



ISC report and overview of fisheries and stock status of tuna, billfish and sharks in the North Pacific Ocean

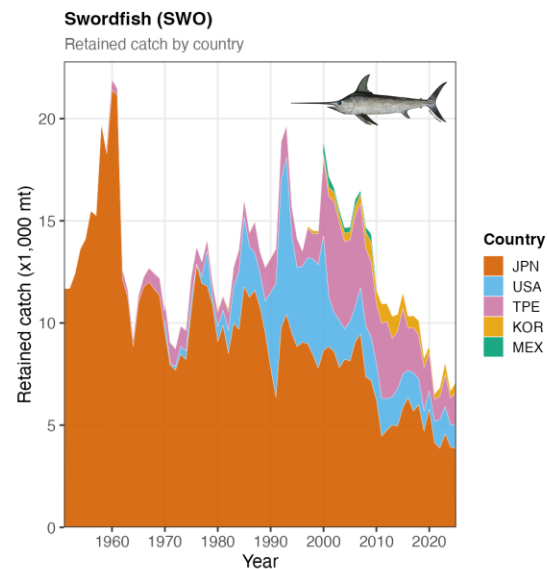
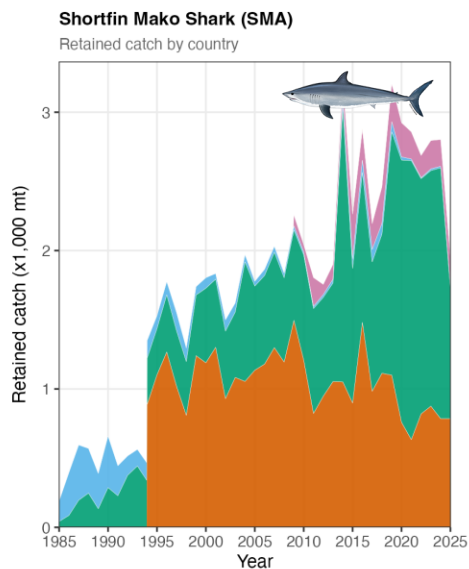
