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

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Submitted by American Samoa

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE TWENTY-SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 11–19 August 2026

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

AMERICAN SAMOA

2026 Annual Report to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

PART I. INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH, AND STATISTICS

American Samoa

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service

Data Included Through December 2025

Scientific data was provided to the Commission in accordance with the decision relating to the provision of scientific data to the Commission by 30 April 2025	**YES**
If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions:	

1.0 Abstract

In the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Convention Area, the United States (U.S.) territory of American Samoa has a commercial longline fishery targeting albacore (Thunnus alalunga), a purse-seine fishery that targets skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) and yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) that unloads their catch in American Samoa, as well as a small troll fishery.

The longline fishery operates within the U.S. EEZ and in the high seas, while the troll fishery only operates in nearshore waters off American Samoa. The purse-seine fishery operates in the high seas, within the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and in the EEZs of other nations where authorized.

In 2023, the American Samoa Government enacted legislation authorizing the Department of Port Administration to issue landing licenses to purse-seine vessels with the purpose of maintaining a record of locally based vessels that regularly land tuna in American Samoa. U.S.-flagged purse-seine vessels are considered American Samoa-based and integral to the American Samoa economy when they meet the following criteria: (1) possession of a valid Tuna Landing License, and (2) landing at least 50% of their catch in American Samoa. For American Samoa-based vessels, catch and effort are reported for the high seas only.

This report presents estimates of annual catches of tuna, billfish, and other highly migratory

species (HMS), and vessel participation in 2025 for fisheries of American Samoa operating in the WCPFC Convention Area. Statistics for 2025 are provisional.

The species composition by American Samoa-based U.S. purse-seine vessels fishing in the high seas of the WCPFC Convention Area in 2025 was comprised of 76% skipjack (13,995 t), 18% bigeye (3,310 t), and 6% (1,105 t) yellowfin tuna (Table 1a).

In 2025, the total longline fishery catch composition was primarily composed of the targeted species, albacore, accounting for 52% (869 t) of total catch, followed by yellowfin tuna with 20% (340 t) and bigeye tuna with 14% (227 t) (Table 1a).

The troll fishery contributed less than 1% of the total HMS catch and includes fishermen that fish recreationally, for subsistence, or commercially, selling all or a portion of their catch.

2.0 Tabular Annual Fisheries Information

Fisheries of American Samoa had an estimated catch of 20,098 t of tuna, billfish, and other HMS in 2025 (Table 1a). The 2025 catch consisted primarily of tuna with 70% skipjack tuna, 18% bigeye tuna, 7% yellowfin tuna, and 4% albacore, with the remaining 1% of total catch composed of billfish and other pelagic fish. Further discussion of the tabular fisheries information is provided in the following section Flag State Reporting.

Table 1a. Annual catch estimates (metric tons) by gear and primary species, for the WCPFC Convention Area for 2025. (Totals may not match sums of values due to rounding. A zero represents no catch or <0.5 t catch and a "-" indicates a species is not reported for a particular fishery.)

