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2025 Annual National Report- Seychelles

Delegation of Seychelles

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Abstract

This report summarizes the fishing activities by Seychelles-flagged vessels authorized by the Seychelles Government to operate in the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) Area for 2023 and 2024 (data up to June). Two industrial longline vessels were authorized to target oilfish (*Ruvettus pretiosus*) and tuna and tuna-like species. In 2023, fishing efforts were primarily concentrated in sub-area 3b, with a total of approximately 328,700 hooks deployed and a catch of 167.1 tonnes. In contrast, in 2024, the fishing activities shifted largely to sub-area 8, with 243,700 hooks deployed and a catch of 90.2 tonnes, primarily targeting tuna species. This shift led to a significant decline in oilfish catches, which decreased from 161.3 tonnes in 2023 to 6.8 tonnes in 2024. The report also highlights changes in species composition, with an increase in catches of bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna in 2024. **Please note that the data for 2024 is only available up to June 2024, and the data remains preliminary.**

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[2] Documents available only to members invited to closed sessions.

Recommendations
It is recommended that the Scientific Committee: • Notes the national report provided by Seychelles

Description of fisheries

As of July 2023, two Seychelles-flagged vessels were authorised to operate in the SIOFA area (Table 1). These vessels target oilfish (*Ruvettus pretiosus*) and tuna and tuna-like species such as bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*), yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*), albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), broadbill swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), and other billfishes using pelagic longline gear. In 2023, fishing activities were concentrated in sub-area 3b. In contrast, in 2024, the majority of fishing activities have shifted to sub-area 8 (Fig. 1).

Table 1: Fleet composition (number of vessels by gear type and size and how this has changed by year).

Year	Vessels that actively fished
	Pelagic Longline
2023	2 (1,015 tonnes)
2024	2 (1,015 tonnes)

