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**MARINE SPECIES IDENTIFICATION MANUAL FOR HORIZONTAL LONGLINE  
FISHERMEN**

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Paper prepared by

Chapman, L., Sharples, P., Brogan, D., Desurmont, A., Beverly, S., and W. Sokimi

Secretariat of the Pacific Commission  
Noumea, New Caledonia

## **Marine species identification manual for horizontal longline fishermen**

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Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Noumea, New Caledonia.

The collection, identification and enumeration of catch data from WCPO fisheries is a fundamental role of the Commission. Continual improvements to information on HMS, non-target, associated and dependent species in the Convention Area is a specific function of the Scientific Committee as noted in the Convention (*Article 12: Functions of the Scientific Committee*). The accurate identification and quantification of total catch from longline fisheries has been problematic due to the wide variety of species across all taxa that can potentially interact with pelagic longline gear. At-sea observer programs are instrumental towards these goals but are often limited in their efficacy by sparse or incomplete training materials. Clear, well illustrated guides for fishermen are far less common and their absence hinders the recording and submission of accurate logbook data.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community is well aware of these problems and has recently completed publication of a comprehensive, fully illustrated identification guide: **Marine species identification manual for horizontal longline fishermen**. The manual is fully illustrated with reproductions of hand painted images commissioned specifically for this document and annotated with key distinguishing characteristics for each species. The manual includes chapters covering:

- Tuna and tuna like species
- Sharks
- Other fish species
- Sea turtles
- Seabirds
- Toothed whales
- Dolphins
- Damaged fish (cetacean, shark, squid, seabird damage)
- Longline baitfish

The manual is not intended to be a thorough taxonomic reference for scientists but is designed for ease of use and understanding by the layperson and commercial fishermen in particular. The SPC can provide copies to fisheries organizations for the purpose of improving data quality. Interested parties should contact Peter Sharples <peterbs@spc.int>.

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Most of the original artwork was produced by Mr Les Hata with contributions from Ms Rachel O'Shea. Cover design, seabird and mammal color diagrams, formatting and layout were completed by Ms Youngmi Choi. The manual was edited by Ms Angela Templeton and translated into the French language by the SPC Translation and Interpretation Section, Noumea, New Caledonia.