

SUMMARY OF BYCATCH IN WCPFC LONGLINE FISHERIES AT A REGIONAL SCALE, 2003-2023

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- Note that the catch estimates should be interpreted as the catch that would have been recorded by observers with 100% coverage of fishing effort.
- Note the refinements to the taxonomic resolution of catch estimates for marine mammals.
- Note the refinements to the definitions of fleets used to estimate catch rates and catch.
- Note the difficulties in robust estimation of longline catches from observer data, particularly for rarely caught species, given the low levels and imbalanced nature of observer coverage, and for some years the low coverage of available L BEST HBF data.

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- Estimates of bycatch indicate a decreasing trend for some finfish, billfish, elasmobranchs, sea turtles and marine mammals. However, these decreases are relatively weak in relation to the uncertainty in the estimates (which is larger than implied by the 95% confidence intervals).
- Note that enhancement of the level and spatial coverage of observers through human and electronic monitoring approaches would improve the estimation of the catch rate models and catches.
- Note that earlier work suggests that the trends in estimated catch rates are more reliable than the magnitudes of the estimated catches.

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

The Scientific Committee is invited to note:

- The updated bycatch estimates for WCPFC Longline fishery.
- Under the methodology applied, the current levels and imbalanced nature of observer coverage limits the reliability of the magnitude of estimated catches and the ability to provide spatially disaggregated estimates.
- Future SC's consider the bycatch estimates as an Information Paper unless changes in the trends of bycatch estimates are detected and/or sufficient observer coverage is available to address spatial disaggregation requests of the SC.