



POSITION

NOVEMBER

2013



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Smart Fishing Initiative

WWF POSITION

Fiji Albacore Tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*) Longline Fishery:
1st Surveillance Audit Progress Assessment

Summary

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) would like to thank Intertek Moody Marine, Inc. (IMM) for the opportunity to comment on the progress of the Fiji Tuna Boat Owners Association (FTBOA) to achieve conditions imposed under the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification of the Fiji Albacore Tuna Longline Fishery. Overall, WWF is pleased with FTBOA's progress toward achieving conditions prescribed under this MSC assessment.

This document is focused on the conditions and milestones specific to the first year of the Annual Surveillance Audit and does not consider any factors outside the context of the current conditions and milestones. Recommendations of the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) are only referenced for informational purposes where necessary. WWF provides comments on each specific condition and milestone below.

Discussion

Condition 1:

By the third annual audit the client must provide evidence to demonstrate target and limit reference points have been agreed by management, consistent with the management objectives and scientific stock assessment.

Annual Milestones

Year 1 (First Surveillance Audit)

- Promotion of adoption of a Harvest Strategy with appropriate target and limit reference points (or equivalents) within WCPFC should have begun in conjunction with Condition 3.
- Evidence of engagement with other major countries fishing the southern albacore stock (i.e. New Zealand, Australia, French Polynesia, Japan, Korea, New Caledonia, Taiwan, United States of America and Samoa), seeking their support for the adoption of appropriate reference points for the stock in WCPFC.

Client Action Plan

YEAR 1

1. Engagement with the Fiji government to promote the completion and adoption of the Fiji Tuna Fishery Management Plan.
2. Consultation with the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry and where necessary FFA and FFA members through the Sub-Committee on South Pacific Tuna and Billfish Fisheries (SC-SPTBF) and Fiji delegates to WCPFC with the objective of establishing an agreed position on limit reference points for the stock that is consistent with the MSC SG 80 standards.
3. The provision of any requested practical support for SPC, FFA and WCPFC analyses on limit and target reference points for albacore to support discussions at FFA SC-SPTBF meetings.
4. Actions to raise awareness of the need for a WCPFC albacore management measure through the Pacific Island Tuna Industry Association (PITIA)

Status

The Fiji Tuna Development and Management Plan (TDMP) remains in a provisional status, having not been officially approved or adopted by the Fiji government. The Fiji government has not publicly indicated when or if it would complete or adopt the TDMP. If it is codified in its present form, it would place a clear total allowable catch (TAC), but as a draft it is uncertain that the provision will be retained once the document is finalised. At this time, it is uncertain when or in what form the TDMP might be finalised.

Although not publicly available, WWF is aware through anecdotal reports that over the past year FTBOA has negotiated through private meetings and written documentation with the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries and Forests to increase support for improved management measures for South Pacific Albacore. This activity was indirectly confirmed through the statements of support for improved management of the South Pacific albacore fishery by the Ministry at several official fora as well as the recent decision of the Ministry to set the ALC at 60 and impose an additional fuel duty to distant water fishing vessels. The Fiji government representatives at the SC-SPTBF also vocally supported the need for stronger in zone TACs in the region as well as the need for better defined reference points. Nonetheless, because the negotiations between FTBOA and the Fiji delegation have occurred in private there is no way for public stakeholders to definitively ensure the content of the discussion regarding reference points, harvest control rules, or harvest strategies or whether the recommendations are consistent with MSC SG 80.

The WCPFC held the Second Management Objectives Workshop (MOWII) preceding the WCPFC Regular Meeting in Cairns, Australia, November 28-29, 2013. The MOWII built on the outcomes of the previous MOWI and was intended to focus discretely on the PNA skipjack and South Pacific albacore fishery components for consideration of applicable reference points, harvest control rules,

and, ultimately, harvest strategy. The input for the MOWII meeting was built, in part, during the Annual 85th Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC) Meeting held in Honiara, Solomon Islands, May 13-17, 2013, and the preceding SC-SPTBF. The need for established zone limits were strongly emphasised at the FFC85 meeting and the preceding SC-SPTBF meeting, although no agreement was reached among the member states. The development of appropriate reference points and harvest control rules were addressed in this discussion as well.