Species and FAO Code	Purse Seine[1]	Longline		Tropical Troll	Total
		NPO[2]	SPO		
Albacore (ALB), North Pacific	-	7	-	-	7
Albacore (ALB), South Pacific	0	-	862	0	862
Bigeye tuna (BET)	3310	180	47	0	3537
Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF)	0	0	0	0	0
Skipjack tuna (SKJ)	13995	9	91	9	14104
Yellowfin tuna (YFT)	1105	83	257	1	1446
Other tuna (TUN KAW FRI)	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL TUNAS	18410	279	1257	11	19957
Black marlin (BLM)	0	0	0	0	0
Blue marlin (BUM)	1	6	36	0	43
Sailfish (SFA)	0	0	1	0	1
Spearfish (SSP)	0	3	1	0	4
Striped marlin (MLS), North Pacific	0	19	-	-	19
Striped marlin (MLS), South Pacific	0	-	6	0	6
Other marlins (BIL)	0	0	0	0	0
Swordfish (SWO), North Pacific	0	10	-	-	10
Swordfish (SWO), South Pacific	0	-	4	0	4
TOTAL BILLFISHES	1	37	49	1	88
Blue shark (BSH)	0	0	0	0	0
Mako shark (MAK)	0	1	0	0	1
Thresher sharks (THR)	0	0	0	0	0
Other sharks (SKH OCS FAL SPN TIG CCL)	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SHARKS	0	1	0	0	1
Mahimahi (DOL)	0	4	1	0	5
Moonfish (LAP)	0	7	0	0	7
Oilfish (GEP)	0	1	0	0	1
Pomfrets (BRZ)	0	4	0	0	4
Wahoo (WAH)	0	13	19	0	32
Other fish (PEL PLS MOP TRX GBA ALX GES RRU DOT)	0	0	3	1	4
TOTAL OTHER	1	29	23	1	54
TOTAL	18412	346	1329	12	20098

[1] Includes high seas catch from American Samoa-based vessels

[2] Includes catches from Hawaii-based vessels that held an American Samoa Limited-entry Longline permit and fished outside of the U.S. EEZ.

Table 1b. Annual catch estimates (metric tons) by gear and primary species, for the WCPFC Convention Area for 2024. (Totals may not match sums of values due to rounding. A zero represents no catch or <0.5 t catch and a "-" indicates a species is not reported for a particular fishery.)

Species and FAO Code	Purse Seine[1]	Longline		Tropical Troll	Total
		NPO[2]	SPO		
Albacore (ALB), North Pacific	-	25	-	-	25
Albacore (ALB), South Pacific	0	-	1024	0	1024
Bigeye tuna (BET)	2796	344	53	0	3193
Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF)	0	0	0	0	0
Skipjack tuna (SKJ)	29132	14	160	1	29307
Yellowfin tuna (YFT)	539	223	208	1	971
Other tuna (TUN KAW FRI)	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL TUNAS	32467	607	1445	2	34521
Black marlin (BLM)	2	0	0	0	2
Blue marlin (BUM)	0	24	67	0	91
Sailfish (SFA)	0	0	3	0	3
Spearfish (SSP)	0	8	0	0	8
Striped marlin (MLS), North Pacific	-	28	-	-	28
Striped marlin (MLS), South Pacific	0	-	2	0	2
Other marlins (BIL)	0	0	0	0	0
Swordfish (SWO), North Pacific	-	64	-	-	64
Swordfish (SWO), South Pacific	0	-	4	0	4
TOTAL BILLFISHES	2	124	77	0	203
Blue shark (BSH)	0	0	0	0	0
Mako shark (MAK)	0	0	0	0	0
Thresher sharks (THR)	0	0	0	0	0
Other sharks (SKH OCS FAL SPN TIG CCL)	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SHARKS	0	0	0	0	0
Mahimahi (DOL)	1	5	1	0	7
Moonfish (LAP)	0	4	0	0	4
Oilfish (GEP)	0	3	0	0	3
Pomfrets (BRZ)	0	9	0	0	9
Wahoo (WAH)	0	24	17	0	41
Other fish (PEL PLS MOP TRX GBA ALX GES RRU DOT)	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL OTHER	1	45	20	0	66
TOTAL	32470	777	1542	2	34791

[1] Includes high seas catch from American Samoa-based vessels

[2] Includes catches from Hawaii-based vessels that held an American Samoa Limited-entry Longline permit and fished outside of the U.S. EEZ.

Table 2. Annual effort by gear in the WCPFC Convention Area for 2024-2025. (Effort units vary by gear.)

