South Africa's Annual Report to the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG) of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, 2024

Prepared by
W. West, S. Kerwath, C. Da Silva, M. Meyer, and Q. Mketsu



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

February 2026

1. Introduction

South Africa was formally accepted as a Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) of the CCSBT on 24 August 2006; and subsequently became a Member of the Extended Commission, committed to CCSBT obligations from the 15th of February 2016. The two South African commercial fishing sectors that target large pelagic species comprise the Large Pelagic Longline (LL) and the Tuna Pole and Line (baitboat) fleet.

1.1. Large Pelagic Longline

The large pelagic longline sector can be divided into domestic (ZAD) and chartered vessels (ZAC). The general method and gear used by ZAD vessels involves setting lines at night (to reduce seabird mortality) with squid bait using buoy -and branch lines of 20 m length. Depending on the vessel size, 700 –1 500 hooks are set per line. Stainless steel hooks are prohibited and as of 2017 wire traces are also prohibited. Other than Southern bluefin tuna (SBT; *Thunnus maccoyii*), ZAD vessels target a mix of tuna species, bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*), yellowfin (*Thunnus albcares*) and albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) as well as swordfish (*Xiphias* gladius). ZAD vessels operate in both the Atlantic, with effort distribution associated with proximity to the two main fishing harbour locations (Cape Town on the West coast and Richards Bay on the East coast).

Joint-venture (JV) agreements between South African fishing rights holders and Japan vessels have been underway since 1995, whereby these foreign-flagged ZAC vessels are permitted to fish under a South African Right Holder. In addition, a new JV arrangement with Taiwan commenced in 2025 and currently comprises a single vessel, which primarily targets albacore tuna in the Atlantic. JV vessels are required to adhere to South African legislation, including but not limited to, the Marine Living Resources Act (Act No. 18 of 1998) and Regulations promulgated thereunder, including Large Pelagic Longline sector specific policy. Importantly, each foreign vessel is required to carry an observer on board every trip. The catch from these vessels accrues to South Africa. Due to a relatively small SBT quota, these vessels predominantly target tropical bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna, and their larger size enables them to fish further offshore and their methodology differs from ZAD vessels. ZAC vessels set up to 3 000 hooks per set with a combination of fish and squid bait, using deeper branch lines and varying hook numbers per basket to influence the setting depth. The targeting and catching of tropical bigeye and yellowfin tunas has proven more successful in the Indian Ocean, resulting in a sizeable amount of the ZAC longline fishing effort being concentrated in the Indian Ocean.

1.2. Tuna Pole and Line (Baitboat)

The Tuna Pole and Line sector operates along the south-west and west coasts of South Africa in the Atlantic Ocean where the traditional target species albacore is available close inshore from October to May, but vessels make forays into the Indian Ocean depending on target species distribution. Traditionally the South African fleet has been characterized into three different categories (1) Skiboats, (2) Pole and Line and (3) Freezer vessels. Skiboats are less than 25 GRT and are mostly confined to day trips within a range of 50 nm. Pole and Line boats, which represent the bulk of the fleet, are mainly older displacement-type vessels converted from other fisheries. These vessels can undertake multiday trips of limited duration and range, as the catch is kept on ice. Freezer vessels are mainly vessels up to 30 m and 230 GRT. Due to their large size and freezing facilities, these vessels can stay out at sea for long periods and reach the farthest fishing grounds. The main target species remain albacore and yellowfin tuna, while SBT is sporadically caught between May to August. Between 2 and 7 vessels have caught SBT annually since 2020, catching between 0.6 and 2.2 tons.

1.3. Type and magnitude of ERS caught by fishery/method

Protected species that are caught by large pelagic longline sector include seabirds, turtles and sharks. Observed numbers of incidental seabird catches are available from 2012, with 10 species identified to date. The observed seabird mortality CPUE (number of seabird mortalities/1000 hooks) has been on a declining trend, with 0.16 in 2014 (43% hooks observed) to 0.04 in 2022 (16% hooks observed). A recent increase in seabird mortality CPUE to 0.15 and 0.17 seabird mortalities/1000 hooks in 2023 (11% hooks observed) and 2024 (15% hooks observed), respectively, may be as a result of reduced observer coverage and therefore requires further investigation.

Bycatch and mortality rates among seabird species vary substantially among the common seabird bycatch species. Turtles are only sporadically caught in SBT associated longline sets and are mostly released alive.

The dominant retained non-target shark bycatch species are blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*) and shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), which are caught in close to equal ratios. In general, due to lower commercial value blue sharks are more likely released alive or discarded than shortfin mako. It is prohibited to retain thresher sharks belonging to the genus Alopias, hammerhead sharks (belonging to genus Sphyrna), oceanic whitetip sharks (*Carcharhinus longimanus*), porbeagle sharks (*Lamna nasus)*, dusky sharks (*C. oscurus)* and silky sharks (*C. falciformis*) and manta- and mobulid rays on board any vessel and all releases (and release condition) of these species must be noted in the logbooks.

2. Review of SBT Fisheries

"Targeted" SBT effort is defined here as the total number of hooks per set that retained at least one SBT. SBT effort in the large pelagic longline domestic fleet (ZAD) has been steadily increasing since 2006, from 500 thousand hooks in 2006 to present levels peaking in 2024 at 2.86 million hooks. Commercialization of the SBT fishery has been motivated and supported by the allocation increases following South Africa's accession to CCSBT in 2016.

Large pelagic longline ZAC SBT effort fluctuated widely between 6 and 498 thousand hooks during the same period . Following the low in 2014 of 85 thousand hooks, ZAC SBT effort slightly increased in 2016, and exceeded 200 thousand hooks in 2017. After a large pelagic longline fishery policy change in 2015 that compels JV vessels to reflag within the first three years of JV operations, the number of JV vessels has been declining, from 4 in 2015 to 1 in 2022 and none in 2023 and 2024.

Total catches of SBT by the large pelagic longline fleet have increased in response to higher quota allocations and the availability of high quality SBT in South Africa's EEZ. Catches peaked at around 210t (round weight) in 2018, declined during the covid-19 pandemic and subsequently increased, reaching a new peak of around 240t (round weight) in 2024. Despite the gradual increase in catches, South Africa has not yet come close to reaching its annual TAC allocations. During the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 fishing seasons (March to February) 61 right holders were authorised to take part in the large pelagic longline fishery. In each of those seasons a total of 35 right holders activated their right to fish for SBT using 31-32 vessels (all ZAD), and of those vessels 23-27 caught SBT. The ZAD fleet landed 109.3 tons (N = 1 473) and 243.3 tons (N = 3384), the ZAC vessel did not land SBT and the Tuna Pole and Line fleet landed 0.39 tons (N = 5) and 0.43 tons (N = 6) SBT, respectively in the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 seasons.

The longline fishery operates mostly within South Africa's EEZ and catches SBT from April

to November; however the majority of SBT catch is typically taken over a three-month period; July to September. Consistent with previous years, most catches of SBT for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 seasons occurred from April to November..

