



2025 IOTC Position Statement

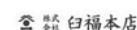
GLOBAL TUNA ALLIANCE

ABOUT US - GLOBAL TUNA ALLIANCE

The Global Tuna Alliance (GTA) is a pre-competitive collaboration of international supply chain companies with a shared interest in strengthening the environmental and social performance of global tuna fisheries.

We are dedicated to ensuring sustainable and socially responsible global tuna fisheries of all species, sizes, and scales (both big and small operations) for current and future generations. We want to transform global tuna fisheries management through our supply chain actions, and by engaging in RFMOs processes.

OUR CURRENT PARTNERS



TOP LEVEL ASKS

Crew Welfare Standards

The GTA urges the IOTC to commit to a process for the development of binding conservation and management measures that address:

- Safe and secure working environments with minimum health and safety risks
- Fair employment terms enshrined in written contracts, provided in a language understood by the employee
- Decent working and living conditions on board vessels, including access to sufficient fresh water, food, and medical care
- Fair and regular remuneration, along with appropriate insurance for crew members
- Opportunity for crew members to disembark and seek repatriation when entitled

Furthermore, we recommend that the IOTC:

- Implement a robust monitoring and enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance with these standards
- Establish a system for crew members to report violations safely and confidentially
- Require flag states to investigate and address reported labor abuses promptly
- Encourage port states to conduct labor inspections on fishing vessels entering their ports

Observer Coverage

The GTA urges IOTC members to:

- Immediately meet current obligations of 5% observer coverage for all fishing vessels of 24 meters length and above, as well as under 24 meters if they operate outside the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the flag CPC
- Develop a clear, time-bound roadmap to achieve 100% observer coverage (human or electronic) across all industrial tuna fisheries in the IOTC convention area
- Develop comprehensive electronic monitoring standards that ensure data quality while recognizing the practical challenges faced by diverse fleets

Harvest Strategies/Management Procedures

The GTA urges the IOTC to:

- Acknowledge and address the limitations and uncertainties in previous stock assessments, including those related to standardised CPUE (catch per unit effort) data
- Prioritise the work on yellowfin tuna Management Procedures to enable the Commission to adopt it at the earliest opportunity and allocate appropriate resources and a clear mandate to advance this work
- Recognise that without credible Management Procedures, GTA partners face increasing difficulty in justifying continued sourcing from these fisheries, potentially impacting livelihoods and economic stability within the region

CREW WELFARE STANDARDS

What is the issue?

The human dimension of fisheries sustainability is critical and cannot be overlooked. Encouraged by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's (WCPFC) binding measure on crew welfare adopted in 2024, we strongly urge the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) to commit to developing similar comprehensive standards, for a decision in 2026, to ensure that workers' rights are protected throughout the Indian Ocean tuna fisheries.

We are concerned by recent reports of widespread and severe human rights abuses in the Indian Ocean tuna fisheries, including:

- Forced labor and human trafficking, with some workers trapped at sea for up to a decade
- Physical and verbal abuse, including beatings, threats, and inhumane treatment
- Hazardous working conditions, lack of proper safety equipment, and denial of necessary medical care
- Excessive work hours, with some crew members reporting 17-hour shifts without breaks
- Underpayment and wage retention

What are we calling for?

We support measures that align with international labor standards, including the International Labour Organization's Work in Fishing Convention (C188) and other relevant instruments. Specifically, we call for the IOTC to commit to a process for the development of binding conservation and management measures.

By adopting these measures, the IOTC will demonstrate its commitment to socially responsible and equitable tuna supply chains. This action is crucial to combat the documented abuses and ensure the protection of workers' rights in Indian Ocean tuna fisheries.



ELECTRONIC MONITORING (EM) & OBSERVER COVERAGE STANDARDS

What is the issue?

Effective monitoring is fundamental to sustainable fisheries management. Current inconsistencies in data collection undermine stock assessments and management decisions and contribute to the Commission's inability to effectively monitor the implementation of obligations.

What are we calling for?

The GTA urges IOTC members to immediately meet current obligations of 5% observer coverage for all fishing vessels of 24 meters length and above, as well as under 24 meters if they operate outside the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the flag CPC.

We also call for a clear, time-bound roadmap to achieve 100% observer coverage (human or electronic) across all industrial tuna fisheries in the IOTC convention area.

We support the development of comprehensive electronic monitoring standards that ensure data quality while recognizing the practical challenges faced by diverse fleets. This approach aligns with our commitment to strengthened monitoring information and ensuring that management decisions are based on robust, verifiable data.

By agreeing to a roadmap to 100% coverage, the IOTC will significantly enhance its ability to collect accurate, timely data on fishing activities, bycatch, and compliance. This improved monitoring will lead to more effective conservation measures, sustainable management of tuna stocks, and increased transparency in the Indian Ocean tuna fisheries.



Photo provided by Dr. Wetjens Dimmlich, GTA

HARVEST STRATEGIES

What is the issue?

We must reinvigorate the yellowfin tuna MP development process. The current review of the Operating Model presents an opportunity to address stakeholder concerns and establish a clear pathway toward a long overdue management procedure (MP) adoption by 2026. The stalling of the process over recent years highlights the critical need for renewed focus and resources to ensure the sustainable management of this vital stock. For Global Tuna Alliance partners, a robust and successfully implemented MP is not simply a desirable outcome, but a fundamental requirement for continued sourcing of yellowfin tuna from Indian Ocean fisheries.

Sustainable management of yellowfin tuna is essential for both ecosystem health and the long-term viability of Indian Ocean tuna fisheries. Renewed commitment and action are crucial to overcome past delays and ensure the successful implementation of a robust management procedure. The establishment of a clear pathway towards MP adoption by 2026 is vital to ensure that GTA partners can continue to confidently source yellowfin tuna from the Indian Ocean, supporting sustainable fisheries and responsible practices.

What are we calling for?

The GTA urges IOTC to:

- Acknowledge and address the limitations and uncertainties in previous stock assessments, including those related to standardised CPUE (catch per unit effort) data.
- Prioritise the work on the yellowfin tuna MP to enable the Commission to adopt it at the earliest opportunity and allocate appropriate resources and a clear mandate to advance this work.
- Recognise that without a credible MP, GTA partners face increasing difficulty in justifying continued sourcing from these fisheries, potentially impacting livelihoods and economic stability within the region.










CURRENT PROGRESS ON HARVEST STRATEGIES IN IOTC STOCKS










Infographic Key

-  Not adopted
-  Adopted, but not implemented
-  Adopted and implemented where applicable










Skipjack

Precautionary Target Reference Points	
Precautionary Limit Reference Points	
Acceptable Levels of Risk	
Management/Operational Objectives	
Management Strategy Evaluation	
Performance Indicators	
Harvest Control Rules	
Monitoring Strategies	
Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels	

Albacore & Yellowfin

Precautionary Target Reference Points	
Precautionary Limit Reference Points	
Acceptable Levels of Risk	
Management/Operational Objectives	
Management Strategy Evaluation	
Performance Indicators	
Harvest Control Rules	
Monitoring Strategies	
Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels	

Bigeye

Precautionary Target Reference Points	
Precautionary Limit Reference Points	
Acceptable Levels of Risk	
Management/Operational Objectives	
Management Strategy Evaluation	
Performance Indicators	
Harvest Control Rules	
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Management Tools to implement Resulting Exploitation Levels	



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