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IOTC DATA SECTION ACTIVITIES, REVIEW OF REQUESTS, AND WPDCS-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

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Purpose

This paper summarizes the Data Section's activities during 2026, including capacity-building initiatives, technical assistance missions, workshops, and other technical support activities. It also provides updates on data-related requests arising from scientific and compliance meetings held since December 2025 and reports on progress made in addressing recommendations from the Twenty-first Session of the Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS21).

Abstract

The Data Section of the IOTC Secretariat provides technical assistance to Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) to strengthen fisheries data reporting and improve the quality and availability of data for scientific and management purposes. Support is delivered through direct assistance to CPCs and in response to requests and recommendations from the Scientific Committee, scientific working parties, the Commission, and the Compliance Committee.

Introduction

Improving the quality of datasets used for tuna stock assessments is a key responsibility of the IOTC Data Section. Over the years, the Secretariat has undertaken a range of activities aimed at enhancing the quality, completeness, and reliability of fisheries data submitted by CPCs. Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain, particularly in relation to the management and reporting of data from coastal fisheries.

The Secretariat's activities encompass a wide range of capacity development and technical support initiatives, including in-country technical assistance missions, workshops, virtual technical meetings, and the hosting of fisheries officials from CPCs at the Secretariat for technical discussions. Participation in external meetings relevant to fisheries data collection and management also forms an important component of the Data Section's work. In addition, data-related requests arising from WPDCS and other scientific meetings require follow-up actions by the Secretariat, including data calls, technical assistance missions, and other targeted support activities. Recommendations from previous WPDCS meetings are also reviewed to identify any actions or requirements arising from the Scientific Committee or the Commission.

Due to the timing and preparation requirements associated with scientific meetings, as well as other Secretariat responsibilities, the number of in-country capacity development activities that can be undertaken annually is limited. This also affects the Secretariat's ability to address all requests originating from WPDCS meetings. Nevertheless, whenever opportunities arise, workshops and other capacity-building events are used as platforms for the Secretariat and CPCs to discuss data-related challenges and identify practical solutions. This paper provides an overview of the Data Section's activities during 2026, including updates on data-related requests from other Working Parties and progress made in addressing recommendations from the Twenty-First Session of the Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS21).

Capacity-building Activities

During 2026, the data section of the Secretariat conducted five in-person technical assistance missions and organized three capacity-building workshops, of which two were held in person and one was conducted virtually. In addition, participated in three external meetings related to fisheries data collection and management, and two in-person external workshops organised by external organisations (**Table 1**). The capacity-development section in Appendix I, provides an overview of the capacity-development missions carried out in 2026 and summarises their key outcomes.

Tab. 1. Summary of data section activities held in 2025

Category	Country / CPC	Mode	Dates
Capacity Building Workshop	Seychelles	In Country	16- 19 May 2026
	Seychelles	Virtual	3-4 Nov 2026
	South Africa	In Country	16- 19 May 2026
External Meeting	Annual meeting of the EU RCG on Large Pelagics	Virtual	23-25 June 2026
	European Commission Fisheries Data Collection Liaison Meeting Enduser	Virtual	2026-09-22
	Regional and national ALDFG reporting frameworks	Virtual	2026-10-14
	ICCAT workshop - Revision of the Sub-committee's Data Collection and Research Program (PIRDCaF) - Joint	Virtual	2026-10-01

Category	Country / CPC	Mode	Dates
	RFMo group : Fisheries Bycatch : Shared Priorities and Global Action Projects		
Technical Assistance Mission	Kenya	In Country	26-29 Apr 2026
	Madagascar	In Country	24-27 Aug 2026
	Oman	In Country	28-Sep - 2-Oct 2026
	Comoros	In Country	05-11 Apr 2026
	Tanzania	In Country	21-25 Apr 2026
External workshop	South Africa	In person	28-30 Jul 2026
	Spain	In person	30 jun - 2 Jul 2026

Technical Assistance Missions

The provision of technical assistance is guided by several factors: (i) direct requests for support from CPCs; (ii) weaknesses in data reporting and management identified during IOTC scientific meetings; and (iii) a sustained decline in the quality of data submissions by a CPC, prompting the Secretariat to initiate collaborative efforts to strengthen national reporting systems.

Unlike previous years, Indonesia, which has received regular technical assistance from the Secretariat, was not among the countries visited in 2026. For the second consecutive year, Kenya and Madagascar received technical support from the Secretariat. Assistance to Comoros and Madagascar was prioritised due to persistent data quality issues and the absence of comprehensive technical support from the Secretariat for more than a decade. In contrast, Kenya and Tanzania were prioritised following formal requests for technical assistance submitted during WPDCS21. Both CPCs are developing industrial purse seine fisheries, which are subject to complex data reporting requirements. These emerging fleets have experienced challenges in meeting such requirements, resulting in gaps, inconsistencies, and delays in data reporting. Furthermore, weaknesses in the monitoring and management of their small-scale fisheries continue to affect the completeness, accuracy, and overall quality of submitted datasets.

The Secretariat was also invited by the Government of Oman to conduct a technical capacity-development mission following a request from the Commission. During the mission, Secretariat staff visited several fisheries facilities, reviewed existing data collection and processing systems, and held discussions with national authorities on opportunities for further collaboration to strengthen fisheries data management and reporting systems in Oman.

Tanzania

Overview of the mission

The mission was conducted over three days with the participation of representatives from key ministries and relevant stakeholders, including Deep Sea Fishery Authority (DSFA), Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries (MBEF), Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries (MLF), and Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST). As the reconstruction and harmonisation of fisheries datasets required information from multiple departments and agencies, close inter-institutional collaboration was necessary to compile, validate, and reconcile the available data.

The main objectives of the mission in Tanzania were to:

- review the proposed methodology for the historical catch reconstruction of artisanal fisheries;
- assess the progress made in implementing harmonised fisheries data management processes among the different entities; and
- provide feedback on the latest submission, with a focus on industrial fisheries data reporting requirements.

The Secretariat was presented with implementation plan, steps by steps and methodology for reconstruction historical catch data of Tanzania coastal fisheries. This is attributed that the current catch data hosted in the IOTC databases are underestimated due to fragmented data cillection systems.The DSFA planned to conduct desk-based research, and collaborates with the Sea Around Us Project and the Mandela University on any relevant data collected in the past. Sampling on landing sites to validate the data are also planned.

Tanzania is also continuously working on harmonisation of the data management systems, which vary by ministry and department related to fisheries, into a general fisheries management platform which will be a repository for all data related to fisheries.

Outcomes

The tasks presented by Tanzania are in early stage and required further review. However, the involvement of stakeholders in the implementation process are beneficial.

The follow-up actions and recommendations:

- assess the key issues affecting fisheries data reporting and identify measures to improve compliance with reporting requirements;
- ensure submission of datasets using the appropriate reporting forms and validate the associated coding systems, particularly for DFAD data;
- strengthen liaison with vessel owners and relevant fisheries authorities, including the SFA, to improve the collection of size-frequency data;
- evaluate and consolidate existing catch datasets as part of the reconstruction and data harmonisation process;
- reconstruct previous Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) information using observer reports and the official IOTC ROS reporting forms, and correct specific issues in the 2024 submission, accordingly, including E-SET-CATCH-SPECIMENS-SSI datasets;
- continue reviewing the harmonisation process across the various fisheries data collection systems, including the incorporation of data raising procedures appropriate for Tanzanian fisheries into the new processing framework;
- ensure the provision of adequate and continuous training for fisheries officers to support sustainable data flow and implementation following harmonisation of the new system;
- reorganise and refine the presentation on the catch reconstruction exercise for submission and discussion at WPDCS22; and
- request the IOTC Secretariat to provide any additional datasets or information that may support the catch reconstruction process.