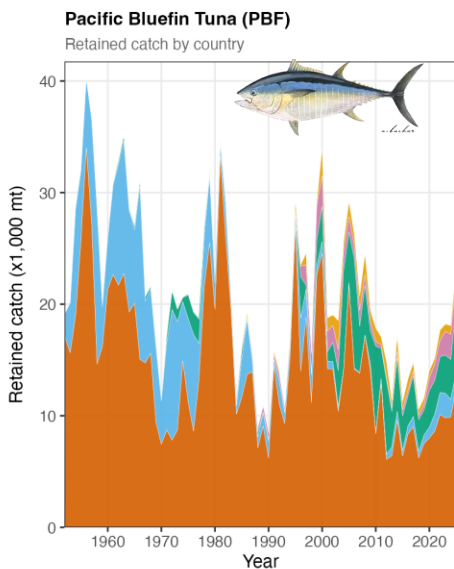
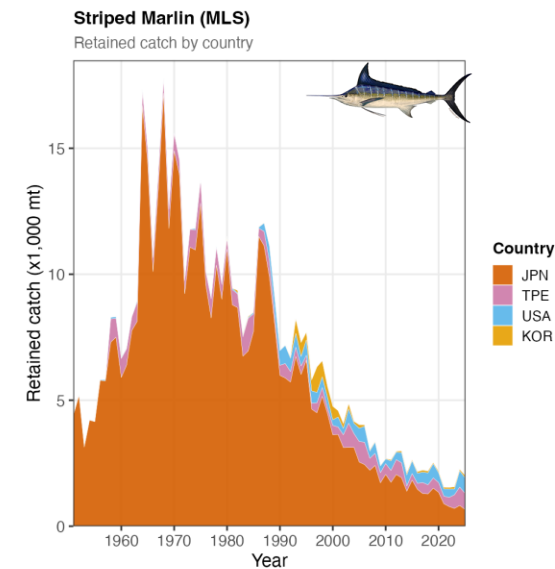
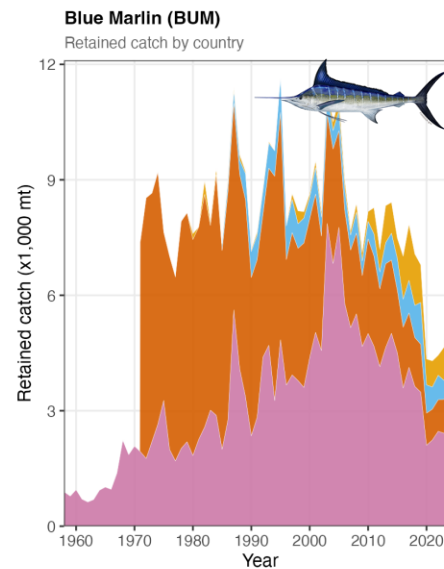
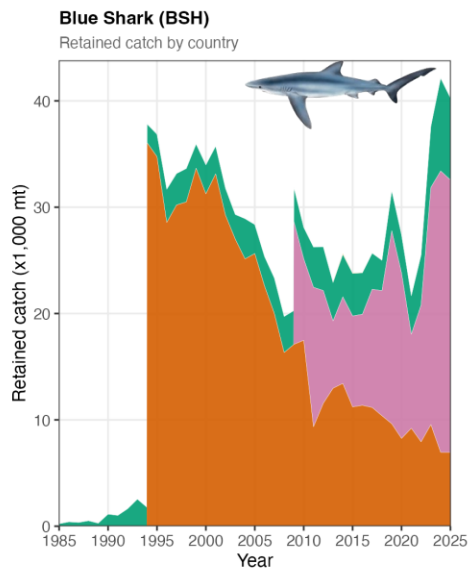
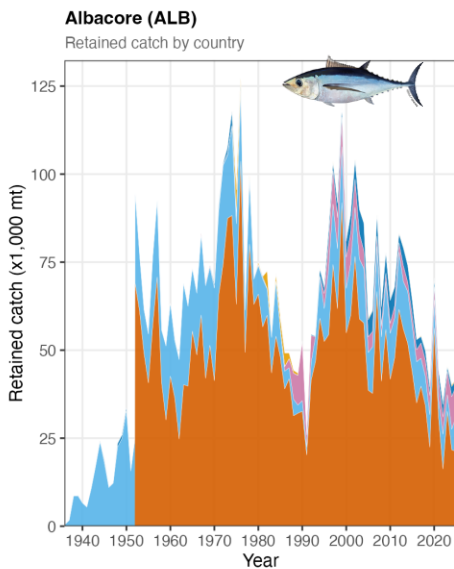
ISC

