



**Western and
Central Pacific
Fisheries
Commission**

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

WCPFC-SC20-AR/CCM-26

TUVALU



TUVALU FISHERIES DEPARTMENT
**MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES &
DEVELOPMENT**
GOVERNMENT OF TUVALU



**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE WESTERN CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES
COMMISSION**

PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

Scientific data was provided to the Commission in accordance with the decision relating to the Provision of Scientific data to the Commission by the 30 th April 2024.	YES
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1.0 ABSTRACT

Tuna catches in Tuvalu's EEZ are caught mostly by Purse seine and Longline fishing methods. The Tuvalu Fisheries Department continues to manage and monitor all the fishing activities in Tuvalu EEZ. These fishing activities are mostly carried out by our bilateral partners under access agreements and regional arrangements under the FSMA and US Treaty.

The Tuvalu catch estimated for the period of 2023 through our flagged vessels is increasing compared to the previous year. The total catch estimated for 2023 PS is about 46,782 mt. The highest catch was recorded for Skipjack species, accounting for about 11,361mt (75%), Yellowfin tuna species was recorded with a catch of 35,135mt (24%), while the Bigeye tuna species has the lowest catch estimated at 286mt (1%).

The Fisheries department issued a total of 149 fishing licenses for the year 2023, under the category of bilateral agreements. The Purse Seiners has been the most dominant gear type throughout these past four years. The 149 licenses are not including fishing vessels registered by the FSM Arrangement, and US Treaties. Bilateral arrangements covered 95 vessels, the FSM Arrangement registered 86 vessels and 12 vessels were registered under the US Treaty.

The Purse Seine utmost Catches of tuna species in Tuvalu's EEZ for 2023 were caught mostly by vessels operating under our bilateral and regional arrangements. Skipjack tuna has dominant the highest catch taken inside our EEZ with Taiwan Flag vessels with the most catch. Skipjack tuna is estimate to be around 42,284mt while 892mt of Yellowfin tuna and 409mt of Bigeye tuna caught by Purse seine fleet inside Tuvalu EEZ.

The Longline fleet continues to operate within Tuvalu EEZ for the year 2023. Yellowfin Tuna is the most dominant species caught within our EEZ with an estimate catch of 221mt. Bigeye tuna has taken the second most catch taken within our EEZ with an estimate of 114mt. The last of these target tuna species is Albacore tuna, and it is estimate to be around 86mt. There is also other species taken within our EEZ and it is estimate to be around 47mt. Theses longline vessels are mostly to be flagged by Fiji and China. While Kiribati catches were due to some of the vessels has been chartered by China and has a Kiribati flagged vessel.

Tuvalu's observer programme (TVOB) has continued their normal routine in placing of observer on Purse seiner (100%) and with plan to place more on Fish carrier. There were 74 active observers and there were expecting to recruit more observer soon.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Tuvalu flagged vessel used only one type of fishing method within the WCPO Convention Area for 2023. This including six purse seiners only while the Tuvalu Longline flag vessel has already been deflagged. This Tuvalu Longline flag vessel was inactive since February 2022 until it was de-flagged in 2023.

All the fishing operations carried out by foreign fishing vessels within the Tuvalu Exclusive Economic Zone are managed and monitored by the Tuvalu Fisheries Department in accord with their access agreement.

In 2023, the fishing effort and catch for purse seine were mostly fished in the Kiribati EEZ including Phoenix and the Line groups, Tuvalu, Nauru, PNG EEZ and some fishing in the High Seas.

3.0 FLAG STATE REPORTING

3.1 DOMESTIC FLEET

In 2023 on the WCPFC RFV for Tuvalu, there are 6 Purse-Seiner vessels authorized to fish in the Convention area in 2023. The table 1 below indicates the number of Tuvalu Purse-Seiner flagged vessels and their size categories active in the WCPFC over the past 5 years.

Table 1: Number of Tuvalu Purse Seiner flagged vessels and size category, active in the WCPFC Convention Area for 2019 - 2023.