	Purse Seine	Longline	
	Days Fished[1]	NPO Hooks[2]	SPO Hooks[3]
2024	356	3,353,108	4,063,248
2025	473	1,795,242	4,189,499

[1] Includes high seas fishing days for American Samoa-based vessels excluding the IATTC overlap area
[2] Includes high seas hooks set by Hawaii-based vessels that held an American Samoa Limited-entry Longline permit
[3] Includes hooks set by American Samoa-based vessels

Table 3. Number of vessels, by gear and size category (gross registered tonnage), active in the WCPFC Convention Area in 2025.

	0–50	51–200	1001–1500	1500+	Total
Purse Seine [1]			**1**	**6**	**7**
Total American Samoa longline		**14**			**14**
Longline (Hawaii-based) [2]		6			6
Longline (American Samoa-based)		8			8
American Samoa Troll	**11**				**11**
TOTAL	**11**	**14**	**1**	**6**	**32**

[1] Includes American Samoa-based vessels
[2] Includes Hawaii-based vessels that held an American Samoa Limited-entry Longline permit and fished outside of the U.S. EEZ.

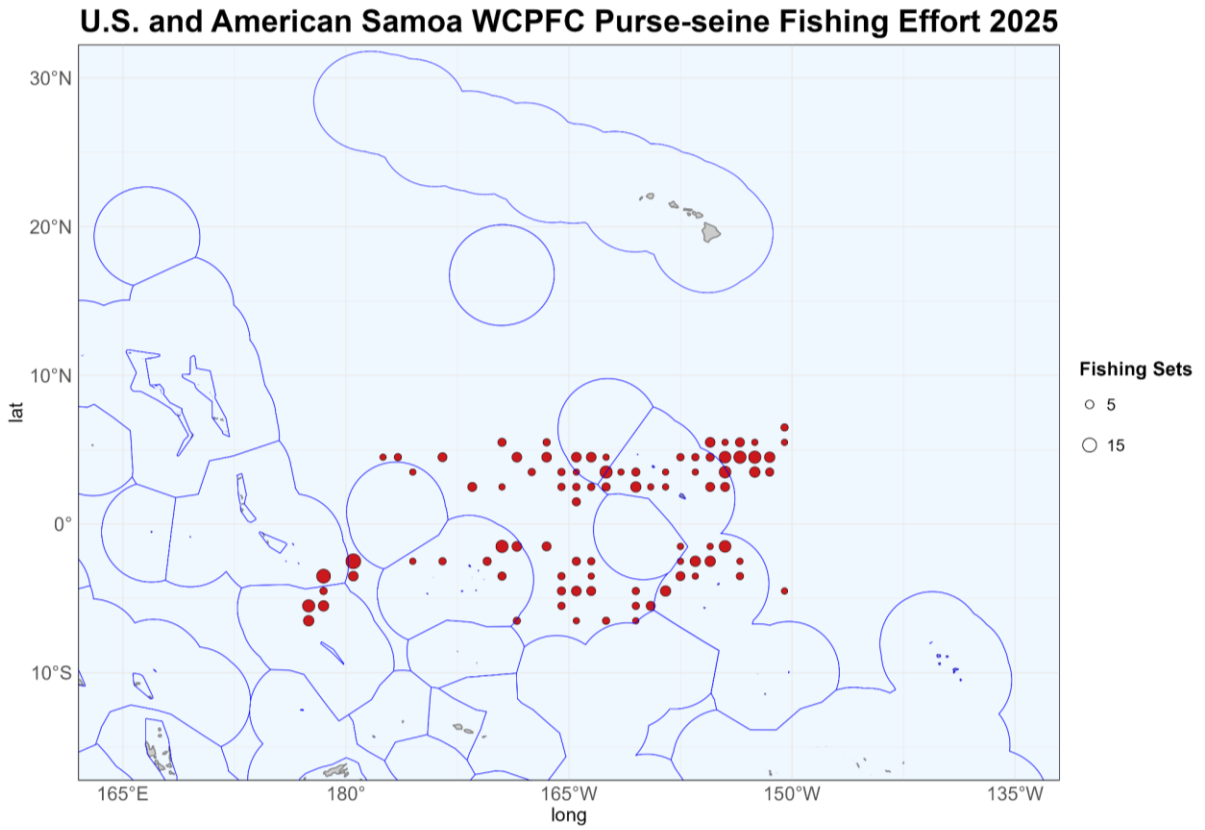

Figure 1. Spatial distribution of fishing effort (number of sets) reported by U.S.-and American Samoa-based purse-seine vessels fishing in the WCPFC Convention Area in 2025. (Effort in some areas is not shown to preserve data confidentiality.)

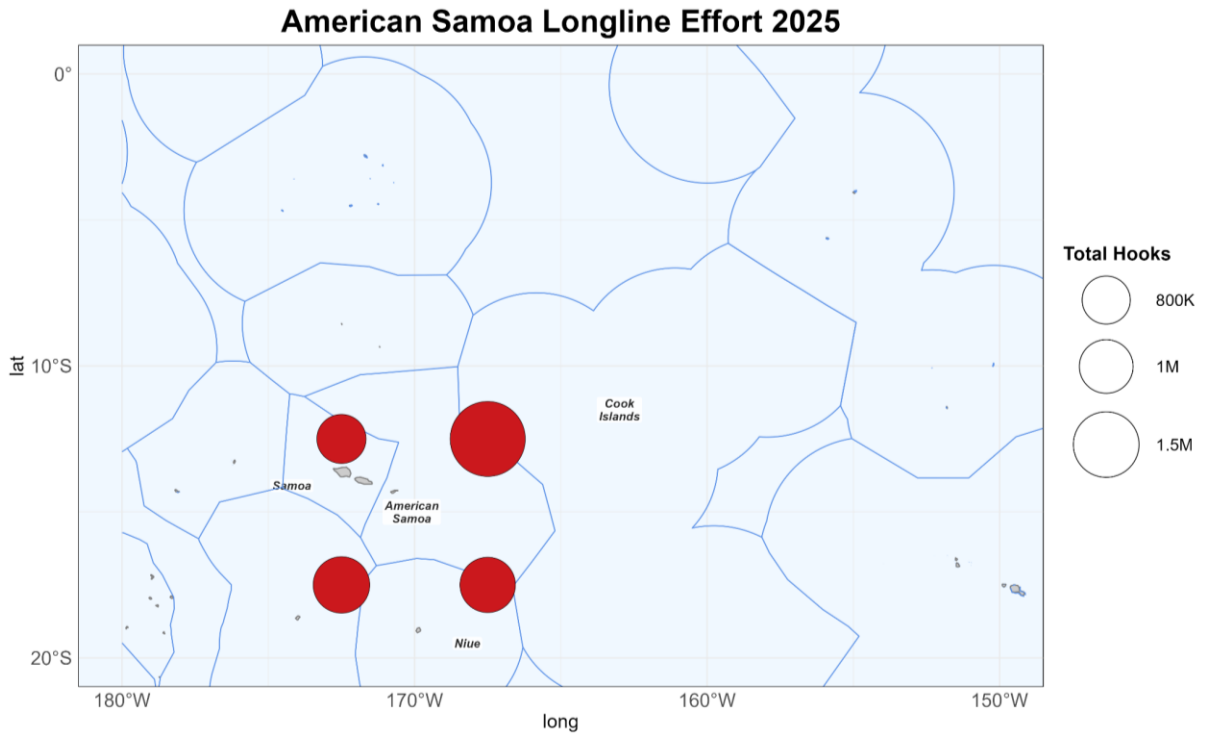

Figure 2a. Spatial distribution of fishing effort (number of hooks) reported by U.S.-flagged American Samoa-based longline vessels fishing in the Pacific Ocean in 2025. (Effort in some areas is not shown to preserve data confidentiality.

