GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL REPORTS TO THE IOTC SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE IN 2026

The National Report is due to be submitted no later than 15 days prior to the start of the annual regular session of the Scientific Committee.

DEADLINE: 15 NOVEMBER 2026

Purpose: To provide relevant information to the Scientific Committee on research and fishing activities and associated monitoring and research activities of Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties operating in the IOTC area of competence. The report should include all fishing activities for species under the IOTC mandate as well as for elasmobranch species and other species taken as bycatch as required by the IOTC Agreement and decisions by the Commission.

NOTE: The submission of a National Report is **Mandatory**, irrespective if a CPC intends on attending the annual meeting of the Scientific Committee.

Explanatory note

This report is intended to provide a summary of the main features of the tuna and tuna-like fisheries for Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties. As such, it does not replace the need for submission of data according to Resolution 15/02 *Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)* and other data related CMMs.

Mandatory versus Desirable information

National Reports must include all headings as noted in the template below as [Mandatory]. Where data/information is not available for a given [Mandatory] heading, the reason why it is not available should be clearly stated. These mandatory fields for the *National Reports* were agreed to by the Scientific Committee in 2010.

Where available, CPCs are encouraged to provide additional information under the headings shown as [Desirable].

For clarification on minimum reporting requirements for the National Report, please contact the IOTC Secretariat (IOTC-Secretariat@fao.org).

NOTE

Please use the template below when preparing your National Report. Simply delete this explanatory page and add your own cover page/preliminaries if needed.
Please also delete any text shown in **red** below before submitting your National Report.

United Kingdom National Report to the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, 2026

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INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02 (and other data related CMMs as noted below), final scientific data for the previous year were provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the current year, **for all fleets other than longline** [e.g., for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2026, final data for the 2025 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2026)	YES 12/05/2026
In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, provisional **longline data** for the previous year was provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the current year [e.g., for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2026, preliminary data for the 2025 calendar year were provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June 2026). **REMINDER:** Final longline data for the previous year are due to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 Dec of the current year [e.g., for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2026, final data for the 2025 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 December 2024).	NO
If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions: The UK had no commercial longline vessels operating within IOTC jurisdiction in 2025. The UK British Indian Ocean Territory Administration (BIOTA) does not operate a separate flag registry. The BIOT/Chagos Archipelago does not have a fleet of commercial fishing vessels, and there is no commercial port in the BIOT/Chagos Archipelago. The waters of the Territory are a no-take Marine Protected Area (MPA) to commercial fishing. An MPA exclusion zone covering Diego Garcia and its territorial waters exists where pelagic and demersal recreational fisheries are permitted. The recreational fishery catches some tuna and tuna like species.	

Executive Summary [Mandatory]
BIOT / Chagos Archipelago waters are a no-take Marine Protected Area (MPA) to commercial fishing. Diego Garcia and its territorial waters are excluded from the MPA and include a recreational fishery. UK (BIOT) does not operate a flag registry and has no commercial tuna fleet or fishing port. The UK National Report summarises fishing in the BIOT/Chagos Archipelago recreational fishery in 2025 and provides details of research activities undertaken to date within the MPA.

The recreational fishery landed 10.3 tonnes of tuna and tuna like species on Diego Garcia in 2025. Principle target tuna species of the industrial fisheries (yellowfin and skipjack tunas) contributed to 13.2% of the total catch of tuna and tuna like species of the recreational fishery. Although yellowfin tuna are no longer considered overfished and subject to overfishing in the Indian Ocean, UK(BIOT) continue to encourage their live release. Length frequency data were recorded for all tuna and tuna-like species in the recreational fishery. A total of 157 yellowfin tuna were measured from this fishery and the mean length was 73.2 cm. Sharks caught in the recreational fishery are released alive.

IUU fishing remains one of the greatest threats to the BIOT / Chagos Archipelago ecosystem but a range of other threats exist including invasive and pest species, climate change, coastal change, disease and pollution, including discarded fishing gear such as Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs). During 2025 the BIOT/Chagos Archipelago Environment Officer continued to take forward the current conservation priorities. Recommendations of the Scientific Committee and those translated into Resolutions of the Commission have been implemented as appropriate by the BIOT Authorities.

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1. BACKGROUND/GENERAL FISHERY INFORMATION

The UK did not have any vessels registered in the IOTC RAV in 2025.

The recreational fishery catches some tuna and tuna-like species. Permitted recreational fisheries also include visiting yachts that fish outside the exclusion zone within the waters of the MPA, but not within Strict Nature Reserves. Such fishing must be for consumption only, within three days. Yachts must apply for a permit to moor in designated areas.

