



# 2024 IOTC Position Statement

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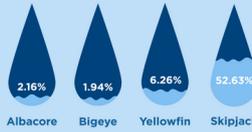
GLOBAL TUNA ALLIANCE

# WHO ARE THE GTA?

We are an independent group of retailers and supply-chain companies, working to ensure that tuna ultimately meets the highest standards of environmental performance and social responsibility.

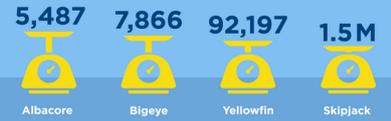


## SHARE OF CATCH



of all tuna caught globally that passes through GTA Partners

## VOLUME OF TUNA LANDED (mt)



## DOCK PRICE (USD)

of tuna caught that passes through GTA Partners



## TOTAL END VALUE

of tuna passed through the GTA

**\$9.2 Billion USD**



**\$2.3 Billion**

Dock price of all tuna caught globally that passes through GTA Partners



Skipjack accounts for \$8 Billion sales of GTA associated tuna

Data collected by GTA 2021-2022



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# GTA TOP LEVEL ASKS

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## Yellowfin Rebuilding

IOTC agrees a resolution that cuts Yellowfin catches in the Indian Ocean by 30% and implements a recovery plan that rebuilds the stock within two generations.

## Bigeye Rebuilding

At a minimum, ensure that bigeye catches do not exceed the limit set by the adopted Management Procedure in Res. 22/03

## Harvest Strategies

- Accelerate development and implementation of comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategies, including precautionary reference points and harvest control rules (HCRs).
- Move from the current system of opaque allocations (where they exist) based on political negotiations, to a systematic and transparent system of fair and equitable fishing opportunities for Bigeye to all participants according to international law.

## Observer Coverage

- Where lacking, adopt minimum standards for electronic monitoring (EM) data, and a work plan with milestones and deadlines for the implementation of best practice EM and e-reporting, with necessary mechanisms to ensure compliance.
- IOTC to raise the minimum level of scientific observation (humans or electronic) on board vessels to at least 30% initially, with the aim of achieving 100% within the next 5 years.

## Port State Measures Agreement

IOTC adopts port state measures (PSMs) that are aligned with PSMA requirements.

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# YELLOWFIN REBUILDING

## *What is the issue?*

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- **Indian Ocean Yellowfin tuna has been overfished since 2015.**
- From 2016-2020 average catches of Yellowfin tuna (434,383 tonnes) were determined to be above the estimated maximum sustainable yield (MSY) level of 403,000 tonnes.
- **In June 2021, IOTC delegates agreed on an interim rebuilding plan for overfished Yellowfin tuna. The measure, resolution 21/01, provided a robust framework on catch reductions and proposed an overall total allowable catch (TAC) of 401,011 tonnes.**
- However, as of January 2022, this measure was weakened with formal objections submitted by six countries, putting the interim rebuilding plan at serious risk of failure.
- **In December 2021, the new stock assessment presented in the IOTC Scientific Committee revealed that Indian Ocean Yellowfin tuna continues to be overfished, and the MSY estimate for the Indian Ocean stock was recalculated at 349,000 tonnes. This is significantly below the catch limit of the interim rebuilding plan (resolution 21/01).**
- Furthermore, the scientific advice in 2021 showed that if 2020 catch levels were reduced by 30%, there is a more than 67% probability of rebuilding the stock by 2030. This equates to a Yellowfin catch at 302,837 tonnes.
- **The overall catch of Yellowfin has reduced slightly - in 2022, it was 410 332t, which is less than the reported catch from 2021 (416 235t) and the 2017-2021 average catch (435 225t).**
- Yet, this minimal reduction barely scratches the surface of what is required to end the overfishing of this stock.

