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**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION
PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH, AND STATISTICS**

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TUVALU

Tuvalu PART 1 REPORT SC6

ABSTRACT

2009 is a historical year for the Tuvalu fishing sector as the Taumoana, the first fishing vessel ever to be owned and to fly the Tuvalu flag, made its fishing debut in August. In total Taumoana managed five fishing trips and landed close to five thousand metric tonnes of tuna. All its catches (including by catches) were offloaded in ports outside Tuvalu.

Fishing capacity continues to grow with the United State, New Zealand and Korean fleet maintained strong dominance. A total of 217 fishing licenses were granted in 2009, an increase of 23% from 2008. 63% of this were Purse seiners (PS) followed by Long Liners (LL) with 28%.

A record catch of 66,819.4 tonnes of tuna was made in 2009 by the two fleets, PS and LL. Of this total the purse seine fleet accounted for 99%. 77% of this came from the effort of the three fleets (the US, NZ and Korea) put together. The long line fleet landed a total of just 515 tonnes, its second lowest in most recent years.

The artisanal sector also recorded a record catch of 27.2 metric tons for the reporting period, five tons more than that in the previous year. However, due to data insufficiency it is very difficult to know for sure what really cause the increase.

1. TABULAR ANNUAL FISHERIES INFORMATION

Table 1 Tonnes of tuna caught by domestic tuna operators. (Source; Fisheries department)

Year	Catch (metric tonnes)		
	Yellowfin tuna	Skipjack	Total
2005	11.3	8.2	19.5
2006	3.3	9.1	12.4
2007	9.0	17.2	26.2
2008	10.5	11.7	22.2
2009	11.6	15.6	27.2

Table 2 Annual catch landed by our national fleet.

Fleet type	Fishing trips	Total catch
PS	5	4,877.77

2. BACKGROUND

For the first time in history Tuvalu registered its first and only Purse Seiner, FV Taumoana, in mid 2009. This Purse Seiner (PS) is part of a long waited deal negotiated under the joint venture (JV) signed with the Fong Haur fishing company based in Taiwan. Taumoana is 76 meters long and has a 1,700 tonnes holding capacity. Fishing operation of the Taumoana commenced in August and is being conducted in fishery waters of Tuvalu plus the EEZs of two other Pacific Island nations. All its catch was taken and landed directly to ports outside Tuvalu.

Apart from the Taumoana, fishing operation and fleet structure in Tuvalu EEZ remain stable over the years. USA, NZ and Korea continue with their strong fishing operations accounting for the majority of the catch taken in Tuvalu waters. Some fish carriers were also licensed this year along with one bunker.

Artisanal operators have landed a record catch of twenty seven tons this year. Unfortunately due to the absence of vital information it is very difficult to tell with some level of certainty the cause of the increase in the catch.

3. FLAG STATE REPORTING

3.1. Purse seine

Access or fishing rights for the national fleet were secured in the FSM and Kiribati. At the end of fishing season the PS was able to complete five fishing trips. A total of nearly five tonnes of tuna was landed. All the catch was offloaded in foreign ports. Significant amount of information about fishing operation of the Taumoana is missing or unknown at the time of writing. These include information on effort (number of fishing days & distribution), catch by species, by-catches, catch distribution etc.

3.2. Domestic tuna operators

Fishing operations concentrated only within the 12 nautical miles.

4. COASTAL STATE REPORTING

Fishing licenses

Tuvalu continues to grant fishing access to interested parties. The table below depicts the number of fishing permits issued by the department in recent years. For the first time Tuvalu now has a fleet of just one purse seine.

Table 3 Fishing licenses issued by the Department of Fisheries

Fleet	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
PS	57	46	100	125	136
LL	53	30	81	43	61
PL	0	3	3	6	12
Carrier				2	7
Bunker					1
Total	110	79	184	176	217

The overall number of licenses issued by the department fluctuates. This trend is caused mainly by the fluctuation in the LL fleet numbers. Nonetheless for the purse seine fleet, the number has shown to have increased quite steadily for the third consecutive year. This year the PS fleet registered a record number of 136 fishing licenses. Support was extended to supporting vessels resulting in the granting of licenses for seven fish carriers and one bunker to enter Tuvalu waters.

