



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
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l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS

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Report by SPC

(1) *REPORT BY SPC*

Introduction

The Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) is responsible for compiling and disseminating data on tuna fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO, Figure 1). The data compiled by the OFP Statistics and Monitoring Section are used primarily for monitoring trends in catch and effort, and for research conducted by the OFP Stock Assessment and Modelling Section, the Tuna Ecology and Biology Section, and by external scientists. The main types of data compiled by the OFP are described below:

- Annual catch estimates for the WCPO are compiled by gear type, fishing nation, and major species of tuna and billfish, but not other bycatch species. The estimates are scientific estimates that are either provided by the fishing nation or determined from logsheet and landings data held by the OFP. Discards are included for the United States purse-seine fleet only. The fleets covered are generally industrial vessels; small-scale fisheries, including recreational, are currently being incorporated into the database.
- Operational-level catch and effort data (longline and purse-seine sets; pole-and-line and troll days fished) covering most industrial gear types and fishing nations in the WCPO are provided by SPC member countries and territories. Bycatch and discards are not usually covered.
- Catch and effort data grouped by time-area strata (5° latitude by 5° longitude and month for longline and troll; 1° latitude by 1° longitude and month for pole-and-line and purse seine) are provided by non-SPC member fishing nations (e.g. Japan, Korea and Taiwan).
- The OFP conducted two large-scale tagging programmes, from 1977 to 1980 and from 1989 to 1992, during which 317,412 skipjack, yellowfin and other species were tagged throughout the tropical and sub-tropical western and central Pacific from pole-and-line vessels. A total of 27,000 tags have been returned, giving an overall return rate of 8.5 percent. The OFP has not conducted a tagging programme since 1992, although tags continue to be returned.
- Port sampling data and unloadings data covering 27 ports are provided by 13 SPC member countries and territories.
- Observer data are collected by OFP scientific observers and observer programmes in eight SPC member countries and territories.
- Other types of data compiled by the OFP include biological data (morphometric data, stomach contents, gonad indices, otolith ring counts, etc.), oceanographic and meteorological data and vessel and gear attributes.

The OFP Statistics and Monitoring Section also provides technical support to SPC member countries and territories for in-country fisheries database systems and national port sampling programmes and observer programmes.

II. Agenda Item 6. Reports of Inter-Sessional Developments in Agency Programmes in Fishery Statistics

A. COMPILATION OF ANNUAL CATCH ESTIMATES

Compilation of annual catch estimates from Indonesia and the Philippines, which represent about 20 percent of the catch of pelagic tuna in the WCPO, have been problematic. Although Indonesia and the Philippines recently provided estimates of total catches of tuna for recent years, up to

2000 and 2001 respectively, the estimates have not been provided by gear type and catches of bigeye and yellowfin have been reported as combined catches. Both of these problems can be resolved through port sampling. In the Philippines, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources have recently established the National Stock Assessment Project of which the largest component is port sampling; at the end of 2001, there were more than 200 ports covered by sampling. Regarding Indonesia, the OFP, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) of Australia and the Directorate General of Capture Fisheries of Indonesia are currently developing a joint port sampling programme.

B. COMPILATION OF OPERATIONAL CATCH AND EFFORT DATA

In the past, the compilation of logsheet data covering the domestic fleets of certain SPC member countries has been difficult. The coverage of logsheet data held at SPC for the longline fleets of Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga improved considerably in 2001 and 2002 in response to measures taken by those governments.

C. ARCHIVAL AND CONVENTIONAL TAGGING DATA

The OFP, in collaboration with CSIRO, has recently released archival tags from domestic Australian longliners fishing in the Coral Sea.

The Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish recommended at its fifteenth meeting, held in Honolulu from 17 to 22 July 2002, that a large-scale tagging programme be developed for the WCPO and the European Commission may be interested in funding such a programme.