YEAR	00-500 GRT	501-1000 GRT	1001-1500 GRT	1500+ GRT	Total Vessels
2019	0	0	0	1	1
2020	0	1	0	2	3
2021	0	2	1	3	6
2022	0	2	1	3	6
2023	0	2	1	3	6

3.2 CATCH DATA

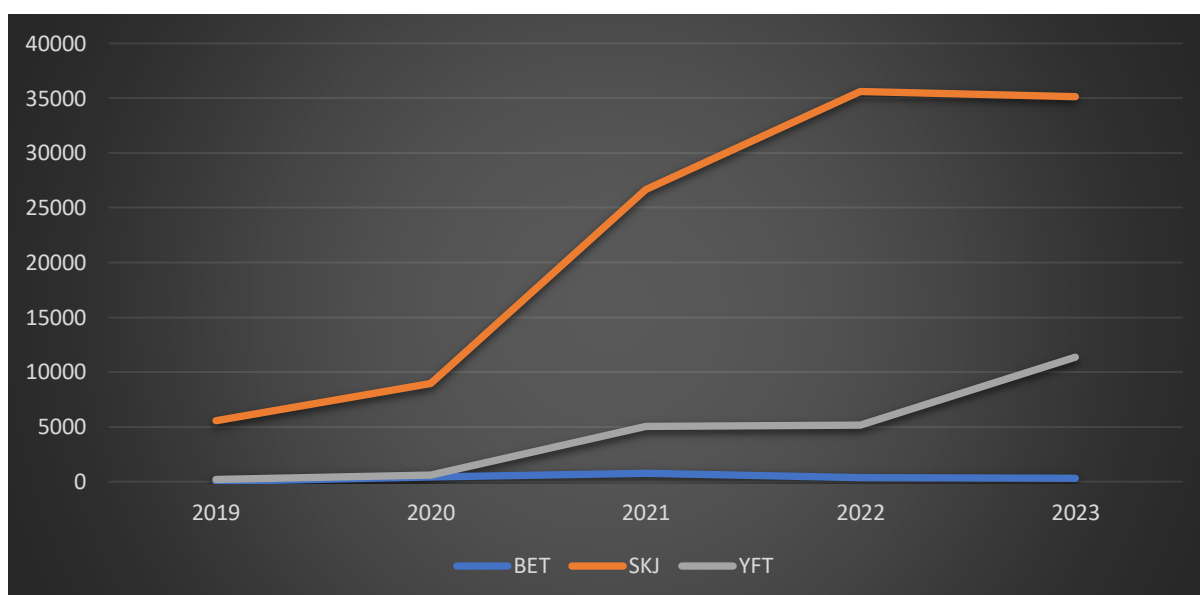
3.2.1 Purse Seine

The Tuvalu catch estimated for the period of 2023 through our flagged vessels is increasing compared to the previous year. The total catch estimated for 2023 PS is about 46,782 mt, as referenced in Table 2 and Figure 1. According to the records of logsheets for our flagged vessels, the highest catch was recorded for Skipjack tuna species, accounting for about 11,361mt (75%). Additionally, Yellowfin tuna species was recorded with a catch of 35,135mt (24%), and Bigeye tuna species had the lowest catch estimated at 286mt (1%).

Table 2: Annual raised catch estimated (mt) for Tuvalu Purse Seiner fleet, in the WCPFC Convention Area over the five past years (2019-2023). Source: TUFMAN 2: ACE

YEAR	BET	SKJ	YFT	Total
2019	9	5559	200	5768
2020	401	8939	595	9935
2021	764	26685	5045	32494
2022	358	35609	5150	41117
2023	286	35135	11361	46782

Figure 1: Chart of annual catches target species for Tuvalu Purse Seiner for the WCPFC Convention Area over the past five years (2019-2023)

