



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
EIGHTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

ELECTRONIC MEETING
10-18 August 2022

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION
PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS**

WCPFC-SC18-AR/CCM-05

EUROPEAN UNION



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

International Ocean Governance and Sustainable Fisheries
Regional Fisheries Management Organisations

Brussels 11 July 2022
MARE.B.2/

EUROPEAN UNION

WCPFC - ANNUAL REPORT PART I (Fishing season 2021)

INDEX

1.- PURSE SEINE FISHERY	3
1.1.- Annual catch and effort by primary species in the WCPFC Convention Area. ..	3
1.2.- Number of vessels by size	4
1.3.- Fishing patterns	5
1.4.- Estimated total catches of non-target, associated and dependent species.	6
1.5.- Research and statistics.....	6
2. LONG LINE FISHERY	8
2.1. Annual catch and effort by primary species and gear in the WCPFC Convention Area.....	8
2.2. Number of vessels by gear and size (fleet characteristic)	9
2.3. Fishing patterns	9
2.4. Estimated total catches of non-target, associated and dependent species	10

WCPFC ANNUAL REPORT PART I
YEAR 2020, PURSE SEINE AND LONG LINE FISHERIES

1.- PURSE SEINE FISHERY

1.1.- Annual catch and effort by primary species in the WCPFC Convention Area.

Fishing vessels operating in the eastern Pacific Ocean normally have 100% coverage of onboard observers, in line with the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP). Although this agreement applies to vessels operating in the IATTC Convention Area, the three purse seiners operating in the Pacific Ocean with EU flag in 2021 have carried out their activity in both IATTC and WCPFC Convention Areas, and the APICD observers have covered *c.* 20% of the catch weight in the WCPFC Convention Area. Information from trips not covered by these observers was obtained from logbooks. Total catches reported by the observers and estimated from logbooks, catches to the east of 150°W and discards of the three main target species during 2021, as well as in previous years, are shown in Table I.

	2021			
	WCPFC	WCPFC east of 150°W	Discards	No. Sets
BET	2848	327	0	
SKJ	9318	1033	0	299
YFT	1180	70	0	

	2020				2019			
	WCPFC	east of 150°W	Discards	No. Sets	WCPFC	east of 150°W	Discards	No. Sets
BET	1452	166	192		599	23	3	
SKJ	7953	512	132	212	8794	139	122	167
YFT	1016	58	10		541	19	1	

	2018				2017			
	WCPFC	east of 150°W	Discards	No. Sets	WCPFC	east of 150°W	Discards	No. Sets
BET	1189	78	3		2686	20	47	
SKJ	8648	1111	115	201	8027	111	55	159
YFT	404	24	9		628	23	3	

Table I- Total catches (in metric tonnes) of BET, SKJ and YFT from EU purse seiners in the WCPFC convention area, in the WCPFC-CA east of the 150°W meridian, estimated discards and number of sets in the last 5 years.

1.2.- Number of vessels by size

In 2021, 3 purse seiners with EU-Spain flag fished in the WCPFC-CA, with gross register tonnage of 1562, 2502 and 3200 GRT. Tuna are mainly caught by sets on FADs, but also on free schools. Catches are frozen onboard in salt vats. Table II summarizes the number of vessels and total gross register tonnage from the beginning of the fishery in the WCPFC-CA.

Year	GRT	No. vessels
1996	1351	1
1997	1351	1
1998	4419	3
1999	8176	4
2000	6887	4
2001	9172	4
2002	9172	4
2003	10678	5
2004	6532	3
2005	6532	3
2006	6532	3
2007	9732	4
2008	9732	4
2009	9732	4
2010	9732	4
2011	9732	4
2012	9732	4
2013	9732	4
2014	9732	4
2015	9732	4
2016	4064	2
2017	4064	2
2018	4064	2
2019	4064	2
2020	4064	2
2021	7264	3

Table II- Number of EU purse seiners and total gross register tonnage in the WCPFC-CA, by year.