Kenya

Overview of the mission

This two-day workshop was conducted to review data reporting gaps and strengthen the capacity of officers from the Kenya Fisheries Service (KeFS), in response to ongoing challenges in completing both statistical data submissions and Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) reporting forms.

The main objectives of the mission to Kenya were to:

- review the challenges faced by Kenya in reporting fisheries data;
- provide guidance on the various IOTC reporting tools;
- provide training on data submission through the e-MARIS system;
- follow up on the development of the national fisheries management system

In addition to the training sessions, Kenya provided an update on the development of the Kenya Fisheries Management Platform, which was first presented in 2025. The platform continues to be progressively developed and is intended to integrate data from multiple fisheries information systems, including coastal fisheries Catch Assessment Survey (CAS) data, logbook data, frame survey data, and industrial fisheries datasets. Once fully operational, the system is expected to improve data management, facilitate data validation and reporting, and enhance the overall quality and accessibility of fisheries information.

Outcomes and recommendations

The challenges faced by Kenya are primarily associated with weaknesses in data collection and processing systems, as well as limited human and institutional capacity. These constraints continue to affect the quality, completeness, and timeliness of fisheries data reporting and impede the effective implementation of reporting requirements.

Follow-up action and recommendations:

- review the historical datasets for coastal fisheries to improve consistency and reliability of reported data:
  - optimise fisheries data collection processes to maximise sampling effectiveness;
  - strengthen training programmes for enumerators, particularly in fish species identification;
- enhance collaboration with NGOs involved in fisheries sampling and research activities;
- resubmit the 2024 fisheries datasets after addressing identified inconsistencies, including:
  - harmonisation of datasets reported under 1DR, 1DI, and 1RC Forms;
  - consolidation of catch datasets, particularly 1RC and 3CE datasets;
  - separation of purse seine fisheries data by fishing mode; and
- completion of 3DA forms using the appropriate reporting codes and species disaggregation procedures;

- strengthen liaison with vessel owners to obtain missing size-frequency data, particularly for purse seine fisheries;
- review and update ROS datasets using the latest reporting formats;
- reconstruct historical ROS observer reports for longline fisheries using the official IOTC reporting forms;
- develop a centralised repository system for the storage and management of ROS data;
- review and update the Drifting Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) management plan using the IOTC template;
- compile and submit data related to chartered vessels in accordance with Requirement 3.2 of the applicable reporting framework.

Comoros

Overview of the mission

The mission was initiated by the Secretariat following the identification of Comoros as a CPC with limited fisheries data processing capacity. The primary objectives were to evaluate current data management practices, identify areas requiring improvement, and support national authorities in strengthening data processing and reporting.

The objectives of the mission were to:

(1) assess the data processing systems of Comoros, including the data collection, storage, and processing mechanisms in use,
(2) follow up on the systems implemented under the World Bank project that concluded in 2021,
(3) identify the most appropriate approaches to improve the existing systems, and
(4) review the data available to assess whether Comoros could be considered as a case-study for the activity focusing on coastal fishery data processing planned under the EU-funded project EC1350.

Limited progress has been made in the development of the Comoros fisheries sector over recent years, and the data processing system established through a joint IOTC-OFCF mission has undergone only minor modifications.

Outcomes

Follow-up actions and recommendations

- The Secretariat will provide Comoros with information on conversion factors for fish products and the length-weight parameters for Short-billed spearfish (SSP).
- The last boat frame survey and census was conducted in 2018, in Comoros. Since then, there may have been changes in the number and composition of vessels by type. Comoros is therefore encouraged to undertake a new boat frame survey to update the national boat registry, with a major focus on the motorised vessels
- Update Comoros data in the IOTC databases by the Secretariat using the defined 5 deg x 5 deg grid coding system (i.e., grid code 6210040)
- Work in collaboration with Comoros to develop some R functions to strengthen and update validation and verification procedures for data quality control

- Review available data for the period 2012-2015, including sampling, effort, and catch data held in the national data repository, and evaluate the current sampling strategy, including post-stratification methods
- Re-develop the estimation module with ArtFishR and develop a visualisation and data export tool (Shiny application) under the IOTC project framework
- Potential interest to develop a pilot project using light GPS trackers in collaboration with fishermen to better understand the spatial dynamics of Comorian fishery activities
- Develop an inventory and monitoring system for AFADs, including the potential use of buoys equipped with echo-sounders.

Madagascar

Overview of the mission

During the technical mission to Madagascar in 2025, several gaps and challenges in fisheries data management and reporting were identified. The 2026 mission therefore focused primarily on reviewing progress made in addressing these issues. During the mission, the Secretariat worked closely with officers responsible for fisheries data collection and processing, as well as representatives from other departments within the Ministry and key stakeholders, including WWF, which also conducts fisheries data collection activities in Madagasca. Appendix II provides more detailed on the mission to Madagascar.

In addition, the Secretariat assessed the capacity of Madagascar's fisheries sampling programme to determine its potential contribution to the IOTC biological sampling programme. This assessment reviewed existing sampling activities, available human and technical resources, and opportunities to strengthen the collection of biological data required for stock assessment and scientific advice.

The objectives of the mission were to:

- Evaluating the sampling system ability to participate in IOTC biological system program
- Assessing Madagascar's data collection, recording, and processing systems, including the use of electronic tools
- Identifying data gaps and understanding the factors contributing to inconsistencies in reported data
- Evaluating the most effective approaches for processing and reporting fisheries data
- Assessing third party contributions to the national data collection effort.

Outcomes

Follow-up actions and recommendations

During the mission, several gaps were identified. Although addressing these challenges will be difficult, the Secretariat will work closely with the officers to implement the following follow-up actions:

- Review and improvement of the sampling strategy:
  - Review and optimization of the national sampling strategy.
  - Translation of species, fishing gear and vessel names from local dialects, using harmonized nomenclature.

  - Review and rationalization of fishing units to facilitate their grouping and reduce the required sample size.
  - Harmonization of data collection at the national level through the use of a standardized sampling form across the country.
  - Strengthening of species-level catch data collection.
  - Review and digitization of historical paper-based records to support the reconstruction of national datasets.
  - Proposal to participate in IOTC Biological sampling data collection
- Preparation and implementation of a frame survey:
  - Conduct of a national boat frame survey every three to five years, noting that the most recent survey was undertaken in 2023.
- Improvement of electronic data transmission and storage systems:
  - Establishment of electronic data transmission to a centralized data repository, reducing reliance on paper-based processes.
  - Systematic implementation of secure data backups.
  - Development and implementation of an integrated system for data collection, processing and storage.
- Training and continuous capacity development:
  - Continued support to Madagascar in improving the quality, completeness and timeliness of data submitted to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).
  - Maximization of the benefits derived from IOTC workshops by selecting the most relevant participants and ensuring appropriate national follow-up and knowledge sharing.
  - Training on data collection methods to ensure the continuity and accuracy of the data collected.
  - Organization of dedicated data workshops in 2027 and 2028.
  - Formal request by IOTC Secretariat for the participation of Madagascar in the Biological Sampling Project

Oman

Overview of the mission

During the Scientific Committee meeting in 2023, the Committee requested that the Secretariat undertake a mission to Oman to support the strengthening of national fisheries data collection and processing systems, following a substantial increase in yellowfin tuna catches reported from Omani small-scale fisheries since 2020. Appendix III provides more detailed information on the mission to Oman.

