ISSF Technical Report 2025-11

SNAPSHOT OF OPEN CONDITIONS FOR MSC-CERTIFIED TUNA FISHERIES AS OF JULY 2025

Photo: Gala Moreno

Ana Justel-Rubio / **October 2025**

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Abstract

This report compiles and analyzes all open conditions for MSC-certified tuna fisheries as of July 2025, providing a consolidated overview of the main challenges these fisheries face to maintain certification. A total of 550 open conditions were identified across 65 certified tuna fisheries, while only two fisheries were found to have no conditions. Conditions were most concentrated under PI 1.2.1 (Harvest Strategy) and PI 1.2.2 (Harvest Control Rules & Tools), explained in part by the early implementation of Section SE of version 3 of the MSC Fisheries Standard in Western and Central Pacific Ocean tuna fisheries. Deadlines for closing conditions typically fall within the five-year certification cycle--though exceptions exist-- highlighting the need for both short- and medium-term corrective actions and commitments to improve fishery performance. By summarizing common issues, needs, and relevant ISSF resources, this report highlights priority areas for action to advance tuna fishery sustainability.

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October 2025

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Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Fisheries Standard is an international benchmark for sustainable fishing, used to assess whether fisheries are well-managed and environmentally sustainable (MSC, 2025a). Over the past two decades, numerous tuna fisheries worldwide have undergone full assessment against the MSC Fisheries Standard. Many have achieved certification, and some have already entered their second, third, or even fourth assessment cycle. Once a fishery is certified, its certificate remains valid for five years; then, it must undergo reassessment before the certificate can be renewed for another five-year cycle (MSC, 2022).

The Fisheries Standard is comprised of three principles: P1-Sustainable target fish stocks, P2-Environmental impact of fishing, and P3-Effective management. Under each of the three principles, a group of performance indicators (PIs) measure specific strategies, objectives and outcomes. A fishery will be assigned a score by the certifier for each PI. The minimum acceptable score for each PI is 60, while 80 represents global best practice, and 100 is state of the art performance. To become certified, a fishery must score at least 60 for each PI and achieve an average of 80 or above for each principle. Any individual PI score below 80 will be assigned a "condition of certification" and the fishery will be required to make improvements. To "close" the condition, the fishery needs to reach a score of 80 or above for the indicator before its next re-assessment. Certified fisheries are required to undergo annual surveillance audits every year of the five-year certification period. Audits will examine any significant changes that might have occurred either in the physical environment or in the management of the fishery, and how this may affect the scoring of PIs, or the progress by the fishery against its open conditions (MSC, 2022; MSC, 2025a).

The MSC estimates that, as of June 2025, 2.84 million tonnes of MSC-certified tuna are landed annually, representing 55% of the global wild tuna catch (MSC, 2025b). This share has increased steadily in recent years, as more fisheries have entered the program and demonstrated that their catches meet the Standard’s sustainability requirements (MSC, 2025b). However, work towards full sustainability remains, as many currently certified tuna fisheries still have a number of open conditions that must be addressed to maintain certification.

In this report, we examine all open conditions for tuna fisheries currently certified against MSC’s Fisheries Standard (as of July 2025) and summarize the main issues identified, the improvements required to address them, and the ISSF resources available to guide these improvements.

2. METHODS

The first step was to compile all open conditions for MSC-certified tuna fisheries, as of July 2025, into a consolidated table. Each condition was entered as a new record, with the following main attributes: Fishery name, Principle and Performance Indicator the condition applies to, Species group or "topic" the condition refers to, Condition text, Source and Deadline.

The **Fishery name** corresponds to the designation used on MSC's "Track a fishery" site (https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/).

Under the MSC Fisheries Certification Process, all conditions have to be linked to a specific Performance Indicator within the Fisheries Standard. This information was stored in the **Performance Indicator** field, and the **Principle** field was populated based on the PI.

Conditions often focus on a particular species group (e.g., seabirds) or a broader "topic" (e.g., Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems). To capture this, we created a **Species group/topic** field, which allowed us to group conditions based on this information. The values used for this field were, in alphabetical order: All ETP[1] species, bait, cetaceans/RHN[2], data collection, ecosystem, main habitats, other secondary species, Principle 3, sea turtles, seabirds, sharks/rays, swordfish, tuna, tuna-like, VMEs[3].

We also stored the verbatim **text** of each condition, to allow us to compare conditions across different fishery reports and to identify commonly used language in conditions related to the same PIs or species groups/topics.

The **source** refers to the specific report from which the condition was extracted. For recently certified fisheries, this was the Public Certification Report (PCR). For fisheries certified for longer than a year, the source was the most recent annual surveillance audit report.

The **deadline** field was populated using the year specified on the condition itself. If the deadline was defined relative to a surveillance audit (e.g., "By the third surveillance audit, …"), the year was calculated based on the date of the source report.

Once all conditions were compiled, to obtain a global overview of the main issues faced by currently certified tuna fisheries, we applied two complementary approaches. First, we ranked PIs based on the number of conditions associated with each PI. Second, we calculated, for each PI, the percentage of currently certified tuna fisheries with at least one open condition for that PI. Finally,

[1] Endangered, Threatened or Protected species

[2] Whale shark (*Rhincodon Typus*)

[3] Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems

we summarized the condition deadlines to better understand the timeframes for completing the improvements required to close these conditions.