1.3.- Fishing patterns

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the catches ($5^{\circ} \times 5^{\circ}$) of EU purse seiners in the WCPFC-CA during 2021 and the five previous years. Figure 2 shows the distribution of effort ($5^{\circ} \times 5^{\circ}$) of EU purse seiners in the WCPFC-CA during 2021 and the five previous years. The figures indicate no significant change in the distribution of the catch and effort in comparison with previous years.

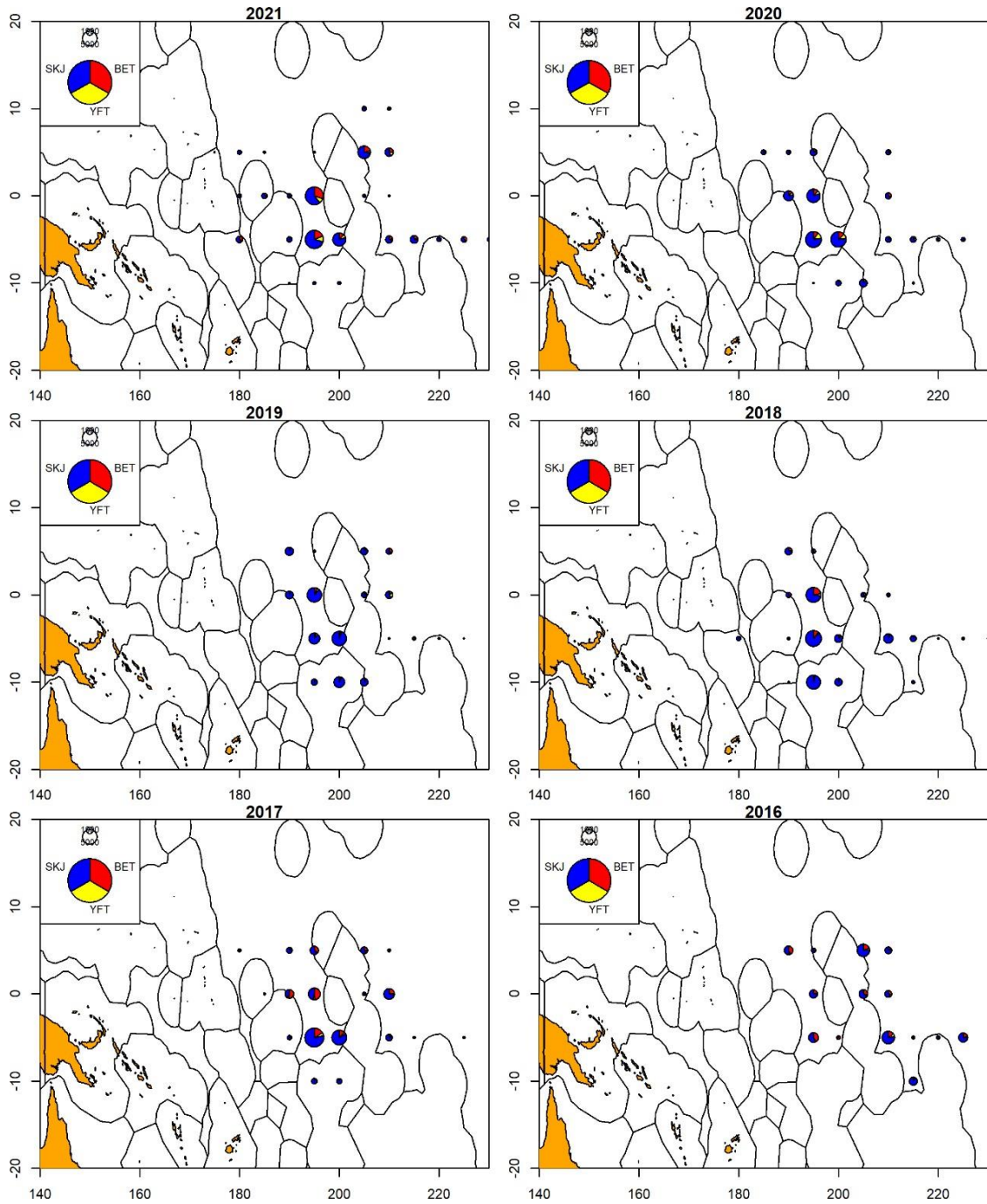


Fig. 1- Distribution of catches by area ($5^{\circ} \times 5^{\circ}$) and species in 2015-2020.