22nd Regular Session of the WCPFC Northern Committee
Nagasaki, Japan
July 13-14, 2026



Landings summaries

ISC North Pacific Species - Retained Catch by Country



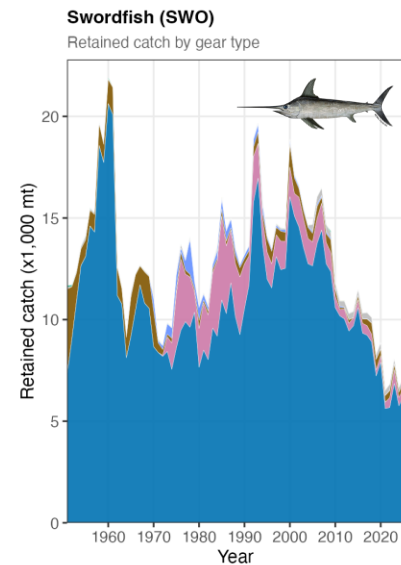
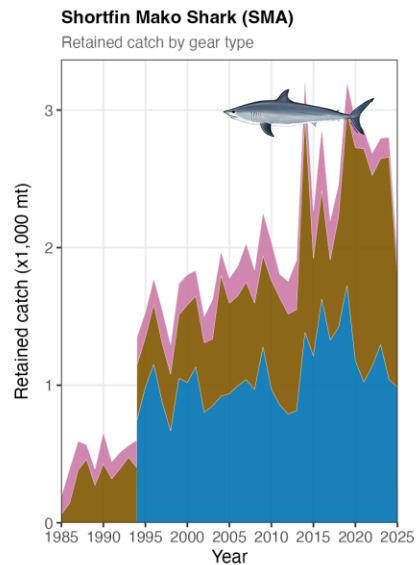
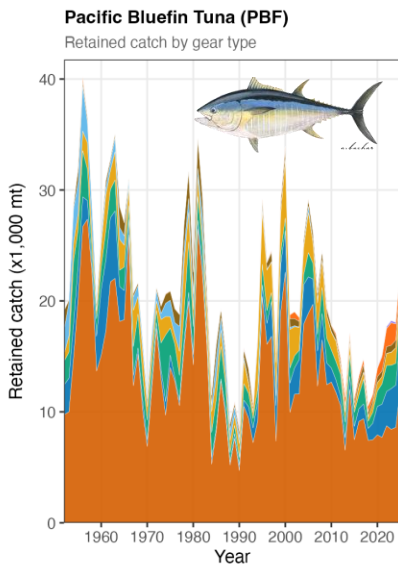
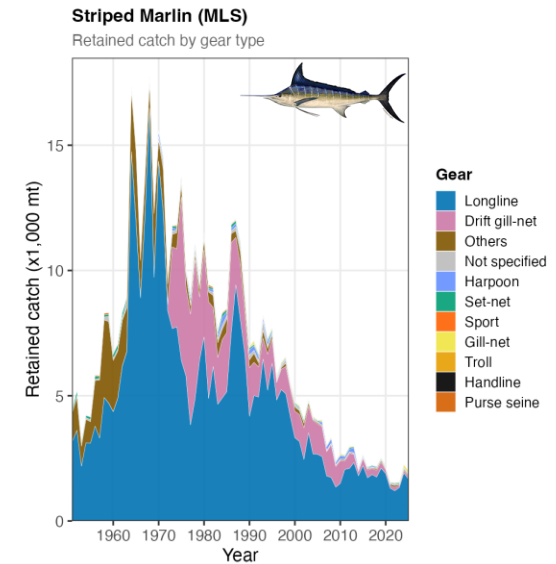
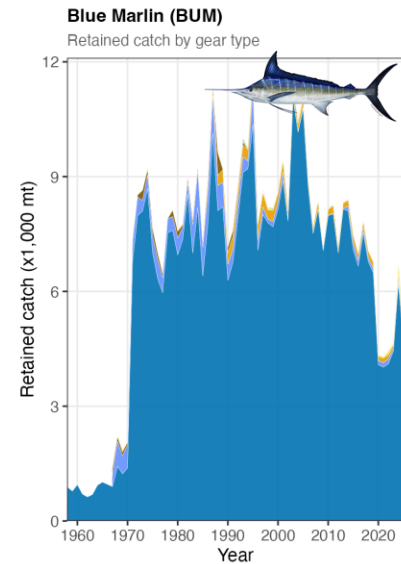
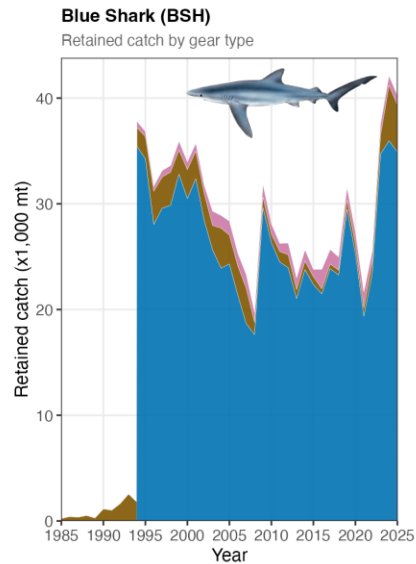
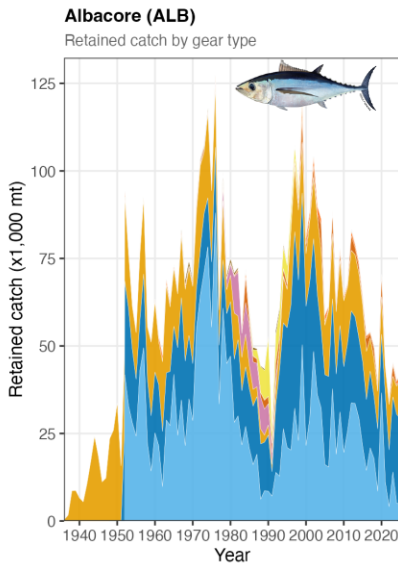
Source: ISC26 Catch Table (2026-06-16). Symbols '+' and '-' treated as zero/NA. Colours: 508/WCAG AA compliant (Okabe-Ito / IBM Carbon palette).

https://isc.fra.go.jp/fisheries_statistics/index.html



Landings summaries

ISC North Pacific Species - Retained Catch by Gear Type



Source: ISC26 Catch Table (2026-06-16). Symbols '+' and '-' treated as zero/NA. Colours: 508/WCAG AA compliant (Okabe-ito / IBM Carbon palette).