FTBOA took several actions to raise awareness of the need for a WCPFC albacore management measure both independently and through PITIA. While much of the discussion was heavily focused on excess subsidisation of the Chinese longline fleet, which substantially impacts the economic viability of the domestic fishery, there were also substantive calls for improvements in overall management of the resource, both general and specific in nature. During 2013 and early 2014, the following radio interviews and press releases were made that strongly addressed the need for improved management of Albacore at the request of FTBOA representatives and/or PITIA.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-06-18/an-call-to-protect-pacific-tuna-industry/4763766>

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/radio/program/pacific-beat/pac-tuna-industry-says-action-needed-to-protect-albacore-fishery/1001000>

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=168693>

<http://www.cookislandsnews.com/2013/June/Wed26/local.htm>

<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2013/December/12-23-07.htm>

<http://www.pacificplanreview.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/0016%20PITIA%207%20Mar.pdf>

<http://www.atuna.com/index.php/2-uncategorised/516-fiji-government-makes-first-steps-on-solving-albacore-crisis#.UuhFChAuDIU>

<http://www.atuna.com/index.php/2-uncategorised/491-government-measures-proposed-to-battle-fiji-albacore-crisis#.UuhFdAuDIU>

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=258374>

In the past, PITIA has also effectively used their website, which is funded by the European-Union initiative known as The Development of Tuna Fisheries in the Pacific ACP countries (DEVFISH). However, it does not appear that the PITIA website has been regularly or recently updated with the last “Weekly News in a Flash” posted in May 2013 and the most recent front page link posted in September 2013.

WWF Position:

WWF is pleased with the progress of the FTBOA on the milestones for this condition through their CAP and believe that they are **on target**. We are aware that FTBOA has publicly and forcefully advocated strongly for adoption of the TDMP as well as further reductions of the Annual Licensing

Cap (ALC). However, we encourage the FTBOA to be more publicly vocal about the need for the Management Objectives Workshop process as well as the implementation of the management tools that forum is addressing, especially the development and implementation of limit and target reference points as well as harvest control rules. These management measures must be implemented on a regional level, which can only be achieved through the MOW process and, consequently, through the WCPFC.

We encourage FTBOA and PITIA to use the PITIA website and newsletter more effectively to highlight the need for development and implementation of reference points and harvest control rules. Furthermore, we hope to see more prominent advocacy from PITIA and FTBOA for the MOW process, through which the foundation for the management measures required under the certification are being developed.

WWF would also like to encourage the FTBOA to be more transparent in their communications with the Fiji government regarding the implementation of the proposed management measures. Transparency is important and there is nothing about the advocacy required by this condition that warrants confidentiality. In an effort to improve the necessary transparency as well as the potential success of the effort, WWF would like to partner with FTBOA to conduct further advocacy before the WCPFC, SPC, and FFA regarding the development of RPs and HCRs for the South Pacific albacore fishery through press releases and official correspondence.

Condition 2:

By the third annual audit the client must provide evidence that a harvest strategy for southern albacore which is responsive to the state of the stock and the elements of the harvest strategy work together towards achieving management objectives reflected in the target and limit reference points is in place.

Annual Milestones

Year 1 (First Surveillance Audit)

The work plan of the relevant management bodies in 2013 to include an examination of the integrated harvest strategies needed to achieve management objectives.

Client Action Plan

YEAR 1

In order to ensure that WCPFC implement a harvest strategy for southern albacore which is responsive to the state of the stock and the elements of the harvest strategy work together towards achieving management objectives reflected in the target and limit reference points. The client will:

1. Undertake activities to ensure appropriate focus is given to albacore tuna management at the Ninth Session of the Commission (December 2012). In particular, raise awareness of the need for restraint on future catches of albacore tuna through the Pacific Island Tuna Industry Association (PITIA) and seek PITIA support for potential management measures resulting from development of harvest control rules and reference points as per Condition 1 and Condition 3.

2. Ensure the work plan of the relevant management bodies in 2013 includes an examination of the integrated harvest strategies needed to achieve management objectives

Status

PITIA, through Ms. Naitilima “Tima” Tupou, played a vocal role during the MOWI that preceded the WCPFC9 meeting in Manila, Philippines, calling for development of appropriate management measures, including reference points and harvest control rules. Ms. Tupou further coordinated with WWF where possible to advocate for improved management measures where appropriate.

