



COMMISSION
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**Views of two Organisations on Harvest Control Rules and Strategies for Yellowfin and Bigeye
Tuna**

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Submitted by Industry Representatives from the Philippines



FFSAPI-SARGEN HANDLINE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Philippines

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November 27, 2024

To the Esteemed Members of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC):

Subject: Call for Expedited Action on Harvest Control Rules and Strategies for Yellowfin and Bigeye Tuna

Dear Esteemed Members,

Greetings from the Philippines. On behalf of the **Fresh Frozen Seafood Association of the Philippines, Inc. (FFSAPI)** and the **Sargen Fishport Tuna Handline Fishing Association, Inc. (SARGEN HANDLINE)**, we extend our deep appreciation for your commitment to ensuring the sustainability of our shared marine resources.

As stakeholders in the rich fisheries of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, we write to underscore the urgency of safeguarding yellowfin and bigeye tuna stocks for the benefit of our fishers, local communities, and future generations.

Our associations are currently implementing the **FFSAPI-SARGEN HANDLINE Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP)**—a five-year initiative aimed at improving the environmental and social sustainability of handline tuna fisheries in the Philippines' Fisheries Management Areas 2 and 3. This project, which is now in its second year, seeks to achieve **eco-label certification**, meeting global standards to ensure that Philippine tuna remains competitive in international markets.

The stakes for this initiative are high: our fisheries directly support the livelihoods of hundreds of fishers, their families, and broader coastal communities. Through this project, **88 handline tuna boats**—66 from the commercial sector and 22 from the municipal sector—are committed to adopting sustainable practices. However, achieving certification hinges on progress at the WCPFC level, particularly in establishing **harvest control rules (HCRs)** and adopting a comprehensive **harvest strategy** for yellowfin and bigeye tuna.

We recognize the significant strides the Commission has made toward fulfilling **Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2014-06**, which envisions harvest strategies for key tuna species. We are also aware of the challenges posed by mixed fishery interactions and varying fishing practices across member nations. Nonetheless, the upcoming **21st Regular Session of the WCPFC in Suva, Fiji**, presents an unparalleled opportunity to take decisive action.

Given the **still pending adoption of Target Reference Points (TRPs)** for yellowfin and bigeye tuna to 2024 and the anticipated development of management procedures by 2025, we respectfully urge the Commission to prioritize the following during this session:

1. **Expedite the development of Harvest Control Rules (HCRs):** Implementing HCRs is critical to meeting sustainability benchmarks and supporting Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs) across the region.
2. **Adopt Target Reference Points (TRPs):** Establishing TRPs will provide clear, science-based objectives to guide sustainable management.
3. **Advance the Mixed Fishery Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE):** Addressing multi-gear impacts is essential to ensuring a balanced approach that benefits all stakeholders.

Time is of the essence, as certification milestones are tied to the timely adoption of these measures. While delays may create challenges, proactive action will send a strong signal of the Commission's commitment to sustainability, benefitting not only our fisheries but also the broader global market reliant on responsibly sourced tuna.

We call on the WCPFC to act decisively to secure the future of the region's tuna fisheries. Together, we can ensure that these vital resources remain resilient and productive for generations to come.

Thank you for your dedication to the shared vision of sustainable fisheries. We remain hopeful and fully committed to working alongside the Commission and its member nations to achieve these critical goals.

Respectfully yours,


ENGR. EMMA F. GARAY
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MERCEDES ONG
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