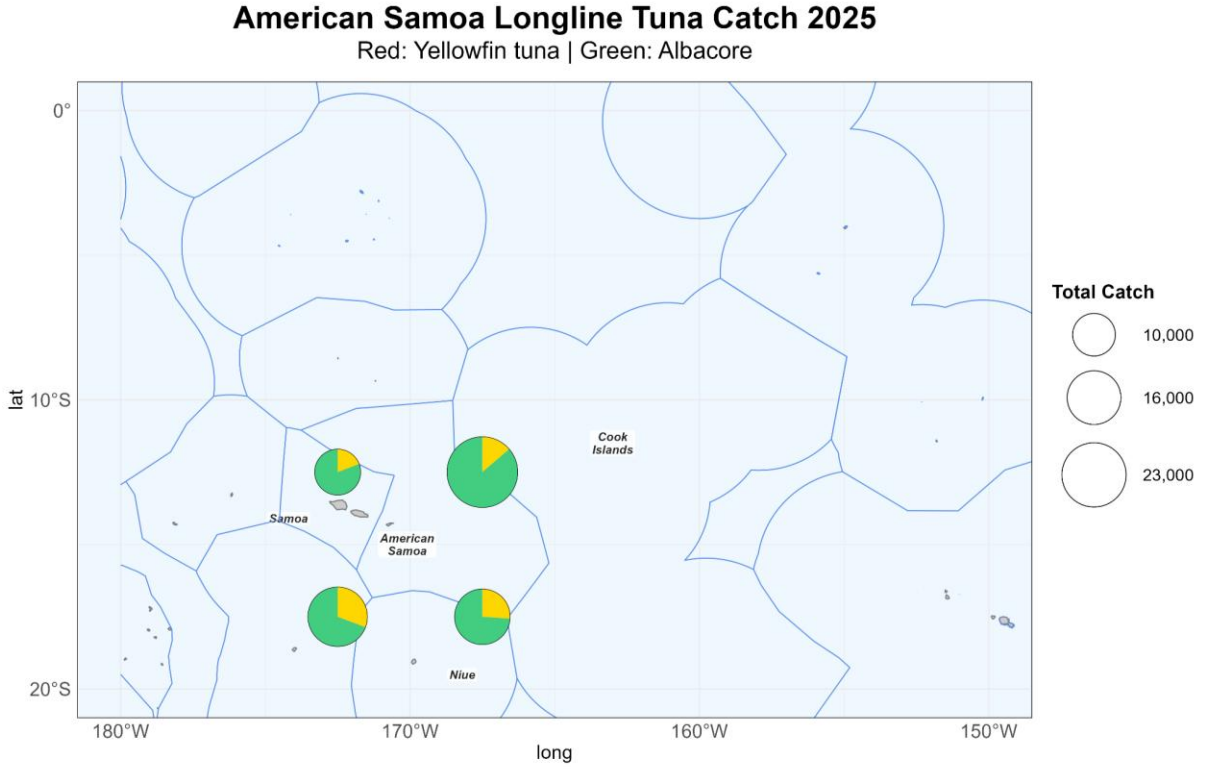

Figure 2b. Spatial distribution of retained and released albacore and yellowfin tuna (in number of fish) by U.S.-flagged American Samoa-based longline vessels in 2025. (Catches in some areas are not shown to preserve data confidentiality.)

3.0 Background

Purse-Seine Fishery

In 2023, the American Samoa Government enacted legislation authorizing the Department of Port Administration to issue landing licenses to purse-seine vessels with the purpose of maintaining a record of locally based vessels that regularly land tuna in American Samoa. Catch and effort data are reported only for American Samoa-based vessels that meet the following criteria: (1) possession of a valid Tuna Landing License, and (2) landing at least 50% of their catch in American Samoa. Additionally, data are limited to fishing activity on the high seas in the WCPFC Convention Area.