https://isc.fra.go.jp/fisheries_statistics/index.html



Landings summaries

ISC North Pacific Species – Retained Catch Summary | Terminal year: 2025 | 10-yr reference: 2015–2024

	Species	2025 Catch (mt)	2024 Catch (mt)	10-yr Avg (mt) 2015-2024	% Chg vs 2024	% Chg vs 10-yr Avg
	Albacore (ALB)	41,798	40,125	49,584	+4.2%	-15.7%
	Blue Shark (BSH)	40,268	42,126	28,417	-4.4%	+41.7%
	Blue Marlin (BUM)	5,254	6,723	6,067	-21.9%	-13.4%
	Striped Marlin (MLS)	2,017	2,259	2,083	-10.7%	-3.2%
	Pacific Bluefin Tuna (PBF)	23,226	18,072	14,453	+28.5%	+60.7%
	Shortfin Mako Shark (SMA)	1,942	2,802	2,707	-30.7%	-28.3%
	Swordfish (SWO)	7,105	6,666	8,750	+6.6%	-18.8%

Green = above reference | Red = below reference | Source: ISC26 Catch Table (2026-06-16)



Assessed
2026

Species

Stock Status and Conservation Information

NPO Albacore tuna (<i>Thunnus alalunga</i>) 2026 (2029)	The stock is likely not overfished relative to the threshold (30%SSB_{current}, F=0) and limit (14%SSB_{current}, F=0) reference points adopted by the WCPFC and IATTC, and. the stock is likely not experiencing overfishing relative to the target reference point (F45%SPR). Current fishing is not anticipated to cause changes in status.
NPO Pacific bluefin tuna (<i>Thunnus orientalis</i>) 2024 (2027)	No adopted reference points. The PBF stock is recovering from the historically low biomass in 2010 and has exceeded the second rebuilding target (20%SSB_{F=0}). The risk of SSB falling below 7.7%SSB_{F=0} (interim LRP for tropical tunas in IATTC) at least once in 10 years is negligible.



Species

Stock Status and Conservation Information



NPO
Swordfish
(*Xiphias gladius*)
2023 (2028)

Limit reference point for $F=F_{MSY}$ established. Relative to MSY-based reference points, overfishing is very likely not occurring (>99% probability). 2019-2021 average F is about 49% below F_{MSY} . The NPO SWO stock is very likely not overfished (>99% probability). 2021 SSB of 35,778 mt is 220% of SSB_{MSY} .



Assessed
2026

PO
Blue marlin
(*Makaira mazara*)
2026 (2031)

No target or limit reference points have been established for BUM by the IATTC and the WCPFC; Spawning stock biomass was estimated to be 42,038 mt in 2021-2023, or about 33% above SSB_{MSY} and 9% above 20% SSB_0 ; Fishing mortality on the stock averaged roughly $F = 0.13$ during 2021-2023, or about 50% below F_{MSY} and 56% below $F_{20\%SSB_0}$; Projected female spawning biomass is expected to increase or remain stable under the $F_{status\ quo}$ and $F_{30\%}$ harvest scenarios and decline to SSB_{MSY} under the High F and F_{MSY} harvest scenarios



WCNPO
Striped marlin
(*Kajikia audax*)
2023 (2027)

Relative to dynamic 20% $SSB_{F=0}$ based reference points, the WCNPO MLS stock is very likely to be overfished (>99% probability) and is likely to be subject to overfishing (>66% probability). Reducing annual catch below 2,400 t is expected to promote recovery of the stock by 2040 or sooner, depending on the catch reduction.



NPO
Blue shark
(*Prionace glauca*)
2022 (2027)