Since 2024, Oman has reviewed and progressively improved its data collection, processing, and reporting systems to enhance the quality, accuracy, and reliability of fisheries statistics. However, several gaps in the historical datasets remain under review and require further analysis and validation.

The objectives of the mission were to:

- Understand updates made by MAFWR's data and statistics department in line with current IOTC reporting requirements, including the identification of data reporting gaps and bottlenecks;
- Examine the progress made in data handling and data reporting processes, with specific focus on the recently developed database for industrial fisheries;
- Examine methodologies currently used by MAFWR's data and statistics department, and identify opportunities for further enhancing the reporting process to the IOTC;
- Examine the current port sampling systems in place, including sampling coverage and any potential gaps in data collection;
- Observe the implementation of field data collection processes at selected landing sites together with colleagues from MAFWR's data and statistics department.

Outcomes

The mission enabled the Secretariat to evaluate the data management systems operating across Oman's fisheries sector. The assessment identified several potential sources of bias in data estimation procedures, which may affect the accuracy and consistency of reported fisheries statistics.

In addition, the introduction of a new fisheries management system, coupled with recent staff turnover among personnel responsible for data processing and reporting, has created a need for further technical capacity development. The Secretariat therefore emphasized the importance of providing targeted training on IOTC data reporting requirements, and data validation procedures.

During the mission, several gaps were identified. The Secretariat will work closely with the officers to implement the following follow-up actions:

- Continued support for data reporting
  - Adhoc support for data processing into the required submission forms
  - Revision of spatial layers used for reporting coastal fishery data (Omani coastal Governorates)
  - Addition of mapping tables of species aggregates to species, and gear aggregates to gears in the IOTC Reference Data Catalogue
  - Webinar planned around May 2027 to support data submission before the deadline on the 30th of June 2027.
  - Organisation of training course for the IOTC forms for ministry officials in person or through webinars, should it be required (Q1 2028)
- Preparation of training in Species Identification
  - Sharing all materials for species identification training
  - Putting the ministry into contact with known experts that have training experience relevant to IOTC
  - Share information on future Species identification workshop planned as part of IOTC activities.

Capacity building workshops

Workshop mode to help build capacity development of the CPCs in better understanding the reporting requirements were intensified following the review of the Data reporting guidelines since 2024. The guidelines including reviewed of the reporting formats for both catch datasets and ROS datasets. The Secretariat conducted three workshops since 2024 on reporting all catch related datasets. In 2026, the capacity building workshops focused on reporting of ROS datasets by fishery group.

Technical workshop to improve the reporting of purse seine data to the IOTC

The Workshop on Purse Seine Fisheries Reporting was held in Seychelles, a country that has hosted one of the largest purse seine fisheries in the Indian Ocean for several decades. Conducted from 16 to 19 March, the workshop brought together 18 participants from six CPCs with industrial purse seine fleets operating in the Indian Ocean. Participants included representatives from fishing industries responsible for purse seine vessels, as well as companies involved in the development of software for the collection and processing of purse seine fisheries data, including Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) data.

Given the workshop's focus on purse seine fisheries reporting, discussions and technical reviews addressed all mandatory reporting requirements for the fishery, including retained catch, catch and effort, size-frequency data, information on fishing activities associated with drifting Floating Objects (dFOBs), buoy usage, and the implementation and evaluation of Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) data collection programmes by CPCs. Several presentations provided an overview of the current status of these datasets, highlighting both achievements and challenges in data collection and reporting. Particular attention was given to the development of data validation tools and the ongoing review of the dFAD reporting form. Participants were also introduced to the revised ROS reporting format and accompanying guidelines, including reporting requirements and implementation considerations.

A presentation on the ObServe software by the Institut de Recherche pour le Developpement (IRD) highlighted the importance of collecting high-quality fisheries and scientific observer data from purse seine vessels. The software was well received, particularly by CPCs that are still developing their fisheries data management systems for purse seine fleets. Currently, the software is being used by the European purse seine fleet and Seychelles. In response to the strong interest expressed by participants, IRD proposed organizing a dedicated training workshop on the use of ObServe. The Secretariat also committed to ensuring that all reference codes incorporated into the software remain current and aligned with IOTC reporting standards.

The workshop also discussed how Electronic Monitoring (EM) data could be integrated into the existing ROS framework to enhance monitoring coverage and improve the quality and completeness of data collected from purse seine fisheries.

ROS reporting workshop for longline fisheries

The ROS Reporting Workshop for Longline Fisheries was held in Johannesburg from 26 to 29 May 2026 and brought together 12 participants from eight CPCs. The workshop also benefited from the participation of experts in fisheries observer programmes and electronic monitoring, who shared their knowledge and experiences with participants.

The workshop focused on the implementation and reporting requirements of the Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) for longline fisheries. CPC representatives presented the status of their national ROS programmes, including data collection and reporting workflows, as well as the challenges encountered in programme implementation and data submission. The Secretariat provided an overview of the evolution of the ROS, identified key data gaps, and presented recent developments in reporting forms, reporting requirements, and associated guidelines.

Given the increasing use of Electronic Monitoring (EM) systems in longline fisheries for the collection of observer-related data, the workshop also reviewed existing data gaps and discussed the implications of EM-derived data for ROS reporting requirements and data management processes.

Unlike purse seine fisheries, where dedicated software solutions are available to support the collection and management of observer and fisheries data, no common software platform is currently used for ROS data collection in longline fisheries. Instead, individual fleets and CPCs have developed their own tools and procedures for collecting, managing, and reporting ROS data. This diversity of approaches highlighted the importance of harmonising data standards and reporting practices to improve data quality, consistency, and reporting efficiency across CPCs.

Gillnet data collection under the IOTC ROS

The Workshop on Gillnet Fisheries Data Collection was conducted remotely and brought together representatives from CPCs with significant gillnet fisheries, namely Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Iran, and Pakistan. Over two days, comprising a total of six hours of discussions, participants reviewed the importance of gillnet fisheries in the Indian Ocean and recent developments in the fishery. Given that gillnet fisheries are predominantly small- to medium-scale operations, participants acknowledged the considerable challenges associated with data collection, resulting in limited and often fragmented data available for assessment and management purposes.