4.1. Purse seine fleet

Table 4 annual catch estimates for the purse seine fleet by flag. Overall catch picks up again this year after a drop in the previous year. The combined catch of the US and the Korean fleet make up the 60% of the overall catch in 2009.

Flag	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Spain	0	0	0	0	3227
FSM	1183	0	0	183	0
Japan	245	254	0	0	0
Korea	0	0	19910	7178	22865
Marshalls	0	0	496	407	2905
NZ	2154	4019	8458	6983	6655
PNG		597	1542	441	2460
Taiwan	886	210	0	0	2313
USA	8384	9715	12016	24171	21853
Vanuatu	1742	179	644	397	4025
Total	14,594	14,974	43,067	39,759	66,304

A very high catch was attained this year, a rise of 67% from the previous year. The catch in fact is a record while the lowest catch was in 2005. The record peak matches the increase noted in the overall number of fishing days by all the foreign fleet.

Table 5 Total number of fishing days by flag for the reporting period. (Source; regional database)

Flag	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Spain	0	0	0	9	60
FSM	26	0	0	6	0
Japan	12	21	0	0	0
Korea	0	1	373	197	490
Marshall	0	0	4	10	61
NZ	86	167	213	260	220
PNG	0	0	19	19	46
Taiwan	14	18	10	4	69
US	314	422	308	874	640
Vanuatu	45	16	23	2	70
Total	497	646	950	1381	1655

The number of fishing days in 2009 had escalated by 20% compared to that in the previous year. The increase is basically due to that fishing time by the majority of the fleet had increased markedly. But for the US and the NZ fleets the opposite had happened. Japan still remains dormant for the third year straight.

4.2. Long line fleet

Table 6 annual catch by flag. Catch estimates for 2009 are only provisional. (Source; regional data base)

Flag	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cook island	0.00	0.00	57.04	24.83	100.01
Fiji	138.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Korea	766.91	62.47	1426.61	549.58	388.80
Taiwan	120.35	4.07	0.00	0.00	0.00
Vanuatu	0.00	2.15	106.02	0.00	26.64
Total	1025.93	68.68	1589.67	574.41	515.45

Catch for 2009 dropped to second lowest for the reporting period. 2006 was the worst year for the LL fleet. However, catch estimate for 2009 is only provisional.

4.3. PL

No data

5. DISPOSAL OF CATCHES

5.1. Artisanal Fleet

Catch is landed and consumed locally.

5.2. Purse seine

One hundred percentage of the catch is landed in foreign ports.

6. ONSHORE DEVELOPMENTS

None

7. FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE FISHERY

Tuvalu has and is continuing to receive requests from fishing partners for some joint venture arrangement. It is still unclear what our stand is at this point in time but it is highly possible that Tuvalu would consider flagging more fishing vessels in the future. Hence there is a strong possibility for catch and effort to increase in the future for Tuvalu.

8. STATUS OF TUNA FISHERY DATA COLLECTION SYSTEMS

8.1. Log-sheets data collections and verifications

Provision of log sheets at the end of the fishing trip is one of the conditions that had long been incorporated into our access agreement. There is also a heavy penalty attached for non compliance. Data verifications on the one hand remains a challenge as none of the fish is landed locally.

8.2. Observer program

Many observers have been trained and yet there is still no national observer program up and running.

8.3. Port sampling program

None

8.4. Unloading/transshipment

No records despite the fact that several transshipment activities were carried out in Tuvalu waters in 2009.

8.5. Artisanal catches

For Funafuti there is now a system to record and monitor fishing operations of artisanal operators. However for the outer islands the department of fisheries is relying heavily on each fishing centre to provide the needed data.