4.0 Flag State Reporting of National Fisheries

Purse-Seine Fishery

In 2025, seven U.S.-flagged purse-seine vessels operated in the WCPFC Convention Area and were considered American Samoa-based and integral to the American Samoa economy

(Table 2). The total American Samoa-based purse-seine catch of tuna in this area was 18,412 t, primarily consisting of skipjack tuna (76%), with smaller proportions of bigeye (18%) and yellowfin tuna (6%) (Table 1a). In 2025, the fishery operated around the equator, mainly between 10° N and 15° S latitude, and between 180° E and 130° W longitude with some fishing in the area where there is overlap in the WCPFC and IATTC management boundaries (Figure 1).

Longline Fishery

The longline fishery consists of vessels that are based out of American Samoa. In 2025, effort remained low and there were a total of eight longline vessels that fished west of 150° W with all American Samoa-based vessels greater than 50 gross registered tonnage (GRT) in size (Table 3).

Retained catches are assigned to the longline fisheries of American Samoa based on the 1) port of landing, 2) location of catch, and 3) the types of permit(s) registered to the vessel. In 2025, 6 longline vessels operated with both Hawaii and American Samoa permits. If longline catches from these vessels were outside of the U.S. EEZ and in the WCPO, the catches were attributed to American Samoa (even if landed in Hawaii) in accordance with federal fisheries regulations (50 *CFR* 300.224).

The American Samoa longline fishery within the WCPFC Convention Area operated mostly from 10° S to 20° S latitude and 165° W to 175° W longitude in 2025 (Figure 2a). The American Samoa longline fishery in the South Pacific Ocean (SPO) targeted albacore, but also caught a noteworthy proportion of yellowfin tuna (19% of retained catch in 2025), which can be seen in the distribution of yellowfin tuna and albacore tuna catch in the SPO (Figure 2b).

No swordfish were caught and no longline vessels targeted swordfish south of 20°S in the WCPFC Convention Area in 2025 (WCPFC CMM 2009-03).

5.0 Coastal State Reporting

American Samoa has a small-scale tropical troll fishery that operates mostly nearshore. In 2025, there were 11 active troll vessels (Table 3) that contributed less than 1% of the total HMS catch in the American Samoa fisheries (Table 1a).

There has been a decline in fishing effort in the tropical troll fishery in American Samoa due to an increase in purchases of HMS from the cannery or from foreign fishers landing in American Samoa. However, there was a small increase in the number of participating vessels and estimated catch in 2025. The troll fishery may involve trips taken for commercial, recreational, or subsistence purposes, with catches often including fish that are both sold and kept for personal use. Catches from the troll fishery are monitored through creel surveys, which involve shoreside interviews conducted by technicians to collect fisheries catch and effort data.

6.0 Socioeconomic Factors and Trends in the Fisheries

NMFS staff and colleagues conducted surveys and analyses to better understand the socioeconomic considerations of pelagic fisheries in American Samoa.

7.0 Disposition of Catch

Purse-seine catch is stored onboard as a frozen whole product. Most of the purse-seine catch has historically been off-loaded to canneries in Pago Pago, American Samoa, however, vessels also transship their catches from the ports of other Pacific Island countries to canneries in Southeast Asia or off-load their catches to ports in Latin America and South America. Cannery products from American Samoa are typically destined for U.S. canned tuna markets. Catches of non-tuna species are consumed onboard the vessel or discarded at sea.

The American Samoa-based longline albacore catch is gilled and gutted and delivered as a frozen product to the cannery in Pago Pago, American Samoa. Other associated catch is either marketed fresh (for vessels making day trips) or frozen (for vessels making extended trips).

Catch from the American Samoa troll fishery is chilled with ice and sold fresh, primarily to local markets.

8.0 Onshore Developments

No major developments have occurred in processing plants or support facilities for American Samoa fisheries.

