

Indian Ocean tuna FIP Position Statement

IOTC Annual Meeting 2026

March 2026

The FIP aims to meet the rising global demand for tuna and other large pelagics in a sustainable manner. This can be achieved by assuring sustainable stock status for all the target tunas that is consistent with the maximum sustainable yield (MSY). Through overall strengthening of management systems at the national and international levels, improvements can be made to ensure sustainable and equitable management of target and vulnerable species, FADs, habitats, and fishery ecosystem by utilising best scientific information available. The fishery aims to achieve certification under the [Marine Stewardship Council](#) (MSC) Fisheries Standard.

As a FIP, we are concerned with the status of the tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean and their effective management. We operate in this region and the sustainability of these stocks is integral to not only our business, but also to the overall marine environment.

IOTC must ensure the uninterrupted, sustainable management of the tuna stocks and marine ecosystems under its purview. There are several critical measures and issues that require immediate attention by IOTC this year. In collaboration with the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), we strongly urge that the IOTC acts in May 2026 at the annual meeting of the IOTC Commission to:

1. Fully implement the revised IOTC compliance assessment process adopted in 2023 to ensure robust and transparent assessment of Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPC) accountability, particularly for CPC non-compliance with the provision of mandatory fishery and FAD data, catch and FAD limits and use of large-scale gillnets.
2. Ensure all CPCs provide a detailed plan of action to address non-compliance — when they are assessed as non compliant category 2 — within the three-month period following the Compliance Committee.
3. Adopt a TAC for yellowfin tuna for the period of 2026-2028 that does not exceed the median MSY estimate of 421,000 tonnes, and adopt measures to ensure this TAC is not exceeded, as recommended by the IOTC Scientific Committee.
4. Implement effective measures to ensure that skipjack and bigeye tuna catches do not exceed the catch limits established by the Harvest Control Rule for skipjack and the Management Procedure for bigeye.
5. Sufficiently fund and accelerate the adoption of robust management procedures for yellowfin and bigeye tuna.
6. Develop permanent Limit and Target Reference Points for all tunas.
7. In line with ISSF's established approach to strengthening FAD management:
 - a. Require vessels to report complete FAD position data and acoustic biomass records from echosounder buoys for scientific use with appropriate time-lags to protect confidentiality.
8. Develop FAD recovery program/strategies and consider incentive-based policies, where practical.
9. Amend Res. 25/08 to require shark fins to be naturally attached for all landings without exceptions or alternatives.
10. The SC established criteria for the conduct of experimental fishing trials to assess the effects of leader materials on the mortality of vulnerable shark species (per para 17 of Resolution 25/08), if such trials take place, ensure that they are done so only in accordance with the criteria.
11. Adopt updated best practices for safe handling and release of mobulids and adopt best practices for safe handling and release for cetaceans, including use of safe release devices, as recommended by the SC.
12. Amend Res. 23/07 on seabird mitigation measures to reflect up-to-date scientific advice and align the specifications to meet the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) standards.

13. Amend Res. 12/04 on sea turtles to include scientifically proven mitigation measures and safe handling and release devices and require identification of sea turtles at species level as recommended by the SC.
14. More fully embrace the use of electronic monitoring to increase observer coverage from the minimum 5% level for all gear types.
15. Adopt measures to begin increasing observer coverage (human and/or electronic) from the minimum 5% and progress toward 100% coverage in industrial tuna fisheries.
16. Strengthen Res. 16/11 to be consistent with the FAO Port State Measures Agreement, including by adopting provisions for prioritizing vessels for inspection and including ports of CPCs outside the IOTC Agreement Area.
17. To improve compliance with tuna conservation measures, adopt amendments to Res. 15/03 to strengthen the IOTC VMS, including by requiring simultaneous near real-time position reporting and ensuring systems are tamper-proof.
18. Add recommended data fields from the FAO Guidelines, Annex I, to the IOTC transshipment declaration including, among others, vessel owner and company contact information, master contact details, intended location (at-sea position or port), and the amount of catch remaining on board after transshipment operations.
19. Require all reporting to be electronic and in near real-time, but no greater than 24 hours after event, and that all transshipment declarations be submitted to flag State and IOTC Secretariat.
20. Require all vessels authorized to conduct at-sea transshipment to have IMO number and operational automatic identification systems (AIS), and that VMS position data are provided to IOTC Secretariat in near-real time.

The Indian Ocean tuna – purse seine (Dongwon Industries) FIP looks forward to the continued leadership of the IOTC in the Indian Ocean, a region rich in tuna resources that are in need of continued science-based conservation and management.