We then focused on the ten PIs with the highest number of conditions. For each of these, we provide:

- Excerpts of the most commonly used language in those conditions.
- Examples of what would be required to close conditions related to that PI.
- Examples of available ISSF resources that could be used to address those conditions.
- A summary and ranking of the Species groups/topics the conditions refer to.
- A summary of the deadlines currently in place to meet those conditions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The consolidated table contained a total of 550 open conditions across 65 MSC-certified tuna fisheries as of July 2025 (**Table 1**). Only two certified tuna fisheries were identified as having no open conditions. All fisheries had been assessed against v2.01 of the Standard.

Table 1 presents the ranking of PIs based on the number of open conditions, while **Figure 1** shows, for each PI, the percentage of certified tuna fisheries with at least one open condition for that PI. In both cases, two PIs stand out: PI 1.2.1 (Harvest Strategy) and PI 1.2.2 (Harvest Control Rules & Tools). This is partly explained by the early application of Section SE of version 3 of the Fisheries Standard for Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) tuna stocks (skipjack, bigeye, yellowfin and southern albacore). Fisheries adhering to this process share the same conditions for PIs 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 that were introduced as part of the early application process. WCPO Section SE conditions represent around half of all open conditions for PIs 1.2.1 and 1.2.2.

***Table 1**. Ranking of PIs based on the number of conditions linked to each PI. Top-ten PIs highlighted in blue.*

Ranking	PI	# of conditions	PI description
1	1.2.2	112	HCR
2	1.2.1	110	HS
3	2.3.3	60	ETP info
4	3.2.3	48	Compliance & enforcement (MCS)
5	2.3.2	43	ETP management
6	2.2.2	38	Secondary (mainly shark-finning & bait)
7	2.3.1	32	ETP outcome
8	2.4.3	25	Habitat info
9	2.4.2	17	Habitat management
10	3.2.2	15	Decision making processes
11	2.4.1	11	Habitats outcome
12	2.1.2	10	Primary species management strategy
13	2.2.3	7	Secondary species information
14	3.2.1	5	Fishery-Specific Objectives
15	2.1.1	4	Primary species outcome
16	1.1.1	3	Stock status
17	2.1.3	3	Primary species information
18	2.5.3	3	Ecosystem information
19	2.2.1	2	Secondary species outcome
20	3.1.1	1	Legal and/or Customary Framework
21	3.1.2	1	Consultation, Roles and Responsibilities
	Total:	550	

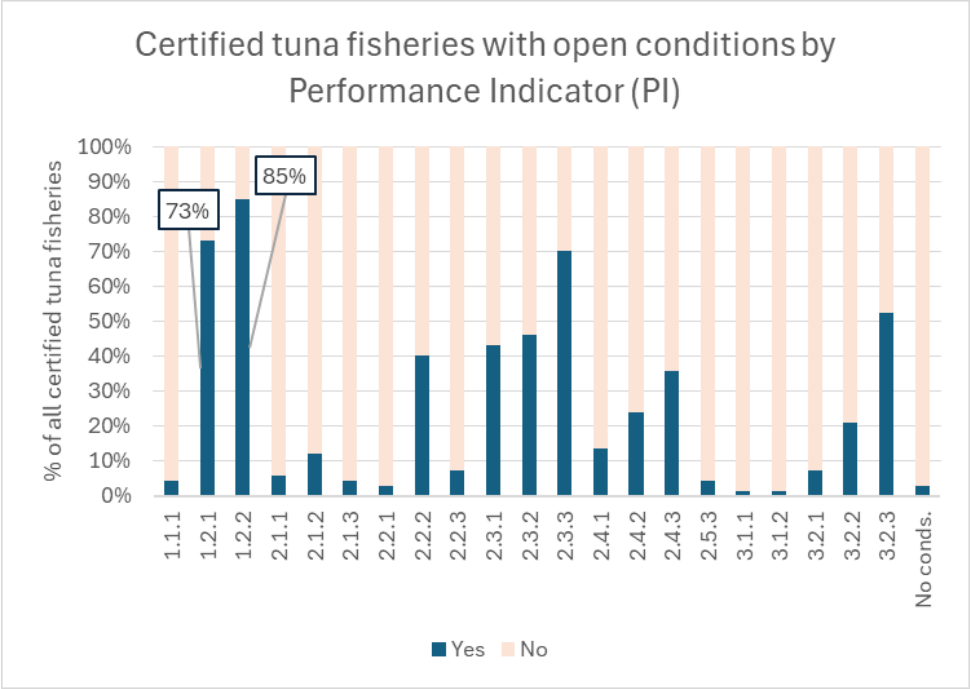


***Figure 1**. Percentages of certified tuna fisheries with at least one open condition for each PI. The last bar on the right represents certified fisheries with no open conditions (2 fisheries out of 67).*

Deadlines for open conditions are summarized in **Figure 2**. As expected, given the five-year certification cycle, most deadlines for open conditions fall between 2025 and 2029. There are some exceptions, however. A few conditions have 2024 deadlines, which can be explained by their source being "older" reports that are about to be superseded by new annual surveillance audit reports or reassessments. At the other end of the range, a small number of conditions have deadlines set for 2034. These are conditions with *exceptional circumstances* related to the Southern bluefin tuna stock.