D. PORT SAMPLING PROGRAMMES AND OBSERVER PROGRAMMES

The OFP continues to compile port sampling data and observer data that are collected by national programmes; however, for the WCPO, coverage remains less than 1 percent for port sampling programmes and less than 3 percent for observer programmes.

The OFP provides both financial and technical support for sampling programmes in member countries and territories. The OFP has recently recruited a Port Sampling and Observer Manager (Mr Peter Sharples), a Fisheries Monitoring Supervisor (Ms Deirdre Brogan) and a Port Sampler and Observer Trainer (Mr Siosifa Fukofuka).

The Fifth Meeting of the SPC/FFA Tuna Fishery Data Collection Committee was held from 2 to 6 December in Brisbane, Australia. The meeting reviewed data collection forms, the status of sampling programmes, and sampling protocols.

E. WCPO TUNA BULLETIN AND SPC TUNA FISHERY YEARBOOK

The 'SPC Regional Tuna Bulletin', which presents monthly catch rates for certain fleets, was recently modified to monitor fishing activities in the WCPO, rather than just the EEZs of SPC members and adjacent waters; it has therefore been renamed the 'WCPO Tuna Bulletin'. It is now available semi-annually, rather than quarterly, and only on the website; the Tuna Bulletin will no longer be printed and distributed. The Tuna Bulletin and the SPC Tuna Fishery Yearbook are available on the SPC website at:

<http://www.spc.int/oceanfish/docs/statistics/index.asp>

F. WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION

The Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean was adopted at Honolulu on 5 September 2000. The objective of the Convention is to ensure, through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the WCPO. Simultaneous with the adoption of the Convention, a resolution was adopted establishing a Preparatory Conference for the Establishment of the Commission. The task of the Preparatory Conference, which will continue

until the Convention enters into force, is to lay the groundwork for the establishment of the Commission. Three sessions of the Preparatory Conference have been convened: PrepCon1 was held from 23 to 28 April 2001 in Christchurch, New Zealand; PrepCon2 was held from 25 February to 1 March 2002 in Madang, Papua New Guinea; and PrepCon3 was held from 18 to 22 November 2002 in Manila, Philippines.

Three working groups have been established by the Preparatory Conference: (I) Organizational Structure, Budget and Financial Contributions; (II) Scientific Structure and Provision of Interim Scientific Advice; and (III) Monitoring, Control and Surveillance. Working Group II is concerned with the data requirements and the research needs of the Commission. Working Group II further established a Scientific Coordinating Group (SCG) to assist in carrying out those terms of reference which require special scientific and technical consideration.

The first meeting of the Scientific Coordinating Group was held from 29 to 31 July 2002, immediately following the Fifteenth Meeting of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB). One of the matters considered by the SCG was the fisheries and scientific data needs of the Preparatory Conference. In this regard, a detailed discussion of the data requirements of the OFP was presented to the SCG in OFP Internal Report 47, "Data requirements of the SPC Oceanic Fisheries Programme and status of data" (which is available on the OFP website).

The SCG recognised that the existing regional arrangements for the compilation and dissemination of data, coordinated by the SCTB, are suitable in the interim period (prior to the entry into force of the Convention and the establishment of the Commission). These existing arrangements are (a) the provision of fisheries data by flag states and coastal states to the OFP; (b) processing and management of these and other data by the OFP; and (c) the dissemination of data according to procedures established by the SCTB Statistics Working Group, including the dissemination of public-domain catch and effort data on the OFP website and the regular publication of statistical bulletins (Tuna Bulletin and Tuna Fishery Yearbook) by the OFP.

At PrepCon3, Working Group II accepted this and other elements of the report of the SCG. It also agreed that the detailed technical work in relation to the Commission's data requirements (as opposed to the interim requirements) should be handled by the next meeting of the SCG, which is scheduled for 17 to 19 July 2003 in Mooloolaba, Australia, immediately following SCTB16.

