



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE  
TWENTIETH REGULAR SESSION**

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

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**WCPFC-SC20-AR/CCM-29**

**WALLIS AND FUTUNA**



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**ANNUAL REPORT – PART 1**  
**INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS**

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COVERING 2019-2023

**WALLIS AND FUTUNA ISLANDS**

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Scientific data was provided to the Commission in accordance with relevant rules	<b>Aggregated data was provided</b> for year 2019 to 2023
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## 1. ABSTRACT

Wallis and Futuna Islands fishing fleets are composed of small scale vessels (<10 m) not mainly targeting tuna and species of interest for WCPFC. Those vessels are operating different fishing gears in the same trip. Tuna catches are mainly recorded in the territorial waters, apart from few trips on seamounts from 40 to 70 nm away from the islands. Data made available to the Fisheries Dpt comes only from small commercial fishermen's logsheets. Overall catches including recreational and subsistence catches are estimated based on the assumption that registered catches by commercial fleet make 80% of total.

Over the 5 year times series, effort of fishing and catch rates of tuna species by small scale nearshore fishery have dropped significantly.

## 2. ANNUAL FISHERIES INFORMATION

Table 1 : Annual catch (kg) and effort estimates of Wallis and Futuna professional fleet for primary species, over years 2019-2023.

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Small scale fisheries**</b>	<b>Effort*</b>					
	nb of trips with or without tuna	1214	1009	886	1127	680
	Nb of trips with tuna and tuna-likes fished	756	492	358	286	258
	<b>Catches of key species (t)</b>					
	Yellowfin tuna (YFT)	10979	5325	2631	2499	1238
	Big eye tuna (BET)	0	0	0	0	0
	Skipjack (SKJ)	8006	6825	3644	2230	1019
	Dogtooth tuna (DOT)	650	163	70	142	99
	Swordfish (SWO)	0	0	0	0	0
	Blue marlin (BUM)	0	0	0	0	0
	Striped marlin (MLS)	1051	1102	111	455	428

(\*)fishing effort is hard to estimate because of predominance of non-target and multiple-gear fisheries. Numbers of trips has been estimated through the annual total trips and the number of target species caught according to logsheets submitted by commercial fishermen. The trips data corresponded only to professional fishermen.

(\*\*) no fleet targeting mainly tuna. "Small scale fisheries" encompasses inshore or near-shore fishermen with mixed fishing techniques.

Table 2 : Number of commercial vessels having fished in territorial waters of Wallis and Futuna (not necessarily targeting tuna species), 2019 to 2023.

<b>Small scale fisheries</b>	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	23	41	40	39	40

Table 3 : Annual reported catches of sharks (kg) in territorial waters of Wallis and Futuna, 2019 to 2023. \*\*\*\*

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Silvertip shark (ALS)</b>	0	12	0	0	0
<b>Blacktip reef shark (BLR)</b>	0	27	0	5	2
<b>Requiem sharks nei (SKH)</b>	40	13	5	0	0

(\*\*\*\*) catches from all fishing gears. In addition, there is no data on incidental catches of sensitive species such as marine birds and turtles. Most of the shark bycatches are a result of deepwater fishing for snappers, and are under-reported.

Fishermen report increasing encounters and catches of sharks around the islands.

Table 4 : nb of logsheets and samples\*\*\*\*, not necessarily related to tuna fishing for years 2019-2023.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Nb of logsheets</b>	1214	1009	886	1127	680
<b>Nb of fish measured</b>	0	687	6206	14286	9726

(\*\*\*\*) from landing surveys since 2020.

### 3. BACKGROUND

There hasn't been large or middle scale tuna fishing activity in Wallis and Futuna EEZ since 2012. Last records of activity date back in 2011, with a single 140 UMS domestic based longliner, licensed from 2010 to 2014, which operated a few trips before stopping in 2012.

Professional small-scale fishery is monitored through logsheets submitted in the frame of fuel subsidizing scheme. In 2023, Wallis & Futuna commercial small-scale fishery fleet counted up to 40 boats (21 in Wallis and 19 in Futuna) using artisanal gears (handline, trolling, spearfishing, gillnetting...) operating mainly within territorial waters. In 2023, tuna and tuna-like species made up about 11% of the catches in Wallis and 9% of the catches in Futuna (10% on average).

Subsistence and in a smaller extent recreational catches have been estimated by various means and around 20% of the overall catch. Census carried out in 2014 counted 181 boats. It's not known how many of them can be involved in fishing activities, but likely much less than total number.

There is currently three nearshore FADs around Wallis Island. The FAD program is still ongoing with the increase of device positions and FAD fishing training to foster fishermen shift from reef fishing to tuna fishing. Two devices are ready to be set around Futuna.

Recently the fisheries division started implementing a new nearshore fishery survey protocol based on length-weight measurement in order to undertake assessments of fished reef species. The outcomes show that a significant proportion of species are being overfished.

### 4. FLAG STATE REPORTING

No flagged tuna fishing fleet.

### 5. COASTAL STATE REPORTING

Small scale commercial nearshore tuna fishing data are collected from logsheets as a requirement for the benefit of fuel subsidy. To estimate overall catch, it's been considered that commercial catches make up 80% of overall catch.

The number of trips reported corresponds to commercial sector only because of insufficient data from subsistence fishery (table 1). To fill this data gap, the fisheries division has been implementing since January 2020 a new survey protocol based on SPC's IKASAVEA software and length-weight measurements for commercial and in a lesser extent subsistence fisheries. Yet, the coverage of subsistence fishing activities by this means is considered to be low.

Catch by species time series show a continuous decline for almost every species over the time period, steeper than concomitant decrease of fishing trips where species of interest were caught. Along with the increasing number of dFADs grounded or encountered around the islands, this is raising a feeling among community that the EEZ is illegally fished

In the absence of fishing operations by a domestic fleet in the EEZ and in the convention area and of foreign fleet licensed to fish within the EEZ, there is no other information related to tuna fishing to be submitted to the Commission.

## **6. FUTURE PROSPECTS**

A new mid-term fishing development plan was endorsed march 2024. By 2027, the plan sets as a top priority the launching of a tuna longline fishery consisting of a middle-scale longliner (19 to 22 m) and a processing facility both run under public-private partnership, targeting domestic market.

The authorities are in the process of seeking partnership with a foreign fishing company in order to undertake a one year fishing trial. This step will provide missing information about catch rates, seasonality, predation, operational costs and marketing...

A small scale offshore fishing fleet, made up of 3 to 4 aluminium crafts, less than 10m long, has started operating since 2022, targeting seamounts and offshore resources by trolling and vertical line. Some of them are on the way to experiment small longline. Given the safety and viability concerns that this type of fishery raises, government is now thinking of reducing financial support to this type of projects.

A project consisting of a 11 m boat was expected to start vertical and horizontal longlining in 2023, targeting 20 to 30 mt/yr. It is now due to start in the second half of 2024.

## **7. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

No recent or ongoing research related to tuna fishing or tuna resources to be reported. Advantage may be taken from above mentioned fishing trial to carry out such activities to provide the longline project and the authorities with useful information for the sake of efficient fishing and good management. In the same time, vessel will be available for any research project during the trial, allowing better cost recovery.