There are notable differences in the distribution of catch and effort between the domestic (ZAD) and chartered (ZAC) longline vessels (Figures 1& 2). The domestic fleet operates off the East and West coast of South Africa (Figure 1), with effort distribution clearly associated with proximity to the two main fishing harbour locations (Cape Town on the West coast and Richards Bay on the East coast). Since 2017 the effort distribution of the ZAD vessels has contracted, with clear concentrations off Richards Bay and the West Coast. Coupled with the mixed species catch composition of ZAD vessels (i.e. variety of targeting strategies among vessels), the effort distribution demonstrates the limited range of the smaller ZAD vessels (20-30m LOA). The ZAC vessels have been operating east of Cape Agulhas (>20° Longitude) since 2012 (Figure 2). The ZAC fleet showed a strong range contraction from formally widespread effort in Area 9, including the High Seas, to predominantly fishing South Africa's EEZ of Area 14 from 2013-2016. However, compared to the years 2013-2016, ZAC vessels have also made SBT catches at offshore positions in 2017 and 2019. The ZAC fleet comprises 2-4 larger vessels (48-50m LOA) that can fish further offshore and in the high seas. No ZAC vessels fished in South Africa in 2020 due to the covid-19 pandemic and only 1 ZAC vessel was active 2021 and 2022, catching SBT in 2021 only.

3. Fisheries Monitoring for Each Fleet

3.1. Scientific Observer Program Design and Coverage

The South African Pelagic Longline Observer Programme was established in 1998, at the start of the experimental phase of the Pelagic Longline fishery, and a minimum 20% observer coverage was stipulated. The Offshore Resources Observer Programme (OROP) began in March 2002 and up until March 2011, 11-20% observer coverage was achieved on local vessels per year based on the total effort (number of hooks) deployed and 100% observer coverage on foreign-flagged (ZAC) vessels. The observer programme contract expired in March 2011, and the Department is in the process of re-establishing the programme, for implementation in the near future. Observer coverage for joint-venture chartered (ZAC) vessels has continued with 100% of fishing trips observed. Furthermore, increased sampling of tuna pole-line vessels is conducted during offloading in port by land-based scientific observers.

The observers collect all operational, catch (retained and discard), effort and length frequency data, and biological material when required. The observers record data on the following South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Program (SWIOFP) forms:
- Form 1: Vessel and trip information sheet
- Form 2D: Pelagic longline gear and operation information
- Form 3D: Fishing effort pelagic long-line
- Form 4: Marine mammal, sea turtle, and seabird incidental take form
- Form 6: Depredation
- Form 7: Fish biological sampling

With the change in 2015 in the large pelagic longline fishery policy regarding JV vessels, the decline in the number of JV (ZAC) vessels has led to a decline in observer coverage in recent years. Total observer coverage has decreased from 1 068.1 thousand hooks in 2017 to 316 thousand hooks in 2023 followed by an increase to 471 thousand hooks observed in 2024. This resulted in a decreasing trend in percentage observer coverage from 39.9% in 2017 to 11% in 2023 and a subsequent increase to 15% in 2024. Although there is a decrease in percentage observer coverage, the number of observed trips on

ZAD vessels has increased from as few as 3 trips prior to 2017, to between 20 and 46 trips a year since. The effective observer coverage of SBT effort (sets with at least one SBT) is summarized by fleet segment and statistical area in Table 1. The total number of SBT measurements taken by observers peaked in 2019 at N = 816, and after a decline to around 200 measurements per year since, increased to N = 553 measurements in 2024, attributed to the mixed targeting strategies of the ZAD vessels and the opportunistic capture of SBT. The measurements equate to 31.2% of the total retained catch in 2019, and 16.3% in 2024.

To further improve the spatio-temporal observer coverage for ZAD fleet segment, since 2018-2019 Section 16 (Observer Programme) of the Large Pelagic Longline Permit Conditions require Permit Holders to carry one or more scientific observers on board their vessel on a minimum of one fishing trip per quarter so as to ensure that 20% of all fishing days per quarter are monitored. The observer coverage for the 2025-2026 fishing season will be provided as part of the 2025 ERSWG data exchange and presented in the South Africa's National Report to the Extended Scientific Commission. Initial analysis indicate that the observer coverage for ZAD could be further improved, while ZAC observer coverage at 100% in line with permit conditions.

3.2. Logsheet data collection and verification

Vessels in the Large Pelagic Longline fishery and Tuna Pole-line fishery must complete daily logs of catches since 1997 and 1985, respectively. The data are verified by comparing logs of catches with landing declarations that are overseen by South African Fisheries Compliance Officers and Fisheries Monitors. Rights Holders are required to submit these logsheets monthly. Records of by-catch are required in the skipper logbooks.

Mandatory information to be included on all longline logbooks while at sea includes: date, latitude, longitude, time of setting and time of hauling, number of hooks set, reason for setting, float line length, branch line length, bait type, observer present (y/n), number of tori lines, sea surface temperature, light stick info, catch by species, weight and number, product type, non-retained species in numbers, number of SBT released alive and dead at sea.

South Africa is currently in the process of permitting the use of electronic reporting using online applications that are output-based, deemed suitable and fulfill the current reporting requirements. There are two initiatives underway in the development of applications, one funded by ICV Africa (a tuna trader) and another project funded by The Nature Conservancy and implemented by CapMarine and Seafood Souq.

3.3. Vessel Monitoring System

The Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) was implemented in 1998. All longline and pole-line vessels are required to have a functional VMS system on board that transmits directly to the Department's VMS OPS Room. It is the Permit Holder's responsibility to ensure that the VMS transmits data continuously and uninterrupted prior to and throughout the duration of the trip. South Africa is in the process of upgrading its VMS, which should bring about a more stringent monitoring and surveillance regime by applying the most advanced VMS technologies.

3.4. Offloading/Transshipment

Unloading or discharging of fish from a longline and tuna pole and line vessels can only be undertaken in the presence of a monitor or a South African Fisheries Control Officer.

Transshipment of fish is not permitted at sea. Transshipments of fish in port require pre-authorisation, issuance of a transshipment permit and is only allowed under the supervision of a Fisheries Control Officer. These measures have been in place since 1998.

4. Seabirds

Capture incidents of seabirds in observed sets that caught at least one SBT in 2024 are summarized in Table 2 for ZAD and ZAC vessels. A total of 69 seabirds (mainly shy albatross, white-chinned petrel and black-browed albatross) were caught together with SBT, 67 of those reported as dead, with most captured in Statistical Area 15. In contrast, the total observed number of seabirds for the total observed hooks of 471 thousand hooks (incl. non-SBT sets) for 2024 was 93 seabirds, including 55 shy albatross, 18 white-chinned petrel, 18 black-browed albatross and 2 cape petrels. Logbook bycatch records (incl. non-SBT sets) from unobserved ZAD reported an additional 15 seabirds (Table 3). Yellow-nosed albatross (Indian and Atlantic), appearing in observer records each year until 2019, have not been reported recently.

