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**RESOLUTION 26/01**  
**ON ESTABLISHING INTERIM CATCH LIMITS FOR YELLOWFIN TUNA IN THE IOTC AREA**  
**OF COMPETENCE**

**Keywords:** yellowfin tuna, catch limits, total allowable catch

**The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),**

RECALLING the responsibility of IOTC for the conservation and optimum utilisation of yellowfin tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence;

RECOGNISING the need for action to ensure the achievement of IOTC objectives to conserve and manage yellowfin tuna in the IOTC Area of Competence;

MINDFUL of Article 56 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and Article XVI of the IOTC Agreement regarding the sovereign rights of coastal States for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the living marine resources in their Exclusive Economic Zones;

MINDFUL of Articles 87 and 116 to 119 of UNCLOS regarding the right to fish on the high seas and the duty to cooperate in the conservation of high seas fish stocks;

COGNISANT of Article 64 of UNCLOS and the provisions of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement concerning cooperation in the conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks;

RECOGNISING the special requirements of developing States, particularly Small Island Developing States, under Article 24 of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement;

RECALLING that the 2024 stock assessment for yellowfin tuna indicates that the stock is not overfished and not subject to overfishing;

NOTING, however, that total catches of yellowfin tuna in 2024 exceeded the estimated maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and that sustained catches above MSY are projected to reduce spawning biomass over time;

RECOGNISING the recommendation of the IOTC Scientific Committee that the Commission establish a total allowable catch (TAC) for yellowfin tuna that does not exceed the median recent MSY estimate of approximately 421,000 t (range 416,000 – 430,000 t);

CONCERNED that maintaining recent catch levels could increase the probability of the stock returning to an overfished state in the long term;

ACKNOWLEDGING the uncertainties identified in the yellowfin tuna stock assessment, including recruitment assumptions and CPUE standardisation issues;

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NOTING with approval that the IOTC Scientific Committee has commenced the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process for yellowfin tuna;

EMPHASISING the need for the swift completion of the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process and the development and adoption of a Management Procedure for yellowfin tuna;

RECOGNISING the ongoing work of the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC) and the absence of a finalised allocation framework;

DESIRING to establish interim yellowfin tuna catch limits that ensure sustainability while preserving flexibility for future allocation decisions;

ADOPTS, in accordance with Article IX, paragraph 1 of the IOTC Agreement, the following:

***Application***

1. This Resolution shall apply to all CPCs within the IOTC Area of Competence.

***Total allowable catch***

2. The total allowable catch (TAC) for yellowfin tuna shall be 436,867 t in 2027 and 2028.
3. After 2028, the TAC specified in paragraph 2 shall remain in place unless the Commission adopts a different TAC. Once the Commission has adopted a management procedure for yellowfin tuna, the TAC for the following management periods will be adopted by the Commission in accordance with that management procedure.

***Catch limits for yellowfin tuna and conditions associated with the catch limits***

4. As an interim measure, CPCs are assigned to Categories A and B and shall apply the following catch limits (Category A) and trigger thresholds (Category B), which take into account the special requirements of Small Island Developing States and the developmental aspirations, limited historical participation, and structural constraints faced by certain developing coastal States:

<i>CPC</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Catch limits (t)</i>
China	A	4,641
Taiwan, Province of China <sup>@</sup>		10,688
Comoros		6,000
European Union		73,078
India		25,000
Indonesia		45,426
Iran		42,000
Japan		4,003
Kenya		6,000
Korea		9,056
Maldives		47,195
Madagascar		5,000

Mauritius		10,990
Oman <sup>^</sup>		25,000 <sup>^</sup>
Pakistan		14,468
Seychelles		39,577
Somalia		5,000
Sri Lanka		33,245
Tanzania		6,000
Yemen		20,500
Category A CPCs (sub-total)		432,867
Category B CPCs (sub-total)	B	4,000
Total		436,867

<sup>@</sup>Taiwan, Province of China, shall be subject to paragraphs 8, 9, 12, and 13.

<sup>^</sup>Oman shall gradually transition from its current catch levels to the catch limit in paragraph 4 by the end of 2031. Oman shall endeavor to reduce its catches by 20% per annum during this period and report its progress annually to the CoC and Commission.

5. In implementing the yellowfin tuna catch limits in paragraph 4, with respect to Category B CPCs, the following provisions shall apply:
  - a) The sub-total for Category B CPCs shall not constitute a binding limit.
  - b) CPCs in Category B shall be subject to a trigger threshold of 3,000 t. If a CPC in Category B exceeds this threshold in two consecutive years from 2027, that CPC shall be listed as a Category A CPC in the table in paragraph 4 and receive a catch limit equal to the Category A CPC with the lowest catch limit, unless otherwise decided by the Commission.
  - c) CPCs in Category B shall not be subject to the provisions of this Resolution concerning overage, underage or transfer of catch.
6. If the Commission adopts, on the basis of a future management procedure or in its absence, a reduction or an increase of the TAC in accordance with paragraph 3, adjustments shall be applied to the catch limits of Category A CPCs, in proportion to the change in TAC.
7. This Resolution shall not prejudice the rights and obligations under international law of those coastal State CPCs in the IOTC Area of Competence whose current fishing activity for yellowfin tuna is limited or non-existent, but that have a real interest in fishing for the species and may wish to develop their own yellowfin tuna fisheries.