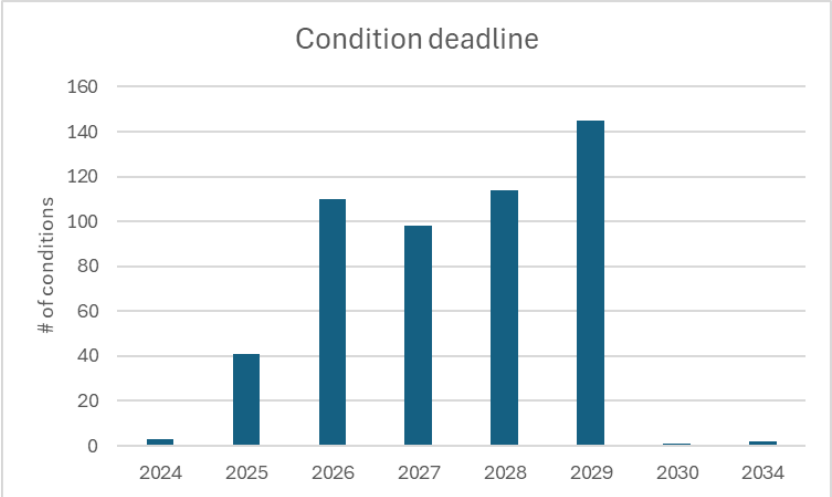


***Figure 2**. Number of open conditions by deadline year. Conditions with 2034 deadlines are "exceptional circumstances" conditions for Southern bluefin tuna.*

Summaries for the ten PIs with the highest number of conditions are provided below.

Links to ISSF resources are available on the **MSC & FIP Resources Finder** online.

(#1) 1.2.1 Harvest Strategy and (#2) 1.2.2 Harvest Control Rules & Tools

Commonly used language

- By [MMM 20YY (and evaluated in the first available audit after)] the client shall **provide evidence** to the assessment team that demonstrate:

• The **harvest strategy is responsive to the state of the stock** and is **designed to achieve stock management objectives** reflected in PI 1.1.1/PI 1.1.1A SG80, and

• The **performance of the harvest strategy** has been evaluated and evidence exists to show that it is achieving the objectives reflected in PI 1.1.1/ PI 1.1.1A SG80, including being clearly able to maintain stocks at target levels and

• **Well-defined HCRs are in place** that ensure the exploitation rate is reduced as the PRI is approached, and are expected to keep the stock fluctuating around a target level consistent with (or above) MSY,

• **HCRs are likely to be robust to the main uncertainties**, and

• Available evidence indicates that the **tools in use are appropriate and effective in achieving the exploitation levels** required under the HCRs.

What's needed & ISSF resources / activities

RFMO advocacy	RFMO priorities and Position statements
	Coordination with NGOs, including ESC members
	Meetings with RFMO member nations
	Participating Company advocacy
	Model letters and other advocacy tools to support MSC clients in their advocacy
	RFMO advocacy and outreach coordination with MSC's regional staff
Capacity building and communications	Capacity building workshops
	Development of capacity building tools (e.g. HS and MSE glossaries)
	Technical reports (e.g. ISSF 2025-08: An Evaluation of the Sustainability of Global Tuna Stocks Relative to Marine Stewardship Council Criteria)
	Infographics (e.g. Tuna RFMOs and the Development of MSE and Precautionary Management Procedures for Tunas)
	FAO eLearning Course on MPs & MSE
National advocacy	Participating Company advocacy
Research by national scientists and science providers	

Stocks the condition applies to (from more to less frequent)*

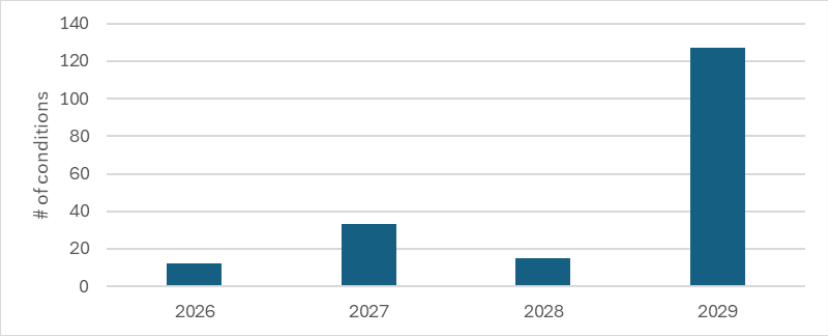
WP YFT (Section SE)
WP BET (Section SE)
SP ALB (Section SE)
EA SKJ
IO SKJ
EP SKJ

SA ALB
EP BET
SBT

*Not included:

- AO YFT because conditions will depend on the outcomes of the currently ongoing early application of Section SE
- any conditions that will likely be closed at the next assessment/audit (e.g., NP ALB)
- any conditions for non-tuna species (i.e., SWO)

Deadlines



(#3) 2.3.3 ETP species information

Commonly used language

*- Demonstrate that some **quantitative** information is adequate to assess the **UoA-related ETP mortality and impact** and to determine whether the UoA may be a threat to ETP protection and recovery.*

*- Information to measure **trends** and support a **strategy** to manage impacts on ETP species.*