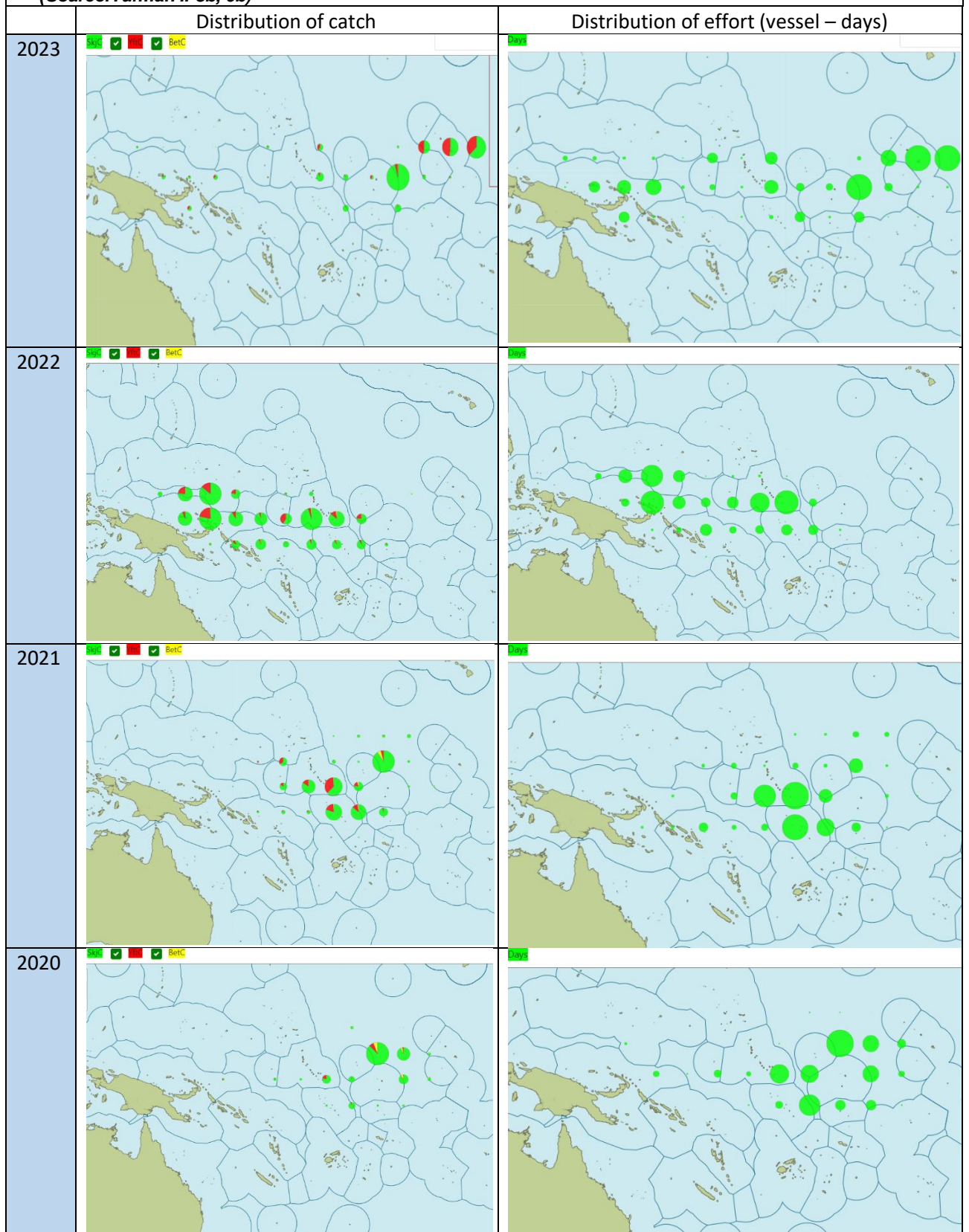


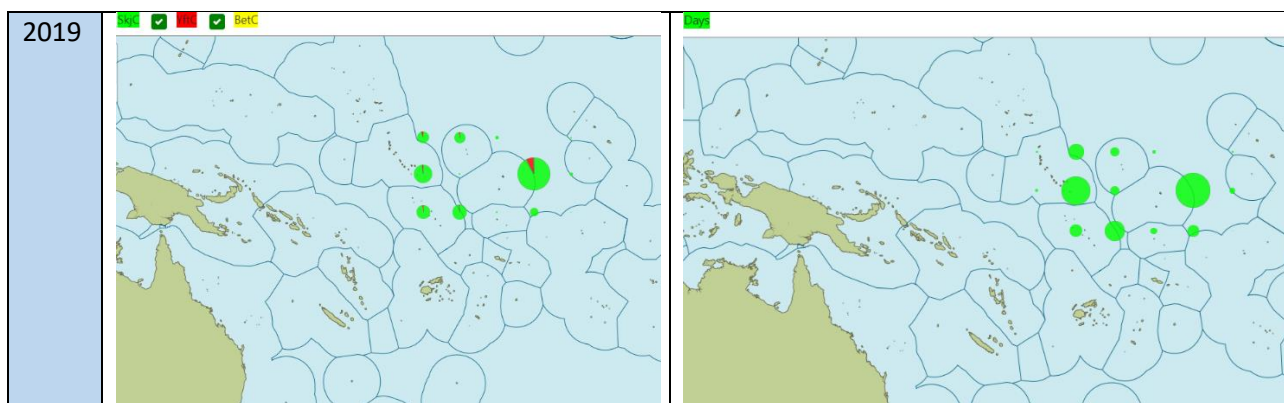
3.3 FISHING PATTERN AND DISTRIBUTION

3.3.1 Catch and Effort Distribution for Purse Seiners

In 2023, the fishing effort and catch for purse seine were mostly fished in the Kiribati EEZ including Phoenix and the Line groups, Tuvalu, Nauru, PNG EEZ and some fishing in the High Seas. The most abundant species caught was skipjack tuna (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Tuvalu National Purse Seiner fleet operations within WCPO area in the past 5 years.
 (Source: Tufman II-8b, 9b)





