

Maldives yellowfin tuna - handline

Overview

FIP Description

The handline fishery is the most important, in terms of foreign exchange revenue. Current landings are about 28,000 MT annually, of which 80% is exported, mostly in fresh chilled form. These exports are worth about 70 million USD a year.

The fishery targets surface-dwelling large yellowfin tuna, which in non-handline fisheries are often associated with dolphins. While Maldivians know of the fishery potential of yellowfin tuna, a targeted fishery using handlines started 1990s as a response to the private sector involvement in fresh tuna exports. Livebait, often scads (*Selar crumenophthalmus*, *Decapterus macarellus*) and triggerfish (*Odonus niger*), are used to attract and maintain large yellowfin tuna schools. Hooked scads/triggerfish on handline leads with sinkers are used to catch yellowfin and hauled manually. The fish are killed immediately, gilled, gutted, and bled before being stored on flake ice.

The fishery is highly selective with no bycatch and virtually no negative interactions with ETP species.

The scope of the FIP is the entire Maldives handline fishery, conducted throughout the archipelago, but generally restricted to the south-central, central, and northern regions. The Maldives fishery segment is part of the wider Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock, but this fishery targets only adult tuna within the Maldivian EEZ.

Of the roughly 800 licensed tuna vessels in the Maldives, about 50% target exclusively yellowfin using handlines. The fishing licenses are renewed every year and managed by the Maldives Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources, and Agriculture.

How is this FIP Doing?

Current Status:

4%

25%

71%

Actions Progress This shows the proportion of actions in the workplan that the FIP has completed.

0%

Actions Overview This shows the proportion of actions that are behind schedule, on track, completed, or not yet started.

Behind	On Track	Complete	Future
0%	100%	0%	0%

Red Indicator Progress This shows the proportion of actions specifically addressing red indicators that are behind schedule, on track, completed, or not yet started. This helps users understand the progress the FIP is making on the biggest challenges in the fishery.

Behind	On Track	Complete	Future
0%	100%	0%	0%

FIP Objective(s)

The Maldives Handline Yellowfin Tuna Fishery Improvement Project seeks to achieve the following objectives by the end of 2026:

- Improve market demand and market access for the Maldives one-by-one handline yellowfin tuna fishery.
- Promote actions to implement a rebuilding plan for the YFT stock that is expected to allow an increase in the stock to a point that it is at or fluctuating around Bmsy.
- Promote actions to implement an effective Harvest Strategy, supported by appropriate and effective Harvest Control Rules and Tools
- Identify management requirements for livebait species utilized in the handline fishery and ongoing information requirements to ensure management is appropriate.
- Implement a process to review any measures necessary to minimise UoA related mortality of endangered, threatened and protected species, notably sharks.
- To achieve MSC Certification of the handline yellowfin tuna fishery by 2026, with all indicator scores reaching 80 or above.

FIP Type

Comprehensive

FIP Stage

Stage 2: FIP Launch

Start and Projected End Dates

May, 2021 -

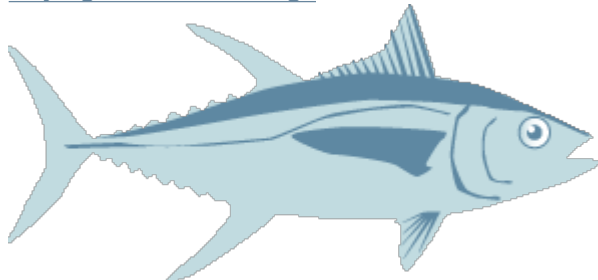
May, 2026

Species**Common Name**

Yellowfin Tuna

Scientific Name

Thunnus albacares

[Buying Guide Link Image](#)[Yellowfin Tuna](#)[Buying Guide](#)**Gear Type**[Handline](#)**Location****FAO Major Fishing Area**[Area 51 \(Indian Ocean, Western\)](#)**Exclusive Economic Zones****Country**

Maldives

Geographic Scope

The entire EEZ of the Maldives

Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO)

IOTC

High Seas Name

Indian Ocean

Estimated Total FIP Landings

25000 metric tons

FIP Leads

Organization Name

Maldives Seafood Processors and Exporters Association

Organization Type

NGO

Primary Contact

Shafin Ahmed

Email

shafin@bigfish.mv

Phone

+9607753978

Website Name

[MSPEA](#)

Organization Name

International Pole and Line Foundation

Organization Type

NGO

Primary Contact

M. Shiham Adam

Email

mshiham.adam@gmail.com

Phone

+9607792687

Website Name

[International Pole and Line Foundation](#)

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