What's needed & ISSF resources / activities

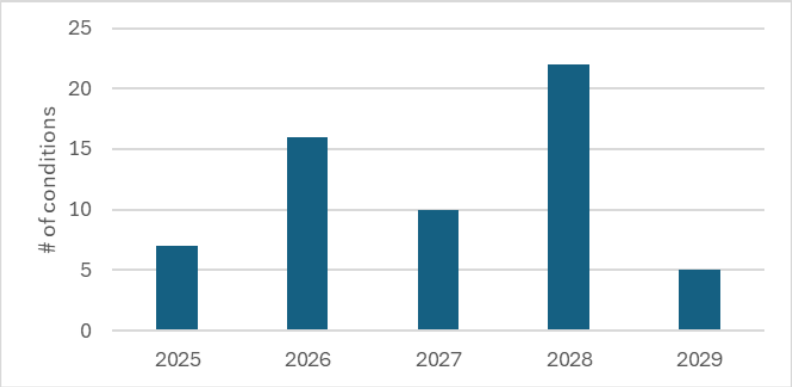
Monitoring at sea	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Observer coverage (LSPS)
EM	VOSI EM field (all gears)
	EM minimum standards technical report
	EM Fact sheet infographic
	EM reporting checklist
	EM vendors list
	EM RFMO requirements infographic
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
FADs	FAD research and Technical Reports (e.g. impacts on sea turtles, sharks, etc.)
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
Research	Technical Reports on different fisheries/gears impacts on bycatch species
	At-sea research to understand impacts on bycatch species
Logbooks	
Port surveys	

Species groups the condition applies to (from more to less frequent)

"All ETP"
Sharks / Rays
Cetaceans / Whale sharks

Seabirds
Sea turtles

Deadlines



(#4) 3.2.3 Compliance & enforcement (MCS)

Commonly used language

*- The **implemented MCS system** has a demonstrated **ability to enforce** relevant management measures, strategies and/or rules.*

*- Verify that **sanctions** are consistently applied and provide effective deterrence.*

*- Verify that **fishers comply** with the management system under assessment, including mandatory requirements under **CMMs**.*

*- Verify that there is **no systematic non-compliance**.*

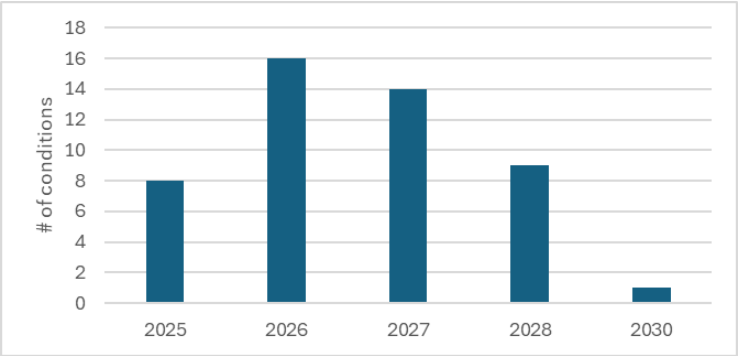
What's needed & ISSF resources / activities

Monitoring at sea	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Observer coverage (LSPS)
EM	VOSI EM field (all gears)
	EM minimum standards technical report
	EM Fact sheet infographic
	EM reporting checklist
	EM vendors list
	EM RFMO requirements infographic
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
RFMO advocacy	RFMO best practices snapshots (compliance)
	RFMO priorities and Position statements
	Coordination with NGOs, including ESC members
	Meetings with RFMO member nations
	Participating Company advocacy
	Model letters and other advocacy tools to support MSC clients in their advocacy
	RFMO advocacy and outreach coordination with MSC's regional staff
National advocacy	Participating Company advocacy
Port and at-sea vessel inspections	

Species groups the condition applies to (from more to less frequent)

N/A

Deadlines



(#5) 2.3.2 ETP species management

Commonly used language

*- Provide evidence that there is a **strategy in place** that is expected to ensure the **UoA does not hinder the recovery** of ETP species [SPECIES NAME] in the [OCEAN] region.*
*- Provide evidence that **all relevant national and regional regulations** on fishery interactions with ETP species are adhered to by the UoA so that it can be demonstrated that the fishery does not hinder recovery of ETP species.*
*- Provide evidence that the ETP measures/strategy **prohibiting the retention** of [SPECIES NAME] is being implemented successfully.*
*- Provide evidence that the measures/strategy is being implemented successfully, both through ensuring adequate **observer coverage** in the UoA and by providing **verifiable data on FAD design**.*
*- Provide evidence that the ETP measures/strategy (...) and **use of [SPECIES GROUP] mitigation measures** are being implemented successfully.*
*- The client should be able to show some evidence that the measures/strategy (**logbook records**) are being implemented successfully.*
*- Demonstrate that the **regular review** of the potential effectiveness and practicality of **alternative measures to minimise UoA-related mortality** of ETP [SPECIES GROUP] species results in measures that are implemented as appropriate and that have an objective basis for confidence that they will work, based on **information directly about the fishery and/or the species involved**.*

What's needed & ISSF resources / activities

Monitoring at sea	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Observer coverage (LSPS)
EM	VOSI EM field (all gears)
	EM minimum standards technical report
	EM Fact sheet infographic
	EM reporting checklist
	EM vendors list
	EM RFMO requirements infographic