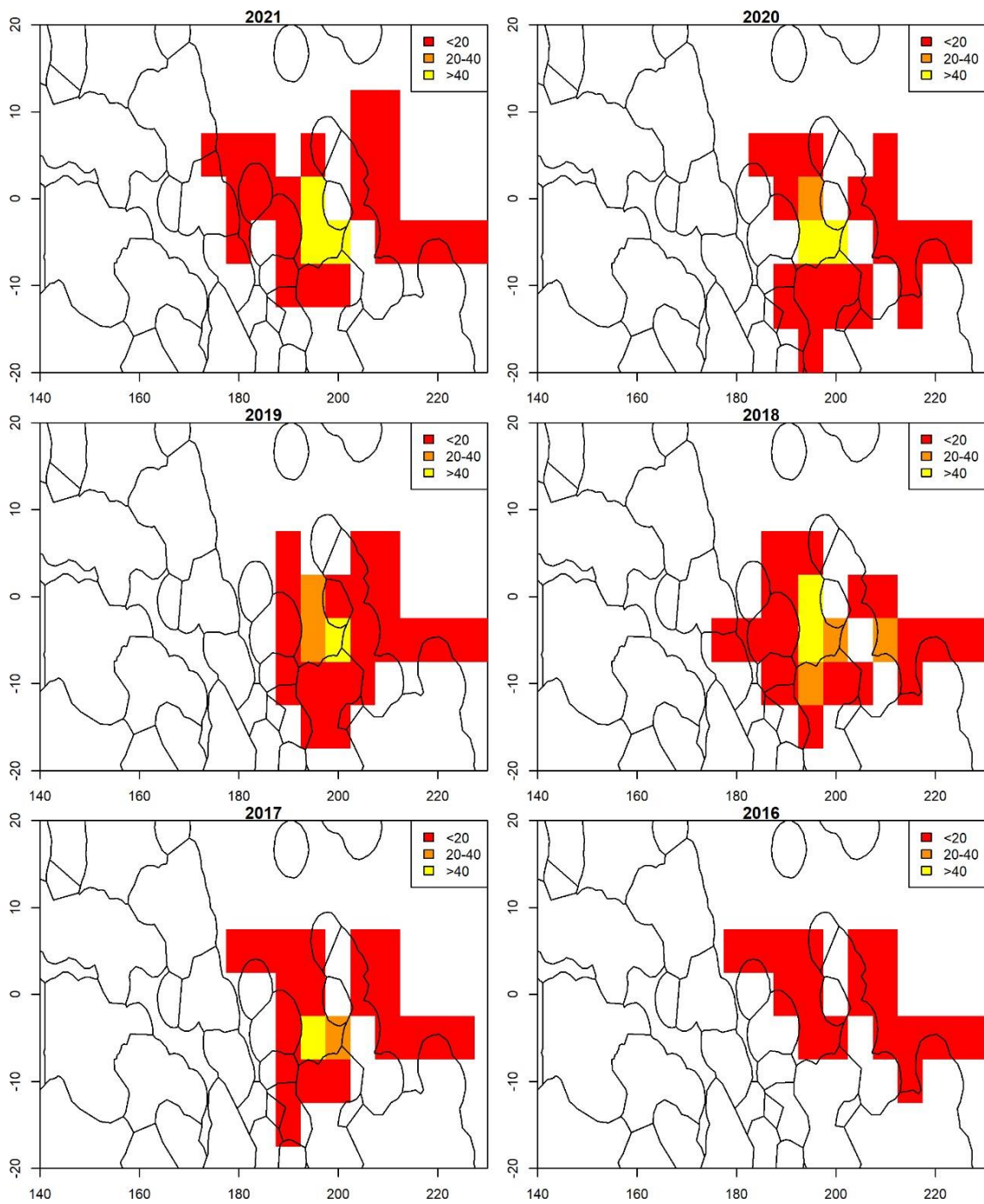


Fig. 2.- Distribution of the purse seine effort, in fishing days, by area (5°x5°) and year.