2. FLEET STRUCTURE [MANDATORY]

N/A: the UK does not have a flag registry or fleet of commercial fishing vessels. The recreational fishery is described in Section 4. The number of UK-flagged vessels operating over the last nine years is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence, by gear type and size class; 2017-2025.

Year	*Number of Vessels Licensed*	*Number of Vessels Active*	*Length*
2025	*0*	*0*	*N/A*
2024	*0*	*0*	*N/A*
2023	*0*	*0*	*N/A*
2022	*0*	*0*	*N/A*
2021	*0*	*0*	*N/A*
2020	*1*	*1 (drifting longliner)*	*45 Metres*
2019	*2*	*2 (drifting longliners)*	*39 metres – 45 metres*
2018	*2*	*2 (drifting longliners)*	*39 metres – 45 metres*
2017	*2*	*2 (drifting longliners)*	*39 metres – 45 metres*

3. CATCH AND EFFORT (BY SPECIES AND FISHERY) [Mandatory]

The UK had no vessels registered on the RAV during 2025; catch and effort for primary species in previous years are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Annual catch and effort by fishery and primary species in the IOTC area of competence; 2017 – 2025.

Year	Total Effort	Total Catch
2025	0	0.0
2024	0	0.0
2023	0	0.0
2022	0	0.0
2021	0	0.0
2020	270000	411.9
2019	621600	881.8
2018	498100	989.3
2017	500300	579.8

Species Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Albacore	3.1	1	1.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amberjack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barracuda	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bigeye Tuna	2.5	2.3	1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sailfish	3.3	3.9	8.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black Marlin	0.8	13.1	12.3	4.3	0	0	0	0	0
Bonito	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blue Shark	195.7	369.5	371.8	157.1	0	0	0	0	0
Blue Marlin	4.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Common Dolphinfish	2.6	2.9	3.3	0.9	0	0	0	0	0
Silky Shark	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other or Mixed Demersal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Snake Mackerel	17.6	31.6	16.6	6.7	0	0	0	0	0
Longfin Mako	0.3	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mako Shark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oilfish	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indo-Pacific Sailfish	1.2	7.3	3.5	1.4	0	0	0	0	0
Sharks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shortfin Mako	68.2	87.4	72	32.9	0	0	0	0	0
Scalloped Hammerhead Shark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swordfish	284.2	523	383.2	202.4	0	0	0	0	0
Tuna - Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wahoo	0.7	1.6	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yellowfin Tuna	20.6	91	142.4	6.2	0	0	0	0	0
Yellowtail Amberjack	7.2	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand total	614.1	1135.4	881.8	411.9	0	0	0	0	0

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; 2017 – 2025.

Figure 2a. Map of the distribution of fishing effort, by national fishery in the IOTC area of competence (most recent year e.g., 2025).
N/A – There was no commercial fishing activity by the UK fleet in 2025.

Figure 2b. Map of the distribution of fishing effort, by national fishery in the IOTC area of competence (average of the 5 previous years e.g., 2021–2025).
N/A - There was no commercial fishing activity by the UK fleet between 2021 and 2025

Figure 3a. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species for the national fisheries, in the IOTC area of competence (most recent year e.g., 2025).
N/A - There was no commercial fishing activity by the UK fleet between 2021 and 2025

Figure 3b. Map of distribution of fishing catch, by species for the national fisheries, in the IOTC area of competence (average of the 5 previous years e.g., 2021–2025).
N/A - There was no commercial fishing activity by the UK fleet between 2021 and 2025

4. RECREATIONAL FISHERY [Mandatory]

A small recreational fishery occurs in Diego Garcia. A total of 10 tonnes of tuna and tuna-like species were caught in 2025, as shown in the table below. Reef-associated species are also caught in this fishery. Of the principle commercial tuna species, yellowfin (no bigeye or skipjack were landed) contributed 13.9% of the total catch of tuna and tuna-like species of the recreational fishery.

Although yellowfin tuna are no longer overfished or subject to overfishing in the Indian Ocean, the UK continues to encourage their live-release, and has been for a number of years.

