



WWF

FACTSHEET

2016

## Tuna Blueprint

# A Vision for Recapturing the Wealth of Tuna

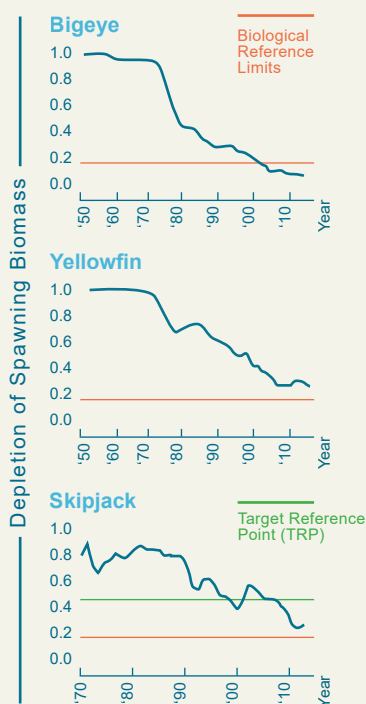
Protecting habitats critical to tuna in the Coral Triangle



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Funae fishermen catching skipjack tuna near Manado Tua using anchovies as live bait. Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia.

## DECLINE OF SPAWNING BIOMASS OF TUNA IN WEST PACIFIC EAST ASIAN SEAS



Source: Depletion of Tuna Stocks in the West Pacific East Asia Region. SPC 2015

## A Tuna Nursery

Tuna fisheries are the wealth of the Coral Triangle region (composed of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Timor Leste). The collective tuna catch from the Western and Central Pacific Ocean reached an historic level of 1 million tonnes in 2013, with a market value of almost US\$2 billion.

The location of the Coral Triangle, a region of extraordinary biodiversity and great economic value between the Pacific and Indian oceans, makes it an ideal spawning and nursery area for three principal tropical tuna species—skipjack, yellowfin, and bigeye—as well as for temperate species such as the Pacific and southern bluefin tuna and albacore.

## Tuna Management Problems

Tuna fisheries are in crisis. The current management of tuna is not effective enough to reverse the trend of tuna population decline. The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) needs a stronger suite of conservation measures, particularly for reducing fishing mortality of juvenile tuna, that follows scientific advice.

A huge portion of the convention area of the WCPFC is within the exclusive economic zones and territorial waters of coastal states, making tuna fisheries an important but highly political arena. This is the main reason for the weak management of tuna and the inability of WCPFC to enact appropriate measures as recommended by science.