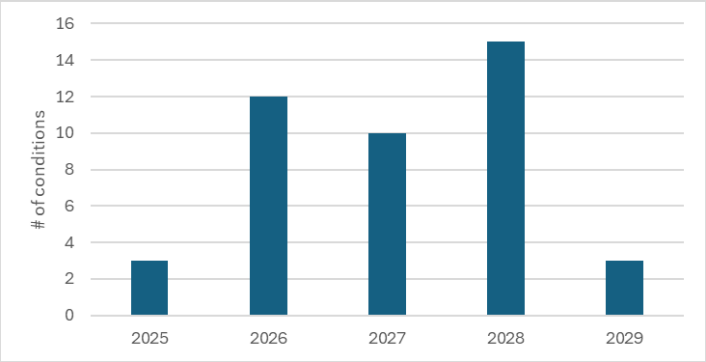
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
Skipper training and best practices	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Skipper Best Practices training (PS and LL)
	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Shark-finning policy (all gears)
	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Sharks, sea turtles and seabirds LL best practices policy (LL)
	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: no large-scale driftnets (all gears)
	VOSI Fins Naturally Attached field (all gears)
	VOSI LL best practices fields (circle hooks, whole finfish bait, monofilament lines, no shark lines)
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
	Skipper Workshops
	Skipper Guidebooks
	Best Bycatch Release Practices in Tuna Purse Seiners Posters
	Shark bycatch mitigation videos
	Sea Turtle Bycatch Mitigation in Longline Fisheries videos
	Seabird Bycatch Mitigation in Longline Fisheries videos
	Best practices infographics
	Saving the Mobula Rays Posters
	Species Identification Guides
	Best practices and bycatch mitigation Technical Reports
	Responsible Fishing Guidelines for Tuna Longline Fisheries
FADs	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: FAD management (PS and S&T)
	VOSI FAD fields (fully NE, BioFAD, FAD recovery, FAD position, FAD echosounder biomass)
	FAD materials and FAD design research & at-sea testing
	FAD marking research
	FAD fate research
	FAD workshops (e.g. BioFAD, FAD recovery)
	Non-Entangling and Biodegradable FADs Guide
	Biodegradable Jelly-FAD Construction Guide
	Jelly-FAD video
	FAD Technical Reports
	FAD infographics
	Acoustic discrimination research and workshops
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
EAFM	EAFM research and workshops
Research and innovation	Research cruises (e.g. tagging studies, pre- and post-release mortality studies)
	Testing new bycatch mitigation measures and release devices (e.g. manta ray grid)
	Theme-specific workshops (e.g. Bycatch release devices)
RFMO advocacy	Bycatch mitigation asks included in RFMO priorities and Position Statements
	Coordination with NGOs, including ESC members
	Meetings with RFMO member nations
	Participating Company advocacy
	Model letters and other advocacy tools to support MSC clients in their advocacy
	RFMO advocacy and outreach coordination with MSC's regional staff
Logbooks	
Port surveys	

Species groups the condition applies to (from more to less frequent)

“All ETP”
Sharks / Rays
Cetaceans / Whale sharks
Seabirds

Sea turtles

Deadlines



(#6) 2.2.2 Secondary species management

Commonly used language

*- Demonstrate that the available quantitative **information is adequate**, both in terms of coverage and quality, **to provide evidence that shark finning is highly likely to not be taking place**.*
*- there should be a partial strategy in place at the UoA level for the main secondary bait species, that ensures that **bait is being sourced from sustainable fisheries**. The partial strategy should be expected to maintain or not hinder rebuilding of bait species at/to levels which are highly likely to be above biologically based limits or to ensure the UoAs does not hinder their recovery.*
*- Provide evidence that there is a regular review of the potential effectiveness and practicality of **alternative measures to minimize UoA-related mortality of unwanted catch of main secondary species [SPECIES NAMES]** and they are implemented as appropriate.*

What's needed & ISSF resources / activities

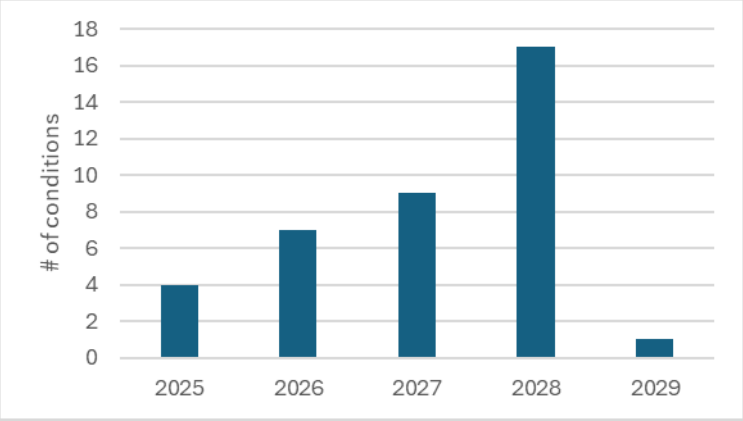
Monitoring at sea	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Observer coverage (LSPS)
EM	VOSI EM field (all gears)
	EM minimum standards technical report
	EM Fact sheet infographic
	EM reporting checklist
	EM vendors list
	EM RFMO requirements infographic
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
No shark-finning	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Shark-finning policy (all gears)
	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Skipper Best Practices training (PS and LL)
	VOSI Fins Naturally Attached column
	Skipper Workshops
	Skipper Guidebooks
RFMO advocacy (shark-finning / Compliance	RFMO priorities and Position statements
	Coordination with NGOs, including ESC members
	Meetings with RFMO member nations

