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

Authors

National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) and the Liberia Maritime Authority (LiMA)

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 2024, final data for the 2023 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 June 2024)	NO. Liberia does not have flag catch vessel operating in the IOTC area. However, there are Liberia flagged reefers vessels operating within the IOTC area.
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 2024, preliminary data for the 2023 calendar year were provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June 2024). **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 2024, final data for the 2023 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat by 30 December 2024).	NO. Liberia does not have flag catch vessel operating in the IOTC area. However, there are Liberia flagged reefers vessels operating within the IOTC area.
If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions:	

Executive Summary [Mandatory]
This report summarizes Liberia's activities and participation with the IOTC. The report provides that Liberia does not currently have a fishing or catch vessel in the Convention Area of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. A notable point in the report is that the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Law of Liberia and the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Regulations of Liberia provide the legal framework and the mechanisms for ensuring the implementation and enforcement of the relevant Conservation and Management Measures of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. Currently. There are 13 Liberian flagged carrier and supply vessels authorised to operate in the Convention Area of IOTC. These vessels primarily conduct transhipment activities.

For the effective conservation and management of various species, Liberia has a robust legal framework comprising both national and international instruments. For the conservation and management of marine turtles, whale sharks, thresher sharks and other species, Liberia implements and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Guidelines for the management and conservation of those species.
During the report period, Liberia did not undertake any research activities in the convention area of the IOTC. The report highlights Liberia's full commitment to the effective implementation and enforcement of the relevant conservation and management measures of the IOTC.

*[Include a summary of the key aspects of the National Report for the most recent reporting year. This summary will be included in the Scientific Committee report (**300 words maximum**)]*

Contents [*add a table of contents with page numbers***] [Desirable]**

1. BACKGROUND/GENERAL FISHERY INFORMATION [MANDATORY]

Liberia's status as a cooperating non-contracting party (CNCP) of the India Ocean Tuna commission was renewed by the IOTC Commission last year. In accordance with its CNCP status, there are currently 13 Liberian flagged carrier and support vessels authorized to conduct transshipment operations in the IOTC Convention Area. Liberia remains fully committed to working with IOTC in promoting cooperation among the Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties of the IOTC with a view to ensuring, through appropriate management, the conservation and optimum utilization of stocks covered by the organization. This is done through commitment to implement and comply with conservation and management measures (CMMs) of the IOTC Commission. Liberia will continue to implement measures such as vessel monitoring system (VMS), authorization to transship and establishment of fisheries monitoring center (FMC) to ensure compliance by its vessels.

In addition to its status as a flag state, Liberia is also a fishing nation with different and vast fisheries including tuna and tuna-like species such as Bigeye, Yellowfin, Skipjack, Albacore billfishes and small tunas. In addition to giving Liberia the experience and competence in fisheries management, fishery sector remains a major source of revenue, employment and food security for the country.

A lot of gains have been made in ensuring the proper management of the fisheries sector of Liberia. There were two purse seine tuna vessels flagged to Liberia and conducted fishing activities for the reporting period, although these vessels did not operate within the IOTC Area. There were access agreements signed during the 2022 and the vessels operated within the ICCAT Area, therefore, the agreements were transmitted to ICCAT Secretariat. Under access agreement, there were 33 vessels that obtained licenses to fish for tuna and tuna like species in the EEZ of Liberia. For the industrial fisheries, the catches for the two flag vessels is estimated at 8721.87 tons of which 77.61%

(6769.37 tons) was SKJ, 19.84% tons was YFT and 2.55% (222.04) tons was BET. There are approximately 650 canoes targeting tuna and tuna like species throughout the 114 fish landing sites along the nine coastal counties of Liberia.