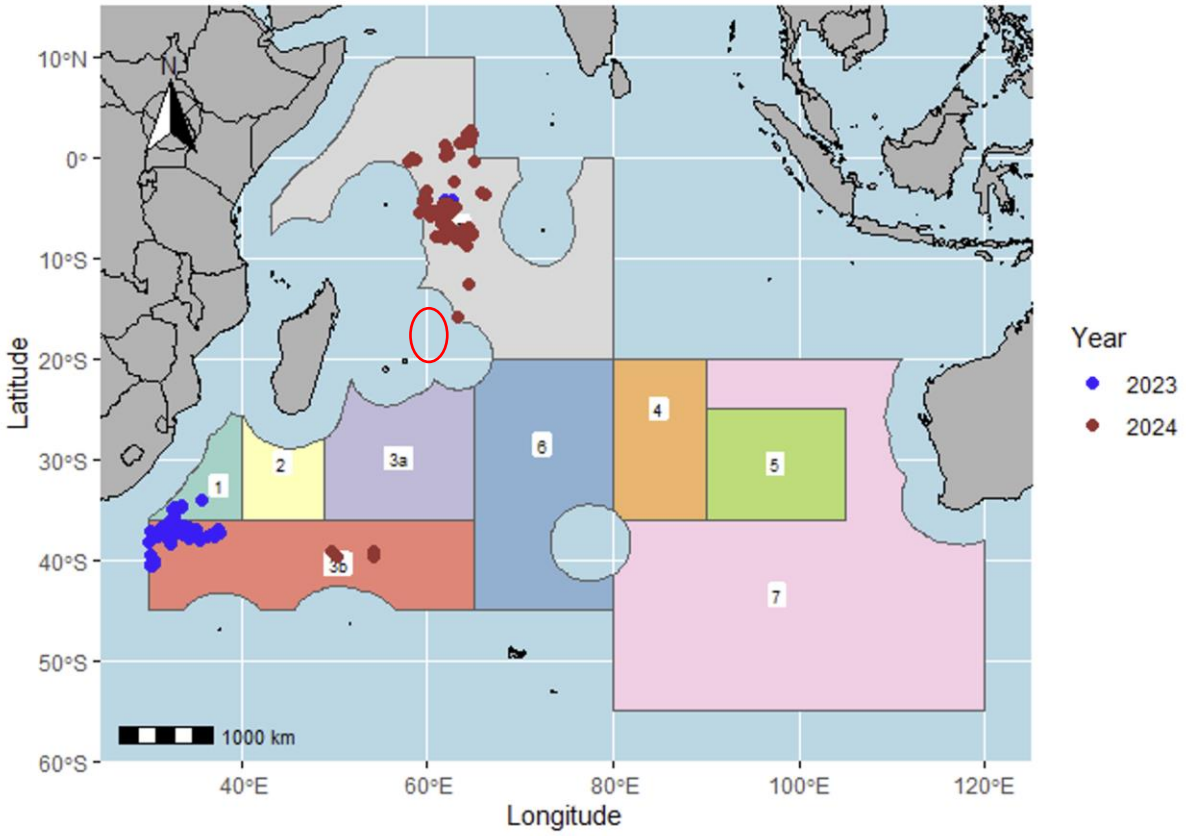

Fig.1: SIOFA Statistical areas defined in the National Report Guideline (SIOFA, 2021) and distribution of fishing activities.

In 2023, the fishing effort was primarily concentrated in sub-area 3b, with a total of approximately 328,700 hooks deployed, followed by 48,600 hooks in Sub-area 1 and 32,600 hooks in sub-area 8 (Table 2). Correspondingly, the highest catch was recorded in sub-area 3b, with 167.1 t, while sub-area 1 and sub-area 8 yielded 18.0 t and 32.8 t, respectively (Table 3). Oilfish made up a significant portion of the total catch, with 145.7 t recorded in sub-area 3b, 15.1 t in sub-area 1, and 0.4 t in sub-area 8 (Table 4).

In 2024, fishing effort and catch distribution shifted, with the majority of activity occurring in sub-area 8, where approximately 243,700 hooks were deployed, resulting in a catch of 90.2 t. This shift is attributed to the vessels primarily targeting tuna and tuna-like species. As a result, limited activity was recorded in sub-area 3b, with only 15,600 hooks deployed and a corresponding catch of 2.5 t (Tables 2 & 3). Oilfish catches remained low compared to the previous year, with 2.0 t recorded in sub-area 3b and 4.8 t in sub-area 8 (Table 4).

Table 2: Summary table of pelagic longline effort (number of hooks*1000).

Year	Sub-areas for reporting catch and effort data								
	1	2	3.a	3.b	4	5	6	7	8
2023	48.6			328.7					32.6
2024				15.6					243.7

Table 3: Summary table of catches (tonnes)

Year	Sub-areas for reporting catch and effort data								
	1	2	3.a	3.b	4	5	6	7	8
2023	18.0			167.1					32.8
2024				2.5					90.2

Table 4: Summary table of catches of oilfish (tonnes)

Year	Sub-areas for reporting catch and effort data								
	1	2	3.a	3.b	4	5	6	7	8
2023	15.1			145.7					0.4
2024				2.0					4.8

Catch, effort and CPUE summaries

The catch of the main target, bycatch, associated and dependent species of the Seychelles-flagged vessels are shown in Table 5.. In 2023, the catch was predominantly composed of oilfish (OIL), which accounted for 161.3 t, representing the primary target species. Other notable catches included yellowfin tuna (YFT) at 23.0 t, bigeye tuna (BET) at 11.5 t, blue shark (BSH) at 10.5 t, and swordfish (SWO) at 5.6 t.

In 2024, a significant shift in species composition was observed, with a marked decline in oilfish catches to 6.8 t, reflecting a change in target species. Conversely, catches of tuna species increased, particularly bigeye tuna (47.1 t) and yellowfin tuna (28.8 t).