Committees)	Participating Company advocacy
	Model letters and other advocacy tools to support MSC clients in their advocacy
	RFMO advocacy and outreach coordination with MSC's regional staff
Skipper training and best practices	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Skipper Best Practices training (PS and LL)
	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Shark-finning policy (all gears)
	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Sharks, sea turtles and seabirds LL best practices policy (LL)
	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: no large-scale driftnets (all gears)
	VOSI Fins Naturally Attached field (all gears)
	VOSI LL best practices fields (circle hooks, whole finfish bait, monofilament lines, no shark lines)
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
	Skipper Workshops
	Skipper Guidebooks
	Best Bycatch Release Practices in Tuna Purse Seiners Posters
	Shark bycatch mitigation videos
	Sea Turtle Bycatch Mitigation in Longline Fisheries videos
	Seabird Bycatch Mitigation in Longline Fisheries videos
	Best practices infographics
	Saving the Mobula Rays Posters
	Species Identification Guides
	Best practices and bycatch mitigation Technical Reports
	Responsible Fishing Guidelines for Tuna Longline Fisheries
Logbooks	
Sustainable bait sourcing	
Port and at-sea vessel inspections	

Species groups the condition applies to (from more to less frequent)

“All ETP”
Sharks / Rays
Cetaceans / Whale sharks
Seabirds
Sea turtles

Deadlines



(#7) 2.3.1 ETP species outcome

Commonly used language

*- Demonstrate that the **measures/strategies are being implemented successfully** and demonstrate that the **direct effects of the UoA are highly likely to not hinder recovery** of [SPECIES GROUP] by analytically determining the impact of the UoA on those ETP species.*
*- The evidence base for determining interaction rates with ETP species, in particular [SPECIES GROUP], should be improved so **that trends in interactions can be measured** and so that it can be determined whether the UoA may be a threat to protection and recovery of the ETP species.*
*- Information shall be gathered such that the direct effects of the UoA are shown to be highly unlikely to hinder recovery of ETP species, **by quantitatively estimating the nature and extent of interactions and/or captures**, or **by reducing the susceptibility of the ETP species** currently assessed as "Medium" risk in the Risk Based Framework such that "Low" risk is attained.*
*- Provide evidence that **direct effects of dolphin sets** have been considered and are thought to be unlikely to create unacceptable impacts.*

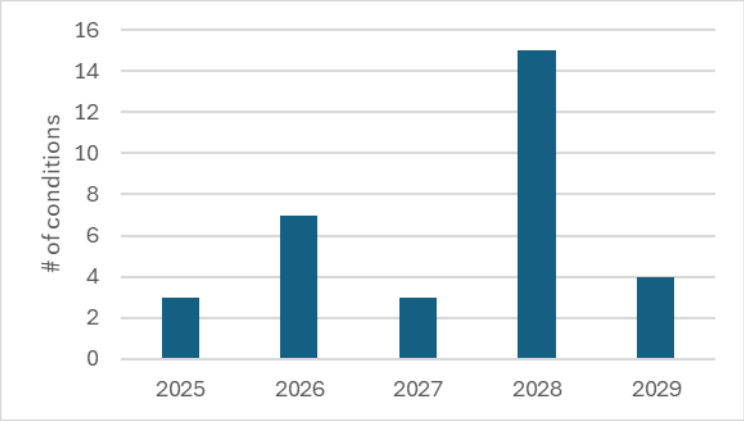
What's needed & ISSF resources / activities

Monitoring at sea	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Observer coverage (LSPS)
EM	VOSI EM field (all gears)
	EM minimum standards technical report
	EM Fact sheet infographic
	EM reporting checklist
	EM vendors list
	EM RFMO requirements infographic
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
FADs	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: FAD management (PS and S&T)
	VOSI FAD fields (fully NE, BioFAD, FAD recovery, FAD position, FAD echosounder biomass)
	FAD materials and FAD design research & at-sea testing
	FAD marking research
	FAD fate research
	FAD research and Technical Reports (e.g. impacts on sea turtles, sharks, etc.)
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
Research	Technical Reports on different fisheries/gears impacts on bycatch species
	At-sea research to understand impacts on bycatch species
Logbooks	
Port surveys	

Species groups the condition applies to (from more to less frequent)

Sharks / Rays
Cetaceans / Whale sharks
"All ETP"
Sea turtles
Seabirds

Deadlines



(#8) 2.4.3 Habitat information

Commonly used language

- Provide evidence that available **information** *is adequate (and continues to be collected) to allow for* ***identification of the main impacts of the UoA (FADs) on the main habitats/VME habitats****, and there is reliable information on the* ***spatial extent of interaction and on the timing and location*** *of use of the fishing gear.*
- Present evidence that the available information on the ***ratio of abandoned/lost FADs, modelled FAD drifting trajectories, and potential beaching locations*** *is adequate to allow for identification of the main impacts of the UoA on VMEs.*
- Information availability is adequate to allow for identification of the main impacts of the UoA on VMEs (in particular ***coral reef habitats****),* ***associated with the beaching of lost and/or abandoned UoA FADs****, and provides reliable information on the spatial and temporal extent of UoA FAD beaching events.*
- With particular reference to FADs ***and buoys*** *lost from the UoAs' fishing operation, provide: (...)* ***information*** *required* ***to detect any increase in risk*** *to VME habitats.*

