

# Yellowfin tuna Indian Ocean

 Fishery:  Indian Ocean  IOTC  Thailand  Longlines

## IDENTIFICATION



### SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Thunnus albacares*

### SPECIES NAME(S)

Yellowfin tuna

### STOCK IDENTIFICATION

An assessment unit is considered to exist in the Indian Ocean by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC, 2014).



### RELATED LINKS:

- [Indian Ocean Tuna Commission \(IOTC\)](#)

## ASSESSMENT

### Strengths

The stock assessment has been carried out regularly using a range of assessment methods. The IOTC has recently adopted precautionary management, which includes the use of interim target and limit reference points and calls for the use of harvest control rules and management strategy evaluation.

: The stock assessment has been carried out regularly using a range of assessment methods. The reliability of the estimates of the total catch has continued to improve over the past few years, and the Secretariat has conducted several reviews of the nominal catch databases in recent years. The Commission has regularly been carrying out the meetings to discuss about the fishery and the appropriate management.

### Weaknesses

Yellowfin tuna in the Indian Ocean are overfished and undergoing overfishing. Catches have been over recommended level since 2011. Recent advice calls for a 20% reduction but only a 5-15% reduction (depending on the fleet) has been adopted by the Commission (2016). IUU fishing and piracy has been a major issue in the Indian Ocean and there are compliance issues with regard to the quality of reported data {IOTC 2013b}. The Commission has taken recent action to continue addressing these issues but the success of these measures is not yet known. A number of bycatch species, including sharks, sea turtles and sea birds are incidentally captured in fisheries targeting yellowfin tuna. Observer coverage rates are low in fisheries targeting yellowfin tuna.

: Although important progress in the quality and quantity of analyses conducted, there remain uncertainties in the application of the models that prevented the SC from determining the current status of yellowfin tuna in a precise way. Nevertheless, most of the analyses conducted coincide in indicating that the stock is very close to an overfished state, or already overfished, and that the exploitation rate in recent years has exceeded the optimal level (IOTC, 2010c). Currently, there is no catch limit for yellowfin tuna in Indian Ocean and catch allocation for Members The Commission should recognize the importance of applying the precautionary approach for the management of the stock in the Indian Ocean, including to set catch limits for yellowfin tuna in Indian Ocean (to the levels recommended by the Scientific Committee) and catch allocation for Members (on the basis of the catch figure indicated in the most recent IOTC Scientific Committee Report). IUU fishing in the Indian Ocean has been a major issue, which includes a range of illicit activities: fishing without permission or out of season; harvesting prohibited species; using outlawed types of fishing gear; disregarding catch quotas; or non-reporting or under-reporting catch weights (FAO, 2007). The Regional Scheme on Port State Measures to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing should be implemented in order to contribute to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources, and in particular of highly migratory stocks, in the IOTC Area through strengthened, harmonized and transparent port State measures to prevent, deter and eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. Dockside monitoring can help in improving catch statistics. There is a need for increased onboard observer coverage rates in order to fill an existing gap in knowledge of bycatch rates and levels and species composition.

## SCORES

### Management Quality:

Management Strategy	Managers Compliance	Fishers Compliance
≥ 6	≥ 6	< 6

### Stock Health:

Current Health	Future Health
7.6	7.6

## FIPS

No related FIPs

## MSC

No related MSC fisheries

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN

- Work with IOTC Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties to:
  - Ensure full compliance with Resolution 17/01, the interim rebuilding plan for yellowfin tuna.

- Improve data collection (i.e. catches, effort, size) for all gear types, for both target and bycatch species, and reporting through measures such as electronic logbooks.
- Develop and implement comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategies with specific timelines for all tuna stocks, including the adoption and implementation of limit and target reference points, harvest control rules, monitoring strategies, operational objectives, performance indicators, and management strategy evaluation.
- Strengthen compliance processes and make information on non-compliance public and continue to provide evidence of compliance with all IOTC Conservation and Management Measures in a timely manner.
- Implement a 100% observer coverage requirement for at-sea transshipment activities, as well as other measures that ensure transshipment activity is transparent and well-managed, and that all required data are collected and transmitted to the appropriate bodies in a timely manner.
- Increase compliance with the mandatory minimum 5% longline observer coverage rates by identifying and correcting non-compliance.
- Implement a 100% observer coverage requirement – human and/or electronic – within five years for longline fisheries. Adopt a 100% observer coverage requirement for purse seine vessels where it is not already required and require the use of the best-available observer safety equipment, communications and procedures.
- Adopt effective measures for the use of non-entangling FAD designs as a precautionary measure to minimize the entanglement of sharks and other non-target species, and support research on biodegradable materials and transition to their use to mitigate marine debris.
- More effectively implement, and ensure compliance with, existing RFMO bycatch requirements and take additional mitigation action, such as improving monitoring at sea, collecting and sharing operational-level, species-specific data, and adopting stronger compliance measures, including consequences for non-compliance for all gear types.
- Ensure all products are traceable back to legal sources. Verify source information and full chain traceability through traceability desk audits or third party traceability certification. For fisheries without robust traceability systems in place, invest in meaningful improvements to bring the fisheries and supply chain in compliance with best practices.