WWF held a side event with PITIA’s support on December 4, 2012 titled “Fishing Within Limits” that was focused on fostering support for the implementation of Reference Points, Harvest Control Rules, and Harvest Strategies. Extensive outreach was conducted prior to and during the WCPFC meeting to encourage attendance and participation.

Alfred “Bubba” Cook served as the Master of Ceremonies for the event. Speakers were selected based on diverse backgrounds and representation to indicate a broad range of support for the proposed management measures. Each speaker emphasized the need for Reference Points and Harvest Control Rules to achieve sustainable management of the region’s tuna resources. Speakers included:

- Ms. Naitilima “Tima” Tupou of the Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association (PITIA), representing 14 Pacific Island countries and several national industry associations. (Appendix 3A)
- Mr. Victor Restrepo of the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), representing 22 prominent global seafood companies.
- [Video] Jackie Healing, Head of Quality, Policy, and Governance, Coles Supermarkets Australia, representing one of the large regional seafood retailers.
- Dr. Graham Pilling, Principal Fisheries Scientist and Forum Fisheries Agency Liaison, Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Ms. Tupou delivered substantive support for the need for these important management measures, emphasising the urgent need for capacity reduction along with modest support for implementation of reference points. (See [Appendix 1](#))

Anecdotal reports suggest that FTBOA, both independently and through PITIA, have advocated that each work plan of the relevant management bodies in 2013 include an examination of the integrated harvest strategies needed to achieve management objectives, including harvest control rules and reference points. The relevant management bodies for this condition and milestone includes the SC-SPTBF and FFC, where parties discussed a management measure in 2013. Fiji is a member of the SC-SPTBF and FFC, with FTBOA participating by proxy. The SPC continues to support the SC-SPTBF on the issue of management measures and a longer-term strategy to achieve desirable catch levels. Unfortunately, the regional political complexity of the issue contributed to the failure of a proposed one-year strategy to attempt to limit catches of South Pacific Albacore in 2014.ⁱ The unstated goal of the one-year strategy was to create an initial placeholder to be replaced by a longer term strategy consistent with management targets defined separately.

The SC-SPTBF has also reviewed and discussed target reference points to support the consequent development of a harvest strategy. The WCPFC's default target is MSY, but SPC analyses and discussion at the SC-SPTBF meeting has led to general acknowledgement that the TRP biomass for the stock should be higher than that at MSY for economic reasons. This determination further contributes to the longer-term harvest strategy discussed by the SC-SPTBF. Therefore, it can be argued that the relevant management bodies and FTBOA have taken some substantial steps toward the milestone and condition, including that the work plan of the FFA and WCPFC meetings includes an examination of the management objectives as well as the integrated harvest strategies needed to achieve those management objectives.

WWF Position:

WWF is pleased with the progress of the FTBOA on the milestones for this condition through their CAP and believe that they are **on target**. However, similar to Condition 1, we encourage the FTBOA to be more publicly vocal about the need for the Management Objectives Workshop process as well as the implementation of the management tools that forum is addressing, especially the development and implementation of limit and target reference points as well as harvest control rules. While we do not fully understand the reasoning, we were particularly disappointed when FTBOA declined to sign a letter supporting the implementation of reference points and harvest control rules before the WCPFC through the Fiji delegation. (See [Appendix 2](#))

Condition 3:

By the third annual audit the client must provide evidence that well-defined harvest control rules have been proposed, tested and established for the fishery.

Annual Milestones

Year 1 (First Surveillance Audit)

- The client to encourage Fiji to work with other interested parties to canvas WCPFC members to support strengthening of HCRs and ensure that albacore is treated as a priority species.
- Promote the adoption of formal HCRs at WCPFC. This should be undertaken in conjunction with any deliberations on appropriate reference points (Condition 1). Additional analyses should be included within the work plan of the WCPFC.
- Reporting should include the number of WCPFC members supporting revision of HCRs and activity to date. Commitment of other WCPFC members to achieving this goal should be achieved by this date.

Client Action Plan

YEAR 1

1. Engagement with the Fiji government to promote the completion and adoption of the Fiji Tuna Fishery Management Plan.
2. Consultation with the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry, and where necessary FFA and FFA members through the Sub-Committee on South Pacific Tuna and Billfish Fisheries (SC-SPTBF) and Fiji delegates to WCPFC with the objective of establishing an agreed position on harvest control rules for the stock that is consistent with the MSC SG 80 standards.

