

Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)

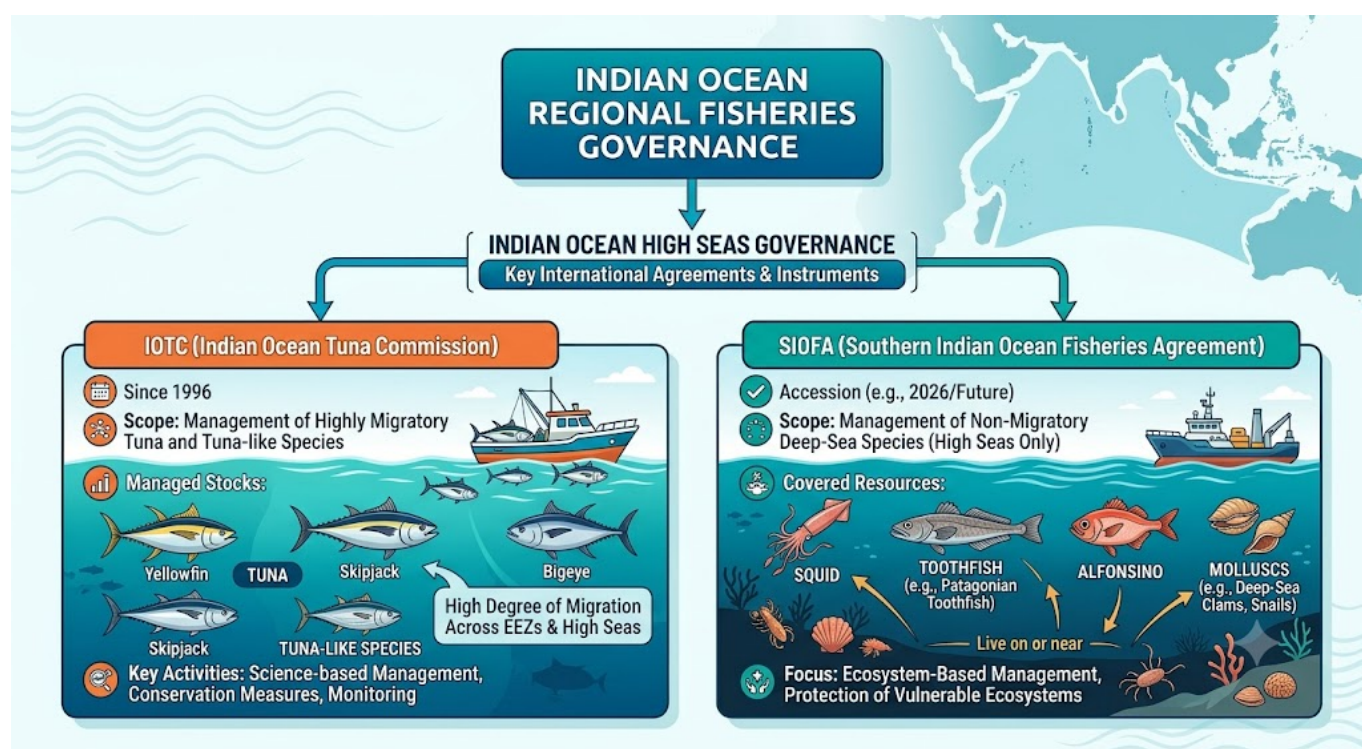
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Why in News?

Recently, the Union Cabinet approved India's formal accession to the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA).

- The agreement elevates India's status from a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CNC) (a position held since 2022) to a full Contracting Party.
- This decision aligns with India's Guidelines for High Sea Fisheries (2025) and advances national Blue Economy priorities under the MAHASAGAR vision.

Key Highlights



About SIOFA

- **Signed in** - Rome on July 7, 2006, and entered into force in June 2012.
- **Geographical Scope** - Covers the high seas of the Southern Indian Ocean between eastern Africa and Western Australia.
- **Species Covered** - Regulates fish, molluscs, crustaceans, and other sedentary species within international waters.
- **Exclusions** - Explicitly excludes **highly migratory species** (which are managed by the Indian

Ocean Tuna Commission - IOTC) and sedentary species under national Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) jurisdiction.

Major Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) in Indian Ocean

- **IOTC (Indian Ocean Tuna Commission)** - India has been a contracting party since 1996 to manage highly migratory tuna and tuna-like species.
- **SIOFA** - Manages all other non-migratory high-seas fishery resources (e.g., Orange Roughy, Alfonsino, Patagonian Toothfish, and Squid).
- **Comparison of RFMOs in the Indian Ocean**

Parameter	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)	Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)
India's Status	Contracting Party since 1996 .	Approved Accession as Contracting Party in 2026 (CNCP since 2022).
Species Scope	Highly migratory species (Tuna and tuna-like species).	Non-migratory fish, molluscs, crustaceans, and deep-sea species.
Governance Focus	Upper pelagic fisheries management.	High-seas benthic, demersal, and deep-water fisheries management.
Legal Basis	Article XIV FAO Constitution.	Standalone regional treaty signed in Rome under UNCLOS principles.

Significance

- Expanding High-Seas Fishing Capacity.
- Participation in Multilateral Ocean Governance.
- Alignment with MAHASAGAR & Blue Economy.

Reference

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