### ***Overage of catch***

8. If any Category A CPC exceeds its annual catch limit, 100% of the overage of the catch limit shall be deducted from the respective CPC's catch limit during or before the adjustment year as indicated in the following table:

<i>Year of catch</i>	<i>Adjustment year</i>
2027	2029
2028	2030
2029	2031
...	...

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9. Notwithstanding paragraph 8, if any Category A CPC exceeds its annual catch limit for two consecutive years, this CPC's catch limit for the corresponding adjustment year shall be reduced by 125% of the excess catch, and the Commission may recommend additional measures, as appropriate.
  10. In the case of overage of catch limits under Resolution 21/01 *On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence* and Resolution 19/01 *On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence*, 100% of the overage in 2025 and 2026 shall be deducted from the respective CPC's catch limit in 2027 and 2028, respectively. If this Resolution enters into force for the respective CPC after 2027, the payback of the overage shall be implemented in the same way in the years following the entry into force of this Resolution for the respective CPC.
  11. Any CPCs in the table of paragraph 4 with a catch limit below 5000 t, may implement a two-year management of their catch limits. Such CPC shall notify the IOTC Secretariat by 31 January 2027. If, at the end of the two-year management period, the CPC has exceeded its catch limit, 125% of the overage of the catch limit shall be deducted from their next year's catch limit.

#### ***Underage of catch***

12. Up to 15% of an underage of a CPC's annual catch limit established in paragraph 4 may be carried over to the corresponding adjustment year specified in paragraph 8.

#### ***Transfer of catch***

13. By 31 December each year, a Category A CPC may temporarily transfer part or all of its annual catch limit for the following year to another Category A CPC that has not objected to this Resolution, by notification to the IOTC Secretariat.

#### ***Administration of catch limits by the IOTC Secretariat***

14. The IOTC Secretariat shall annually prepare and circulate, by 31 December, a table of allocated catch limits disaggregated in accordance with the requirements set out in paragraphs 4 to 13 (including catch limits, overage and underage of catch, and transfers) for the following year.
15. If the IOTC Executive Secretary receives notifications of transfers in accordance with paragraph 13, it shall circulate these notifications and adjusted catch limits by 7 January each year.

#### ***Chartering agreements and export of fishing vessels***

16. CPCs shall not conclude, extend or renew chartering agreements, be it as chartering or flag CPCs, with Contracting Parties that object to this Resolution.
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18. To the extent possible, CPCs shall not export their flagged fishing vessels targeting IOTC managed species to CPCs that object to this Resolution in accordance with Article IX, paragraph 5 of the IOTC Agreement.

### ***Supply vessels***

19. To ensure a level playing field among CPCs using supply vessels in their purse seine operations targeting tropical tuna, Contracting Parties that have objected to Resolution 24/02 *On management of drifting fish aggregating devices (FADs) in the IOTC Area of Competence* shall apply the following supply vessel limits and requirements:

- a) By 1 January 2027: 3 supply vessels in support of not less than 12 purse seine vessels, all of the same flag State.
  - b) By 1 January 2029: 3 supply vessels in support of not less than 15 purse seine vessels, all of the same flag State.
  - c) CPCs shall ensure that a single purse seine vessel shall not be supported by more than one supply vessel of the same flag State at any time.
  - d) CPCs shall not register any new or additional supply vessels on the IOTC Record of Authorised Vessels.
  - e) As an exception to this limit requirement, Oman is authorised to reregister a second supply vessel (Al Malah) on the IOTC Record of Authorised Vessels (RAV) with an authorisation period up to 31 December 2031.
  - f) The next WPICMM shall assess the possibility to allow the renewal of a supply vessel exclusively in case of written evidence that an old supply vessel might represent a risk for maritime security or the life of seafarers.
20. CPCs shall report annually, before the 1<sup>st</sup> of January for the coming year of operations, which of their purse seine vessels are served by each supply vessel. This information will be published on IOTC website so as to be accessible to all CPCs and is mandatory.

### ***Scientific work***

21. The IOTC Scientific Committee shall conduct a full stock assessment of yellowfin tuna in 2027.
22. The IOTC Scientific Committee and its Working Parties shall prioritise the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process for yellowfin tuna and shall develop a management procedure for consideration and adoption by the Commission at its annual Session in 2028.

### ***Final provisions***

23. Nothing in this Resolution shall pre-empt or prejudice the future allocation of fishing opportunities.
24. If one or more Contracting Parties object to this Resolution pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 5 of the IOTC Agreement, and if the sum of the catch limits of the objecting Contracting Parties under paragraph 4, is equal to or above 15% of the TAC specified in paragraph 2, this Resolution shall not enter into force.
25. If the total catch in any year exceeds the applicable annual TAC, adjusted by the carryover of underage of catch, if any, for reasons other than exceeding of catch limits by CPCs with an allocated catch limit, the Commission shall review this Resolution.

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26. The Commission shall review this Resolution in light of the next yellowfin tuna stock assessment and revise it as necessary at its annual Session in 2028.
27. This Resolution supersedes Resolution 21/01 *On an Interim Plan for Rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin Tuna Stock in the IOTC Area of Competence*. If the mechanism in paragraph 24 is triggered, Resolution 21/01 or, for those Contracting Parties that have objected to Resolution 21/01, the previous yellowfin rebuilding plans to which they are bound shall remain in force and apply from 2028 onwards.