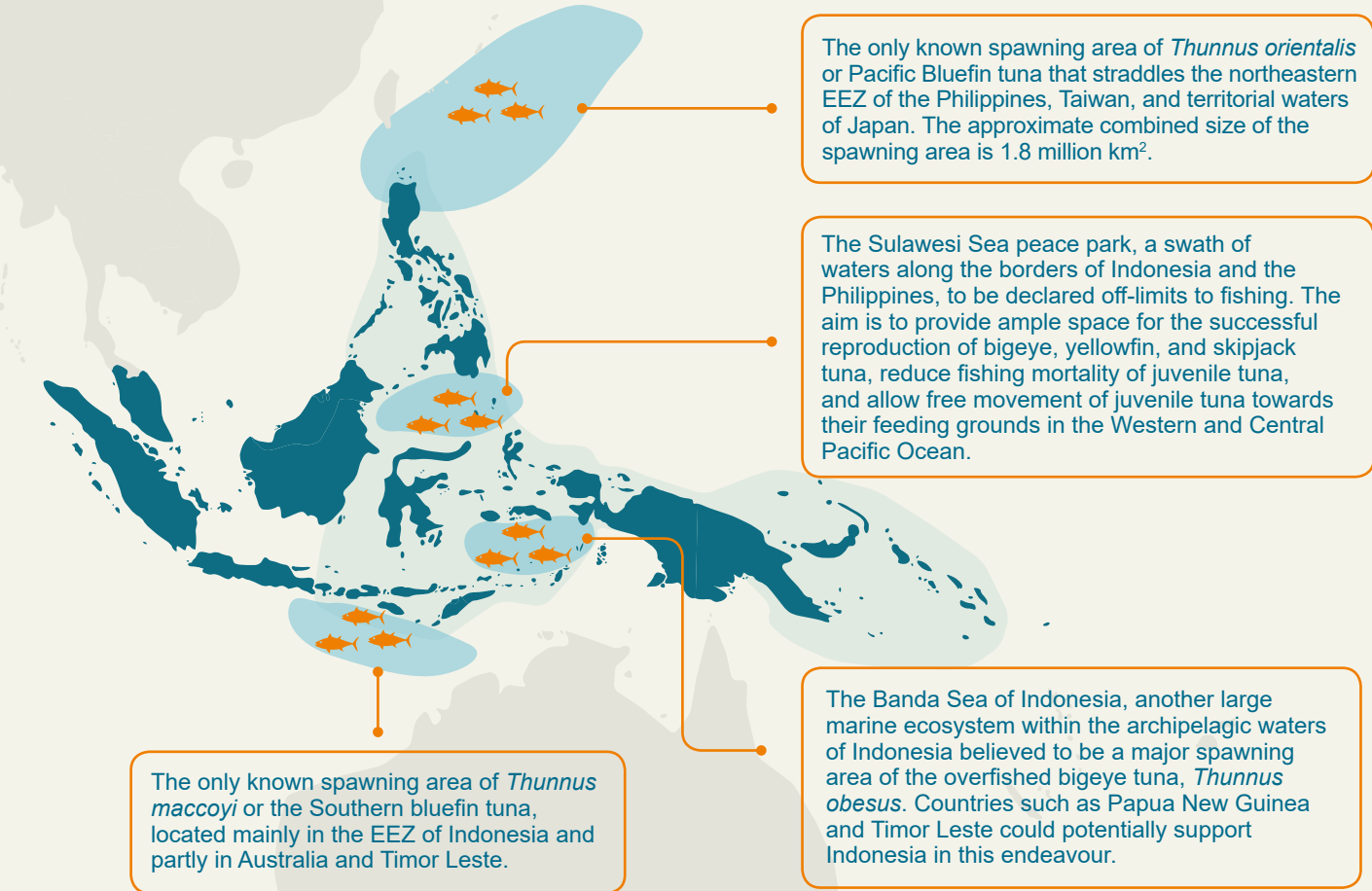
**To help reverse the declining trend in tuna populations, WWF is advocating a new Tuna Blueprint that pursues a more multi-disciplinary approach to reinforce current fisheries-based conservation measures.**

A Blueprint for Success

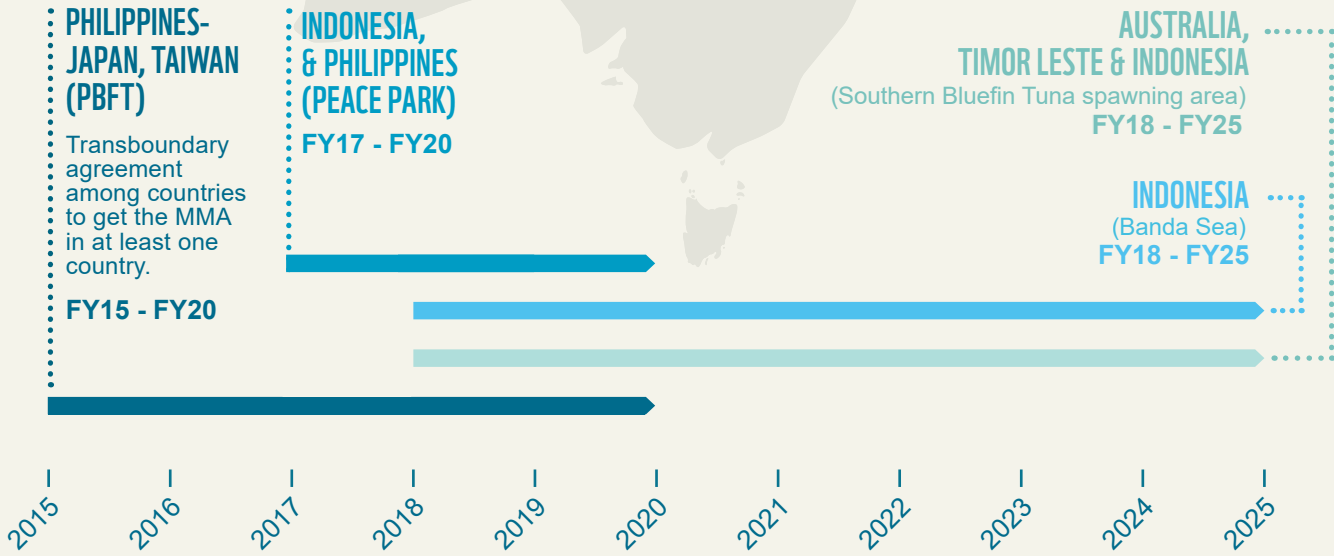
This Tuna Blueprint is designed to restore the health of tuna populations through the protection of areas critical to the successful completion of the tuna life cycle. Within the Coral Triangle, the protection of marine areas for conservation falls on non-fisheries agencies, usually environment agencies—an approach that weakens the political influence of the fishing sector.