3.4 ARTISANAL FISHERIES

In the Tuvalu Fisheries Department under the Coastal section, our data on artisanal fisheries are still being collected on the main target species, which are skipjack, bigeye, and yellowfin tuna, by our data collectors in Funafuti and the outer islands. Mainly, these data are being collected by our fishermen through handline and troll fishing, as part of the small-scale artisanal tuna data. Analysis of creel data comprises of the highest catch from Skipjack tuna of 3760.72kg (77%) of the total, yellowfin tuna of 1092.6kg (22.5%) and Bigeye tuna of 1.58kg (0.03%).

3.5 SPECIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST

There is an observer data on whale shark interactions from our Tuvalu flagged vessels, it was accidentally caught and released unharmed by opening the net.

3.6 NON-TARGET ASSOCIATED OR DEPENDENT SPECIES

The annual estimates of non-target species caught by our flagged vessels are provided in Table 3. According to Purse Seine data, the total catch of non-target species for the year 2023 was 51 mt.

Table 3: Annual raised catch estimates (mt) of non-target species, associated or dependent species for PS Tuvalu flagged vessels only.

YEAR	BLM	BUM	MLS	SWO	BSH	FAL	HAM	MAK	OCS	TOTAL
Purse seine										
2023	13	12	2	0	0	23	0	0	1	51
2022	7	15	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	34
2021	0	3	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	16
2020	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
2019	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
2018	0	7	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	11

4.0 COASTAL STATE REPORTING

4.1 FISHING LICENSES

In order to successfully access Tuvalu’s EEZ, the vessel operators have to agree to the terms and conditions and also sign an access agreement with the Government of Tuvalu, this is an obligation under our Laws. The Tuvalu government continued to issue licenses via an online system through Fims, which is access by the industry on iFims. This fishing permits are issued mostly to bilateral partners in the Philippines, Korea, Taiwan, China, Kiribati and Vanuatu. The Government of Tuvalu continues to grant High seas fishing permits to its flag vessels for the purpose of fishing on areas beyond our national jurisdiction for our National fleet. In addition, multinational accords like the US Treaty and FSM Arrangement can access Tuvalu’s EEZ for the purpose of fishing operation under their regional access licenses.

The Fisheries department issued a total of 149 fishing licenses for the year 2023, under the category of bilateral agreements in table 4 and figure 3. The Purse Seiners has been the most dominant gear type throughout these past four years. The 149 licenses recorded in table 6 for the year 2023, do not include fishing vessels registered by the FSM Arrangement, and US Treaties, which are treated separately in table 5. For foreign purse seiners. Bilateral arrangements covered 95 vessels, the FSM Arrangement registered 86 vessels and 12 vessels were registered under the US Treaty.

Table 4: Number of licenses issued for fishing in Tuvalu’s EEZ, by flag and gear type from 2019 to 2023.

