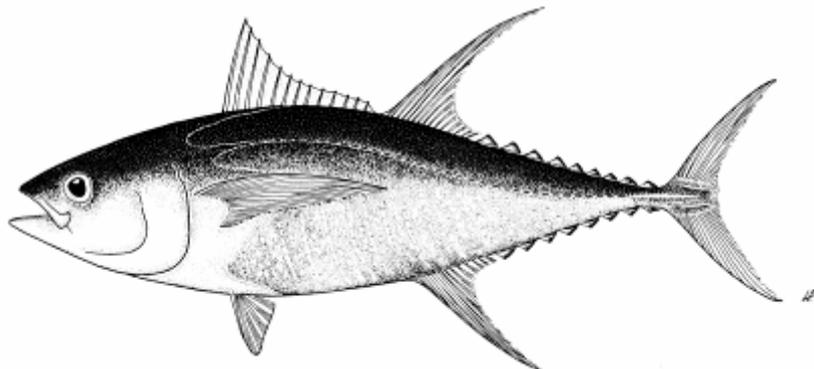




Nauru Tuna Fishery Report



Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources, Nauru.

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Nauru Tuna Fishery Report

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT
OF HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL
PACIFIC OCEAN

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Introduction:

The Nauru Exclusive Economic Zone is one of the more productive tuna fishing grounds in the WCPF convention area as far as the purse seine fishery is concerned. Although relatively small in size (320,000km²) it has continuously yielded high level of catches from all the major purse seine fleets that are licensed to fish in its waters. The total catch ratio in relation to the size of the EEZ is one of the highest in the WCPF area. Being a purse seine fishery, the majority of the tuna catches are skipjack, yellowfin and to a lesser extent bigeye tuna. Aside from this, there is also a small local longline fleet being operated by the Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority but the catch levels are very marginal at this stage and the remainder of the tuna fishery is made up of local artisanal fishermen operating out of small aluminum dinghies and wooden canoes.

Fleet Structure:

Domestic Fleet:

Nauru has no major commercial fleet operating in the WCPF area operating under its flag. The closest will be the two 12m longliners operated by NFMRA (Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority) but the maximum operating capacity of these two vessels invariably limit their operations to the EEZ of Nauru. The fleet is yet to be fully operational and is still undergoing trial fishing operations to determine the viability of operating a longline venture in Nauru. and have yet to embark on a fully commercial scale

Distant Water Fishing Nation Fleet:

On the other hand Nauru licenses a total of 144 purse-seiners from the following countries:

Japan 32

Korea 27

Taiwan 32

FCF (Vanuatu) 1

China 6

USA 16

New Zealand 3

FSM Arrangement 27

All these vessels are either licensed bilaterally or thru a multi-lateral arrangement with the Forum Fisheries Agency and all licenses are for a fixed period renewable at the expiry of each period. None of the vessels call in to port unless for emergency or crew transfers.

Annual Catches

Purse Seine fleet

Table 1 – Total PS Catch by Species, Weight and Year

Year	Species	Weight (mt)
2000	Bigeye Tuna	114
	Skipjack Tuna	43,695.70
	Yellowfin Tuna	16,505.60
	Others	67
	Total	60,382.30
2001	Bigeye Tuna	110.30
	Skipjack Tuna	34,076
	Yellowfin Tuna	14,608
	Others	209
	Total	49,003.90
2002	Bigeye Tuna	405.90
	Skipjack Tuna	97,543.40
	Yellowfin Tuna	8,835.20
	Others	139
	Total	106,923.50
2003	Bigeye Tuna	177.30
	Skipjack Tuna	16,012.30
	Yellowfin Tuna	3,294.40
	Others	162.19
	Total	19,646.19
2004	Bigeye Tuna	502
	Skipjack Tuna	53,122
	Yellowfin Tuna	3,723
	Others	9
	Total	57,356

Longline Fishery

The longline fishery is insignificant compared to the purse seine fishery and is currently exploited by the local domestic fleet of two small inshore longliners operated by the NFMRA. The catches from the two vessels has been erratic due to continuous mechanical breakdown however the breakdown since 2003 is as follows:

Table 1. Domestic Longline catches 2003

Bigeye Tuna	Yellowfin Tuna	Skipjack Tuna	Albacore	Black Marlin	Sail Fish	Sword Fish	Wahoo	Barracuda
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8,898	4,839.30	2,301.90	1,489.30	119.05	265.10	238.55	112	107.40
Shark	Oil Fish	Rudder Fish	Broadbill	Moon Fish	Dolphin Fish	Blue Marlin		Total
497	56.05	63.10	195.50	43.70	35.50	464.65		19,726

The catches in 2003 were very high for this domestic fleet but it must be clarified that the NFMRA entered in a trial joint venture with a 30m foreign longliner and most of those catches were from this vessel. However this demonstrated the potential of the longline fishery when fully developed and is one where the NFMRA has undertaken extensive work (with assistance from SPC, FFA and OFCF) to appraise the viability of developing it.

Table 2 – Domestic LL Catch by Weight and by Species-2004

Bigeye Tuna	Yellowfin Tuna	Albacore	Black Marline	Sail Fish	Shark	Broadbill	Dolphin Fish	Total
414.95	634.050	9	39.60	37.80	53.70	2.30	19.90	1,211.30

Markets

The majority of purse seine catches in Nauru are destined for the major canneries around the Asia Pacific region with the exception of the Japanese fleet and those serving the Japanese markets as these catches (skipjacks especially) tend to be supplied to a mixture of either the cannery or the Katsuobushi markets in Japan.

The longline catches from the domestic fleet serves the local market with some trial shipments being sent to the Japanese sashimi market.

Future prospects and development

We anticipate the Purse Seine fishery to remain relatively stable unless there is some drastic environmental changes as in the El Nino /La Nina phenomenon. The proposed Vessel Day Scheme being currently negotiated may have some impact on the allocation of catches by fleet but at this stage these are only speculations. With the Purse seine fishery being a purely offshore industry, there is little infrastructure development onshore related to this sector.

Nauru is very keen on developing its domestic longline fleet and has recently enlisted the help of expert staff from SPC, OFCF Japan and other private consultants to look into this matter and make recommendations. However there are still some constraints relating to financial, managerial and operational issues that need to be sorted out before the venture becomes viable and this has become one of the key national objectives for the Fisheries sector in Nauru in its development program.