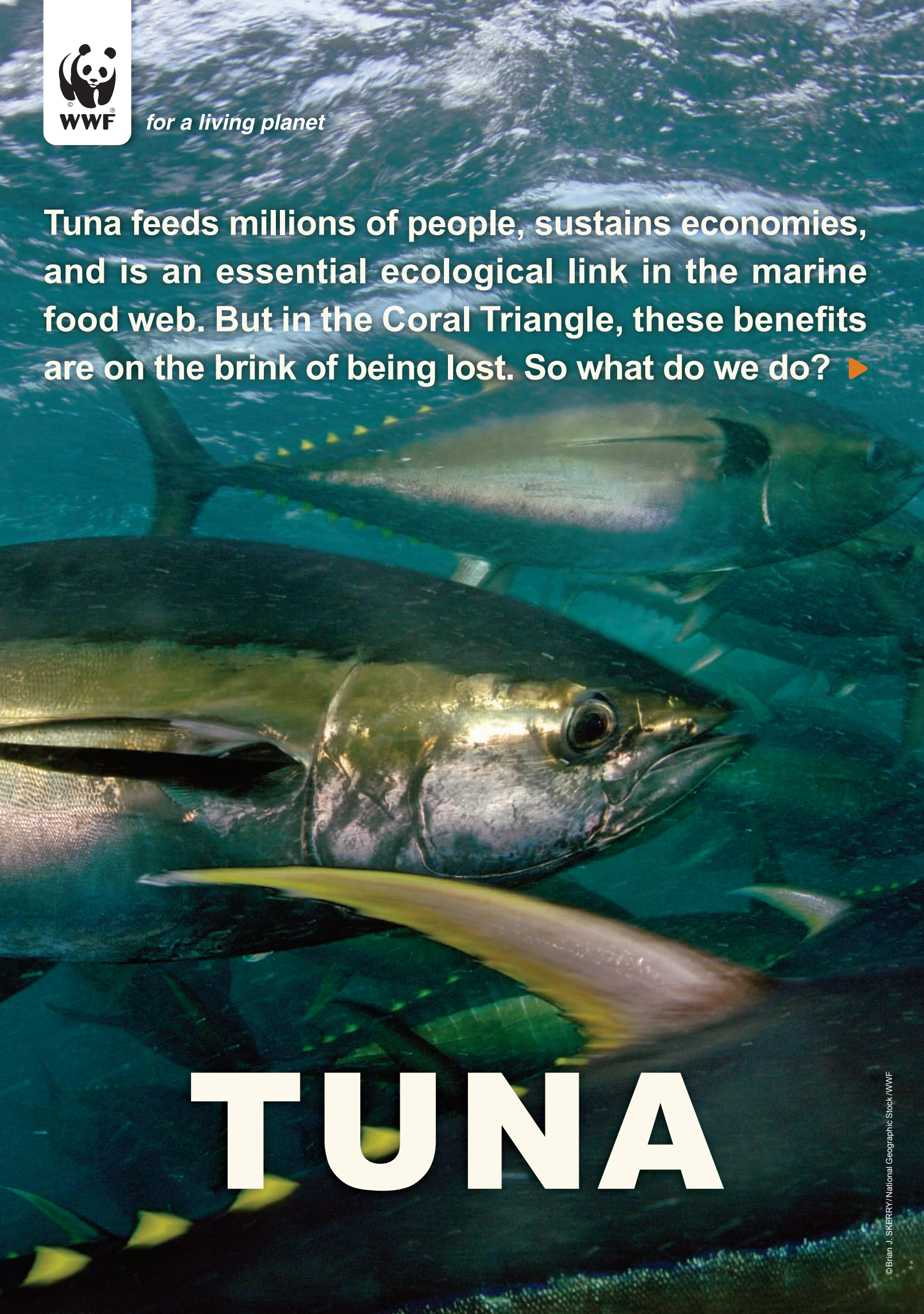
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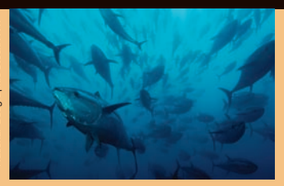
Tuna feeds millions of people, sustains economies, and is an essential ecological link in the marine food web. But in the Coral Triangle, these benefits are on the brink of being lost. So what do we do?
TUNA
©Brian J. SKERRY/National Geographic Stock/WWF

As fishing efforts intensify, the abundance of tuna may not last in the Coral Triangle. Better management, improved technology and solid incentives are urgently needed to turn the situation around.



THE CORAL TRIANGLE— the nursery of the seas—is the most diverse marine region on the planet, covering 6 million km² of ocean across six countries in the Indo-Pacific region. It is home to 3000 species of reef fish and commercially-valuable species such as tuna, whales, dolphins, rays, sharks, and six of the seven known species of marine turtles.

What makes tuna so special?

Caught, traded, shipped and eaten around the world, tuna is an irreplaceable resource for developed and developing countries globally. Between 1950 and 2006, about 27.5 million tons of tuna were caught by fishing fleets operating in Coral Triangle countries.

