishing practices and marine biodiversity protection. Under regulation 11 of the Deep Sea Fisheries Management and Development Regulations of 2021, the country has implemented robust measures to monitor and report incidental seabird bycatch by fishing vessels operating within its Exclusive Economic Zone, as well as those fishing beyond national jurisdiction or within the competence of relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). Vessel operators are mandated to report any seabird bycatch as the Director General directs. Additionally, Tanzanian vessels operating south of 25°S latitude must apply specific mitigation measures and adhere to technical standards to minimise seabird interactions. To further strengthen compliance, Tanzania is currently in the process of amending its regulations to formally accommodate mitigation measures applicable to operations south of 25°S latitude.
23/08	On electronic monitoring standards for IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 3c	Tanzania is planning the pilot implementation of electronic monitoring systems (EMS) in line with IOTC Resolution 23/08, as part of its broader compliance and transparency efforts.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
24/04	On a regional observer scheme	Paragraph 12	Tanzania has instituted a national observer program to strengthen fisheries monitoring, data collection, and regulatory compliance across its commercial fishing fleet. As part of this initiative, an observer training program was launched in October 2024 to build technical capacity and ensure consistent deployment of qualified personnel. Complementing onboard observation, the country conducts routine sampling at landing sites and implements regular frame surveys to generate robust fisheries data. These integrated efforts support comprehensive oversight and contribute to the sustainable management of marine resources.

9. Literature cited

MBEF (2020) Marine Fisheries Frame Survey 2020. SWIOFish Project/World Bank. Department of Fisheries Development, Zanzibar

MLF (2020) Fisheries Annual Statistics Report, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Tanzania. https://www.mifugouvuvi.go.tz/.

Silas MO (2022) Patterns of small-scale coastal fisheries and local fisheries management in Tanzania : adaptation to a changing climate. Doctoral thesis, comprehensive summary, Department of Ecology, Environment and Plant Sciences, Stockholm University, Stockholm

URT (2018) Marine Fisheries Frame Survey 2018 Report, Mainland Tanzania. Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Tanzania, Fisheries Department, Dodoma

Annex A:

A fleet-level summary of the Vessel Monitoring Plans

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

Not applicable for Tanzania

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

Not applicable for Tanzania

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

Not applicable for Tanzania