2. FLEET STRUCTURE [MANDATORY]

3. *Liberia does not have catch vessels operating within the IOTC areas.*

Table 1: Number of vessels operating in the IOTC area of competence, by gear type and size class

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

5. *Liberia as a CNCP to IOTC does not have catch vessels conducting fishing activities in the IOTC area, but we have reefers vessels transhipping fisheries products.*

Table 2. Annual catch and effort by fishery and primary species in the IOTC area of competence. *[for the most recent five years at a minimum]* Include a 'not elsewhere indicated – NEI' category for all other catches combined. *[Note: Multiple tables may be required e.g., **Table 2a, 2b, 2c).*** **[Mandatory]**

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. **[Mandatory]**

Figure 2a. Map of the distribution of fishing effort, by national fishery in the IOTC area of competence (most recent year e.g., 2023). *[may require a separate map for each fishery]* **[Mandatory]**

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., 2019–2023). *[may require a separate map for each fishery]* **[Mandatory]**

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., 2023). *[may require a separate map for each species]* **[Mandatory]**

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., 2019–2023). *[may require a separate map for each species]* **[Mandatory]**

6. RECREATIONAL FISHERY [Mandatory]

Liberia recreational fishing vessels do not conduct fishing activities within the IOTC area

7. ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH ISSUES [Mandatory]

Ecosystem and bycatch issues are discussed in this section

5.1 Sharks [Mandatory]

In 2019, Liberia adopted its National Plan of Action for Sharks and has also prohibited some aspect of shark fishing has on the 2019 Fisheries and Aquaculture Management and Development Law as stated below in Section 5.1.2 of this report.

5.1.1. NPOA sharks [Desirable]

In 2019, Liberia adopted its first NPOA sharks and is now in the implementation phase.

5.1.2. Blue shark [Mandatory]

Section 4.7 of the 2019 Fisheries and Aquaculture Management and Development Law prohibit certain aspect of shark fishing as stated below:

1) *This section applies, inter alia, to all persons carrying out commercial fishing activities within all areas under national jurisdiction of the Republic of Liberia, including the Fisheries Waters, and to all persons using a Liberian fishing vessel for commercial fishing activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction.*

2) *No person shall:*
   a. *without a valid and applicable license or authorization issued under this Act, engage in commercial fishing for sharks;*
   b. *engage in shark finning;*
   c. *possess, store, tranship or land, or attempt to tranship, land, buy or sell any:*
      i. *shark fin (including the tail) that is not naturally attached to the whole corresponding carcass;*
      ii. *species of shark, in whole or in part, that is prohibited by an international conservation and management measure to be retained on board, transhipped, stored or otherwise; or*
   d. *possess, use or caused to be used a trace wire or J hook for the purpose of fishing.*

3) *The owner, operator and master of each fishing vessel shall release or cause to be released any species of shark that is caught, for which fishing is not permitted, as soon as possible after the shark is brought alongside the vessel, and to do so in a manner that results in as little harm to the shark as possible.*

4) *Any person who contravenes Subsection (2) or (3) commits an offence and upon conviction, shall be liable for a fine not exceeding the maximum amount described in the Second Schedule or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three years or both, and the fishing vessel and gear used in the offence and all fish on board shall be forfeit.*

5.2 Seabirds [Mandatory]

Liberia does not have catch vessels operating in the IOTC area.

1. How many vessels operated south of 25˚S in the period covered by this report?
2. How many of those vessels used bird scaring lines (as a proportion of total effort)?
3. How many of those vessels used line weighting (as a proportion of total effort)?
4. How many of those vessels used night setting (as a proportion of total effort)?

5.3 Marine Turtles [Mandatory]

Liberia does not have catch vessels fishing the IOTC area.

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

Liberia does not have vessels operation in the IOTC area.

8. NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING SYSTEMS [Mandatory]

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

Section 11.27 Vessel Monitoring System

This section has been in force since 2010

The Director General shall establish and operate vessel monitoring systems for purposes of monitoring, control and surveillance, and managing the operation of fishing vessels under this Act. The operator of any industrial fishing vessel, as a condition of license, shall install, maintain and operate a VMS transponder in accordance with such conditions as prescribed or required by the Di-rector General. The mobile transceiver unit (MTU) or other device or equipment shall be an integral component of a vessel monitoring system at all times while the fishing vessel is in the Fisheries Waters or, in respect of a Liberian fishing vessel. in areas beyond national jurisdiction or such other area as may be prescribed or agreed in an international agreement or international conservation .and management measures.