Table 5: Retained catch (tonnes) by species for main target, bycatch, associated and dependent species*

Year	OIL	ALB	BET	BLM	BSH	BUM	FAL	MAK	MLS	MZZ	SFA	SWO	YFT	Total
2023	161.3	3.0	11.5	0	10.5	0.3	0	2.0	0.1	0.6	0.1	5.6	23.0	217.9
2024	6.8	2.1	47.1	0.2	0.3	1.7	0.1	0.1	0.4	2.1	0.2	2.8	28.8	92.7

*OIL – Oilfish (*Ruvettus pretiosus*), ALB – Albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), BET – Bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*), BLM – Broadbill swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), BSH – Blue shark (*Prionace glauca*), BUM – Blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*), FAL – Silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*), MAK – Mako shark (*Isurus spp.*), MLS – Striped marlin (*Kajikia audax*), MZZ – Marine fishes nei, SFA – Indo-Pacific sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*), SWO – Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), YFT – Yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*).

The catch per unit of effort (CPUE) in 2023 was 0.53 t/1000 hooks. In contrast, in 2024 it declined to 0.36 t/1000 hooks.

Fisheries data collection and research activities

The primary data sources for the longline fishery include logbooks, landing and transshipment declarations, and length frequency forms. Given that these vessels seldom call into Port Victoria, their data is submitted electronically to the Seychelles Fisheries Authority (SFA). Seychelles-registered vessels are required to submit logbooks detailing their daily activities, catch, and effort throughout the duration of their registration period, regardless of where they operate (Seychelles Fishing Authority, n.d.).

In addition to logbooks, SFA, in collaboration with Deep-Sea Fisheries of Taiwan, established a self-reporting sampling protocol in June 2007 to collect data on the size distribution of various species, including tuna, billfish, and sharks. This protocol aims to monitor stock structure across time and different strata. Sampling is conducted by crew members aboard Seychelles-flagged vessels, who measure the first 30 fish caught during each set haul. The measurements, along with other relevant information (vessel details, date, position), are recorded on a sampling form and submitted to SFA via email on a weekly basis (Seychelles Fishing Authority, n.d.).

Table 6 presents the temporal and spatial resolution of the data collected from the pelagic longline fishery through logbooks.

No research activities were undertaken in the SIOFA area of competence in 2024.

Table 6: Details on the scales and resolutions of the fishery data collection for pelagic longline fishery.

	Pelagic longline fishery data collection items			
Year	Tow / set (*individual or some aggregation*)	Time scale (*set-tow hauling time, daily, etc.*)	Spatial scale (*tow/set exact position or grid, please provide grid resolution*)	Species details (*any aggregation or species grouping*)
2023	Individual	Set time	Exact position	Recorded by species, however, some aggregation for unreported species
2024	Individual	Set time	Exact position	Recorded by species, however, some aggregation for unreported species

Description of data verification mechanism

Following data capture, a comprehensive verification process is carried out to identify and correct any potential errors. The geographical locations of fishing activities, as reported by the skipper, are validated using Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) data. This enables the cross-checking of the positions declared in the logbook against the VMS data to identify and rectify any data entry errors or inconsistencies, such as falsified positions (Seychelles Fishing Authority, n.d.).

Once validated, the data is processed to estimate the final catch figures for the fishery. The weight of the fish recorded in the logbook typically refers to the processed weight (e.g., headed, gutted, or gilled). The whole weight of the fish landed is then estimated using a conversion factor that has been established and approved by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) (Seychelles Fishing Authority, n.d.).

Summary of observer and port sampling programs

The distant water industrial longline fleet does not land in Port Victoria, therefore, there are no port sampling programmes for those vessels. Nevertheless, a self-sampling initiative is underway, wherein the crew records size frequency data of key IOTC species , which is then transmitted to the Seychelles Fisheries Authority. Size frequency data for all the fleets are submitted to the IOTC secretariat on an annual basis (Assan et al., 2023).

The Authority is in the process of deploying EM system on the industrial longline fishing vessels to address mandatory requirement in regards to CMM01 (2023), Clause 45b.

References

Assan C., Socrate E., Jean J., Lucas J., Lucas J.A., Auguste K. and Lucas V (2023). Seychelles National Report to the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, 2023. Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

Seychelles Fishing Authority (n.d). Statistical Operations Procedures. Victoria, Mahé, Seychelles: SFA.