5. Non-target shark species

Capture incidents of sharks and rays in sets that caught at least one SBT in 2024 are summarized in Table 4 for ZAC and ZAD vessels. Blue sharks and shortfin mako are the most common shark bycatch that are caught together with SBT, a majority of which are retained. Silky sharks and thresher sharks (including bigeye threshers) have been caught regularly over this period, with approximately half released alive as opposed to discarded.. In the total observed number of sharks for the total observed hooks (incl. non-SBT sets), 21 species of sharks and rays were reported in contrast with 16 species in the SBT-only sets. Logbook bycatch records from unobserved ZAD vessel trips (incl. non-SBT sets) provide additional information on non-target bycatch species (Table 5). It is important to note that mostly prohibited shark species are recorded as bycatch in the logbooks whereas commonly retained species, such as blue shark and shortfin mako would be recorded under the main species section unless released in larger numbers.

6. Marine Mammals and Marine Reptiles

In 2024 there were 21 observed capture incidents of turtles (green, loggerhead) in longline sets that caught at least one SBT (Table 6). These turtles were either released alive (N=15) or in an “Other” state (N=6). By contrast, the total observed number of turtles (incl. non-SBT sets) for 2024 was 53 turtles, comprising 38 loggerhead turtles, 9 green turtles and 6 leatherback turtles. Logbook bycatch records (incl. non-SBT sets) from unobserved ZAD vessels reported an incomparably high number of 142 turtles caught in 2024 (70 Loggerhead turtles, 35 leatherback turtles, 3 green turtles and 34 unidentified turtles), of which all except were released alive (Table 7).

The only marine mammal captures recorded by observers were Cape fur seals and Antarctic fur seals, released alive (N=11) or in an “Other” state (N=4) (Table 8). The same level of seal bycatch was reported by observers in non-SBT sets (N=21). There were no observed incidences with dolphins or other marine mammals. Logbook bycatch records (incl. non-SBT sets) from unobserved ZAD vessels reported a further N = 4 seals released alive (Table 9).

7. Mitigation Measures to Minimise Seabird and Other Species Bycatch

7.1. Seabirds

The start and completion of line setting must be conducted at night, defined by the period between nautical dusk and nautical dawn. Vessels must either fly a bird scaring line (tori line) during the setting of each longline or use line weighting (40 g or greater attached within 0.5 m of the hook, or 60 g or greater attached within 1 m of the hook, or 80 g or greater attached within 2 m of the hook). Instruction on the method of tori line construction and deployment is provided to each vessel to ensure that correct specifications and procedures are followed. Deck lighting is to be kept to a minimum. The beams of deck lights must be directed towards the deck. All bait must be appropriately thawed, and where necessary, the swim bladder punctured to ensure rapid sinking of the bait.

All birds caught must be brought onboard and, with the use of the release instructions provided, live birds are to be released. The release instructions clearly outline the procedures to follow to ensure that a seabird has a good chance of survival after release.

The NPOA- Seabirds was gazetted in 2008 and specifies a maximum bycatch rate of 0.05 birds/1000 hooks. Within this plan an initial seabird bycatch limit of 25 birds killed per year is set per vessel. Once the vessel reaches this limit a second tori line must be flown, and branch lines (snoods) must be weighted by placing 60 g weights within 2 m of the hook to ensure optimal sinking rates. Where multiple weights are used then the first weight should be within 2 m of the hook and the last weight within 3 m of the hook. If a vessel reaches 50 birds killed in a year, then the vessel must stop fishing immediately. If the vessel has complied with all mitigation measures 100% of the time, then it will be allowed to fish on condition that a trained onboard observer is present to investigate the nature of the high seabird mortality and that instructions given by the observer will be followed.

7.2. Sharks

The large pelagic longline permit conditions prohibit targeting of sharks. To enforce this, annual shark catches per right's holder must be less than 50% to comply with the permit conditions. If quarterly catches exceed 60% of the catch an observer must be taken on board for the remainder of the fishing season. The fins and trunks of all sharks caught must remain attached to the trunk naturally or via a cord. A precautionary upper catch limit (PUCL) for blue sharks is set at 1000 t total weight for the entire South African longline fishery and a quota of 154 t in the ICCAT region for shortfin mako sharks. Furthermore, the use of wire traces has been banned from the Large Pelagic Longline fishery as of 2017. Thresher sharks belonging to the genus Alopias, hammerhead sharks (belonging to genus Sphyrna), oceanic whitetip sharks, porbeagle sharks, dusky sharks and silky sharks shall not be retained on board the vessel.

Retention of shark species is not allowed on board a Tuna Pole and Line vessel.

7.3. Marine Turtles

The use of circle hooks is encouraged as stated in the permit conditions. The South African government has worked closely with WWF to educate skippers on release procedures for turtles. According to the handling and release instructions provided to vessels in their permit conditions, vessels are required, amongst others, to:

- Remove the hook using a long handled de hooker on turtles too large to bring onboard and a de h-oker on turtles brought onboard.

- Use a line cutter when a de-hooker is not possible and to cut the line as close to the hook as possible.
- Use net to bring the turtle onboard and to avoid pulling on the line.
- Handle the turtle with gentle care.
- Release the turtle headfirst and away from fishing gear once it has recovered onboard.

Trained observers are present on all ZAC vessels, and they record all interactions with marine turtles during the fishing operation.

Since 2013, all vessels have been required to record interactions with marine turtles in their logbooks, and each vessel has been given a species guide to aid identification of turtles to species level.

8. Public relations

In addition to governmental activities, which communicated and disseminated through the Large Pelagic Management Working Group and the Scientific Large Pelagics and Sharks Working Group , DFFE conducts annual “road shows” where DFFE personnel visit various sites around the country to inform stakeholders about changes in permit conditions and reporting requirements. DFFE provides education materials in the form of booklets, bycatch species ID guides, guides for correct use of logbooks and bycatch handling guides.

South Africa is a member of three Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs): The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and The Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT). As such, South Africa is required to provide information to each of these RFMOs, generally in the form of data submissions and reports. In terms of Ecologically Related Species, South Africa is required to submit an annual report to each RFMO indicating by catch trends and statistics. In addition, South Africa is required to submit numerous species-specific data submissions that detail catch and effort of our Large Pelagic Longline fishery. Scientific analyses are presented to regional and international working groups and are published in the form of numerous technical reports and peer reviewed scientific publications.

ERS Data Exchange and Dissemination

South Africa has contributed spatially disaggregated bird bycatch data and analysis of set level longline data to collaborative work to assess seabird bycatch in pelagic longline fleets (South Atlantic and Indian Oceans), titled: Collaborative work to assess seabird bycatch in pelagic longline fleets (South Atlantic and Indian Oceans). This project was a collaborative work to assess seabird bycatch in the pelagic longline fleets operating in the South Atlantic (SAO) and Indian (IO) Oceans from an entirely scientific perspective. South Africa has also actively participated in the Common Oceans project to assess seabird bycatch in surface longline fisheries in the southern hemisphere south of 20 degrees.

