



**FFSAPI-SARGEN HANDLINE  
FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

**Philippines**

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July 26, 2024

**Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission**

PO Box 2356 Kaselehlie Street Pohnpei  
Federated States of Micronesia, 96941

**Thru: Ms. Rhea Moss-Christian**  
Executive Director

**Dr. Sungkwon So**  
Science Manager

**APPEAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HARVEST CONTROL RULES AND HARVEST  
STRATEGY FOR YELLOWFIN AND BIGEYE TUNAS**

Dear Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission:

In the spirit of conservation and sustainability, we, the Fresh Frozen Seafood Association of the Philippines, Inc. (FFSAPI) and the Sargen Fishport Tuna Handline Fishing Association, Inc. (SARGEN HANDLINE), are reaching out to you with an appeal for support.

Our associations have embarked on a significant and transformative journey through the FFSAPI-SARGEN HANDLINE Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP). This comprehensive 5-year initiative which is now on its second year of implementation, is dedicated to enhancing both the environmental and social aspects of yellowfin and bigeye tuna handline fisheries in the Philippines' Fisheries Management Areas 2 and 3. Our ultimate goal is to secure an eco-label certification that meets global market standards, ensuring the competitiveness of Philippine tuna products on the world stage. We are proud to have 88 enrolled tuna handline boats—66 from the commercial sector and 22 from the municipal sector—ranging in size from 3 gross tons to 66 gross tons.

Our commitment goes beyond economic gains. While we strive to support the livelihoods of handline stakeholders and contribute to the nation's food security, the sustainability of yellowfin and bigeye tuna stocks is our highest priority. Therefore, we seek the dedicated efforts of the members of the WCPFC Scientific Committee to expedite the development of harvest control rules and a robust harvest strategy for yellowfin and bigeye tuna in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean during the upcoming Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Scientific Committee Meeting on August 14-21, 2024, in Manila.

It is essential to recall that WCPFC11 agreed to Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2014-06, aiming to develop and implement a harvest strategy approach for key fisheries and stocks in the WCPO. In 2015, pursuant to paragraph 13 of the CMM, WCPFC12 agreed on a Workplan for adopting Harvest Strategies under CMM 2014-06.

Given the impact of various fishing gears on tuna stocks, it is crucial to consider mixed fishery interactions when developing harvest strategies. According to the latest WCPFC Regular Session held in Cook Island in December 2023, the Commission has noted significant progress in developing the mixed fishery Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) framework. The adoption of target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin has been rescheduled to 2024, with management procedures for these species tentatively scheduled for 2025.

Given this timeline, the upcoming Scientific Committee Meeting this August is pivotal.


Establishing harvest control rules and strategies is essential to ensure the sustainability of our handline fishery and meet the eco-label certification's sustainability performance indicators. This is not just about protecting our fisheries; it is about safeguarding the future of our fishers, their families, and our nation's food security.

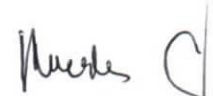
Let us work together to protect our fishers, safeguard their livelihoods, and maintain healthy fish stocks for future generations.

We eagerly anticipate the adoption of harvest control rules and harvest strategies in the WCPO.

Thank you very much for your support.

Respectfully yours,

  
ENGR. EMMA F. GARAY  
President, FFSAPI

  
MERCEDES ONG  
President, SARGEN HANDLINE