



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

NOT A DROP IN THE OCEAN

KEY SUCCESSES

Common Oceans ABNJ Program

2014–2019



Between 2014–2019, the Common Oceans Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) Program has made significant strides in:

- **Improving tuna fisheries**
- **Tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing**
- **Protecting marine life**
- **Safeguarding vulnerable ecosystems**

The ABNJ comprise the high seas and the seabed beyond the extended continental coastal shelf, and are the home of complex and vulnerable ecosystems that support the livelihoods of millions of people. Joint international efforts ensure more sustainable management of fisheries and marine life in the ABNJ. Currently:

- **98 percent of the total catches** of tuna and tuna-like species are under regulation by RFMOs
- **96 countries** are involved in the conservation and management of tunas
- **30 countries** are involved in the conservation and management of deep-sea fisheries

Negotiations are underway for a **new international treaty** under the *United Nations Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS) **on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of ABNJ** - referred to as the **BBNJ Process**.



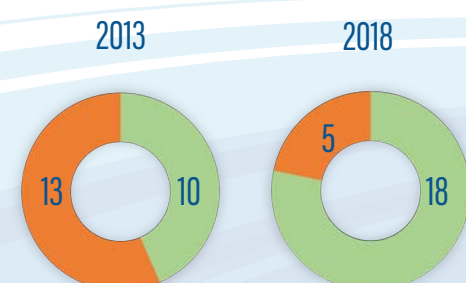
KEY SUCCESSES



Common Oceans ABNJ Program (2014–2019)

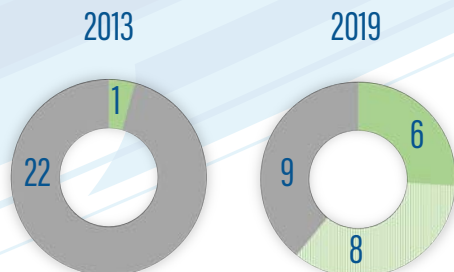
Improving tuna fisheries

- Consensus on developing **harvest strategies** – a pre-agreed way to determine **catch limits for all major commercial tuna stocks** – is making tuna fisheries more sustainable and transparent in all five tuna RFMOs



- Stocks experiencing overfishing
- Stocks not experiencing overfishing

- Stocks experiencing overfishing down from 13 to 5**



- Harvest strategy in place
- Harvest strategy under development
- No harvest strategy in place

- 6 harvest strategies completed, with 8 more underway**

Raising awareness on ocean issues

- 44 Representatives** from **34 countries** received training on the BBNJ Process through the **Regional Leaders Program**, connecting fisheries and environmental communities
- 8 side events, 1 media workshop** and **2 cross-sectoral workshops** organized for stakeholders to exchange information, and to profile ABNJ issues to a wider audience

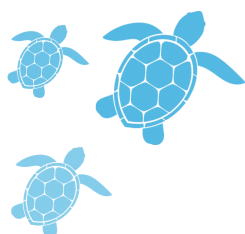
Protecting marine life

- Adjustments to fishing gear **lowered the mortality of marine mammals** caught by Pakistani gillnet fisheries in the Indian Ocean by an estimated **98 percent**

Marine mammals caught by Pakistani gillnets:

2013: 12 000
2018: <200

- Turtle mortality is expected to go down by ~12 percent** in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, thanks to the mandatory use of circle hooks and other mitigation measures



- First global estimate on seabird bycatch** in tuna longline fishing in the Southern Hemisphere

FAD-guidelines in place	2013	2019
Atlantic Ocean	NO	YES
Indian Ocean	NO	YES
Eastern Pacific Ocean	NO	YES
Western & Central Pacific Ocean	NO	YES

- Groundbreaking assessments of vulnerable shark populations** resulted in management actions in the Pacific Ocean

- Bycatch and marine pollution reduced** through the use of **non-entangling and biodegradable fish aggregating devices (FADs)**

Safeguarding vulnerable ecosystems

- New protocols enabled all eight deep-sea RFMOs to do fishing impact assessments on potential **Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs)**

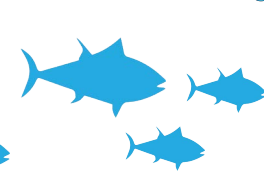
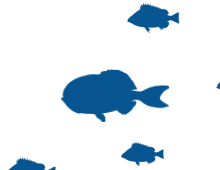
- More deep-sea habitats and species, such as corals and sponges, now protected following the designation of **18 new VME sites**



Tools for tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

- **First-ever, university-certified training course in fisheries enforcement and compliance** for Fisheries Officers from Pacific Island countries
- **Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS)** trialed in Fiji and Ghana for better **monitoring, compliance and data collection in tuna fishing**
- **Legal guide** to facilitate implementation of the **FAO Port State Measures Agreement**
- First global **Tuna Compliance Network** for tuna RFMO officials
- Global comprehensive, web-based **list of authorized vessels updated in real-time**

Championing the ecosystem approach

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- All five tuna RFMOs have agreed to develop plans for the **implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF)**
 - All eight deep-sea RFMOs now **comply with the ecological pillar of the EAF**
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Fostering public-private partnerships

- **Successful business cases spurred investments** and engaged industry and governments to take action to improve the management and conservation of billfish in the Caribbean, the tuna fleet capacity management in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the impact of climate change on tuna fishery management

The Common Oceans ABNJ Program aims to improve fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ. It is a partnership of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), governments, inter-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector.

The Program is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by FAO.

For more information:

www.fao.org/in-action/commonoceans

common-oceans@fao.org

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