South Africa participated in the development of analytic tools (code) that can be utilised with any aggregation of data and for any spatial area to estimate seabird bycatch (Bycatch Per Unit Effort (BPUE)) and number of birds caught. Specific outcomes include the development. The results were presented to the 2018 IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch in South Africa and are publicly available:
https://www.iotc.org/sites/default/files/documents/2018/08/IOTC-2018-WPEB14-45.pdf

South Africa provided data to the collaborative seabird risk assessment SEFRA model of

CCSBT fisheries in the Southern Hemisphere, for the 2024-2026 iteration. And South Africa is willing to participate in the FAO/GEF Common Ocean – II, on the 2nd global seabird risk assessment.

Privately funded skipper training workshops were conducted in 2024 and 2025 for the large pelagic longline and tuna pole sectors. These workshops were hosted by ICV Africa (a tuna trader with Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification requirements) as well as the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) and the CCSBT Seabird Project. The workshops focused on regulatory compliance, ETP bycatch handling and mitigation measures, and bycatch reporting requirements.

South Africa is currently utilising the Bycatch Estimation Tool (BYET), a statistical toolkit developed under the ICCAT Scientific Committee's Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods (WGSAM), to support estimation of total bycatch of species groups such as sharks (shortfin mako, blue shark, porbeagle) and billfish. The BYET can also be applied in the estimation of seabirds, turtles and marine mammals.

9. Information on other ERS (non-bycatch) such as prey and predator species

Killer whales (orca) and pilot whales have been observed mauling fish caught on the longline, and these depredations are recorded in the skipper logbooks. These data sets are currently being used for a regional study examining the effect of depredation on longline fleets in South Africa. Analysis of orca depredation may reveal substantial impacts to the large pelagic longline fishery. This study involves looking at the extent, history and the socio-economic impact of this depredation. Additional data are being sourced from the fishery directly through onboard observers.

10. Other

Nothing to report

11. Implementation of the IPOA-Seabirds and IPOA-Sharks

The Department, with the assistance of NGOs (e.g. Birdlife SA), assesses the impact of longline fisheries on seabirds, turtles and sharks and to investigate various mitigation and management measures.

11.1. NPOA Birds

A National Plan of Action for seabirds (NPOA-seabirds) was published in 2008, which aimed to reduce seabird mortalities below 0.05 seabirds.1000 hooks-1. Good collaboration with the fishing industry, researchers and managers, continual refining of mitigation measures, the implementation of stringent management measures through permit conditions, and close monitoring through the observer programme indicates that seabird mortalities have decreased.
South Africa is in the process of reviewing and updating its NPOA-seabirds and a final draft is expected to be completed shortly.

11.2. NPOA Sharks

The South African National Plan of Action for sharks (NPOA-Sharks) was finalised in 2013 and provided information on the status of chondrichthyans in South Africa and examined structure, mechanisms and regulatory framework related to research, management, monitoring, and enforcement associated with shark fishing and trade of shark product in the South African context. This information was used to identify, group and prioritize issues particular to South African chondrichthyan resources that require intervention in the forms of specific actions, associated responsibilities and time frames. It provides a guideline for identifying and resolving the outstanding issues around management and conservation of sharks to ensure their optimal, long term, sustainable use for the benefit of all South Africans.

Integral to the NPOA for Sharks -South Africa was the list of issues to be addressed in terms of improving sources of data, addressing scientific knowledge on common and cryptic species and thereby improving the management of chondrichthyan fisheries. In 2018, DAFF updated and reviewed the NPOA which was presented at the IOTC WPEB14 (da Silva et al., 2018).
https://www.iotc.org/sites/default/files/documents/2018/09/IOTC-2018-WPEB14-11_Rev1.pdf

The review indicated that progress was made in six of the seven “Issue Clusters” and within most 22 issues highlighted in the NPOA Sharks SA. Most notable progress was made within the optimum use (100% of listed actions completed) and classification and assessment of species (84% of listed actions completed) issue clusters. The least progress was made in the data and reporting and regulatory tools issue clusters.

In May 2020, following public concern about shark populations along the South African coast, The Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms Barbara Creecy, appointed an External Panel to formally review the NPOA-Sharks I. The Expert panel was tasked to provide an independent critical appraisal of the NPOA-Sharks I, to review the progress made with implementation of the plan and to provide input towards an updated and improved NPOA. The Expert panel scrutinised 60 background documents and reviewed the 62 actions of NPOA-Sharks I and provided scores for each section. The external experts commended the external review process as a unique example of accountability and transparency that highlighted the Departments’ commitment to conserve shark species and properly manage their long-term sustainable use. Overall, the review of the Panel was positive and acknowledged good progress with the foundational sections of the plan relating to research. They noted that in this context, South Africa’s plans and achievements compare well with the standard of developed countries such as the USA and Australia. To improve on sections where limited progress was made, specific recommendations were made for immediate implementation. These included but were not limited to effective communication and coordination from science to policy, the need for measurable indicators to track progress of the updated plan and a stronger focus on illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing (DEFF, 2020).

Emanating from this review, after an extensive stakeholder consultation phase, the revised NPOA-Sharks II (2022) builds on the achievements and lessons learned from NPOA-Sharks I and closely follows the recommendations of the Shark expert panel. In 2022, the NPOA-Sharks II was finalised and adopted. The NPOA-Sharks II was presented at the 2022 IOTC WPEB *(South Africa NPOA Sharks II. C. da Silva, S.E. Kerwath. IOTC-2022-WPEB18-10)*.