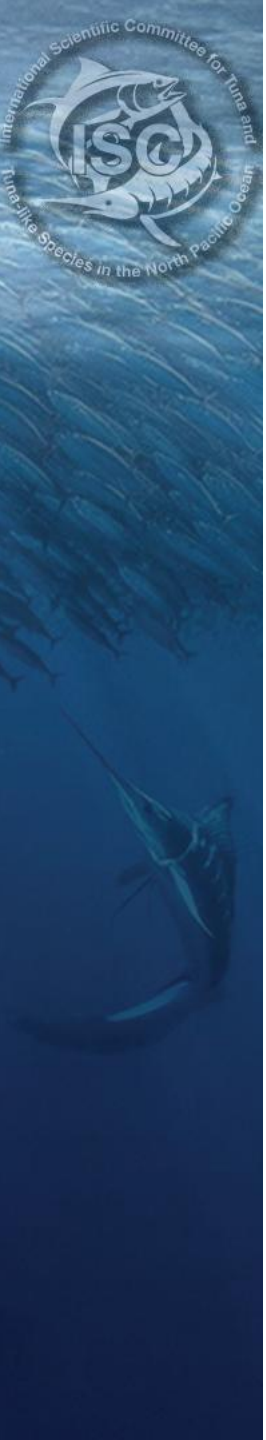
Stock Status and Conservation Information

No adopted reference points. Stock SSB is 1.17 SSB_{MSY} (63.5%). Recent annual F is below F_{MSY} (91.9%). The stock is expected to remain above SSB_{MSY} for the next 10 years under F_{current} (2017-2019), F_{current}+20%, and F_{current}-20% projection scenarios.



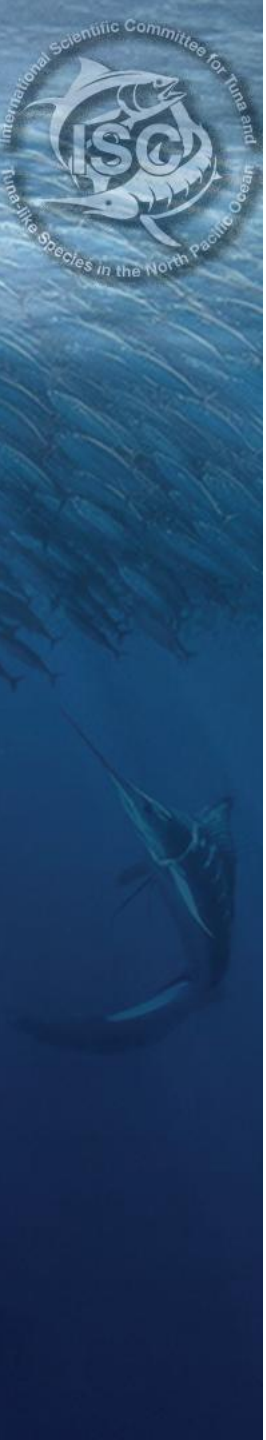
NPO
Shortfin mako shark
(*Isurus oxyrinchus*)
2024 (2029)

No adopted reference points. Recent median depletion (2019-2022) is estimated from the model ensemble to be 0.60 (95% CI = 0.23-1.00). The recent median depletion is 1.17 times depletion at MSY (95% CI = 0.46-1.92) and the stock is likely (66% probability) not in an overfished condition relative to MSY-based reference points. Recent U (U₍₂₀₁₈₋₂₀₂₁₎) is estimated from the model ensemble to be 0.018 (95% CI = 0.004-0.07). U₍₂₀₁₈₋₂₀₂₁₎ is 0.34 times (95% CI = 0.07-1.20) U_{MSY}.



ISC Activities in 2026

- Peer review of the 2024 Pacific bluefin tuna assessment
- Benchmark assessment for North Pacific Ocean albacore was adopted.
- Benchmark assessment for Pacific Ocean blue marlin was adopted.
- NC21 requested that the ISC provide estimates of the historical impact of each fleet group on the NPO ALB stock in terms of fishing intensity ($F\%SPR$) for the reference periods 2002–2004 and 1999–2015 using updated fleet groupings, to guide potential fleet-specific reductions in fishing intensity should SSB fall below the threshold reference point. ALBWG prepared science advice document and a shiny app (https://connect.fisheries.noaa.gov/NPALB_harvest_strategy_tool/) to support implementation of the harvest strategies adopted by the WCPFC and IATTC.
- As requested by the JWG, the PBFWG calculated TAC for the first management period (TAC1) under HCRs 17 and 18 using the estimation model updated with FY2023 data. Total TAC1 was calculated at 26,642 mt under HCR 17 (80:20 WPO:EPO impact ratio) and 28,388 mt under HCR 18 (70:30 impact ratio).
- The PBFWG developed a draft Exceptional Circumstances Protocol (ECP) for the PBF MSE, using the existing North Pacific albacore protocol as a starting point.