Building on discussions from previous workshops related to the Regional Observer Scheme (ROS), participants reiterated the long-standing challenges of implementing conventional observer programmes aboard gillnet vessels. These challenges remain largely unchanged and include the small size of vessels, onboard safety concerns, limited accommodation, and generally unsuitable conditions for non-fishers to remain at sea for extended periods.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)-Pakistan initiated a crew-based observer programme in Pakistan in 2012, covering a number of gillnet vessels and generating a substantial amount of fisheries data. During the workshop, two presentations were delivered on the programme. The first provided an overview of its development and implementation, while the second focused on the design of the associated data collection system. WWF-Pakistan worked closely with the Secretariat to develop data collection forms aligned with IOTC reporting requirements. Although the programme generated valuable information, it was discontinued in 2019. Furthermore, as WWF acted as a secondary data holder rather than the competent authority, the data collected through the programme were not formally submitted to the Secretariat.

A crew-based observer programme has been operating on a trial basis in Sri Lanka since 2018. Given the scale and diversity of the country's gillnet fisheries, including vessels operating both within areas under national jurisdiction and on the high seas, different management and monitoring arrangements apply across fisheries. As a result, the implementation of the crew-based observer programme has progressed at varying rates, reflecting the differing operational and management contexts.

For high-seas gillnet fisheries, the crew-based observer programme follows a data collection format closely aligned with the Regional Observer Scheme (ROS), covering most of the required data fields. While some information is not currently collected, this is largely due to the absence of specific fields in the existing data collection forms rather than operational constraints, and could be readily incorporated if required. The programme is primarily funded by the private fishing sector and is implemented through close collaboration between industry stakeholders and the Sri Lankan Government.

In contrast, Iran and Indonesia currently do not operate observer programmes within their gillnet fisheries. Data collection in these fisheries relies primarily on port sampling and landing-site monitoring.

In Iran, port sampling is largely limited to tuna and tuna-like species. Biological information for non-target species is generally unavailable, as many fish are processed at sea or prior to landing, resulting in catches being landed in a headed and gutted condition. Iran expressed interest in exploring a crew-based observer approach, recognising its potential to improve biological data collection while remaining cost-effective and fostering greater collaboration with fishers.

Indonesia, meanwhile, presented its recently introduced OBOR application, which has been in use since 2025 and employs artificial intelligence (AI) to support species identification and catch enumeration. The system was developed to strengthen fisheries data collection and processing; however, it remains unclear to what extent it has been implemented within gillnet fisheries, given that Indonesia does not have gillnet fleet operating beyond areas under national jurisdiction.

The workshop concluded with a proposal to organise an in-person meeting focused on alternative data collection approaches for gillnet fisheries, including practical training on data requirements and collection methodologies. Participants also requested an independent review of existing ROS data collection approaches, including conventional observer programmes, crew-based observation systems, and emerging electronic monitoring and technology-based solutions, with the aim of identifying best practices and improving data coverage across gillnet fisheries in the Indian Ocean.

Other workshops participation

The Data Section participated in two other workshops in 2026 related to fisheries data management. The first, organised by the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), focused on the importance of tropical tuna fisheries in both large-scale and small-scale fishing sectors. The second, organised by the IOTC Science Section, focused on the development of an Indian Ocean Shark Research Plan.

The ISSF workshop aimed to improve understanding of the impacts of large-scale and small-scale tropical tuna fisheries, with particular emphasis on data and governance gaps. Representatives from several tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (t-RFMOs) participated and presented the current status of tropical tuna fisheries within their respective management areas. Discussions highlighted differences in data availability, reporting obligations, and management approaches between fisheries and regions. A key recommendation from the workshop was the need for greater collaboration among t-RFMOs to review and harmonise data requirements, while improving alignment between reporting obligations and management measures.

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During the Shark Research Plan workshop, the Fisheries Data Officer presented an overview of IOTC shark data holdings, including data availability, current reporting status, and key challenges affecting

the collection, reporting, and use of shark fisheries data. The presentation contributed to discussions on research priorities and data needs for the development of a coordinated Indian Ocean Shark Research Plan.

External meetings

The data section participated in four external meetings held virtually in 2026. Two of the meetings were related to European Union fisheries data status, while the other two focused on bycatch related data.

Data Requests from Scientific Meetings

To improve the quality and availability of data used in stock assessments of IOTC species, several scientific Working Parties have submitted specific requests to the WPDCS for the provision or enhancement of particular datasets. Meeting these requirements often necessitates direct engagement between the Data Section and CPCs to obtain the requested information. In some cases, the Data Section has developed targeted projects or specialized data-request formats to facilitate data collection and address the needs of the scientific Working Parties. However, despite these efforts, not all CPCs are willing or able to provide the requested information, resulting in ongoing data gaps for certain assessments.

In addition to requests originating from the Working Parties, the Commission and Scientific Committee (SC) also submits follow-up data requests to the WPDCS. During the most recent SC session and subsequent Working Party meetings, a total of 24 data-related requests were made (**Table 2**), including three requests from the Scientific Committee, one from the Commission, and one from the Compliance Committee. These requests cover a range of data requirements aimed at improving the quality, completeness, and availability of information used for scientific analyses, stock assessments, and the monitoring of fisheries and compliance activities. Details of all requests are presented in appendix IV.

Tab. 2. Number of data requests made to WPDCS

Scientific Meetings	Number of requests
CoC23 (May 2026)	1
S30 (May 2026	1
SC28 (December 2025)	3
WGEMS06 (April 2026)	3
WPB24 September 2026)	2
WPEB22 September 2026)	3
WPFAD08 (June 2026)	4
WPNT16 (July 2026)	1
WPTT28 (October 2026) [Report not adopted yet]	6

Progress Made on the Recommendations from WPDCS20

During WPDCS21, four recommendations were submitted to the Scientific Committee (**Table 3**), covering several thematic areas, including recommendations of endorsing the WPDCS21 Programme of Work and final report. The implementation status of these recommendations has been reviewed and, where necessary, updated recommendations are proposed for consideration and endorsement by participants. Progress made against each recommendation is presented in appendix V.

Tab. 3. Summary on progress made on WPDCS19 recommendations

Type	WPDCS21_REC
Data reporting (to the IOTC Secretariat)	1
National statistical systems	1
Review of the draft, and adoption of the report of the 19th Session of the WPDCS	1
WPDCS program of work	1

Conclusions

The activities carried out by the Data Section in 2026 focused on improving not only the regular datasets but also the ROS data, which continue to face submission challenges. This included reviewing the formats used for data collection and reporting. Since 2019, the Secretariat has been able to revisit Oman, noting the significant development in its fisheries sector, and following request from the Scientific Committee. The outcomes of most in-country missions highlight the importance of follow-up support in developing data management systems, as well as the need for continuous capacity development in coastal countries.

Requests made to WPDCS by various Working Parties primarily focused on the need for the Secretariat to collaborate closely with CPCs to review and improve existing data collection practices.

In 2025, only a limited number of recommendations from WPDCS21 were submitted to SC28. However, all the recommendations were reviewed by SC28.