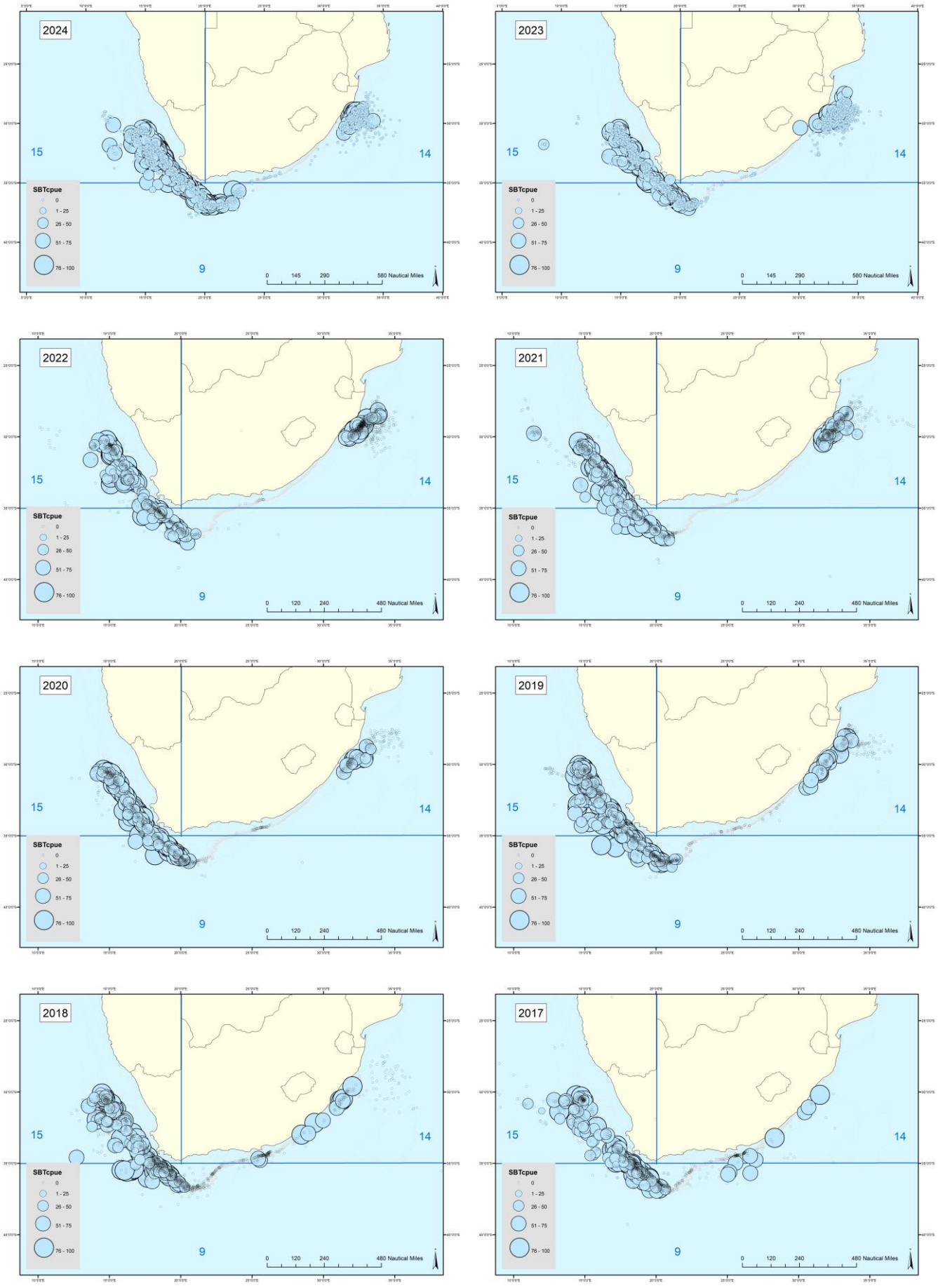


Figure 1. Annual distribution (2012 - 2024) of longline sets for the South African domestic vessels fleet (ZAD). The size of the bubble indicates the relative SBT catch per set in kg per 1000 hooks.

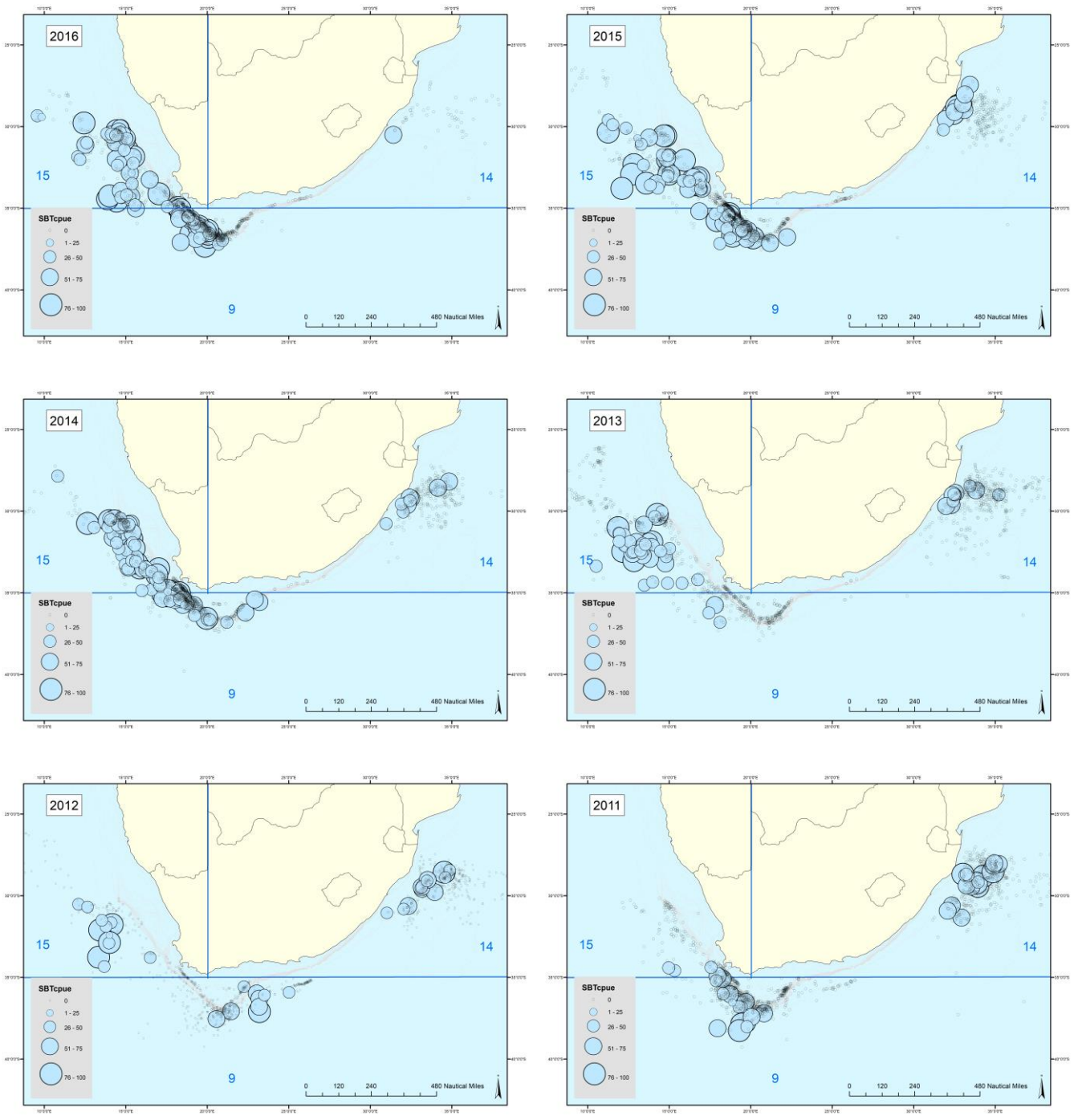


Figure 1 contd.. Annual distribution (2011 - 2024) of longline sets for the South African domestic vessels fleet (ZAD). The size of the bubble indicates the relative SBT catch per set in kg per 1000 hooks.