### What happened last year?

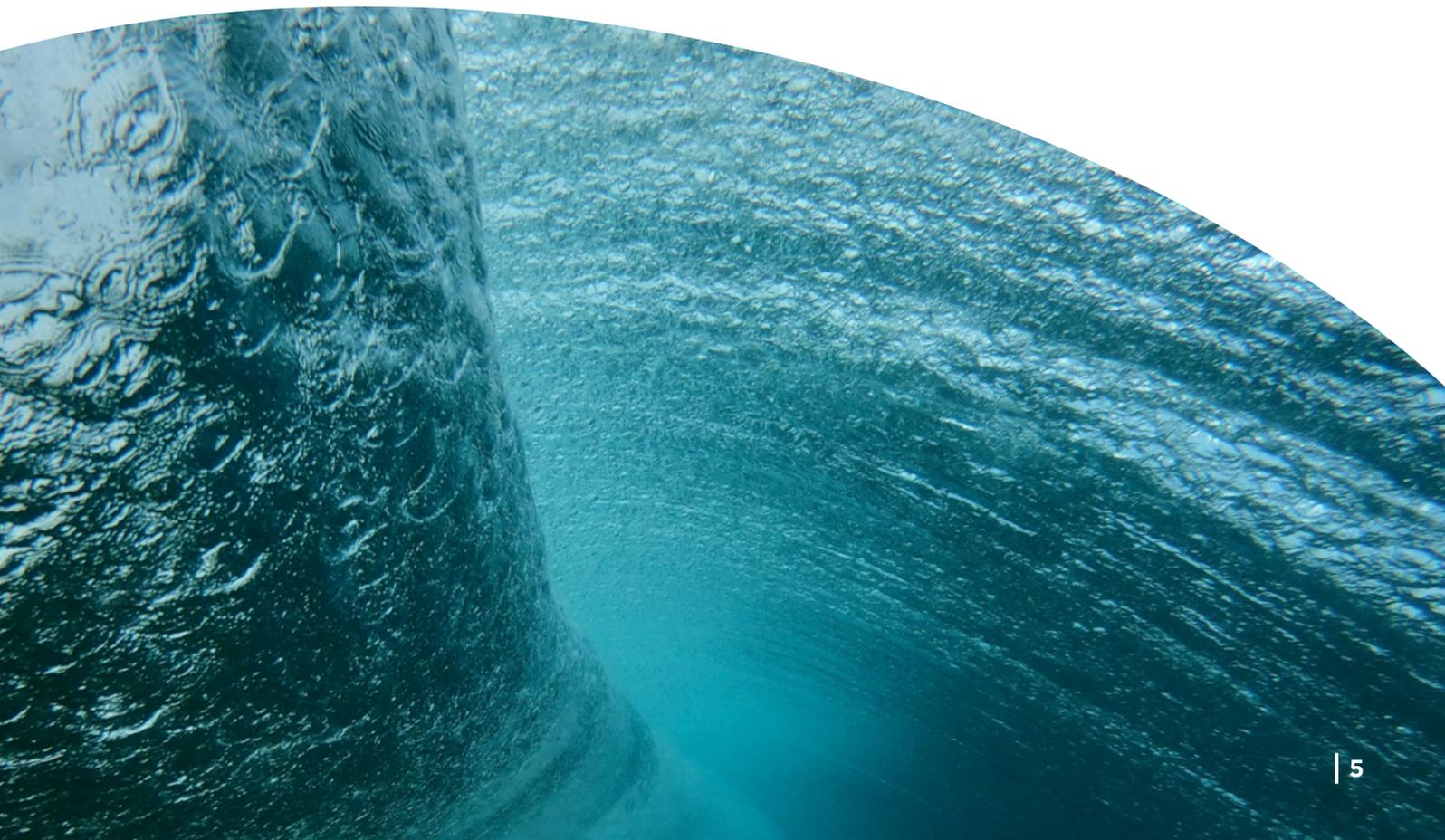
- **As in previous years, the 27th Session of the IOTC in May 2023 concluded without a binding measure to cut Yellowfin catch and rebuild the stock. While there was some effort to adopt voluntary measures, these are clearly not enough to rebuild the stock with confidence.**
- Progress was once again hindered by the failure to agree on catch allocations.
- **Despite there being several proposals on the table, the only successful resolution to rebuild Yellowfin was by host country Mauritius. Though this measure was purely voluntary, stifling its overall impact.**

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## *What are we calling for?*