Year	Estimated catch of tuna and tuna like species (kg)										Total (kg)		
	Blue marlin	Dolphinfish	Kawakawa	Rainbow runner	Sailfish	Wahoo	Dogtooth tuna	Skipjack tuna	Yellowfin tuna	Other tuna nei	Tunas	Tuna like spp	All
2017	0	70	1525	288	0	7899	569	107	2425	0	3401	9783	13184
2018	0	94	1189	153	0	5163	189	176	4313	0	4678	6599	11277
2019	0	32	1201	186	0	3859	109	257	2770	299	3434	5279	8713
2020	0	32	345	76	141	2663	10.4	117	3110	45	3284	3258	6542
2021	9	22	582	40	0	5421	343	78	2622	0	3043	6075	9118
2022	0	59	199	62	0	5356	192	9	1580	5	1785	5676	7462
2023	0	35	244	23	0	6238	245	19	1191	23	1478	6540	8018.8
2024	0	40	335	51	0	5064	124	31	1129	0	1285	5490	6775.5
2025	0	30	639	85	0	8049	103	0	1353	0	1456	8805	10262

Catches of tuna and tuna-like species landed from the UK (BIOT) recreational fishery during the period 2017-2025.

Length data have been collected for yellowfin tuna (*T. albacares*) from the recreational fishery since June 2009. A total of 157 *T. albacares* were measured in 2025 with a mean length of 73.2 cm and a range of 48-120 cm. For comparison, the mean length in the recreational fishery in 2024 was 76.8 cm with a range of 40-140 cm. Observer programmes on purse seiners (2005/6) and longliners (2003/4) operating in BIOT recorded mean lengths of 98cm (n=378) and 123cm (n=2385) respectively and

5. ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH ISSUES [Mandatory]

The BIOT zone, excluding territorial waters around Diego Garcia, is a no-take MPA closed to commercial fishing. The recreational fishery on Diego Garcia is monitored. Beyond the blanket protection of all species through the declaration of the MPA, there are currently no separate national plans of action in place for individual species or species groups. However, in its recreational fishery, all sharks and billfish caught must be released alive and fishers are encouraged to release yellowfin tuna.

The current ecosystem threats relate to illegal unreported and unregulated fishing of which a large number of events were detected by the BIOT Patrol Vessel in 2025 and were reported separately to the Compliance Committee (IOTC-2026-CoC23-12). Controlling IUU is a core element of the current conservation priorities (see https://biot.gov.io/environment/).

5.1 Sharks [Mandatory]

Sharks must be released alive when caught in the recreational fishery, however they continue to be caught illegally by IUU vessels in BIOT waters. No commercial fishery operated in 2024.

Research, including tagging of sharks in BIOT waters is ongoing through the Bertarelli Programme on Marine Science which has included scientific research expeditions in BIOT, these are listed under Section 7.

5.1.1. NPOA sharks [Desirable]

N/A

5.1.2. Blue shark [Mandatory]

The UK did not operate a fishery in the IOTC area of competence in 2025, this was reported via e-MARIS. Biological data - size and discard data were provided in accordance with the Resolution 15/02 between 2017 and 2020 when on board observers were deployed on UK vessels operating in the IOTC.

5.2 Seabirds [Mandatory]

Seabird bycatch does not occur in the recreational fishery and has not been observed in IUU fisheries. No commercial fishery operated in 2025.

1. How many vessels operated south of 25˚S in the period covered by this report? None
2. How many of those vessels used bird scaring lines (as a proportion of total effort)? N/A
3. How many of those vessels used line weighting (as a proportion of total effort)? N/A
4. How many of those vessels used night setting (as a proportion of total effort)?N/A

5.3 Marine Turtles [Mandatory]

No turtle bycatch / interaction was reported in the BIOT recreational fishery in 2025. The BIOT area includes undisturbed and recovering populations of hawksbill and green turtles. Island sweeps are conducted as part of the normal monitoring programme, where part or entire islands are inspected, turtle nesting tracks are regularly encountered and recorded (See Section 7).

No incidents have been reported to the UK Fisheries Monitoring Centre since 2019, where a loggerhead turtle was captured and released. In 2025 there was no commercial fishing activity by the UK fleet in the IOTC area.

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

Only marine turtles were recorded as being caught by commercial vessels, loggerhead in 2019, and one in 2028, with a further two unidentified in 2018. All were released alive. Mobulid rays are occasionally caught by IUU vessels. No incidental mortality /annual catches on other ecologically related species such as marine mammals and whale sharks have been observed in the recreational fishery.

6. NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING SYSTEMS [Mandatory]

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

No commercial fisheries operated in the IOTC area of competence during 2025.

Logbook data collection for the recreational fishery is completed by the vessel charterer for each trip conducted. The system was introduced in 2006 and provides 100% coverage of all boat based recreational fishing activity. Prior to that a system of logbooks to be completed by fishers was utilised but proved to be less effective and did not achieve full coverage. A similar fisher-based system was introduced in 2016 for shore based recreational fishers, although they tend not to catch tuna or tuna like species and the reporting is inconsistent.