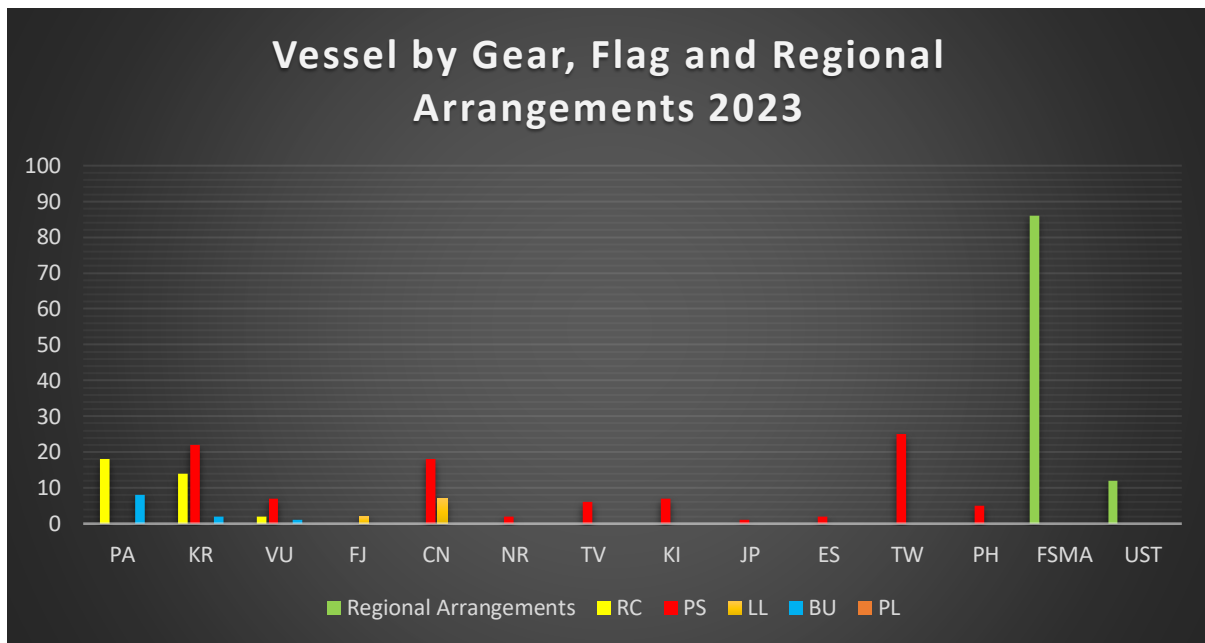
Source: TUFMAN 1 & PNA FIMS.

Years	Longline	Purse seine	Pole & Line	Fish Carrier	Bunker	TOTAL
2019	70	104	14	51	0	239
2020	31	98	16	55	4	204
2021	27	108	12	26	10	183
2022	23	93	1	6	10	133
2023	9	95	0	34	11	149

Table 5: Numbers of PS bilateral & multilateral licensed vessels authorized to fish in Tuvalu EEZ from 2019 to 2023. Key: FSMA – Federated State of Micronesia Arrangement, UST – US Treaty. Source: PNA FIMS.

Years	Bilateral	FSMA	UST	TOTAL
2019	104	68	27	199
2020	98	70	25	193
2021	108	83	17	208
2022	93	82	7	182
2023	95	86	12	193

Figure 3: Annual number of licensed fishing vessels by gear, flag and Regional agreements in 2023.



4.2 TUNA CATCH IN TUVALU EEZ

Tuvalu Economic Exclusive Zones covers an oceanic area of approximately 749,790 km² with a population of 11,000 people who consistently depend on their coastal and Oceanic fishery. The Tuvalu Fishery Department continue to carefully monitor the inshore and offshore fishery, with assistance from regional organisations in the pacific region.

The Purse Seine utmost Catches of tuna species in Tuvalu’s EEZ for 2023 were caught mostly by vessels operating under our bilateral and regional arrangements in figure 4. Skipjack tuna has dominant the highest catch taken inside our EEZ with Taiwan Flag vessels leading the table with the most catch. Skipjack tuna is estimate to be around 42,284mt while 892mt of Yellowfin tuna and 409mt of Bigeye tuna caught by Purse seine fleet inside Tuvalu EEZ.

The Longline fleet continues to operate within Tuvalu EEZ for the year 2023 in figure 5. Yellowfin Tuna is the most dominant species caught within our EEZ with an estimate catch of 221mt. Bigeye tuna has taken the second most catch taken within our EEZ with an estimate of 114mt. The last of these target tuna species is Albacore tuna, and it is estimate to be around 86mt. There is also other species taken within our EEZ and it is estimate to be around 47mt. Theses longline vessels are mostly to be flagged by Fiji and China.

The last point we need to clarify on this report is on figure 5 for LL catch in our EEZ. The data retrieve from Tufman 2 states that there was fishing held by Kiribati LL Flag vessels inside our EEZ. In order to align this report with our Licensing obligation we note there were no Kiribati LL vessels license by TFD in 2023. The point arises within our internal discussion and was clarified by SPC that this LL vessel were Chartered by KI.