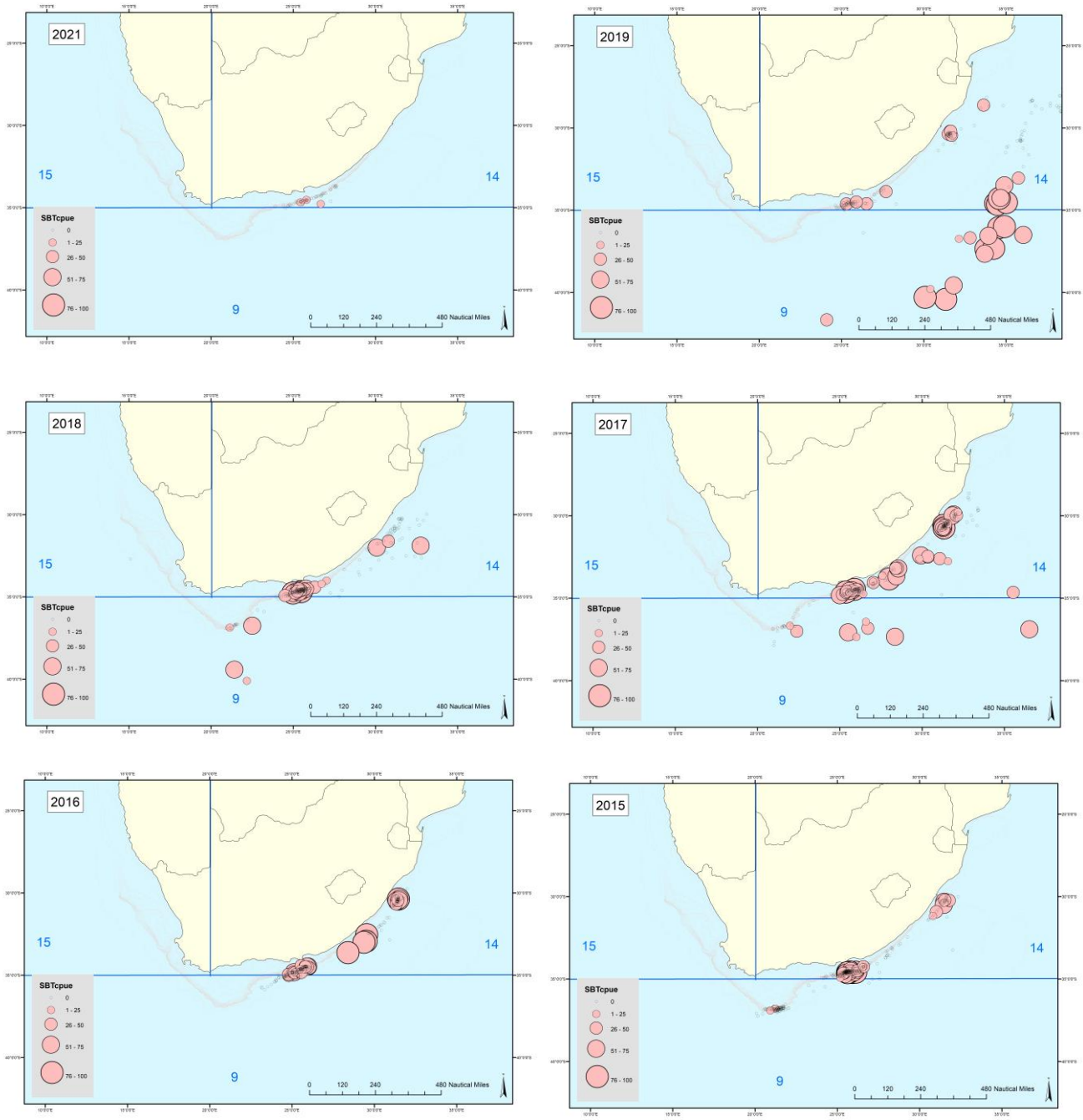


Figure 2. Annual distribution (2011 - 2021) of longline sets for the South African chartered (foreign flagged) vessels (ZAC). The size of the bubble indicates the relative SBT catch per set in kg per 1000 hooks. No ZAC effort was present in 2020, 2022 to 2024.