3. Support for and collaboration as requested on activities of the FFA SC-SPTBF in the analysis of harvest control rules consistent with candidate reference points.
4. Engagement with Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry staff and Fiji delegates to WCPFC to:
 - a. promote the tabling of a statement to WCPFC at its Ninth Session (December 2012), urging other members to work diligently to adopt formal harvest control rules for all tuna stocks, as required by the WCPFC Convention.
 - b. engagement with high-level contacts between Fiji government officials, FFA and its members, and WCPFC delegates from the other major countries fishing the stock in advance of the Commission meeting to seek their support for the adoption of appropriate harvest control rules by the WCPFC.
 - c. ensure the work plan of the WCPFC Scientific Committee and FFA SC-SPTBF in 2013 will include analyses of candidate harvest control rules for albacore.
5. Actions to raise awareness of the need for a WCPFC albacore management measure through the Pacific Island Tuna Industry Association (PITIA)

Status

The Status for this condition is sufficiently explained in the preceding Status for Conditions 1 and 2.

WWF Position:

WWF is pleased with the progress of the FTBOA on the milestones for this condition through their CAP and believe that they are **on target**. However, similar to Conditions 1 and 2, we encourage the FTBOA to be more publicly outspoken about the need for the Management Objectives Workshop process as well as the implementation of the management tools that forum is addressing on a regional scale, especially the development and implementation of limit and target reference points as well as harvest control rules.

WWF also again encourages the FTBOA to be more transparent in their communications with the Fiji government as well as the other relevant management bodies regarding the implementation of the proposed management measures. WWF reiterates its request to partner with FTBOA to conduct further advocacy before the WCPFC, SPC, and FFA regarding the development of RPs and HCRs for the South Pacific albacore fishery through press releases and official correspondence.

Condition 4:

By the third annual audit the client must provide evidence that a partial strategy of demonstrably effective management measures are in place such that the fishery does not hinder recovery and rebuilding of blue shark, short-finned mako, silky and oceanic sharks

Annual Milestone

Year 1 (First Surveillance Audit)

The development of a partial strategy and implementation plan.

Client Action Plan

1. A formal strategy and implementation plan has already been developed in collaboration with the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries. The Fiji longline licence conditions for 2012 note: "No drop

line and shark line is to be carried on board (section 1.3); all licensed vessels fishing in the archipelagic waters, the 12 miles territorial seas and the EEZ are to have on board fins that total no more than 5% of the weight of sharks on board" (section 1.4; consistent with WCPFC decisions).

2. The FTBOA will adopt the use of the shark by species logbook prepared by SPC to provide more detailed and accurate record keep of retained shark by species.

Status

FTBOA has implemented a partial strategy and implementation plan that includes specific measures as noted to include a license condition requiring a ban on "shark" or "drop" lines on board the vessel and the 5% fin-to-carcass ratio. Additional measures have since been proposed by the WCPFC specific to shark conservation and management.ⁱⁱ Since development of FTBOA's shark strategy and implementation plan the WCPFC has enacted a ban on the retention of both oceanic whitetipⁱⁱⁱ and silky sharks.^{iv} Additionally, there was disagreement in the two blue shark stock assessments presented by the WCPFC Scientific Committee and the International Scientific Committee of the Northern Committee. The former assessment indicated that blue sharks are likely overfished and experiencing overfishing while the latter indicated more positive assessment but nearing MSY. Additionally, research conducted under the authority of the WCPFC has shown that the 5% fin-to-carcass ration is not effective at ensuring the sustainability of vulnerable shark species.^v

WWF conducted a project in partnership with FTBOA to support the implementation of field activities to reduce bycatch in Fiji's longline tuna fishing industry, with particular reference to cultivation of strategic working partnerships with the fishing industry and continued policy advocacy engagement on bycatch mitigation with the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries and Forests. This project included four subcomponents that include:

- Deployment of WWF observer on Solander Pacific longline fishing vessels: A WWF staff (Fisheries Project Officer) spent 48 days out at sea on 3 Solander Pacific Limited longliners to observe and document bycatch mitigation practices being implemented by the company.
- Employment of circle hooks: All of the FTBOA vessels employ circle hooks on all their longline fishing vessels. This has been an ongoing practice well before the FTBOA albacore fishery was certified. Circle hooks are effective at preventing sharks from being gut or gill hooked, increasing the survival of hooked sharks that are released.
- Bycatch best practice guideline: this is work in progress and currently being developed in collaboration with and for Solander Pacific. Solander Pacific expressed a strong interest in developing such a guideline for its fishing vessels and with the hope that the guideline would be picked up by other longline fishing companies.
- Bycatch best practice workshop: Several companies from FTBOA participated in a 1-day workshop. Emphasis was placed on learning the use of turtle dehooking devices; understanding critical bycatch issues in Fiji's tuna longline fisheries, including sensitive shark species; bycatch best practice on board fishing vessels; and an understanding of the Offshore Fisheries Management Decree 2012.