6.2. Observer scheme (including date commenced and status; number of observer, include percentage of coverage by fishery. Also, a description of the protocols supporting the observer programs and sampling schemes mentioned in paragraphs 3, 4, 6 and 9 of Res [25-06])

No Commercial fisheries operated in the IOTC area of competence during 2024, coverage from previous years is given in Table 3 and Figure 4.

Table 3. Annual observer coverage by longline hooks set (2017–2025).

Year	Hooks set	Hooks observed	Percent Observed
2025	0	0	0
2024	0	0	0
2023	0	0	0
2022	0	0	0
2021	0	0	0
2020	270,000	0	0
2019	621,600	45,000	7.2
2018	498,100	42,000	8.4
2017	500,300	38,688	7.7

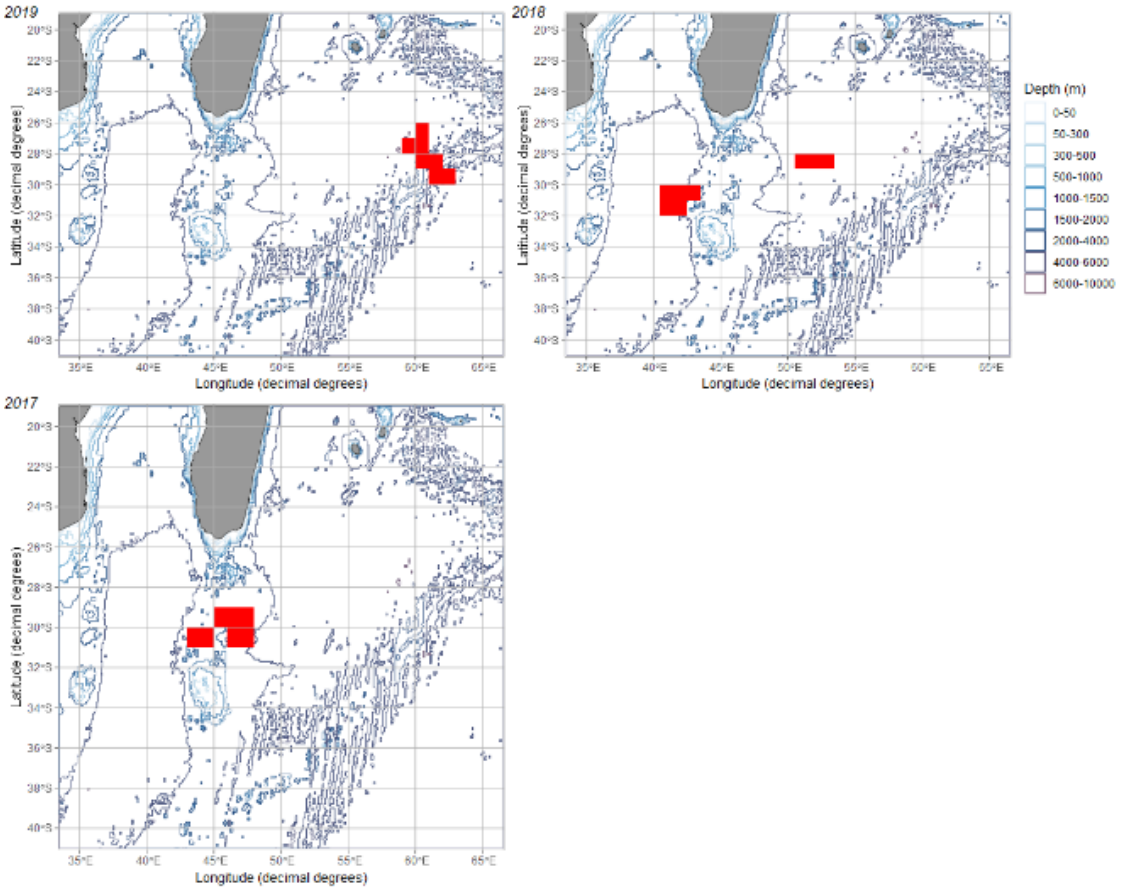

Figure 4. Map showing the spatial distribution of observer coverage during the years in which the programme ran (2017 – 2019).

6.3. Port sampling programme.

N/A - The UK operated no commercial fisheries in the IOTC area of competence during 2025 and no port sampling regime has been in place.

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

	Port sampling (all gears)	
Year	**Vessel trips**	**Trips monitored**
2025	0	0

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

	Port sampling (all gears)	
Year	**Individuals landed**	**Individuals measured**
2025	0	0

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

The UK operated no commercial fisheries in the IOTC area of competence during 2025 and none of these species have been landed.