Appendix I: Main Activities related of the Data Section carried out in 2025

Category	Country / CPC	Dates	Executing agencies / staff	Mode	Description of activities	Summary
Technical Assistance Mission	Comoros	05-11 Apr 2026	IOTC Data Coordinator; IOTC National Professional Officer	In Country	The mission was organised by the IOTC Secretariat as part of ongoing capacity development activities, through which Comoros was identified as one of the CPCs with limited data processing capabilities. The objectives of the mission were to: (1) assess the data processing systems of Comoros, including the data collection, storage, and processing mechanisms in use, (2) follow up on the systems implemented under the World Bank project that concluded in 2021, (3) identify the most appropriate approaches to improve the existing systems, and (4) review the data available to assess whether Comoros could be considered as a case-study for the activity focusing on coastal fishery data processing planned under the EU-funded project EC1350.	
	Tanzania	21-25 Apr 2026	IOTC Fisheries officer (data); IOTC National Profession Officer	In Country	During the WPDCS21, Tanzania requested the Secretariat assistance to review the ongoing work on the data management and further training to related to the challenges faced in data reporting. The main objectives of the mission in Tanzania were to: - review the proposed methodology for the historical catch reconstruction of artisanal fisheries; - assess the progress made in implementing harmonised fisheries data management processes among the different entities; and - provide feedback on the latest submission, with a focus on industrial fisheries data reporting requirements.	The mission identified several priority actions to strengthen fisheries data management, including the reporting requirements of the main datasets and ROS. Refinement of the catch reconstruction presentation for WPDCS22, and the Secretariat is available for any assistance.
	Kenya	26-29 Apr 2026	IOTC Fisheries officer (data); IOTC National Profession Officer	In Country	Kenya requested follow-up mission for continuous training in data reporting due to challenges faced with compiling the data. The main objectives of the mission to Kenya were to: - review the challenges faced by Kenya in	During the mission, several weaknesses were identified in Kenya's fisheries data reporting and management systems. Addressing these challenges will require improvements in data collection systems, enhanced training for

Category	Country / CPC	Dates	Executing agencies / staff	Mode	Description of activities	Summary
					reporting fisheries data; - provide guidance on the various IOTC reporting tools; - provide training on data submission through the e-MARIS system; - follow up on the development of the national fisheries management system.	enumerators, particularly in species identification, and stronger collaboration with NGOs and vessel owners.
	Madagascar	24-27 Aug 2026	IOTC Fisheries officer ; IOTC National Professional Officer	In Country	The visit was principally to follow-up on last year mission, development so far, and to evaluate the sampling data collection systems with the posilibity of Madagascar participating in the data biological sampling project. The objectives of the mission were to: - Evaluating the sampling system ability to participate in IOTC biological system program - Assessing Madagascar's data collection, recording, and processing systems, including the use of electronic tools - Identifying data gaps and understanding the factors contributing to inconsistencies in reported data - Evaluating the most effective approaches for processing and reporting fisheries data - Assessing third party contributions to the national data collection effort.	Several gaps were identified in Madagascar's fisheries data management systems, some of which may be challenging to address in the short term. While the Secretariat agreed to continue supporting Madagascar, priority actions include reviewing the fisheries sampling strategy, conducting a new frame survey, improving electronic data transmission and storage systems, and strengthening capacity development to enhance data collection, management, and reporting.
	Oman	28-Sep - 2-Oct 2026	IOTC Data Coordinator; IOTC Fisheries officer	In Country	Following requests from the Scientific Committee, and subsequently, the Commission to review the Omani data magament system to understand the substantial increased in yellowfin tuna, the Secretarait were invitated by Oman to assess their system. The objectives of the mission were to: - Understand updates made by MAFWR's data and statistics department in line with current IOTC reporting requirements, including the identification of data reporting gaps and bottlenecks; - Examine the progress made in data handling and data reporting processes, with specific focus on the recently developed database for industrial fisheries; - Examine methodologies currently used by MAFWR's data and statistics department, and identify opportunities for further enhancing the	Several gaps were identified in Oman fisheries management system, and the Secretariat will continue to work closely with Oman. It was recommended that the data collectors are trained in species identification; the officers are trained in completing data reporting forms; and review of spatial layers used for data reporting

Category	Country / CPC	Dates	Executing agencies / staff	Mode	Description of activities	Summary
					reporting process to the IOTC; - Examine the current port sampling systems in place, including sampling coverage and any potential gaps in data collection; - Observe the implementation of field data collection processes at selected landing sites together with colleagues from MAFWR's data and statistics department.	
Capacity Building Workshop	Seychelles	16- 19 May 2026	IOTC Data Coordinator IOTC Fishery Officer IOTC National Profession Officer EU, Kenya, Mozambique, Seychelles, Mauritius and Tanzania	In Country	The IOTC Purse Seine Data Reporting Workshop, held in Seychelles in March 2026, brought together 18 participants from six CPCs to strengthen reporting on purse seine fisheries, including mandatory statistical datasets, drifting floating object (DFOB) data, and Regional Observer Scheme (ROS) reporting. The workshop improved participants' understanding of IOTC reporting requirements, facilitated the exchange of national experiences and challenges, and identified key data gaps and priorities for consideration by the WPDCS and WPEB.	
	South Africa	16- 19 May 2026	IOTC Fishery Officer EU, Indonesia, Maldives, China, Taiwan,China, Malaysia, South Africa and Tanzania	In Country	The ROS longline reporting workshop was held from 26th– 29th May 2026 in Johannesburg, South Africa counting with 12 participants from 8 CPCs and invited experts.	
	Seychelles	3-4 Nov 2026		Virtual	Review of alternative data collection methods for gillnet fisheries under the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme (ROS)	Technical workshop on species identification and sampling best practices to improve the species level reporting of fishery statistics to the IOTC
External Meeting	Annual meeting of the EU RCG on Large Pelagics	23-25 June 2026	IOTC Fisheries Statistician	Virtual	Presentation of a summary on data needs and gaps regarding large pelagic data in the IOTC, with a summary of EU data reporting status.	
	European Commission Fisheries Data Collection Liaison Meeting Enduser	46287	IOTC Fishery Officer	Virtual		

Category	Country / CPC	Dates	Executing agencies / staff	Mode	Description of activities	Summary
External workshop	Spain	30 jun - 2 Jul 2026	IOTC Data Coordinator	In person	ISSF Workshop on the Importance of Tropical Tuna Fisheries of Large and Small Scales	The workshop brought together experts from tuna RFMOs, FAO, scientists, and stakeholders to examine the role and impacts of small-scale (SSF), intermediate-scale, and large-scale fisheries targeting tropical tunas. Participants sought to improve the consistency of definitions, strengthen fisheries data, evaluate fishery impacts, and identify governance improvements that support science-based management.
	South Africa	28-30 Jul 2026	IOTC Fishery Officer (Data)	In person	Indian Ocean shark research plan workshop	Preparing and presenting the dataset at Shark research plan workshop
External Meeting	Regional and national ALDFG reporting frameworks	46309	IOTC Fishery Officer (Data)	Virtual		
	ICCAT workshop - Revision of the Sub-committee's Data Collection and Research Program (PIRDCaF) - Joint RFMo group : Fisheries Bycatch : Shared Priorities and Global Action Projects	46296	IOTC Fishery Officer (Data)	Virtual		

Appendix II: Madagascar technical mission summary - 24 - 29 August 2026

Background

The mission reviewed progress in fisheries data collection, processing and IOTC reporting. Visits and consultations in Tamatave and Antananarivo confirmed that resource constraints, institutional disruption and cyclone damage continue to affect data coverage and continuity. The immediate priority is to consolidate the existing system through achievable sampling requirements, documented estimation methods and secure data management before larger investments are undertaken.