In addition, an abundance of small tuna species such as frigate, bullet and the bonito provide vital sustenance to millions of people in the Coral Triangle, while they also serve as food for the larger tuna.

Tuna of the Coral Triangle

Southern Bluefin tuna
Thunnus maccoyii
DEPLETED

Yellowfin tuna
Thunnus albacares
FULLY EXPLOITED

Long-tail tuna
Thunnus tonggol
STOCK STATUS UNKNOWN

Bigeye tuna
Thunnus obesus
OVER-EXPLOITED

Skipjack tuna
Katsuwonus pelamis
MODERATELY EXPLOITED

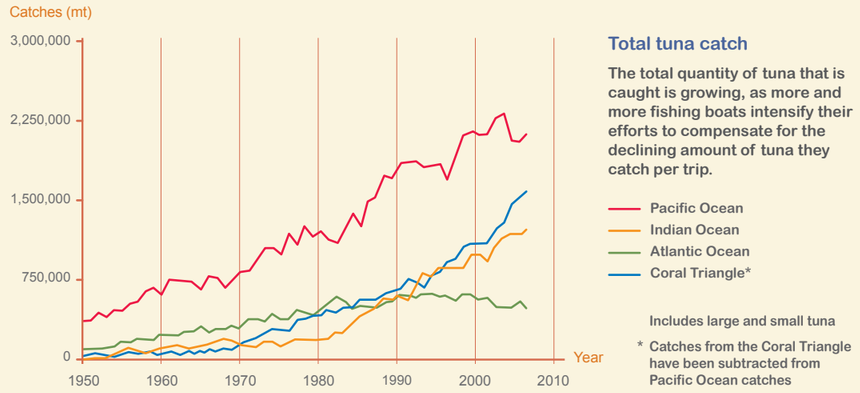
Albacore tuna
Thunnus alalunga
MODERATELY EXPLOITED
(NORTHERN & SOUTHERN STOCKS)

Tuna illustrations © Les HATA/SPC 2009

Tuna are being taken out of the sea faster than stocks can support

The fishing industry is scrambling to supply growing international demand for tuna. This puts more pressure on the otherwise heavily fished stock of yellowfin tuna in the Western and Central and Indian oceans as fleets move in from depleted fishing areas.

If the current level of fishing continues or increases, these stocks will collapse. The result? Loss of revenue and reduced food security in some parts of the world.



Total tuna catch

The total quantity of tuna that is caught is growing, as more and more fishing boats intensify their efforts to compensate for the declining amount of tuna they catch per trip.

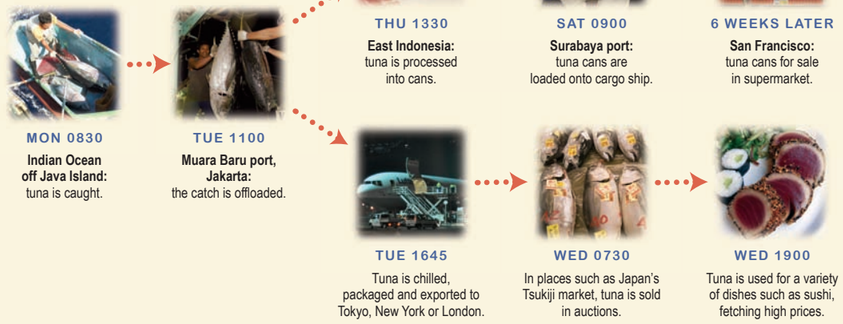
- Pacific Ocean
- Indian Ocean
- Atlantic Ocean
- Coral Triangle*

Includes large and small tuna

* Catches from the Coral Triangle have been subtracted from Pacific Ocean catches

Current management of tuna fisheries is not working

International laws and standards support sustainable fisheries management, and are applicable to tuna regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and their member states. But in reality, tuna RFMOs have been unable to prevent overexploitation of tuna, rebuild depleted stocks, or protect the wider ecosystem.



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How can we save tuna stocks in the Coral Triangle?

Solutions exist to better manage the remaining tuna stocks across the Coral Triangle. Effective tuna management at the national level through adoption of fair commercial fishing agreements, better law enforcement, and promotion of better fishing practices that are attuned to fish ecology must become the building blocks of a regional strategy to ensure tuna stocks do not collapse.

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At WWF, we are collaborating with industry to transform tuna fishing and:

- Develop a system that raises funds from global tuna trade and supports tuna management in Coral Triangle countries
- Establish ecosystem-based fisheries management that delivers equitable benefits to island communities
- Reduce illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing by excluding IUU fish from the supply chain
- Implement incentives for sustainable fishing practices (e.g., MSC certification)
- Engage consumers on the importance of tuna fisheries and enable them to make sustainable seafood choices

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WWF's Coral Triangle Programme

WWF's Coral Triangle Programme is focused on securing the health of the region's natural resources and the millions of livelihoods that depend on it. We are working to ensure that proper environmental, political and socio-economic management is put in place towards:

- Building a sustainable live reef food fish trade
- Promoting sustainable tuna fisheries
- Financing marine protected areas
- Protecting marine turtles and reducing their bycatch
- Reducing the impacts of climate change

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www.panda.org/coraltriangle/tuna

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