The issue of scientific structures to address scientific functions on the Commission was also discussed by Working Group II. Delegates reinforced the requirement to make use of existing regional organisations, to the greatest extent possible, and suggested that data functions and stock assessment should be closely linked, due to the dependency of the stock assessments on access to data. However, no agreement was reached by Working Group II at PrepCon3 on a model for meeting the science and data needs of the Commission.

III. Agenda Item 7. Elasmobranch Statistics

A. ELASMOBRANCH STATISTICS UNAVAILABLE DUE TO LOW OBSERVER COVERAGE

Observer data that can be used to estimate elasmobranch catch rates have been compiled by the OFP for longline and purse seine; however, the coverage rates are less than 1 percent for longline and less than 3 percent for purse seine. This level of coverage is considered insufficient to reliably estimate annual catches of elasmobranchs in the WCPO.

B. LONGLINE LOGBOOK DEVELOPED BY THE SPC/FFA DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE

Most tuna fishery catch and effort logsheets that are currently used in the region do not allow the collection of elasmobranch catch data by species due to lack of space. In order to better monitor the catches of major non-target species (such as sharks) and species of special interest (such as turtles, marine mammals and sea birds), the SPC/FFA Data Collection Committee (DCC) has

developed a longline logbook with one page per set (rather than a logsheet with one line per set) that will contain detailed information on pelagic sharks. The logbook will be tested during 2003 and 2004 and reviewed at the next meeting of the DCC in December 2004.

IV. Agenda Item 10. Catch and Trade Certification Schemes

A. CATCH CERTIFICATION CONSIDERED BY SCTB15

Catch certification schemes for the WCPO were considered at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish, which was held from 22 to 27 July 2002 in Honolulu. The report of the FAO Expert Consultation on the Harmonization of Catch Certification Schemes, which was held from 9 to 11 January 2002 in La Jolla, California, was presented. One of the recommendations of the Expert Consultation is to give priority for the development of new schemes to fisheries that are or may be subject to significant levels of IUU fishing. During the discussion of the report at SCTB15, it was suggested that while the extent of unreported catches in the WCPO is unknown, there is no reason to believe that it is a major problem at present. Therefore, the development of catch certification or trade documentation schemes for the WCPO should not be considered a priority. However, such schemes should be reconsidered if and when evidence of unreported catches, anecdotal or otherwise, is reported.

B. JAPANESE REPORT ON IUU FISHING PRESENTED AT PREPCON3

In a report presented at PrepCon3, "Japanese Report on Current Situation of IUU LSTLVs", it was reported that 100 large-scale tuna longline vessels (LSTLVs) may currently be engaging in IUU fishing around the world. Several of these vessels (e.g. the six *Fortuna* vessels) are known to have reflagged in Vanuatu in the WCPO. The report implied that these vessels may still be engaging in IUU fishing; however, the OFP holds catch and effort logsheets provided by SPC member countries and territories covering three of these vessels, and landings data and port sampling data covering all of them. It would therefore appear that these vessels are not fishing in the WCPO illegally and that their catches are being reported. The information in the Japanese report cannot therefore be considered evidence of unreported catches by IUU vessels fishing in the WCPO.

C. PROVISION OF VESSEL INFORMATION TO IATTC

In response to a request from the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, the OFP provided a list of vessels covered by logsheet, port sampling and observer data held at the OFP in October 2002.

V. Agenda Item 17. Agency Data Collection Programmes, Including STATLANT Issues

A. NON-ASFIS THREE-ALPHA CODE FOR SOUTHERN BLUEFIN, NORTHERN BLUEFIN

At the request of the OFP, FIDI has assigned the 3-alpha code 'TPZ' to the species item '*Thunnus maccoyii*, *T. orientalis*' for use when catches of southern bluefin tuna (*T. maccoyii*) and Pacific bluefin tuna (*T. orientalis*) cannot be distinguished. This code is not an official ASFIS code; it has never been assigned to any other species item; and it will not be assigned to any other one in the ASFIS list. In regards to ASFIS, it is therefore considered as a 'dead code'.