Main findings

Sampling and estimation. The routine network is geographically unbalanced, with no coverage in the south-west. Numerous fishing units and demanding sample targets place considerable pressure on individual enumerators. Concerns about the 2023 frame survey have led to continued reliance on the 2012 survey and local adjustments. Raising factors and the treatment of unsampled regions, missing periods and fleet changes require documentation and review.

Data quality and continuity. Industrial landing weights provide extensive coverage, but should be reconciled with logbooks; discards require separate collection. The closure of the Tuna Statistics Unit in Antsiranana in 2022 disrupted fisheries monitoring, reduced technical capacity and resulted in the loss of access to historical data and processing software. Currently the data collectors relies largely on paper and Excel, without systematic secure backups. The paper and excel sheets are not uniform across the country. Any electronic tools used need to provide for all of the IOTC data requirements (ie catch, effort and biological sampling).

Complementary data and biological sampling. WWF records from southern areas, including time series extending to 2012, could help address geographical and historical gaps after methods and coverage are assessed. Ministry counterparts expressed interest in biological sampling. Practical fin-clip training was provided and equipment left with the Tamatave team, pending formal approval.

Priority actions

Review fishing-unit definitions, geographical coverage and sampling targets against available staff and resources. Introduce common forms and harmonised species and gear codes linked to local names, supported by identification and measurement training. Document the raising method through worked examples and prepare standard protocols and reference lists before the next frame survey. Consolidate current datasets, establish routine backups and inventory historical records for phased recovery. Pilot sustainable electronic collection with offline entry, validation and secure transfer before progressing towards an integrated national database. Institutional control of data, documentation and administrator access, together with funded maintenance, should be explicit requirements. Agree with WWF how compatible records may contribute to national estimates. Seek formal approval for genetic and morphometric sampling and finalise protocols. Designate a ministry focal point and train a core group able to retain and share technical skills. Subject to resources, IOTC follow-up should support sampling design, estimation, standard forms, electronic pilots and biological sampling.

Appendix III: Mission to Oman

Background and mission purpose

Oman's fisheries data collection and management systems have several recognised limitations that contribute to uncertainty in the data reported to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). In particular, the nominal catch and catch-effort data show a substantial increase in catches and catch rates in 2020, with both remaining at elevated levels thereafter. The IOTC and its Scientific Committee therefore requested a Secretariat mission to support the review of data collection and processing procedures. Since 2024, Oman has been reviewing and improving these systems to address IOTC reporting requirements and national information needs.

The objectives of the mission were to:

1. Review the updates made by MAFWR's data and statistics department in relation to current IOTC reporting requirements, and identify remaining reporting gaps and bottlenecks;
2. Assess progress in data handling and reporting, particularly the recently developed database for industrial fisheries;
3. Examine the methodologies currently used by the department and identify opportunities to improve reporting to the IOTC;
4. Review port sampling arrangements, including sampling coverage and gaps in data collection;
5. Observe field data collection at selected landing sites together with colleagues from MAFWR's data and statistics department.

Landing sites visited

The ROs visited Qurayyat, Sur and Al Ashkharah to observe landing activities and discuss routine data collection issues with fishers and local ministry officials. Qurayyat serves skiffs from the artisanal fleet, while Sur and Al Ashkharah serve both skiffs and dhows from the artisanal and coastal fleets. The field visits were complemented by discussions at the ministry on data processing procedures and practical training for MAFWR staff on the IOTC reporting forms.

Visits to landing sites

The three sites provided an opportunity to examine data collection under different local conditions. At each site, the ROs observed fish being landed and discussed procedures with local government officials, many of whom were also responsible for collecting the data. Each site was in a different governorate. Qurayyat, in the governorate of Muscat, serves as a principal regional landing hub for skiffs. Landing sites within each governorate are organised around a main hub, although catches landed at smaller sites are currently sold locally. Plans are being considered to transport these catches to the main hubs for auction. Observations at the landing sites helped clarify how some collection practices could introduce bias into the subsequent estimates. In particular, the handline category combined at least two distinct types of fishing gear: one used to catch tuna and another used for smaller grouper and snapper species. Treating these as a single category may obscure differences in fishing activity and catch composition. The ROs also directly observed cases of species misidentification, indicating a need for further training. Discussions at all three sites were open, and local officials made considerable efforts to explain their procedures and answer questions.

Central Fish Market

The ROs also visited the Central Fish Market near Muscat, which handles approximately 40 tonnes of fresh fish daily. Fish are transported from landing sites, sorted and checked for quality on arrival, and sold through an auction system. Priority is given to the domestic market, while exports are subject to specific conditions, including restrictions applying to large tunas. The market and its auction records could provide a complementary source of information for cross-checking fisheries production and trade data. These records appear to be available to MAFWR. However, their integration into the fisheries data workflow and their use in compiling national statistics remain unclear.

Methodological discussions and findings

Oman currently uses two databases to manage fisheries data: one for the artisanal and coastal fleets, and another for the industrial fleet operating outside Omani national waters. The artisanal fleet comprises approximately 16,000 skiffs under 8 m in length and an unspecified number of dhows without cabins. The coastal fleet consists of approximately 650 dhows with cabins. The industrial fleet comprises six purse seiners, three longliners and two support vessels.

The industrial fisheries database was developed this year, reflecting the relatively recent expansion of this part of the sector. It is currently installed on a single laptop, with wider deployment progressing slowly because of the required security checks. A dedicated computer within the ministry is planned for data entry.

Several reporting issues remain unresolved. Submissions need to be checked each month to ensure that all required catch, drifting fish aggregating device (DFAD) activity and observer logbooks have been received. Some industrial fisheries data identified as missing by the IOTC cannot be recovered because they were not collected in the original logbooks. Bycatch and discard reporting also require attention, as the longline logbooks do not currently contain this information. Further training is needed, and there are plans to deploy observers on longliners to provide independent verification of reported data.

Reporting coverage for the coastal fleet is particularly limited. Fewer than ten vessels report each month, and these submissions cannot be considered representative of the fleet. Artisanal fisheries data are collected by staff operating within each governorate, but routine collection is limited to landings. Some collectors also record fishing gear and time at sea on their own initiative; these variables are not collected systematically.

Total fleet catches are estimated by raising observed landings using the probability of fishing and the number of vessels. The probability of fishing is derived from a telephone survey in which licence holders are asked whether they fished on the previous day. The current estimates assume six non-fishing days per month. This may underestimate the number of non-fishing days and will be reviewed through a re-examination of the data, with additional collection if necessary.

Species misidentification and inappropriate gear aggregation are further potential sources of bias in the catch estimates. Both issues were under investigation at the time of the mission, and the landing-site observations provided practical examples to inform this work.

Upcoming database changes

The head of statistics, Dr Al Hadhrami, outlined plans for a ministry-wide data infrastructure bringing together the existing fisheries, agriculture and other databases within a common framework. For fisheries, the platform is intended to allow fishers to apply for and pay for their fishing licences, and

submit the associated reports. Information submitted through the platform would feed into the existing databases.