1.4.- Estimated total catches of non-target, associated and dependent species.

Tables III and IV summarize the purse seine bycatch by species in the WCPFC-CA in 2021 and 2020, respectively. In most cases, the observers only record the number of fish of each species per set. The total weight has been estimated by multiplying the number of fish in each size category (small, medium, large) by an average weight for the purse seine fishery provided by the IATTC (N. Vogel, pers. comm.).

In 2021, 5 species/groups accounted for more than 99% of the estimated bycatch, in terms of weight, namely, Silky shark, blue marlin, dolphinfish, wahoo, and *Makaira, Tetrapturus*. Around 87% of the *Carcharinus falciformis*, the main bycatch species of the purse seine fleet, as well as the only specimen of *C. longimanus* observed in 2021, were estimated to be released alive.

There is a mandatory Spanish protocol for releasing marine turtles caught by purse seine alive. All turtles involved in fishing operations must be released in the best conditions as soon as possible. In 2021, no interactions with marine turtles were observed in the WCPFC-CA.

1.5.- Research and statistics

In 2021, c. 9 % of the catch in the WCPFC-CA, including bycatch, was monitored by IATTC and national program observers of the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP). This coverage was unusually low due to the pandemic situation.

Additionally, in keeping with the current Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs), EU purse seiners fishing in the WCPFC-CA usually have 100% coverage of Regional Observer Programme (ROP) observers. These observers also record information on size and species composition, vessel activity, bycatch, etc. However, this information is submitted directly to the Science Service Provider and not reported to the flag State, and is not included in the current report.

	Species	WCPFC	East of 150 ° W
BILLFISH	<i>Makaira nigricans</i>	6.98	0.11
	<i>Makaira, Tetrapturus</i>	1.35	0.00
SHARKS & RAYS	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>	25.35	4.89
	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>	0.03	0.03
	<i>Sphyrna</i> spp.	0.03	0.03
	<i>Mobulidae</i>	0.08	0.08
OTHER FISH	<i>Acanthocybium solandri</i>	0.16	0.00
	<i>Canthidermis maculatus</i>	<0.01	<0.01
	<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>	5.83	3.13
	<i>Elagatis bipinnulata</i>	<0.01	<0.01
	<i>Decapterus macarellus</i>	<0.01	<0.01
	<i>Sphyraena barracuda</i>	<0.01	<0.01

Table III.- Purse seine bycatch in metric tonnes in the WCPFC-CA and in the WCPFC-CA east of meridian 150°W during 2021. These figures have been estimated from the bycatch records of the trips carrying AIDCP observers (c. 9% of the total catch in weight in the WCPFC-CA).

	Species	WCPFC	East of 150 ° W
BILLFISH	<i>Makaira nigricans</i>	3.84	0.04
	<i>Makaira, Tetrapturus</i>	0.62	0.20
SHARKS & RAYS	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>	27.60	0.26
	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>	0.22	0.00
	<i>Carcharhinus</i> spp.	0.92	0.17
	<i>Sphyrna mokarran</i>	0.14	0.00
OTHER FISH	<i>Acanthocybium solandri</i>	1.56	0.63
	<i>Aluterus scriptus</i>	<0.01	<0.01
	<i>Canthidermis maculatus</i>	0.01	<0.01
	<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>	2.89	0.83
	<i>Elagatis bipinnulata</i>	0.11	0.01
	<i>Kyphosus elegans</i>	<0.01	<0.01
	<i>Lobotes surinamensis</i>	<0.01	<0.01
	<i>Seriola, Caranx</i> spp.	<0.01	<0.01
	<i>Sphyraena barracuda</i>	0.03	0.00

Table IV.- Purse seine bycatch in metric tonnes in the WCPFC-CA and in the WCPFC-CA east of meridian 150°W during 2020. These figures have been estimated from the bycatch records of the trips carrying observers of the AIDCP (c. 22% of the total catch in weight in the WCPFC-CA).

2. LONG LINE FISHERY

The Spanish long line fleet is composed by 7 long liners. The activity of the fleet commenced in 2004, and it has been targeting swordfish since then. The data hereby included have been obtained from mandatory electronic logbooks for 2021 activity. All Spanish flagged longliners process the swordfish on board in dressed weight (eliminating the head, viscera and fins) and keep it frozen.