Solander Pacific of FTBOA has twice requested for turtle and shark ID cards to be placed on board all their fishing boats. These cards were sourced from the SPC Noumea and provided to Solander. All companies that participated in the bycatch best practice workshop were received copies of the same

as well as the Fiji Offshore Fisheries Decree 2012. Solander Pacific has also prohibited all their fishing vessels from using wire tracers, which represents an indicator of targeted shark fishing.

At this time, WWF is unaware if FTBOA has fully adopted the use of the shark by species logbook prepared by SPC to provide more detailed and accurate record keep of retained shark by species, but we understand that FTBOA has requested the logbook.

WWF Position:

WWF is pleased with the progress of the FTBOA on the milestones for this condition through their CAP and believe that they are **on target**. Overall, FTBOA has made significant steps to mitigate and reduce shark bycatch. However, we believe that FTBOA should also be advocating strongly for the finalisation of the Fiji National Plan of Action (NPOA) for sharks. We also believe that FTBOA should review recent recommendations made to the WCPFC regarding sharks and strive to harmonise their license conditions with those recommendations. WWF wishes to continue to work with FTBOA to further define their shark strategy and work to improve their impact on the vulnerable shark species.

Condition 5:

By the third annual audit the client must provide evidence that:

- A partial management strategy is in place that maintains bycatch at levels which are highly likely to be within biologically based limits or ensures that the fishery does not hinder their recovery;
- There is some objective basis that the partial strategy will work;
- There is some evidence that the partial strategy is being implemented effectively.

Annual Milestones

A partial strategy and implementation plan should be developed in readiness for the first annual surveillance

Client Action Plan

1. A formal strategy and implementation plan has already been developed in collaboration with the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries. The Fiji longline licence conditions for 2012 note: "No drop line and shark line is to be carried on board (section 1.3); all licenced vessels fishing in the archipelagic waters, the 12 miles territorial seas and the EEZ are to have on board fins that total no more than 5% of the weight of sharks on board" (section 1.4; consistent with WCPFC decisions).
2. The FTBOA will adopt the use of the shark by species logbook prepared by SPC to provide more detailed and accurate record keep of retained shark by species.

Status

As noted in Condition 4, FTBOA has implemented a partial strategy and implementation plan that includes specific measures. In addition to this partial strategy and implementation plan, FTBOA has also engaged in the abovementioned activities with WWF to address shark bycatch in the fishery. Similarly, at this time WWF is unaware if FTBOA has fully adopted the use of the shark by species logbook prepared by SPC to provide more detailed and accurate record keep of retained shark by species, but we understand that FTBOA has requested the logbook.

WWF Position:

WWF is pleased with the progress of the FTBOA on the milestones for this condition through their CAP and believe that they are **on target**. Overall, FTBOA has made significant steps to mitigate and reduce shark bycatch. However, we believe that FTBOA should also be advocating strongly for the finalisation of the Fiji National Plan of Action (NPOA) for sharks. We also believe that FTBOA should review recent recommendations made to the WCPFC regarding sharks and strive to harmonise their license conditions with those recommendations. WWF wishes to continue to work with FTBOA to further define their shark strategy and work to improve their impact on the vulnerable shark species.

Condition 6:

By the third annual audit the client must provide evidence that information is adequate to support a partial strategy to manage main retained species, or detect any increase in risk. The information collected must be sufficient to estimate outcome status with respect to biologically based limits.

Annual Milestones

A formal monitoring plan has been developed in readiness for the first annual surveillance.