Under the proposed arrangements, fishers would be required to enter catch and trip information before selling their catch. This could provide more timely information on fishing trips, catches and species composition. Its reliability will, however, depend on the quality of the declarations. Species misidentification and inaccurate reporting remain concerns, particularly if users receive insufficient training.

Oman was therefore encouraged to maintain the existing collection systems in parallel while the new platform is tested and refined.

Meeting with staff of the data and statistics department of the Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture and Water Resources (MFAWR)

A brief meeting with the Undersecretary for Fisheries, His Excellency Eng. Yaqoub bin Khalfan Al Busaidi, provided the wider policy context for the technical discussions. He emphasised the importance Oman attaches to the fisheries sector, particularly tuna fisheries, as part of its economic diversification plans. The continued acquisition and flagging of industrial tuna vessels reflect this direction.

Outcomes

The main outcomes of the mission were:

1. Assessment of fisheries data collection and reporting systems. The mission reviewed data management arrangements for the artisanal, coastal and industrial fleets and identified gaps affecting the completeness, reliability and representativeness of submissions to the IOTC.
2. Identification of potential biases in catch estimates. The review identified assumptions about fishing activity, species misidentification and inappropriate gear aggregation as priorities for further investigation and refinement of the estimation methods.
3. Identification of improvements needed in industrial fisheries reporting. The review of the recently developed database identified incomplete logbook submissions, historical data that cannot be recovered, and gaps in bycatch and discard reporting. Further training and independent verification through observer coverage are needed.
4. Assessment of landing-site data collection practices. Visits to Qurayyat, Sur and Al Ashkharah provided direct observations of field procedures and confirmed weaknesses in species identification and gear classification. The wider review also identified particularly low reporting coverage for the coastal fleet.
5. Support for IOTC reporting capacity. Ministry staff received practical training on the IOTC reporting forms. The discussions also identified opportunities to improve data handling and reporting procedures.
6. Identification of considerations for the transition to an integrated data system. The mission reviewed plans to link licensing, trip reporting and catch declarations through a ministry-wide platform. Maintaining the existing collection systems in parallel was recommended while the new arrangements are tested and refined.



Fig. 1. Three landing sites (green) visited by IOTC secretariat and the capital Muskat (blue)

Appendix IV: Data-Related Requests from Other Meetings

Tab. 4. Requests from other scientific meetings in 2026

Meeting	Paragraph	Description
SC28 (December 2025)	27-28	The SC RECALLED that the National Report does not replace the need for submission of data according to the IOTC Mandatory Data Requirements listed in the relevant IOTC Resolutions (and in particular Resolution 15/02). For these reasons, the SC REQUESTED all CPCs to ensure that information and data presented in the respective National Reports and the official submissions available to the IOTC are in agreement with each other.
	62	The SC NOTED that the WPNT is exploring alternative data-poor methods that utilise length-frequency data. The SC REQUESTED countries harvesting these species to work to improve their length frequency data, with support from the Secretariat, to make the future assessments feasible and less uncertain.
	102	The SC NOTED that there have been unusually high catches of striped and blue marlin by purse seines in vert recent years. The SC REQUESTED the WPB and WPDCS to investigate these data to check if those estimates are realistic.
WGEMS06 (April 2026)	22	The WGEMS DISCUSSED the possibility of holding this workshop directly ahead of the WPDCS meeting as many of the participants to the workshop would also be present at WPDCS. However, the workshop timing was not fully confirmed.
	80	The WGEMS AGREED that the IOTC specific technical workshop on EM data and implementation to support CPC's EM implementation, and described in paragraphs 19-22, be held following this joint tuna RFMO EM harmonization workshop together with the WPDCS in 2027.
	85	The WGEMS RECOMMENDED that the WPDCS consider and endorse the WGEMS Programme of Work (2027–2031), as provided in Appendix IV.
CoC23 (May 2026)	63	The CoC23 NOTED that Somalia have not reported catch figures previously and RECOMMENDED that the Commission task the Working Party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS) to discuss the reported catch figure of Somalia
S30 (May 2026	48	The Commission NOTED that paragraph 7 of Resolution 23/06 requests the SC to develop best practice guidelines for the safe handling and release of cetaceans by 2025, taking into account relevant work undertaken by other RFMOs. The Commission REQUESTED the WPDCS, WPEB and the SC to examine the existing recommendations related to this provision and provide an updated recommendation for endorsement by the Commission in 2027, including through intersessional collaboration among interested CPCs.
WPFAD08 (June 2026)	12	The WGFAD NOTED that changes to reporting forms are currently documented through change logs available on various information-sharing platforms. However, the WGFAD SUGGESTED that the Secretariat consider mechanisms to make such changes more visible to CPCs.

Meeting	Paragraph	Description
	13	The WGFAD SUPPORTED the Secretariat's proposed timeline for updating Form 3DA and the associated codelists in advance of their consideration by the WPDCS.
	14	The WGFAD REQUESTED the Secretariat to continue intersessional efforts to develop updated and standardised guidelines for Form 3DA, to be presented at the WPDCS. This revision should include: (i) standardisation of date and time formats; (ii) inclusion of vessel type classification; (iii) definition of biodegradability categories; (iv) clarification of mesh size reporting; and (v) revision and harmonisation of activity categories related to buoys and FADs. The WGFAD REITERATED the importance of the Secretariat's commitment to supporting CPCs before, during and after data submission to ensure that the highest possible data quality is achieved. The WGFAD NOTED that such support may be provided through informal exchanges aimed at resolving reporting issues or, where necessary, through requests for resubmission.
	50	The WGFAD NOTED the ongoing work of the Secretariat on developing a glossary of important terms in IOTC fisheries including the definition of a 'fishing event' which it intends to present to the WPDCS. The WGFAD NOTED that the final intention would be to discuss this glossary and any recommendations relating to it from the WPDCS further at FAO's Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) in 2027 in an effort to standardise these definitions across all RFMOs as currently CWP's definitions are very limited. The importance of aligning terminology and definitions across RFMOs to improve consistency and comparability was emphasised. The WGFAD RECALLED its previous review of FAD definitions, which resulted in updated definitions being incorporated into Resolution 24/02, and supported efforts to advance agreed definitions through the CWP process
WPNT16 (July 2026)	124	The WPNT NOTED that revisions to Indonesia's historical catches have introduced significant differences relative to the last assessment. For Spanish mackerel, annual discrepancies range from 20,000 to 36,000 tonnes over 2017–2022 (kawakawa shows similar differences; longtail tuna differences are considerably smaller). Consequently, the current assessment results are not directly comparable to 2023. The revised catch series, endorsed by the SC, is based on logbook and landing-site data and is considered more reliable. However, the WPNT AGREED that it remains difficult to explain why the revision disproportionately affects some species (e.g., COM and KAW) over others (e.g., LOT) given they are caught in the same fisheries. The WPNT REQUESTED the WPDCS to investigate this discrepancy further.
WPB24 September 2026)	111	NOTING the necessity to gather information to enable the development of advice relating to a range of potential management measures to complement the commonly used CPC based catch advice, the SC REQUESTED: • That the IOTC Secretariat (or alternately CPCs, where the Secretariat does not hold a CPCs relevant data or information) provide summaries of observer data (or logbook data or other relevant information) to WPB pertaining to the following data types for the following fishery types: o All gear/fishery types – discarding/retention rates and at-haul mortality (%) for each marlin and sailfish species, by fishery/gear type o Longline – proportion of each fleet using different hook types and sizes (Japanese tuna, J hook, Circle hook, other) o Gillnet – estimate of the proportion of the gillnet fleet using subsurface setting, and if possible, preferred depths used in fishery, and whether the fishery predominantly sets/soaks the gear overnight or through the day (or other). • CPCs to consider undertaking analyses (e.g., model-based) of at-haul mortality, at a longline fleet level (and if possible for troll/handline), to help identify key factors driving at-haul mortality and subsequently, possibly help identify additional options to reduce at haul mortality