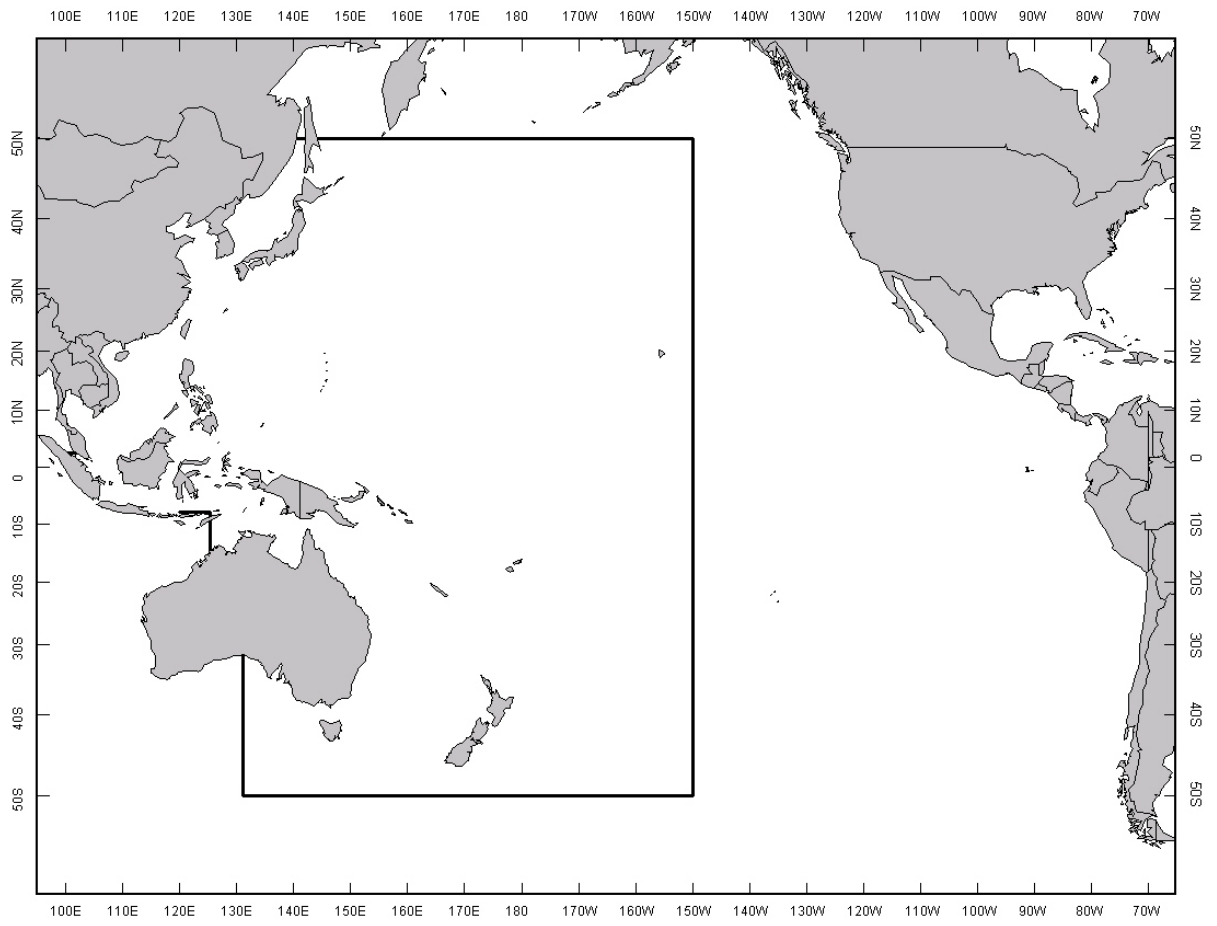


Figure 1. Western and Central Pacific Ocean