Client Action Plan

In discussion with the Fiji Ministry, FTBOA will implement a formal shark bycatch monitoring plan. This will support the planned expansion of the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry observer programme, and ensure observers have access to FTBOA vessels. In liaison with the Fiji Ministry, FFA and SPC, FTBOA will help develop an on-board monitoring plan across all FTBOA vessels that is consistent with the quantitative data collection process of the Ministry observers. This will allow the number and fate of bycatch sharks to be assessed. This will be based on the adoption of a by species logbook to monitor shark landings.

Status

As noted in the Assessment Report, there is both qualitative and quantitative information on the amount of all the main shark bycatch species (e.g. blue shark and mako) and most of the minor shark bycatch (e.g. oceanic white tip and silky sharks) taken by this fishery, but that this information is only adequate to qualitatively assess outcome status with respect to biologically based limits. While this information is adequate to support a partial strategy to manage the main shark bycatch species, it remains insufficient to evaluate with a high degree of certainty whether a strategy is achieving its objective. Consequently, data is insufficient to assess mortality of bycatch species because observer information suggests that much of the shark catch is currently retained rather than released.

WWF is currently unaware if FTBOA has developed a formal monitoring plan. However, WWF understands that FTBOA has undertaken efforts toward developing this plan, including consulting with FFA and SPC. Of important note, overall observer coverage in the WCPO longline fleet is currently around 2.8%. FTBOA has achieved a relatively higher observer coverage rate of 5.2%, but for statistical purposes this level of coverage still remains exceptionally low. Unfortunately, observer coverage is substantially limited by a very small observer cadre in Fiji of fewer than 30 active certified observers with the Fiji Ministry of Forests and Fisheries.

Like with Condition 4 and 5, WWF is unaware if FTBOA has fully adopted the use of the shark by species logbook prepared by SPC to provide more detailed and accurate record keep of retained shark by species, but we understand that FTBOA has requested the logbook.

WWF Position:

WWF cannot fully assess the progress of the FTBOA on the milestones for this condition through their CAP at this time. While we acknowledge the significant steps FTBOA has taken to mitigate and reduce shark bycatch, we cannot determine, based on the public record, if FTBOA has developed a monitoring plan. However, WWF firmly believes that FTBOA must consistently meet or exceed the WCPFC recommended observer coverage of 5% as a minimum commitment under the proposed monitoring plan.

Condition 7:

By the third annual audit the client must provide evidence that a reporting system to record the occurrence and outcome of all interactions with sea turtles and seabirds has been developed at the fleet level to determine whether the fishery may be a threat to protection and recovery of the ETP species, and if so, to measure trends and support a full strategy to manage impacts. The data that is collected should be sufficient to allow fishery related mortality and the impact of fishing to be quantitatively estimated for ETP species.

Annual Milestone

That a formal monitoring plan has been developed in readiness for the first annual surveillance.

Client Action Plan

In discussion with the Fiji Ministry, FTBOA will implement a formal ETP bycatch monitoring plan, consistent with the shark bycatch monitoring plan developed to address Condition 6. This will support the planned expansion of the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry observer programme, and ensure observers have access to FTBOA vessels. In liaison with the Fiji Ministry, FFA and SPC, FTBOA will help develop an on-board monitoring plan across all FTBOA vessels that is consistent with the quantitative data collection process of the Ministry observers. This will allow the number and fate of ETP species to be assessed.

Status

See the Status for Conditions 4 and 6. FTBOA has aggressively pursued mitigation measures for turtle bycatch through collaborative efforts with WWF. Additionally, FTBOA has voluntarily allowed research on a whale depredation by supporting the investigation the effectiveness of prototype physical depredation mitigation devices (PDMDs) for of mitigating depredation by and by-catch of toothed whales in South Pacific pelagic longline fisheries. This research complements a larger project managed by the Australian Mammal Centre focused on non-lethal options for mitigating catch depredation by and by-catch of toothed whales on pelagic longlines, which also focuses on improving tuna catch that would otherwise be hunted down by toothed whales during longline fishing operations. This research was carried out in partnership with Dr Derek Hamer, Projects Manager, Marine Mammal – Fisheries Interactions at the Australian Marine Centre, Australian Antarctic Division, Tasmania, Australia.

[Seabird Section here]

WWF Position:

WWF cannot fully assess the progress of the FTBOA on the milestones for this condition through their CAP at this time. While we acknowledge the significant steps FTBOA has taken to mitigate and reduce ETP bycatch, including turtles and cetaceans, we cannot determine, based on the public record, if FTBOA has developed a monitoring plan. However, WWF firmly believes that FTBOA must consistently meet or exceed the WCPFC recommended observer coverage of 5% as a minimum commitment under the proposed monitoring plan.