Meeting	Paragraph	Description
		• CPCs individually or collaboratively conduct gillnet experimental fishing trials that: o Aim to test different setting depths and times of setting/soaking (e.g. day/night), on catch rates and mortality of interacting species o Collect data on all interacting species including billfish bycatch, target tuna and vulnerable species (e.g. cetaceans, turtles), in order to provide the Commission a quantified understanding of likely effects and possible trade-offs of various subsurface setting options, on each species. o Prioritise accurate species identification.
	24	The WPB NOTED that some fisheries targeting oilfish (Ruvettus pretiosus) and escolar (Lepidocybium flavobrunneum) in the southwestern Indian Ocean may catch substantial amounts of tuna and tuna-like species, including billfish species, and REQUESTED the Secretariat to liaise with SIOFA to determine whether data on these catches are reported to the IOTC.
WPEB22 September 2026)	27	The WPEB NOTED that some preliminary analyses of data reported by CPCs for 2025 show some improvements in the reporting at species level. The WPEB NOTED that India reported sharks catches at species level for the first time and the WPEB REQUESTED the Secretariat to work closely with India to review previous catches.
	176	The WPEB NOTED that India has adopted stringent measures to protect more than 20 shark species, including introducing minimum size limits, a complete finning ban, and trade and export controls of shark fins. India's National Plan of Action (NPOA) for sharks was adopted in 2024. The WPEB also ACKNOWLEDGED India's efforts to report shark catches at the species level in recent years and NOTED the potential to review historical catch data as well. The WPEB REQUESTED the Secretariat to liaise with India to review the reporting of historical shark catches.
	318	NOTING that many items on the PoW for the WPEB relate to improving data which are valid for many working parties, the WPEB REQUESTED the Secretariat to summarise common issues across Working Parties for discussion during the meeting. The WPEB further REQUESTED the WPDCS to ensure that their PoW is harmonised with all the Working Parties then take any common issues to the SC for discussion and endorsement.
WPTT28 (October 2026) [Report not adopted yet]	17	The WPTT STRESSED the need for CPCs undertaking historical catch reviews to accelerate these processes and provide updated datasets as soon as possible. The WPTT REQUESTED that the WPDCS prioritise historical catch reviews and strengthen efforts to ensure that CPCs provide adequate supporting documentation describing the methodologies used to estimate and revise catches, and that the outcomes of these reviews and the associated methodologies be reported back to the WPTT.
	23	The WPTT REQUESTED that the Secretariat clearly distinguish between anchored FAD (AFAD) and other FAD categories in analyses of Indonesian purse seine fisheries.
	24	The WPTT NOTED the suggestions to present catch and size-frequency information aggregated across all EU Member States rather than by individual Member State. However, the WPTT NOTED that Resolution 12/02 applies confidentiality provisions to fleets comprising three or fewer vessels, and REQUESTED further discussions between the Secretariat and the European Union to determine the most appropriate approach for presenting and interpreting these data while respecting confidentiality requirements.
	20	The WPTT NOTED that raising size-frequency data is a standard practice intended to reduce sampling bias and improve the representativeness of size-composition data. However, given the potential influence of raising procedures

Meeting	Paragraph	Description
		on assessment results, the WPTT REQUESTED that CPCs document and report the methodologies used to raise their size-frequency data.
	21	The WPTT NOTED the substantial increase in size-frequency samples reported from the Iranian gillnet fishery over the last two years and REQUESTED that Iran clarify whether these data represent actual samples collected or raised estimates.
	61-62	The WPTT NOTED the development of a machine-readable application for National Reports, which could facilitate data extraction, validation, and cross-checking. NOTING that such a tool could improve the transparency, consistency, and usability of National Reports, while also helping to identify opportunities for enhancing reporting templates. The WPTT SUGGESTED that the paper and associated application be presented to the WPDCS for review and feedback, particularly regarding its potential use in supporting data validation and improving reporting practices.

Appendix V: Progress made on WPDCS21 recommendations

Tab. 5. WPDCS21 progress on recommendations

Type	WPDCS21_REC	Recommendations	SC28 (para. 236)	Response / follow-up by the SC27	S30 (para. 33)	Commission response / suggestions for consideration at WPDCS20
Data reporting (to the IOTC Secretariat)	WPDCS21.01 (para. 87)	The WPDCS RECOMMENDED that the SC ADVISE the Commission to ensure that the transition from the current website to the FAO one does not affect the operations of the Commission and set aside enough resources for this transition.	SC28 (para. 236)	Updates: The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission ensures that the transition from the current website to the FAO one does not affect the operations of the Commission and set aside enough resources for this transition.		Update: None
National statistical systems	WPDCS21.02 (para 135)	The WPDCS RECOMMENDED that the SC consider adding specific code to longline logbook and ROS templates to enable the collection of data on the use of loop devices in longline fisheries. The WPDCS ACKNOWLEDGED that the ratio between the number of hooks and loop lines may provide a simple and efficient metric for effort and further NOTED that species-specific catch data should be collected for both hook-based and loop-based effort units.	SC28 (para. 146)	The SC ENDORSED the recommendation to add a specific code to longline logbook and ROS templates to enable the collection of data on the use of loop devices in longline fisheries. The SC ACKNOWLEDGED that the ratio between the number of hooks and loop lines may provide a simple and efficient metric for effort and further NOTED that species-specific catch data should be collected for both hook-based and loop-based effort units.		Update: None
WPDCS program of work	WPDCS21.03 (para. 220)	The WPDCS RECOMMENDED that the SC consider and endorse the WPDCS Programme of Work (2026–2030).	SC28 (para. 287)	Update: The SC NOTED the proposed Program of Work and priorities for the SC and each of the working parties and AGREED to a consolidated Program of Work as outlined in Appendix 36a-g. The Chairpersons and ViceChairpersons of each working party will ensure that the efforts of their respective working parties are focused on the core areas contained within the appendix, considering any new research		Update: None

Type	WPDCS21_REC	Recommendations	SC28 (para. 236)	Response / follow-up by the SC27	S30 (para. 33)	Commission response / suggestions for consideration at WPDCS20
				priorities identified by the Commission at its next Session.		
Review of the draft, and adoption of the report of the 19th Session of the WPDCS	WPDCS21.04 (para. 228)	The WPDCS RECOMMENDED that the Scientific Committee consider the consolidated set of recommendations arising from WPDCS20, as detailed in Appendix VI	SC28 (para. 303)	Update: The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission consider the consolidated set of recommendations arising from SC25, provided at Appendix 40.	S30 (para. 51)	Update: The Commission ENDORSED the SC's 2025 list of recommendations as its own