



**NORTHERN COMMITTEE
Twentieth Regular Session**

15 – 16 July 2024
Kushiro, Japan (Hybrid)

Explanatory Note - Baseline for Vanuatu North Pacific Albacore

WCPFC-NC20-2024/DP-01

VANUATU

Explanatory Note - Baseline for Vanuatu North Pacific Albacore

Introduction

This report provides an update on Vanuatu's efforts to obtain additional reliable information to resolve the pending issue concerning the baseline for North Pacific Albacore. The purpose of this note is to inform the North Committee about the challenges faced in accessing historical data and propose an alternative baseline for consideration.

Background:

During NC 15, Members raised concerns regarding Vanuatu's North Pacific Albacore fishing effort. Vanuatu has been working closely with the SPC to review its catch and effort data. Vanuatu has consistently informed Members during NC 16, NC 17, and NC 18, that complete fishing vessel numbers and vessel days data for 2002 and 2003 are unavailable. In response, Vanuatu proposed using the most reliable data: 2002-2004 average fishing license information as the baseline for fishing vessels and using 2004 vessel days to estimate the average days per vessel for calculating the vessel days baseline. However, this proposal has not been accepted by the North Committee, and Vanuatu has agreed to collaborate with Japan and the United States to seek a resolution before NC 19.

Vanuatu, in collaboration with the SPC, has made diligent efforts to gather reliable information and has obtained complete catch and effort data from 2004 onwards. However, the coverage for the years 2002 and 2003 remains limited. To address this data gap, Vanuatu proposes utilizing the average figures from 2004 to 2006 as an alternative baseline. The following figures are suggested for consideration:

Number of vessels (2004-2006 average): $(42 + 36 + 37) / 3 = 38$

Number of vessel days (2004-2006 average): $(3868 + 2840 + 4140) / 3 = 3616$

During NC 19, Japan and the USA disagreed with Vanuatu's proposal, raising concerns that the 2004 data was based on the number of licenses rather than the actual number of fishing vessels.

Conclusion

Vanuatu acknowledges the limitations in obtaining historical data for the North Pacific Albacore baseline due to the lack of a proper data collection system in the past. However, **Vanuatu would like to emphasize that the data from 2004- 2006 is**

based on operational catch and effort data; data that have been reviewed and submitted to the SPC. Therefore, we kindly request the North Committee to reconsider **our proposal to use the average figures from 2004 to 2006 as an alternative baseline.**