Condition 8:

By the third annual audit the client must provide evidence that sanctions that deal with noncompliance are consistently applied.

Annual Milestones

By the first surveillance audit the client must, provide evidence of progress towards reporting on regulatory compliance within the FTBOA fishery.

Client Action Plan

By the first surveillance audit the client must, provide evidence of progress towards reporting on regulatory compliance within the FTOBA fishery .

Status

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WWF Position:

WWF cannot fully assess the progress of the FTBOA on the milestones for this condition through their CAP at this time. While we acknowledge the significant steps FTBOA has taken to mitigate and reduce ETP bycatch, including turtles and cetaceans, we cannot determine, based on the public record, if FTBOA has developed a monitoring plan. However, WWF firmly believes that FTBOA must consistently meet or exceed the WCPFC recommended observer coverage of 5% as a minimum commitment under the proposed monitoring plan.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Statement of PITIA at WWF WCPFC9 Side Event



Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association

The Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association (PITIA) is pleased to lend support to WWF in advocating harvest controls and reference points for all the principle tunas within the WCPFC.

We have stressed for urgent action to be taken in the Southern Albacore fishery where we have seen a classic “tragedy of the commons” emerging in recent years. Too many vessels are chasing a limited resource with a corresponding lowering of CPUE’s. This is not only on the High Seas but within the EEZ’s of coastal states themselves. We have noted also that many of these vessels – newcomers to the Fishery – are heavily subsidised both in construction and daily operating costs.

These subsidies compound the problem by making it more difficult for domestic vessels to compete in the market place.

We however look to WWF and other eNGOs to assist us in establishing a link between us as the Pacific Islands Tuna Industry with these fleets and to work towards a responsible reduction of catches in this fishery to a sustainable level. “Of particular interest to our members in the smaller Island countries as they develop their domestic fisheries is for these subsidized distant water fisheries to also take part in the development of the local fisheries through setting up of shore infrastructures and employment of local crew.”

We accept that the setting of reference points may require more science and understanding of the Fisheries involved. Never the less member nations of WCPFC, particularly those with large distant water fleets, can take action now to control expansion of their fleets. Concurrent action by the Island States to limit license access to a level that ensures economic sustainability will assist in the development of their own national fleets.

PITIA, therefore, is pleased to lend support to WWF and indeed any organisation that advocates sustainable economic development of commercial fisheries in the Pacific region. At the same time recognising that a precautionary approach ensures the long term commercial viability of Fisheries which is a principle aim of PITIA.

Appendix 2: WWF Letter to Fiji Ministry of Fisheries and Forests



World Wildlife Fund

Smart Fishing Initiative
4 Ma'afu Street
Suva, Fiji Islands

Phone: +679 331 5533
www.panda.org/smartfishing/

Mr. Inoke Wainiqolo
Permanent Secretary Fisheries and Forests
Level 3 Takayawa Tower
P.O. Box 2218
Government Buildings
Suva, Fiji Islands

Ni Sa Bula Vinaka,

WWF would like to request your support for the timely development and implementation of standardized management measures known as Limit and Target Reference Points (LTRPs) as well as Harvest Control Rules (HCRs) in the tuna fisheries managed by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). The tuna fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) are critically important to our domestic fishing industry and to our people. Therefore, it is also very important that we manage those fishery stocks sustainably and effectively through the use of LTRPs and HCRs.

The use of these management measures ensures a clear and methodical approach to management of the tuna fisheries in the WCPO. The use of LTRP offers clarity regarding the benchmarks for assessing stock status while the use of HCR ensures that there is clarity about what actions should be taken if/when the LTRPs are approached. Thus, LTRPs and HCRs also provide a discrete level of certainty and security in the management process that avoids what are often long and contentious debates over measures that are determined on a periodic basis, leading to more effective and efficient decision making. Lastly, the development and implementation of LTRPs and HCRs is necessary to retain the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification, providing access to lucrative western markets for tuna products.

We have enclosed some basic materials from WWF explaining LTRPs and HCRs with this letter. We hope that you will consider these materials and support the further development and implementation of LTRPs and HCRs during this year's WCPFC meeting in Cairns, Australia. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss the issue further.

Vinaka vakalevu,

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