ISC Activities in 2026

- Substantial progress was reported across all three IBBS member countries. A formal MOU for genetic research — covering stock structure, CKMR, and related work — was signed by all three IBBS partners, establishing a framework requiring project-specific annexes prior to any sample exchange, with a unified preservation protocol to be developed for cross-laboratory comparability.
- NC21 tasked the BILLWG to begin technical work on a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for Western and Central North Pacific Ocean swordfish (WCNPO SWO) and to develop a detailed MSE workplan to be presented to NC22 in July 2026. The US indicated it would provide additional capacity for this work, and preliminary work was presented to the WG by a consultant (Adrian Hordyk, Blue Matter Science) during the data preparatory meeting.
- The SHARKWG completed the development of a conceptual model for the 2027 North Pacific Ocean blue shark (NPO BSH) assessment.



ISC 26 Recommendations

Pacific bluefin tuna

- Continued implementation of the 2024 PBF assessment peer review recommendations.
- Continued development and evaluation of new recruitment indices before consideration for inclusion in future assessments.
- Ongoing international collaboration to improve ageing methods, growth estimation, and biological parameterization.
- Continued development of alternative abundance indices to maintain the robustness of assessment inputs, as stock rebuilding and management measures increasingly influence traditional CPUE series.
- Inclusion of sensitivity analyses during the next Pacific bluefin health check assessment to evaluate the effects of new recruitment information on terminal-year uncertainty.
- Preparation of a comprehensive recommendation tracking table for the next Pacific bluefin benchmark assessment documenting recommendations that have been addressed, partially addressed, or deferred.

North Pacific Ocean albacore tuna

- ALBWG evaluate the potential value, scope, and timing of an independent review of the broader albacore assessment framework and report its findings and recommendations to ISC27.



ISC 26 Recommendations

North Pacific Ocean swordfish

- Northern Committee should consider both options 1 and 2 outlined in the North Pacific swordfish MSE workplan and identify a preferred option, and provide the management guidance necessary to support continued MSE development, including decisions on the spatial extent of the MSE and the fisheries to be included. The ISC26 notes that the BILLWG recommended option 1 and the ISC26 Plenary supports this recommendation.
- ISC26 recommended that the Northern Committee revise the schedule for the next North Pacific swordfish benchmark stock assessment from 2028 to 2029, recognizing that the additional year would allow incorporation of updated biological parameters from the IBBS project, while also facilitating completion of the swordfish MSE and improving the distribution of BILLWG workload. ISC26 further noted that successful completion of the North Pacific swordfish MSE through to the end of 2028 and beyond may require additional resources.



ISC 26 Recommendations

North Pacific Ocean swordfish

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ISC future work 2027

- Assessment will be conducted for PBF, WCNPO MLS, and NPO BSH in 2027
- ISC will begin a formal external review of its function in 2027
 - members should assess opportunities to provide in-kind support for independent reviewers for the ISC functional review and provide nominations for potential reviewers to the ISC Chair by January 31, 2027.
 - members should continue intersessional refinement of the TORs, including reviewer qualifications, review logistics, reporting arrangements, and the scope of the review, with a view to finalizing the TORs prior to selection of the review panel.
- The IBBS program will produce summary findings in 2027.



ISC Schedule of Assessments

Species	Region	Last	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Albacore Tuna (<i>Thunnus alalunga</i>) ALB	NPO	2026		B			B			B			B
Pacific bluefin tuna (<i>Thunnus orientalis</i>) PBF	NPO	2024*			U MSE	MP		B MP	MSE	MP			
Swordfish (<i>Xiphias gladius</i>) SWO	NPO	2023			MSE	B(?) MSE	B(?)				B		
Striped marlin (<i>Kajikia audax</i>) MLS	WCNPO	2023*			B					B			
Blue marlin (<i>Makaira nigricans</i>) MLS	PO	2026		B					B				
Blue shark (<i>Prionace glauca</i>) BSH	NPO	2022	I		B					B			
Shortfin mako shark (<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>) SMA	NPO	2024					B					B	

B – benchmark, U – update, I – indicator, MP – Management procedure, MSE – MSE Run/review, * indicates external review



ISC 26 was hosted by the Chinese Taipei June 23-29 in Taipei City, Chinese Taipei. The ISC is very grateful to the Fisheries Agency, Ministry of Agriculture for being such gracious hosts.



The next Plenary meeting will be hosted by the United States and is tentatively planned for June 23-28, 2027, at a location and venue to be determined.