What's needed & ISSF resources / activities

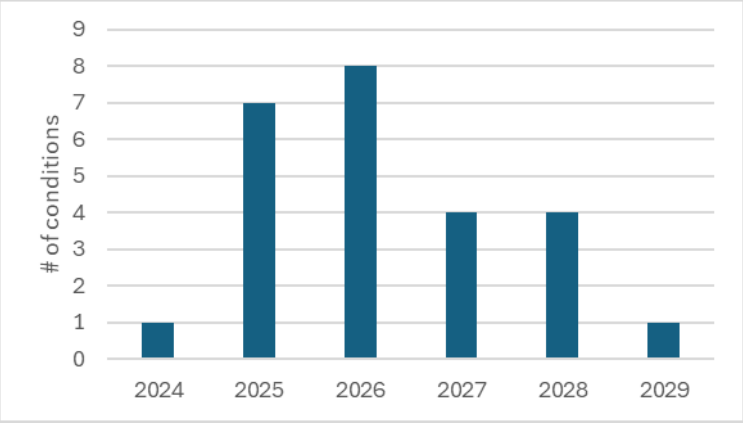
FADs	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: FAD management (PS and S&T)
	VOSI FAD fields (fully NE, BioFAD, FAD recovery, FAD position, FAD echosounder biomass)
	FAD materials and FAD design research & at-sea testing
	FAD marking research
	FAD fate research
	FAD workshops (e.g. BioFAD, FAD recovery)
	Non-Entangling and Biodegradable FADs Guide
	Biodegradable Jelly-FAD Construction Guide
	Jelly-FAD video
	FAD Technical Reports
	FAD infographics
	Acoustic discrimination research and workshops
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
EAFM	EAFM research and workshops
Monitoring at sea	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Observer coverage (LSPS)
EM	VOSI EM field (all gears)

	EM minimum standards technical report
	EM Fact sheet infographic
	EM reporting checklist
	EM vendors list
	EM RFMO requirements infographic
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
RFMO advocacy	FAD management asks included in RFMO priorities and Position Statements
	Coordination with NGOs, including ESC members
	Meetings with RFMO member nations
	Participating Company advocacy
	Model letters and other advocacy tools to support MSC clients in their advocacy
	RFMO advocacy and outreach coordination with MSC's regional staff
National advocacy	Participating Company advocacy
FAD Logbooks	
Port and at-sea vessel inspections	

Species groups the condition applies to (from more to less frequent)

N/A

Deadlines



(#9) 2.4.2 Habitat management

Commonly used language

- Provide evidence that ***there is a partial strategy in place*** *for VMEs (****coral reefs****) that is expected to achieve the Habitat Outcome 80 level of performance or above.*

- There should be an objective basis for ***confidence that the partial strategy in place*** *for managing UoA impacts on VME habitats (in particular coral reefs), associated with* ***lost and/or abandoned UoA FAD beaching*** *events,* ***will work based on information directly about the UoA and/or habitats*** *involved, and some* ***quantitative evidence*** *should be presented* ***that it is being implemented successfully****.*

- Provide at least some quantitative evidence that ***the UoA complies with both its management requirements (voluntary and/or required) and with protection measures afforded to VMEs by other MSC UoAs/non-MSC fisheries, where***

relevant.

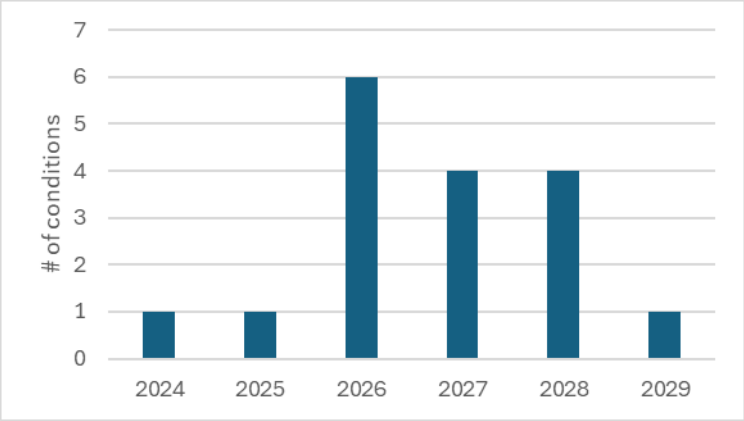
What's needed & ISSF resources / activities

FADs	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: FAD management (PS and S&T)
	VOSI FAD fields (fully NE, BioFAD, FAD recovery, FAD position, FAD echosounder biomass)
	FAD materials and FAD design research & at-sea testing
	FAD marking research
	FAD fate research
	FAD workshops (e.g. BioFAD, FAD recovery)
	Non-Entangling and Biodegradable FADs Guide
	Biodegradable Jelly-FAD Construction Guide
	Jelly-FAD video
	FAD Technical Reports
	FAD infographics
	Acoustic discrimination research and workshops
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
EAFM	EAFM research and workshops
Monitoring at sea	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Observer coverage (LSPS)
EM	VOSI EM field (all gears)
	EM minimum standards technical report
	EM Fact sheet infographic
	EM reporting checklist
	EM vendors list
	EM RFMO requirements infographic
	Host or participate in RFMO side events
Skipper training and Best practices	ISSF CMs & PVR column re: Skipper Best Practices training (PS)
	Skipper Workshops
	Skipper Guidebooks
RFMO advocacy	FAD management asks included in RFMO priorities and Position Statements
	Coordination with NGOs, including ESC members
	Meetings with RFMO member nations
	Participating Company advocacy
	Model letters and other advocacy tools to support MSC clients in their advocacy
	RFMO advocacy and outreach coordination with MSC's regional staff
National advocacy	Participating Company advocacy
FAD Logbooks	
Port and at-sea vessel inspections	