2.1. Annual catch and effort by primary species and gear in the WCPFC Convention Area

Division	Buque	SWO
71	YANQUE	4,44
77	CARMEN TERE	26,40
	ILLA GAVEIRA	1,62
	PLAYA ZAHARA	35,48
	PLAYA ZAHARA DOS	48,91
	VIKING BAY	12,81
	YANQUE	29,93
81	CARMEN TERE	316,88
	GLACIAL	294,93
	ILLA GAVEIRA	168,46
	PLAYA ZAHARA	257,19
	PLAYA ZAHARA DOS	142,62
	VIKING BAY	284,91
	YANQUE	153,34
Total general		1.777,93

Table 5. Total estimated catches by species in the WCPFC area (t)

It has to be noted that the catches included the total amount as result of the activity of these vessels in the WCPFC area, overlapping area and IATTC area, since these vessels may operate in the IATTC area.

2.2. Number of vessels by gear and size (fleet characteristic)

Gear	LONGLINE
Fleet	SPAIN (EU)
Size class (GRT)	
0-50	0
50-200	1
201-500	6
500+	0

VESSEL NAME	AUTHORIZATION PERIOD
CARMEN TERE	01/01 to 31/12/2021
GLACIAL	01/01 to 31/12/2021
ILLA GAVEIRA	01/01 to 31/12/2021
PLAYA ZAHARA	01/01 to 31/12/2021
PLAYA ZAHARA DOS	22/04 to 31/12/2021
VIKING BAY	01/01 to 31/12/2021
YANQUE	01/01 to 31/12/2021

2.3. Fishing patterns

Spanish longline vessels in the Western and Central Pacific operate in the temperate area south of 20° south and the mostly work around of 30° south. The port of Auckland (New Zealand) is the main hub for landings and supply activities. Long distances toward south are usually covered before starting fishing activities.

The vessels carry on lengthy trips lasting for 2 to 3 months and they target swordfish. They did not catch tropical sensitive shark species such as oceanic whitetip shark, silky shark or whale shark. They displayed an average of 1.257 hooks per vessel in 2021.

2.4. Estimated total catches of non-target, associated and dependent species

It has to be noted that the catches in the following table include the total amount as result of the activity of these vessels in the WCPFC area, overlapping area and IATTC area, since these vessels may operate in the IATTC area.

Table 6. Total estimated catches by species in the WCPFC area (t)

Division	Buque	ALB	BET	BLM	BSH	BUM	LMA	MLS	PBF	SKJ	SMA	YFT
71	YANQUE				4,8913							0,0728
77	CARMEN TERE	0,111	1,98542	0,50285	7,70741	2,59536		1,89783			0,97065	0,4823
	ILLA GAVEIRA		0,61275	1,3052	7,8884			5,4392			0,41715	0,15093
	PLAYA ZAHARA	0,13542	2,6715	4,90017	18,55049	1,81786					2,98215	1,0868
	PLAYA ZAHARA DOS	0,11322	2,5142	1,0621	6,396	0,7969		1,5431			0,00001	2,3049
	VIKING BAY		1,95414		5,61108			5,62793				
	YANQUE				23,71645			5,68215				0,4368
81	CARMEN TERE	1,20351	33,8412	1,97679	484,62189	5,61151		13,1376			104,721	8,88385
	GLACIAL				550,56136			29,56552			95,85	8,437
	ILLA GAVEIRA		2,29104	2,3972	70,94435			11,3594				0,57921
	PLAYA ZAHARA	1,37085	29,65128	5,44251	419,61275	12,71092		0,0611			121,47235	9,44464
	PLAYA ZAHARA DOS	0,31524	10,2531	1,0465	173,9302	2,1801		3,3735			39,20536	4,5565
	VIKING BAY	0,91797	18,99885	3,8883	436,61018	0,208		13,68955			111,19545	2,444
	YANQUE				52,70002			28,7793			0,00001	0,95521
Total general		4,16721	104,77348	22,52162	2263,74188	25,92065		120,15618			476,81413	39,83494