Figure 4: Total raised catch estimates (mt) in Tuvalu EEZ by flag and species for 2023. Source: TUFMAN 2

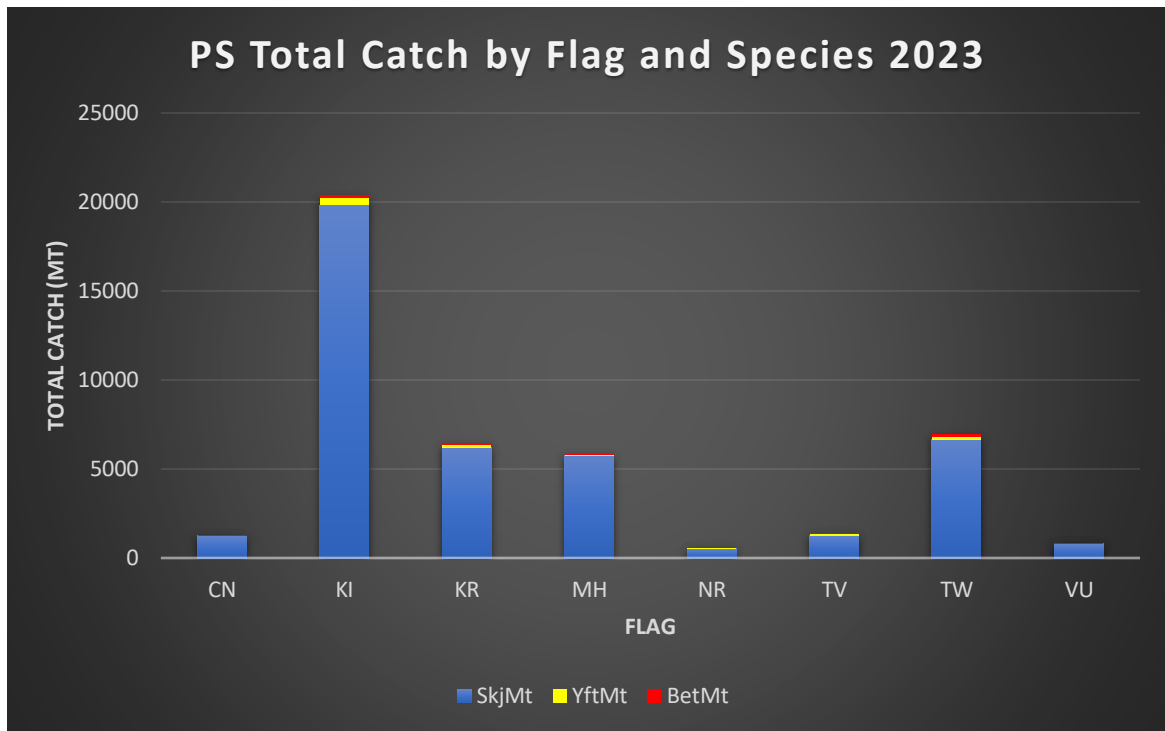
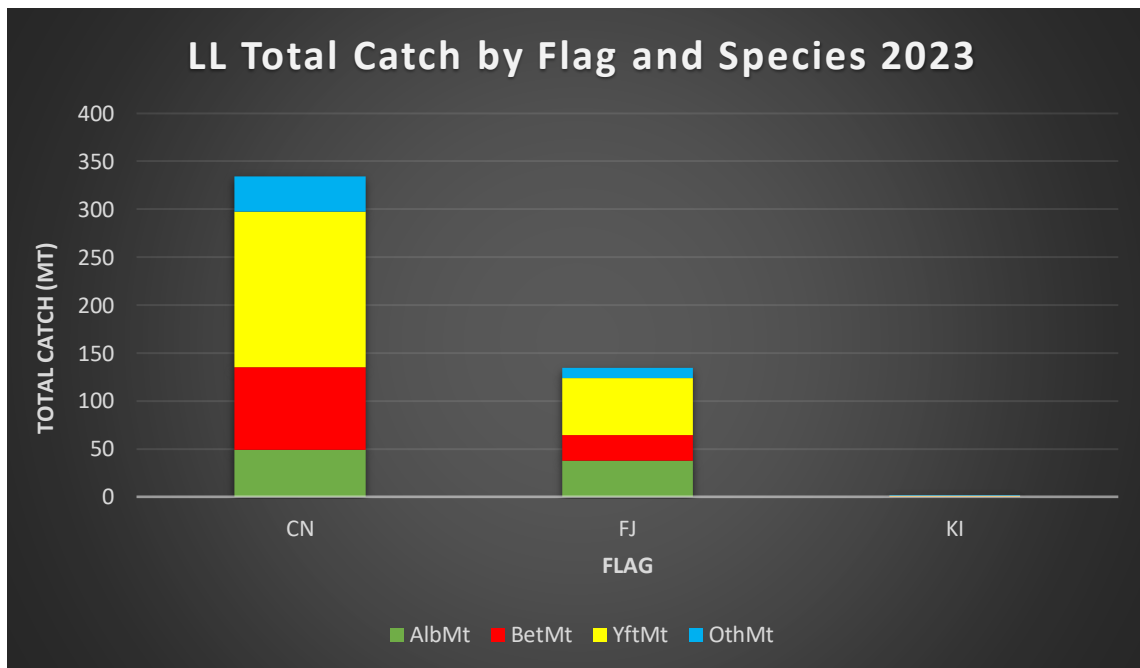


