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FACTSHEET

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Offshore Fisheries Programme



THE PACIFIC OCEAN IS HOME TO SOME OF THE WORLD'S MOST ABUNDANT POPULATIONS OF TUNA SPECIES SUCH AS ALBACORE, SKIPJACK, BIGEYE AND YELLOWFIN

The WWF Offshore Fisheries Programme is an advocacy, awareness, research and policy input initiative. It strives to improve and promote sustainable tuna fisheries management, and the certification of key fisheries within the Pacific Islands region. To achieve this WWF is working collaboratively and strategically with key stakeholders in advocating for fishing best practices as highlighted in WWF's network initiatives on Smart Fishing and Market Transformation. WWF aims to influence responsible fisheries policy by engaging with Pacific Island governments, relevant civil society organisations and environmental non-governmental organisations; Pacific Island countries regional fisheries organisations; and the fishing industry sector.

Oceanic fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Convention Area based on 2010 provision figures accounted for approximately 60% of the world's tuna catch or 2.4148 million metric tonnes, the second highest annual catch recorded

The Western and Central Pacific Ocean, which is free of driftnets, is often described as the last frontier of healthy tuna fishery in the world

Our presence in the region

The geographical scope of this programme's policy work covers all Pacific Island countries and territories that are members of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). It aims to progress this work by focusing on Fiji as a stepping point to similar work in other Pacific Island countries and territories.

A collective responsibility

The Pacific Ocean is now considered to be the last frontier of healthy and highly migratory tuna fish stocks. Pacific Island and Pacific Rim nations, as well as continental Europe, are vying for access to this high value commercial resource. The effective and sustainable management of this offshore fishery is a complex one that requires consolidated support from all stakeholders and an acknowledgement that we are all stewards of our marine environment. Without a collective effort our offshore fisheries areas face the prospect of decimation through overfishing.

WWF is also making concerted efforts to effect greater change in offshore fishing practices and related trade, to not only ensure the sustainable harvest of this shared tuna resource, but to also effectively mitigate unintentional catch, or bycatch, of marine turtles and mammals, and other non-target species. The programme will do this by working with the fishing industry sector, government, and regional fisheries organisations.

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC or Tuna Commission)

The WCPFC is known as an RFMO or a regional fisheries management organisation, one of several around the world, whose responsibility is to implement the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Ocean. This convention is an international fisheries agreement that seeks to ensure, through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks (i.e. tuna, billfish, and marlin) in the western and central Pacific Ocean

The Tuna Commission has adopted a number of conservation and management measures (CMMs) to reduce bycatch of marine mammals and other non-target species



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Bringing about positive change

The overarching goal of the programme is that *“By 2020, healthy, recovering and resilient marine ecosystems that provide improved food security, livelihoods and well-being for dependent communities are achieved through responsible ecosystem based management and trade in offshore and inshore fisheries”*. In order to make this goal a reality, WWF is continuing to:

- Advocate for active integration of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management into national and regional policies and legislation
- Enhance and strengthen regional advocacy and policy reform through capacity building
- Strengthen and foster strategic partnerships with civil society organisations raising awareness on offshore fisheries issues create conditions conducive to the uptake of sustainable offshore fisheries practices and standards, such as Marine Stewardship Council Certification
- Reduce offshore fisheries bycatch through sustainable fishing practices
- Enhance regional transparency and traceability regarding offshore fishing, landing and trade
- Leverage funds to enhance the programme objectives and direct international aid and investments in the region towards sustainable fisheries development, harness market forces and engage supply chains to apply pressure to improve tuna and fisheries management
- Raise consumer awareness of fishery conservation issues and to promote the practice of sustainable sourcing by major purchasers
- Work closely with WWF’s Marine Species Programme to reduce bycatch of turtles, sharks and juvenile tuna, which are all priority WWF species



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.wwfpacific.org.fj

For more information

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