Species groups the condition applies to (from more to less frequent)

N/A

Deadlines



(#10) 3.2.2 Decision-making processes

Commonly used language

- Demonstrate that at [RFMO] level, ***decision-making processes*** *regarding the [P1 SPECIES] stock management* ***respond to important issues****, specifically to* ***catches in excess of the annual catch limit corresponding to the HCR****, in a transparent, timely and adaptive manner.*
- Demonstrate that ***an informed decision has been made by [RFMO] on the status of each [P1 SPECIES] UoA and which provides scientifically determined reference points*** *to which the [RFMO] commission can respond to with appropriate conservation measures.*
- Provide evidence that ***information on the fishery's performance and management action,*** *at the [NATIONAL/RFMO] management level, is available on request,* ***and explanations are provided for any actions or lack of action*** *associated with findings and relevant recommendations emerging from research, monitoring, evaluation and review activity.*
- Provide evidence that decision-making processes for [COUNTRY], respond to serious and other important ***issues identified in relevant research, monitoring, evaluation, and consultation****, in a transparent, timely and adaptive manner and take account of the wider implications of decisions.*

What's needed & ISSF resources / activities

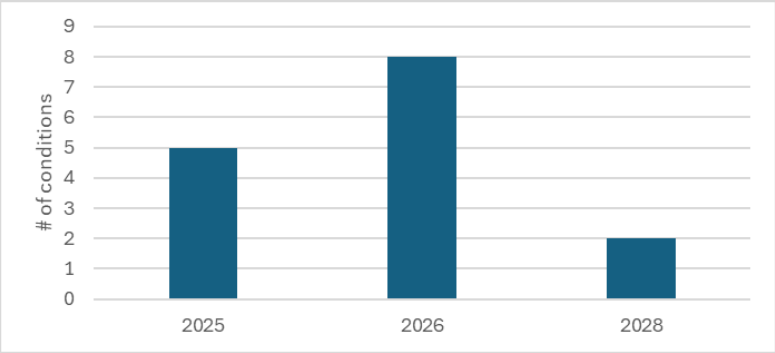
RFMO advocacy	RFMO priorities and Position statements
	Coordination with NGOs, including ESC members
	Meetings with RFMO member nations
	Participating Company advocacy
	Model letters and other advocacy tools to support MSC clients in their advocacy
	RFMO advocacy and outreach coordination with MSC's regional staff
National advocacy	Participating Company advocacy
Other	P1-P3 report "An Evaluation of the Sustainability of Global Tuna Stocks Relative to MSC Criteria"

Stocks the condition applies to (from more to less frequent)

AO YFT (ICCAT)

IO SKJ (IOTC)
EP SKJ, YFT, BET (IATTC)

Deadlines



4. CONCLUSIONS

This review of open conditions for MSC-certified tuna fisheries as of July 2025 provides a consolidated overview of the current challenges these fisheries must address to maintain certification under the MSC Fisheries Standard. A total of 550 open conditions were identified across 65 certified fisheries, with only 2 fisheries certified without conditions. This indicates that while certification has become widespread among tuna fisheries, significant improvements are still required to reach and maintain best practices.

The analysis revealed that conditions are not evenly distributed across the Performance Indicators in the Fisheries Standard. In particular, PI 1.2.1 (Harvest Strategy) and PI 1.2.2 (Harvest Control Rules & Tools) accounted for the highest concentration of open conditions. This is largely due to the early application of Section SE of version 3 of the MSC Standard in Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) tuna fisheries, which share common conditions under these indicators. WCPO Section SE conditions represented around half of all open PI 1.2.1/1.2.2 conditions, while the remaining ones correspond to other stocks in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans. Beyond these PIs, conditions were spread across a diverse set of topics, including endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species, habitat/FAD management, and broader RFMO or national level management-related requirements under Principle 3.

Deadlines for closing conditions are within the expected five-year certification cycle (2025–2029). However, exceptions were observed, with some deadlines already due in 2024 as older reports are about to be updated by new annual surveillance audits or reassessments, and others extending to 2034 in the case of exceptional circumstances for the Southern bluefin tuna stock. These timelines highlight the need for both short- and medium-term corrective actions and commitments to improve fishery performance.

Taken together, the results underline the progress made by tuna fisheries in engaging with the MSC program while also illustrating the scale of work still ahead. Conditions of certification serve a dual purpose: they uphold the rigor of the Standard and create a clear pathway for fisheries to implement meaningful improvements. The analysis also shows that common challenges are shared across fisheries, suggesting opportunities for joint action (e.g., research, advocacy) and knowledge exchange.

It should be noted that the lists of resources and activities identified for closing conditions for each of the top ten PIs are not comprehensive. While this report highlights ISSF resources in particular, we recognize that other tools and initiatives are also available to support fisheries in meeting their conditions.

By documenting and analyzing open conditions for tuna fisheries, this report contributes to identifying priority areas for action, supporting both fisheries and stakeholders in advancing the sustainability of global tuna stocks.

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Susan Jackson, Holly Koehler, Hilario Murua and Víctor Restrepo provided useful reviews and valuable comments on earlier drafts of the document.

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