EU fishing opportunities for 2024–2026

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Council Regulation (EU) 2024/1856 amending Regulation (EU) 2024/257 fixing for 2024, 2025 and 2026 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters, and Regulation (EU) 2023/194 fixing for 2023 such fishing opportunities

Council Regulation (EU) 2024/257 fixing for 2024, 2025 and 2026 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters

What is changing and why?

The European Commission has fixed the fishing opportunities for 2024, 2025, and 2026 for certain stocks in EU waters, and implemented catch limits and other measures agreed in regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) of which it is a member in EU law. Some fishing opportunities for stocks outside EU waters have now been amended, based on outcomes of consultations with non-EU countries and RFMOs, and new scientific advice.

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT):

- sets the total allowable catches (TACs) for 2024 for North Atlantic albacore at 47,251 tonnes; and for blue shark at 30,000 and 27,711 tonnes (North and South Atlantic, respectively)
- in 2024 maintains the TACs set for 2023 for Eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna, Mediterranean albacore and South Atlantic albacore, Mediterranean, and North and South Atlantic swordfish, blue marlin, white marlin, yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna; and maintains the retention allowance for South Atlantic shortfin mako
- maintains a maximum limit of 300 fish aggregating devices (FADs) per fishing vessel in 2024, and a 72-day closure period for the use of FADs in order to reduce the fishing mortality of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna
- recommends that the EU carry over a percentage of its unused quota of fishing opportunities from 1 or 2 years ago, on request, to 2024.

A new provision prohibits EU vessels from harming shortfin mako sharks caught in the Atlantic Ocean north of 5°N, and requires prompt release of such shortfin mako sharks unharmed into the sea. EU vessels are already prohibited from retaining on board, transhipping, or landing any carcass of bigeye thresher sharks, oceanic whitetip sharks, hammerhead sharks, and silky sharks caught in association with fisheries in the ICCAT Convention area. These sharks must also be released, promptly and unharmed, back into the sea.

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Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR):

- catch limits for target and by-catch species are adopted for the period from 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2024.

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC):

- catch limit for bigeye tuna (Thunnus obesus) for 2024 and 2025 is established for the first time in the IOTC Area of Competence
- limits on fishing capacity, FADs, and supply vessels; and the catch limit for yellowfin tuna (Thunnus albacares), are maintained in that area.

South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO)

- adopts catch limits for jack mackerel (Trachurus murphyi) and maintains exploratory fisheries for toothfishes (Dissostichus spp.).

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC):

- the current measures applicable in its Convention area are maintained.

Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT):

- TACs are adopted for Southern bluefin tuna (Thunnus maccoyii) from 2024 to 2026.

South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO):

- the 2023 TACs are maintained in its Convention area in 2024.

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC):

- effort limits and maximum numbers of purse seiners fishing for tropical tunas are maintained in 2024; at any time, these vessels should deploy no more than 350 FADs at sea, with activated instrumented buoys.

Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA):

- a by-catch limit for Portuguese dogfish (Centroscymnus coelolepis) is adopted
- the boundaries of management areas for the Del Cano and Williams Ridge toothfishes (Dissostichus spp.) are amended
- extended observer and tagging requirements for toothfishes are established in the rest of the Agreement Area.

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Timeline

Regulation 2024/1856 applies from 1 December 2023 (Art. 2 applies from 1 January 2024).

Regulation 2024/257 applies from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024.

For more information see the full record on the AGRINFO website – where you can also view the latest AGRINFO Update newsletters and search the database.

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