Within the recreational fishery gaffing billfish and sailfish is prohibited under the licence terms and conditions and all should be unhooked and released if caught

6.5. Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring [Desirable]

The UK operated no commercial fisheries in the IOTC area of competence during 2025 and has never operated a gillnet fishery in the area.

6.6 Sampling plans for mobulid rays [Mandatory]

The UK operated no commercial fisheries in the IOTC area of competence during 2025 and has no sampling plan in place. However some sampling does take place on IUU catches, when the opportunity arises.

6.7 Electronic Monitoring Standards [Mandatory for CPC implementing EMS]

The UK operated no commercial fisheries in the IOTC area of competence during 2025 and therefore did not have a need to implement a EMS system.

7. NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS [Desirable]

Currently most research is conducted within BIOT through a series of expeditions funded under the Bertarelli Programme in Marine Science Research under the BPMS links to conservation priorities through 'Key Species' research.

7.1. National research programs on blue shark

There is no National research programme specifically on blue shark, any caught in the IUU fisheries are measured and reported to IOTC.

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

There is no National research programme specifically on these species.

7.3. National research programs on sharks

There is no National research programme specifically on sharks taken in fisheries.

7.4. National research programs on oceanic whitetip sharks

There is no National research programme on whitetip sharks taken in the IOTC area of competence.

7.5. National research programs on marine turtles

There is no National research programme on marine turtles, however research continues within BIOT on their global movements and the effects plastic has on them (see publications 2 and 5).

7.6. National research programs on thresher sharks

There is no National research programme specifically to look at potential nursery areas, research has been previously undertaken to look at the effects of the landings ban on thresher sharks in Sri Lanka.

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

Project title	Period	Countries involved	Budget total	Funding source	Objectives	Short description
Bertarelli Programme in Marine Science	2017-2026	UK, USA, Australia, Mauritius, Seychelles, Sri Lanka India, La Reunion, Maldives	$24m	Bertarelli Foundation	Two phase programme of collaborative, multi disciplinary marine science	Indian Ocean marine science collaboration studying highly mobile species, effects of MPA protection on IUU fishing ad resilience and recovery of corals reefs

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

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	All mandatory statistical reports, including null reports are submitted.
12/09	On the conservation of thresher sharks (family alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 4–8	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025
13/04	On the conservation of cetaceans	Paragraphs 7– 9	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025
13/05	On the conservation of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*)	Paragraphs 7– 9	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025
13/06	On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries	Paragraph 5–6	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025
15/01	On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 1–10	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025. Sharks are released alive if caught in the recreational fishery
15/02	Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)	Paragraphs 1–7	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025
17/05	On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC	Paragraphs 6, 9, 11	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025
18/02	On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 2-5	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025
18/05	On management measures for the conservation of the Billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish	Paragraphs 7 – 11	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025
18/07	On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC	Paragraphs 1, 4	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025
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	Provided under Res 21/01 below.
19/03	On the Conservation of Mobulid Rays Caught in Association with Fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence	Paragraph 11	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025, and therefore does not intentionally or incidentally catch mobulid rays. They are not caught in the recreational fishery, there is no National monitoring programme in place, however research has been undertaken (see Section 9)
21/01	On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence (*If not provided under Res 19/01 above*)	Paragraph 23	The UK had no commercial fishery operational in 2025. Small amounts of yellowfin tuna are caught in the recreational fishing in BIOT but since 2018 their release alive has been encouraged (Section 4).
23/07	On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries.	Paragraphs 3–7	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025, and therefore does not incidentally catch seabirds.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
23/08	On electronic monitoring standards for IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 3c	The UK operated no commercial fisheries in the IOTC area of competence during 2025 and therefore did not have a need to implement a EMS system.
25/06	On a regional observer scheme	Paragraph 12	Not applicable as the UK had no commercial fishery operational in the IOTC area of competence in 2025.

9. LITERATURE CITED [Mandatory]

ALL REFERENCES NUMBERED 1 THROUGH 33 USE DATA COLLECTED IN THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO BY THE BERTARELLI PROGRAMME IN MARINE SCIENCE

1. Benkwitt, C.E., Zora, A., Ebrahim, A., Govinden, R., Lange, I.D., Evans, S. Schulze, M., Cotton, E., Bennett, L., Graham, N.A.J. (2025). Nutrient connectivity via seabirds enhances dynamic measures of coral reef ecosystem function. *PLOS Biology* https://journals.plos.org/plosbiology/article?id=10.1371/journal.pbio.3003222 [open access]. *Jun*

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Annex A:

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

N/A

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

N/A

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].

N/A

A3 A general description of EMS requirements placed upon vessel skippers/crews by the CPC government [Mandatory for CPC implementing EMS].

N/A