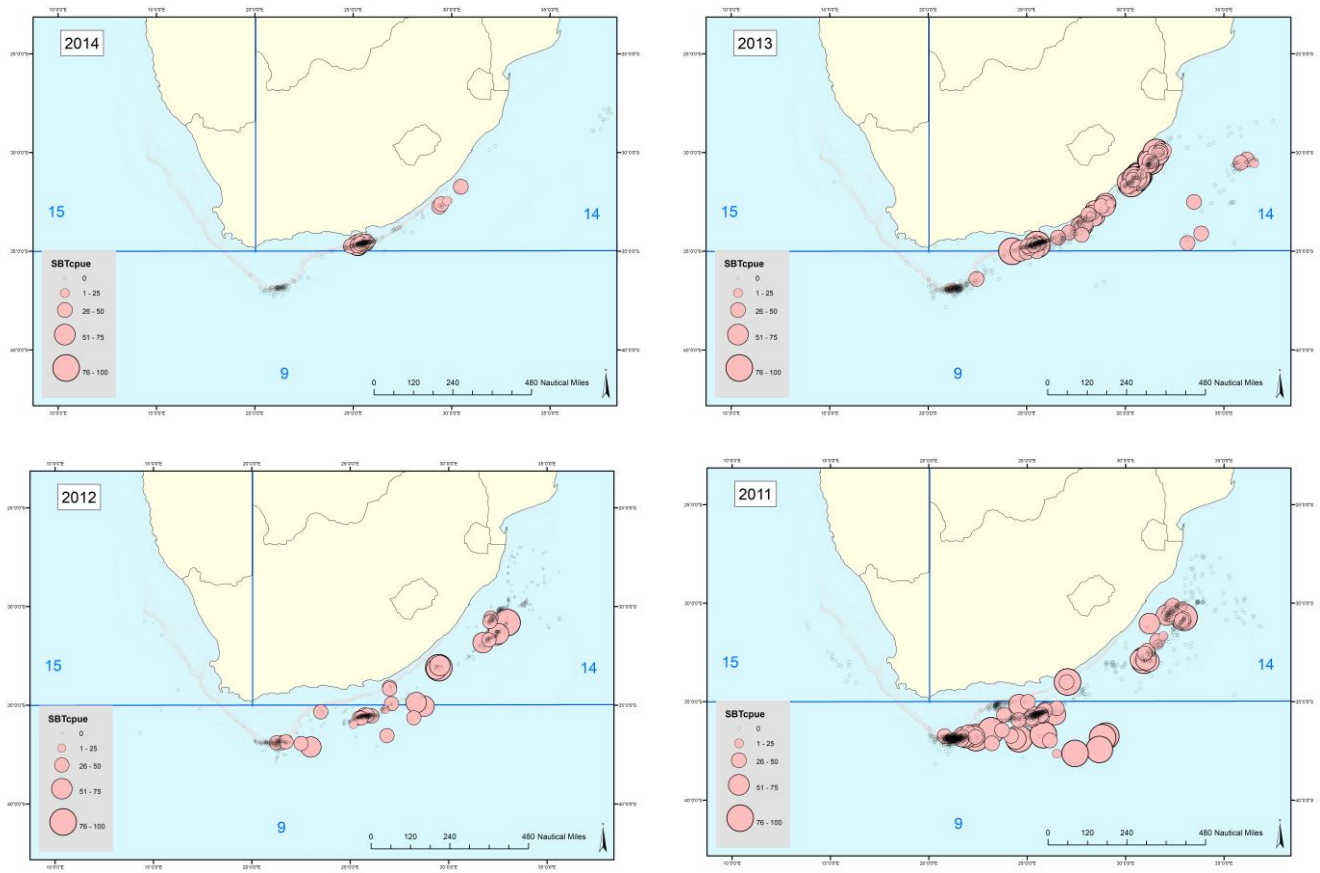


Figure 2 contd. Annual distribution (2011 - 2021) of longline sets for the South African chartered (foreign flagged) vessels (ZAC). The size of the bubble indicates the relative SBT catch per set in kg per 1000 hooks. No ZAC effort was present in 2020, 2022 to 2024.

Table 1. Total fishing and observed effort for South Africa in 2024 in the large pelagic longline fishery.

Country / Fishing Entity	Calendar Year	Quarter	Fishery		Human Observer / EM	Area		Total & Observed Effort		Proportion of observed effort with specific mitigation measures									
			Gear Code	Fleet Code		Latitude	Longitude	Total Effort	Total Observed Effort	TP+NS	TP+WB	NS+WB	TP+WB+NS	TP	NS	WB	NIL	HS	Others (*add additional columns if required*)
ZA	2024	1	LL	ZAD		-30	15	2 000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	man Observ	-25	30	85 669	40 930	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD		-30	10	4 340	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	man Observ	-30	15	88 843	4 272	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD		-30	30	2 460	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	man Observ	-35	15	35 244	2 736	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD		-35	20	43 136	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	man Observ	-25	30	50 540	3 978	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	man Observ	-30	10	71 003	12 972	0	0	0.3853	0.6147	0	0	0	0	0	
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	man Observ	-30	15	224 789	79 993	0.0225	0.02	0.1975	0.76	0	0	0	0	0	
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD		-30	30	9 693	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	man Observ	-35	15	133 563	38 531	0	0	0.7057	0.2943	0	0	0	0	0	
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	man Observ	-35	20	47 845	13 950	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	man Observ	-30	10	7 524	4 623	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	man Observ	-30	15	88 073	3 901	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	man Observ	-35	15	117 504	24 209	0.2891	0	0.6613	0.0496	0	0	0	0	0	
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD		-35	20	25 778	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Mitigation Type Codes	
TP	Tori Poles
NS	Night Setting
WB	Weighted Branchline
HS	Hook Shielding Device

Table 2. Observed (human observer) captures/mortalities of seabirds for South Africa –in 2024 in the pelagic longline fishery, for sets where at least one SBT was caught.

Country / Fishing Entity	Calendar Year	Quarter	Fishery		Human Observer / EM	Area		Species Code or Species Group Code	Species Scientific Name or Species Group Name	Observed Captures				
			Gear Code	Fleet Code		Latitude	Longitude			Fate (*numbers*)				
										Retained (dead)	Discarded (dead)	Released (live)	Other	English name
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	DAC	Daption capense	2	0	0	0	Cape petrel
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	DCU	Thalassarche cauta	6	0	0	0	Shy albatross
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	DIM	Thalassarche melanophrys	4	1	0	0	Black-browed albatross
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	DCU	Thalassarche cauta	4	0	0	0	Shy albatross
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	DIM	Thalassarche melanophrys	2	0	0	0	Black-browed albatross
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	DCU	Thalassarche cauta	3	0	2	0	Shy albatross
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	DIM	Thalassarche melanophrys	7	0	0	0	Black-browed albatross
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	20	DCU	Thalassarche cauta	18	0	0	0	Shy albatross
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	20	DIM	Thalassarche melanophrys	2	0	0	0	Black-browed albatross
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	20	PRO	Procellaria aequinoctialis	4	0	0	0	White-chinned petrel
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	10	DCU	Thalassarche cauta	4	6	0	0	Shy albatross
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	10	PRO	Procellaria aequinoctialis	2	0	0	0	White-chinned petrel
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	PRO	Procellaria aequinoctialis	2	0	0	0	White-chinned petrel

Table 3. Total bycatch of seabirds reported in logbooks of the South African longline fishery (incl. non SBT sets) for 2024 in the pelagic longline fishery.

Year	Species	N Captures	N Dead	N Alive	Mortality (%)
2024	Albatrosses nei	13	12	1	92.3
2024	Great-winged petrel	1	1	0	100.0
2024	Shy albatross	1	1	0	100.0

Table 4. Observed (human observer) captures/mortalities of sharks and rays for South Africa for 2024 in the pelagic longline fishery.