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, 5, 7 and 8 of Res [22-04])

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., 2019–2023 or to the extent available). **[Mandatory]**

Figure 4. Map showing the spatial distribution of observer coverage. **[Mandatory]** *[Recommended spatial resolution = 1 x 1 degree grid]*

6.3. Port sampling programme *[including date commenced* and *status of implementation]* **[Mandatory]**

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

Table 5. Number of fish measured, by species and fishery] **[Mandatory]**

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

Liberia does not have vessels operation in the IOTC area.

6.5. Gillnet observer coverage and monitoring [Desirable]

Liberia does not have the messures for observer coverage of Gillnet

6.6 Sampling plans for mobulid rays [Mandatory]

Liberia does not have vessels operation in the IOTC area.

9. NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS [Desirable]

The Research and Statistics Division of the National Fisheries & Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) collect all data and information about the marine fisheries, including aquaculture and inland fisheries. Fisheries observers, inspectors and fisheries enumerators have been trained to collect catch and effort data on vessels and fish landing sites. Observer collects catch and effort including biological data per species per haul using the FAO species code/ guide.

7.1. National research programs on blue shark

Liberia does not have research plan on this species, but apply the FAO guideline with regards to the conservation of the Shark species.

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

Liberia does not have research plan on this species, but apply the FAO guideline with regards to the conservational measures

7.3. National research programs on sharks

Liberia does not have research plan on this species , but apply the FAO guideline with regards to the conservation of the Shark species.

7.4. National research programs on oceanic whitetip sharks

Liberia does not have research plan on this species , but apply the FAO guideline with regards to the conservation of the Shark species.

7.5. National research programs on marine turtles

Liberia does not have research plan on this species , but apply the FAO guideline with regards to the conservation messures .

7.6. National research programs on thresher sharks

Liberia does not have research plan on this species , but apply the FAO guideline with regards to the conservation of the Shark species.

Table 6. Summary table of national research programs, including dates. [currently underway]
Example only

Project title	Period	Countries involved	Budget total	Funding source	Objectives	Short description
Programme régional de marquage de thons	2019–2023	EU – France and Spain		ED- DG FISH	Observer program: collection of bycatch data	

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

Respond with progress made to recommendations of the SC and specific Resolutions relevant to the work of the Scientific Committee [to be updated annually to include most recent Conservation and Management Measures adopted by the Commission].

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	Liberia implements the FAO guidelines for the Conservation
12/09	On the conservation of thresher sharks (family alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 4–8	Liberia implements the FAO guidelines for the Conservation
13/04	On the conservation of cetaceans	Paragraphs 7– 9	N/A
13/05	On the conservation of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*)	Paragraphs 7– 9	Liberia implements the FAO guidelines for the Conservation
13/06	On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries	Paragraph 5–6	Liberia implement the FAO guidelines for the Conservation
15/01	On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 1–10	N/A
15/02	Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs)	Paragraphs 1–7	Liberia provides all report in regards to the commission rules and regulation
17/05	On the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC	Paragraphs 6, 9, 11	Liberia is implementing in accordance to IOTC measures
18/02	On management measures for the conservation of blue shark caught in association with IOTC fisheries	Paragraphs 2-5	N/A
18/05	On management measures for the conservation of the Billfishes: Striped marlin, black marlin, blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish	Paragraphs 7 – 11	N/A
18/07	On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC	Paragraphs 1, 4	Liberia ensure to fulfil all reporting requirement
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	N/A
19/03	On the Conservation of Mobulid Rays Caught in Association with Fisheries in the IOTC Area of Competence	Paragraph 11	N/A
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	N/A
22/04	On a regional observer scheme	Paragraph 12	N/A
23/07	On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries.	Paragraphs 3–7	N/A

2. LITERATURE CITED [Mandatory]