Figure 5: Total raised catch estimates (mt) in Tuvalu EEZ by flag and species for 2023. Source: TUFMAN 2



5.0 SOCIO ECONOMIC FATCORS

The fisheries licensing continues provide fisheries revenue to the Government of Tuvalu annually. This is crucial for sustaining government services, especially those related to health, education, and other areas of government expenditure.

6.0 DISPOSAL OF CATCH

The Tuvalu Purse Seine vessels transshipped in Tuvalu at a designated transshipment area.

7.0 ONSHORE DEVELOPMENT

The GOT's commercial fishery interests are represented by the National Fisheries Corporation of Tuvalu (NAFICOT), which has undergone reform to conform to the Public Enterprises (Performance and Accountability) Act 2009's requirements. In 2020, the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer and the Financial Officer officially created the NAFICOT management. The NAFICOT started marketing catches of local fishermen at the end of 2023.

8.0 FUTURE PROSPECT OF FISHERY

Despite significant obstacles, Tuvalu currently promotes domestication of its tuna fisheries. However, the ability to place seafarers to work on fishing vessels would be an important step in the development of our resources.

9.0 STATUS OF TUNA FISHERY AND DATA COLLECTION

9.1 LOGSHEET DATA COLLECTION

Logsheet data are collected weekly by the Tuvalu Fisheries Department, through emails from vessel operators. These logsheets are to be submitted by the vessel operator within 7 working days for Purse Seiners and 14 working days for Longliners after completion of a trip. For vessels offloading in port Funafuti, their logsheets are collected onboard the vessels by our compliance officers and handed over to our data entry officers so that data can be entered accordingly into the Tufman 2 database. These logsheets are verified daily by authorized officers who have access into system. Available data shows that Tuvalu Flagged Purse Seiners' Logsheets have 100% coverage. Although this covered only a few days' fishing and some of the data are not shared on TUFMAN 2 system due to the data confidentiality.

9.2 OBSERVER PROGRAM

In 2023, there were 74 active observers since after a long break due to COVID-19. Tuvalu's observer programme (TVOB) has continued their normal routine in placing of observer on Purse seiner (100%) and with plan to place more on Fish carrier. There were 74 active observers and there were expecting to recruit more observer soon. The number of trips and sea days for observers were very high in 2023 compared to 2022 in table 6. There were no FFA placement in 2023.

Table 6: Number of Observer trips and sea days in 2022-2023

ARRANGEMENT	2022		2023	
	TRIPS	SEA DAYS	TRIPS	SEA DAYS
TV OBSERVER PROGRAMME	15	512	248	7178
PNA	11	417	103	3261

10 CMM REPORTING

SECTION A: SPECIFIC INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED IN ANNUAL REPORT PART 1 AS REQUIRED BY CCMS AND OTHER DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION.

CMM 2009 -03 [Swordfish], Para 8	There is no Tuvalu vessel recorded fishing in the Convention Area South of 20 degree South					
Observer coverage (WCPFC 11 decision – para 484 (b))	Refer to the Observer Program under the status of tuna fishery and data collection					
CMM 2009-06 [Transshipment], Para 11 (ANNEX II)	(1) The total quantities, by weight, of highly migratory fish stocks covered by this measure that were transshipped by fishing vessels the CCM is responsible for reporting against, with those quantities broken down by:					
	a) Offloaded and received;	b) Transshipped in port, transshipped at sea in areas of national jurisdiction, and transshipped beyond areas	c) Transshipped inside the Convention Area and transshipped outside the Convention Area;	d) Caught inside the Convention Area and caught outside the Convention Area;	e) Species	f) Product form