WWF is calling for the legal protection of four large offshore areas, three of which are transboundary. The plan is to protect these very important spawning areas from fishing; protect the spawning population during the reproductive season; and allow juveniles to grow, and protect them as they move towards their feeding grounds. The areas below are not fixed as other places in the Coral Triangle are still under consideration.

These four critical areas include:



Tuna Blueprint Milestones FY17 - FY25



A ‘Big Win’

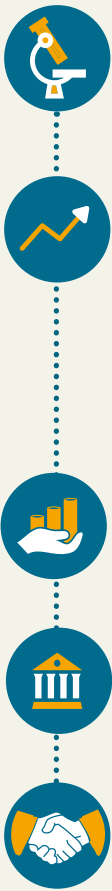


Depending on how big an area the respective governments will allow to be protected, the combined area could reach 3 million km<sup>2</sup> —a significantly large area to serve as safe haven for tuna to reproduce without the risk of being caught.

Achieving protection will mean obtaining commitments from Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, PNG, Timor Leste, Taiwan and Australia. Implementation of the Tuna blueprint would help these countries meet commitments under international agreements such as the Convention on Biodiversity; Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and the 2014 World Parks Congress.

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A fisherman pulling up a newly caught yellowfin tuna. Gorontalo, North Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Steps to Achieve Success



STEP 01 Develop a science-based, compelling argument

Prove that protecting these critical habitats will contribute to improving the population of tuna in fishing grounds.

STEP 02 Develop a value proposition

In monetary terms, show how habitat protection translates to asset buildup of the natural capital and potential gains in the medium to long term.

A powerful communications advocacy effort will use these two arguments to raise awareness of the issues, raise funds, and rally governments and the private sector to fully engage in the process.

STEP 03 Build an innovative financing mechanism

This will provide incentives to the affected stakeholders and catalyze their participation in the process of declaration.

STEP 04 Convince, engage, and work with individual governments

Go through the legal process of scoping, stakeholder mapping, and consultations.

STEP 05 Solicit international and global political support

This is to encourage governments and convince skeptics of the merit of getting critical habitats of tuna protected, and to rally support for a transboundary cooperation between countries.

Investing in the Tuna Blueprint will bring significant socio-economic benefits, with estimates of USD1.73 billion over 10 years from reducing juvenile tuna catch by just 50% in the Philippines alone.





## Challenges

The process towards legal protection will be a challenging one, with expected huge resistance from the fishing sector and local government units where food security and livelihood may be impacted in the short term. With sustainable livelihoods at the core of WWF's work in the Coral Triangle, the Tuna Blueprint will emphasize effective management to strike a balance between long-term protection and short-term livelihoods and sustenance. Targeted messaging will be delivered to relevant audiences, and champions will be utilized to promote the Tuna Blueprint.

Despite the challenges, including finding innovative new financing mechanisms, WWF is relying on its years of experience in the field, solid relationships with stakeholders, and wide network of experts in conservation, fisheries management, and government to see this endeavour through—and to secure the future of one of the Coral Triangle's most important marine species.

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Trawler fishermen sorting fish and crustacean brought up by a trawler in Kudat Bay, Sabah, Malaysia.

### For more information

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