Country / Fishing Entity	Calendar Year	Quarter	Fishery		Human Observer / EM	Area		Species Code or Species Group Code	Species Scientific Name or Species Group Name	Observed Captures Fate (*numbers*)				English name
			Gear Code	Fleet Code		Latitude	Longitude			Retained (dead)	Discarded (dead)	Released (live)	Other	
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	BSH	Prionace glauca	0	1	84	102	Blue shark
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	BTH	Alopias superciliosus	0	2	5	1	Bigeye thresher
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	FAL	Carcharhinus falciformis	0	104	121	9	Silky shark
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	ISB	Isistius brasiliensis	0	0	2	0	Cookie cutter shark
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	OCS	Carcharhinus longimanus	0	0	8	4	Oceanic whitetip shark
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	PLS	Dasyatis violacea	0	0	2	5	Pelagic stingray
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	PSK	Pseudocarcharias kamoha	0	0	2	0	Crocodile shark
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	PTH	Alopias pelagicus	0	0	2	0	Pelagic thresher
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	RMB	Manta birostris	0	0	1	0	Giant manta
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	SMA	Isurus oxyrinchus	8	0	10	0	Shortfin mako
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	SPZ	Sphyrna zygaena	0	2	2	0	Smooth hammerhead
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	BRO	Carcharhinus brachyurus	0	0	2	0	Copper shark
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	BSH	Prionace glauca	0	6	51	3	Blue shark
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	PLS	Dasyatis violacea	0	0	1	0	Pelagic stingray
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	SMA	Isurus oxyrinchus	11	0	1	0	Shortfin mako
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	THR	Alopias spp	0	1	4	0	Thresher sharks nei
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	BSH	Prionace glauca	0	0	11	0	Blue shark
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	SHK	Selachimorpha(Pleurotrem	0	0	2	0	Various sharks nei
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	SMA	Isurus oxyrinchus	3	1	0	0	Shortfin mako
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	THR	Alopias spp	0	0	10	0	Thresher sharks nei
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	BSH	Prionace glauca	0	3	0	13	Blue shark
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	FAL	Carcharhinus falciformis	0	16	0	3	Silky shark
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	MAK	Isurus spp	0	0	0	1	Mako sharks
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	OCS	Carcharhinus longimanus	0	0	0	1	Oceanic whitetip shark
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	SRX	Rajiformes	0	0	1	0	Rays, stingrays, mantas nei
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	10	BSH	Prionace glauca	18	76	173	32	Blue shark
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	10	SMA	Isurus oxyrinchus	22	0	5	0	Shortfin mako
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	ALV	Alopias vulpinus	0	0	4	2	Thresher
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	BSH	Prionace glauca	224	1 192	452	412	Blue shark
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	BTH	Alopias superciliosus	0	2	0	33	Bigeye thresher
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	MAK	Isurus spp	0	0	2	0	Mako sharks
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	PLS	Dasyatis violacea	0	4	6	2	Pelagic stingray
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	POR	Lamna nasus	0	3	4	0	Porbeagle
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	PTH	Alopias pelagicus	0	11	1	12	Pelagic thresher
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	SMA	Isurus oxyrinchus	302	42	139	2	Shortfin mako
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	THR	Alopias spp	0	0	10	2	Thresher sharks nei
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	BSH	Prionace glauca	64	80	226	105	Blue shark
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	BTH	Alopias superciliosus	0	0	9	28	Bigeye thresher
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	PLS	Dasyatis violacea	0	0	2	0	Pelagic stingray
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	POR	Lamna nasus	0	0	2	2	Porbeagle
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	PTH	Alopias pelagicus	0	0	4	0	Pelagic thresher
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	SMA	Isurus oxyrinchus	44	15	0	4	Shortfin mako
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	THR	Alopias spp	0	0	4	0	Thresher sharks nei
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	20	BSH	Prionace glauca	0	14	80	34	Blue shark
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	20	BTH	Alopias superciliosus	0	0	9	11	Bigeye thresher
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	20	SMA	Isurus oxyrinchus	9	0	2	0	Shortfin mako
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	20	THR	Alopias spp	0	0	12	0	Thresher sharks nei
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	10	BSH	Prionace glauca	33	2	404	14	Blue shark
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	10	PLS	Dasyatis violacea	0	0	1	0	Pelagic stingray
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	10	SMA	Isurus oxyrinchus	9	0	1	0	Shortfin mako
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	BSH	Prionace glauca	20	5	19	10	Blue shark
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	SMA	Isurus oxyrinchus	0	0	4	1	Shortfin mako
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	BSH	Prionace glauca	46	163	54	23	Blue shark
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	MAK	Isurus spp	2	6	0	0	Mako sharks
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	SMA	Isurus oxyrinchus	6	0	3	0	Shortfin mako
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	THR	Alopias spp	0	5	7	6	Thresher sharks nei

Table 5. Total bycatch of sharks and rays reported in logbooks of the South African longline fishery (incl. non SBT sets) for 2024 in the pelagic longline fishery.

Year	Species	N Captures	N Dead	N Alive	Mortality (%)
2024	Bigeye thresher	92	29	63	31.5
2024	Blue shark	1915	448	1467	23.4
2024	Copper shark	15	0	15	0.0
2024	Great hammerhead	3	0	3	0.0
2024	Hammerhead sharks nei	63	13	50	20.6
2024	Mako sharks	129	0	129	0.0
2024	Manta rays	8	0	8	0.0
2024	Oceanic whitetip shark	342	21	321	6.1
2024	Pelagic stingray	2	0	2	0.0
2024	Porbeagle	28	3	25	10.7
2024	Rays and skates nei	1	0	1	0.0
2024	Scalloped hammerhead	2	1	1	50.0
2024	Silky shark	1171	490	681	41.8
2024	Stingrays nei	11	0	11	0.0
2024	Thresher	1	0	1	0.0
2024	Thresher sharks nei	489	106	383	21.7
2024	Tiger shark	7	2	5	28.6

Table 6. Observed (human observer) captures/mortalities of marine turtles for South Africa for 2024 in the pelagic longline fishery.

Country / Fishing Entity	Calendar Year	Quarter	Fishery		Human Observer / EM	Area		Species Code or Species Group Code	Species Scientific Name or Species Group Name	Observed Captures Fate (*numbers*)				English name
			Gear Code	Fleet Code		Latitude	Longitude			Retained (dead)	Discarded (dead)	Released (live)	Other	
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	TTL	Caretta caretta	0	0	2	0	Loggerhead turtle
ZA	2024	2	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-25	30	TUG	Chelonia mydas	0	0	0	2	Green turtle
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	10	TTL	Caretta caretta	0	0	4	0	Loggerhead turtle
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	TTL	Caretta caretta	0	0	2	0	Loggerhead turtle
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	TUG	Chelonia mydas	0	0	0	2	Green turtle
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	TTL	Caretta caretta	0	0	5	2	Loggerhead turtle
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	TTL	Caretta caretta	0	0	2	0	Loggerhead turtle

Table 7. Total bycatch of turtles reported in logbooks of the South African longline fishery (incl. non SBT sets) for 2024 in the pelagic longline fishery.

Year	Species	N Captures	N Dead	N Alive	Mortality (%)
2024	Green turtle	3	0	3	0.0
2024	Leatherback turtle	35	0	35	0.0
2024	Loggerhead turtle	70	0	70	0.0
2024	Marine turtles nei	34	0	34	0.0

Table 8. Observed (human observer) captures/mortalities of marine mammals for South Africa for 2024 in the pelagic longline fishery.

Country / Fishing Entity	Calendar Year	Quarter	Fishery		Human Observer / EM	Area		Species Code or Species Group Code	Species Scientific Name or Species Group Name	Observed Captures Fate (*numbers*)				English name
			Gear Code	Fleet Code		Latitude	Longitude			Retained (dead)	Discarded (dead)	Released (live)	Other	
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	10	SEA	Arctocephalus gazella	0	0	4	0	Antarctic fur seal
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	15	SEK	Arctocephalus pusillus	0	0	2	4	South African fur seal
ZA	2024	3	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	SEK	Arctocephalus pusillus	0	0	1	0	South African fur seal
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-30	10	SEK	Arctocephalus pusillus	0	0	2	0	South African fur seal
ZA	2024	4	LL	ZAD	uman Observe	-35	15	SEK	Arctocephalus pusillus	0	0	2	0	South African fur seal

Table 9. Total bycatch of marine mammals reported in logbooks of the South African longline fishery (incl. non SBT sets) for 2024 in the pelagic longline fishery.

Year	Species	N Captures	N Dead	N Alive	Mortality (%)
2024	Fur seals nei	2	0	2	0.0
2024	Seals nei	2	0	2	0.0