		of national jurisdiction;				
40,607MT	Honiara, Solomon Rabaul, PNG Pohnpei, FSM Tarawa, Kiribati Christmas, Kiribati Funafuti, Tuvalu Busan, Korea Majuro, Marshall Islands	Inside the Convention Area	Inside the Convention Area	SKJ (29,193MT)	Frozen whole round	
	Honiara, Solomon Rabaul, PNG Pohnpei, FSM Tarawa, Kiribati Christmas, Kiribati Funafuti, Tuvalu Busan, Korea Majuro, Marshall Islands	Inside the Convention Area	Inside the Convention Area	BET (209 MT)	Frozen whole round	
	Honiara, Solomon Rabaul, PNG Pohnpei, FSM Tarawa, Kiribati Christmas, Kiribati Funafuti, Tuvalu Busan, Korea Majuro, Marshall Islands	Inside the Convention Area	Inside the Convention Area	YFT (11,205MT)	Frozen whole round	

	(2) The number of transshipments involving highly migratory fish stocks covered by this measure by fishing vessels that responsible for reporting against, broken down by:				
	a) Offload and received	b) Transhipped in port, transhipped at sea in areas of national jurisdiction, and transhipped beyond areas of national jurisdiction	c) Transhipped inside the Convention Area and transhipped outside the Convention Area	d) Caught inside the Convention Area and outside the Convention Area	e) Fishing gear
	61	Honiara, Solomon Rabaul, PNG Pohnpei, FSM Tarawa, Kiribati Christmas, Kiribati Funafuti, Tuvalu Busan, Korea Majuro, Marshall Islands	Inside the Convention Area	Inside the Convention Area	PS
CMM 2011-03 [Impact of PS fishing on cetaceans], Para 5	There were no recorded interactions or encirclements of cetaceans				

CM 2018-03 [Seabirds] Para 13	There were no recorded interaction with birds
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CMM 2018-03: [Seabirds] Annex 2. Guidelines for reporting templates for Part 1 report

The following tables should be included in the annual Part 1 country reports, summarizing the most recent five years.

Table x: Effort, observed and estimated seabird captures by fishing year for [CCM] [South of 30°S; 25°S-30°S; North of 23°N; or 23°N – 25°S¹]. For each year, the table gives the total number of hooks; the number of observed hooks; observer coverage (the percentage of hooks that were observed); the number of observed captures (both dead and alive); and the capture rate (captures per thousand hooks).

Year	Fishing effort				Observed seabird captures	
	Number of vessels	Number of hooks	Observed hooks	% hooks observed	Number	Rate ²
[year]						
[year]						
[year]						
[previous year e.g. 2017]						
[current year e.g. 2018]						

¹ Insert 'North of 23°N', 'South of 30°S', '25°S-30°S' or '23°N – 25°S'. For CCMs fishing in all areas, provide separate tables for each area.

² Provide data as captures per one thousand hooks.

Table y: Proportion of mitigation types¹ used by the fleet in [year].

	Combination of Mitigation Measures	Proportion of observed effort using mitigation measures					
		South of 30°S	25°S-30°S	25°S to 23°N	North of 23°N		
	No mitigation measures						
Options required south of 25°S	TL + NS						
	TL + WB						
	NS + WB						
	TL + WB + NS						
Other options 25°S-30°S	HS						
	WB						
Other options north of 23°N	TL						
	SS/BC/WB/DSLS						
Provide any other combination of mitigation measures here	SS/BC/WB/(MOD or BDB)						
	Totals (must equal 100%)						

¹ TL = tori line, NS = night setting, WB = weighted branch lines, SS = side setting, BC = bird curtain, BDB = blue dyed bait, DSLS = deep setting line shooter, MOD = management of offal discharge, HS = hook-shielding device.

Table z: Number of observed seabird captures in [CCM] longline fisheries, 2012, by species and area.

Species	South of 30°S	25°S-30°S	North of 23°N	23°N –25°S	Total
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E.g. Antipodean albatross					
[species name]					
[species name]					
[species name]					
[species name]					
[species name]					
[species name]					
Total					

SECTION B: ADDITIONAL ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS THAT COULD BE INCLUDED IN ANNUAL REPORT PART 1, IF NOT OTHERWISE REPORTED ANNUALLY TO WCPFC

CMM 2006-04 [South West striped Marlin], Para 4	No Tuvalu flagged vessels fished south of 15 degrees south.
CMM 2015-02 [South Pacific Albacore] Para 4	Addressed through the regular provision of operational catch/effort logsheet data to SPC, who automatically include these data in the WCPFC databases, as per our authorization
CMM 2019-03 [North Pacific Albacore], Para 3	No Tuvalu flagged vessels fished in the CMM area.