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- The GTA and WWF are jointly calling on the IOTC to: pass a resolution that cuts Yellowfin catches by 30% of 2020 levels, in line with scientific advice, and agree on a recovery plan that rebuilds the stock within two generations.
- **CPCs should redouble their efforts to leave the 28th Session in Bangkok with a Yellowfin reduction deal.**
- Any resolution should apply to all fishing vessels targeting tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean, regardless of the length of the vessel and area of operation.
- **If catches are reduced to <70% of 2020 levels there is a >67% probability of being above BMSY in 2030.**
- Accordingly, reduce Yellowfin catches to below 302,837t.
- **In addition to the reduction in catch as set out above, the IOTC must ensure that all CPCs must comply with the resolution.**



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# BIGEYE REBUILDING

## *What is the issue?*

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- **The IOTC adopted a management procedure (MP) for Bigeye tuna in 2022.**
- The MP-based catch limit is scheduled to be implemented for the first time next year. Because Bigeye is both overfished and experiencing continued overfishing, the first-ever catch limit for the stock will require a reduction in catch from recent averages of around 90,000t annually to the MP-derived annual limit of 80,583t for 2024 and 2025.

## *What are we calling for?*

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- **At a minimum, ensure that Bigeye catches do not exceed the limit set by the adopted Management Procedure in Res. 22/03**



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# HARVEST STRATEGIES

## *What is the issue?*

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- Harvest strategies (or management procedures) provide a pre-agreed framework to facilitate efficient, science-based decision-making, to achieve a long-term vision for the stock and fishery.
- **IOTC has been progressing the development of management procedures which the GTA commends.**
- A HCR has been adopted for Skipjack, which is a component of a management procedure. While this is positive, the Commission is consistently overshooting the TAC. For the HCR to be effective, the Commission needs to stick to the limit.

## *What are we calling for?*

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- **Adoption of additional measures to prevent continually overshooting the HCR-derived TAC for Skipjack tuna.**
- We call on the IOTC to either adopt a systematic and transparent system of fair and equitable fishing opportunities for all participants according to international law or implement more effective rules, such as an Olympic system, to prevent overshooting the catch limit.



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# OBSERVER COVERAGE

## *What is the issue?*

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- Comprehensive observer coverage is critical to effective fisheries management, compliance monitoring, independent verification of catch, and effort and species interactions.
- **Low levels of observer coverage limit the availability of independent catch and effort data, reducing the accuracy of stock assessments and the effectiveness of conservation management measures.**
- The IOTC currently requires only 5% observer coverage for longline vessels larger than 24 meters operating within the Convention Area.
- **While the IOTC has endorsed minimum electronic monitoring (EM) standards for purse seine vessels, it has not yet adopted them for all gear types or carrier vessels.**

## **What happened last year?**

- A resolution was passed directing the IOTC Scientific Committee to develop and agree on electronic monitoring minimum standards for Indian Ocean fisheries by 2024.

## *What are we calling for?*

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- Implementation of the minimum standards for electronic monitoring (EM) data.
- **WWF and GTA strongly encourage the IOTC to raise the minimum level of scientific observation (humans or electronic) on board vessels to at least 30% initially, with the aim of achieving 100% within the next 5 years.**



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# PORT STATE MEASURES AGREEMENT

## *What is the issue?*

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- The PSMA, adopted in 2009 by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), requires parties to place tighter controls on foreign-flagged vessels seeking to enter and use their ports to land or tranship fish.
- **Tuna RFMOs also implement Port State measures as part of their management measures. This ensures that these governments have minimum standards in place, regardless of whether they are a party to the PSMA.**
- The IOTC adopted a Resolution on Port State Measures in 2010, which was amended in 2016.
- **However, the exclusion of ports by CPCs that are outside of the IOTC Convention Area undermine the global reach of Port State Measures and provide potential safe havens for IUU vessels, operators, and vessels that support IUU fishing activities.**

## *What are we calling for?*

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- Amend Res. 16/11 to prioritize vessels for inspection in port and expand the measure to include ports of CPCs that are outside of the IOTC Convention Area.





## CONTACT

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