9.0 Future Prospects of the Fisheries

Fuel costs and supplies associated with fishing operations have increased dramatically in the last year and may affect participation and trip distance from ports for all U.S. large-scale and small-scale fisheries. In addition, U.S. fleets face competition from less regulated foreign fleets that may have lower operational costs.

Fishing effort in the American Samoa longline and small-boat troll fisheries in the South Pacific is expected to remain low. The American Samoa-based longline fishery is expected to continue targeting albacore and deliver their catch frozen to the cannery in Pago Pago, American Samoa. In 2025, the active longline fleet declined from eight vessels at the start of the year to six by year-end. Effort for the fleet is expected to remain low, with fishing activity anticipated to be similar to 2025 levels. This fleet has had recent operational challenges with limited available crew in this remote location and high operational costs. In addition, growth of this fishery may be prevented as the fishing area close to American Samoa is limited to its EEZ as waters outside are surrounded by the EEZs of other countries. A substantial distance must be traveled to reach international waters; consequently, requiring

large amounts of fuel. Longliners are also faced with competition from foreign vessels. Low effort is also expected for the American Samoa small-boat troll fishery that has had on average only eight vessels fishing from 2021 to 2025. Typically, locals buy fish from the cannery or from the docks at low prices from foreign fishing vessels, which reduces the demand for local fishers. However, there will be some new opportunities for local fishing in 2026 with the arrival of three super ‘alia vessels that can be leased to locals. These vessels can be used for longlining or bottom fishing and are 38 ft in length, smaller than typical longliners. In addition, locals that would like to lease vessels will be able to receive training.

10.0 Status of Fisheries Data Collection Systems

10.a Logsheet Data Collection and Verification

American Samoa pelagic fisheries are monitored using fishery-dependent data collected from various sources: logbooks and fish catch reports submitted by fishers, at-sea observers, market sales reports from fish dealers, and creel surveys (i.e. offshore fisheries catch and effort data collected shoreside by technicians through fisher interviews). The coverage rates for different data collection methods vary.

The primary monitoring system for retained catches for the large fisheries (purse seine and longline) in the WCPFC Convention Area is federally mandated logbooks that provide catches (in numbers of fish or weight), fishing effort, fishing location, and some details on fishing gear and operations. U.S. purse-seine logbook and landings data have been submitted, as a requirement of the South Pacific Tuna Treaty, since 1988 with coverage rates at 100%.

Logbooks have been required to be submitted to NOAA fisheries by all American Samoa longline vessels since 1996, with logbook coverage generally at 100%. The American Samoa-based longline fleet began its transition to electronic logbooks in 2023, achieving full implementation by 2025. Although electronic reporting is the primary method, paper logs continue to serve as a secondary backup.

The tropical troll pelagic fishery in American Samoa is monitored by a creel survey.

10.b Observer Programs

Purse Seine

U.S. purse-seine vessels operating in the WCPFC Convention Area under the Treaty on Fisheries between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the U.S. of America (Treaty) were monitored by observers provided by the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) through 2022. Beginning in 2023 U.S. purse-seine vessels were monitored by observers provided by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA). Monitoring includes both the collection of scientific data, as well as information on operator compliance with various Treaty-related and Pacific island country-mandated requirements (these data are not described in this report). NOAA Fisheries has a field station in Pago Pago, American Samoa, that facilitates the placement of PNA-deployed observers on purse-seine vessels.

Since January 1, 2010, the observer coverage rate in the U.S. purse-seine fishery in the Convention Area has been 100%. However, the mandatory observer requirement was suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic and was reinstated January 1, 2023. Data previously collected by FFA-deployed and currently by PNA-deployed observers are provided directly to the WCPFC.

Longline

Under the Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Pacific Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific Region established under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, observers monitor the U.S. and American Samoa longline fisheries under the NOAA Pacific Islands Regional Observer Program (PIROP). In 2025, there was 3% coverage for American Samoa-based longline trips, but there were no trips departing in 2025 that operated on the high seas outside the U.S. EEZ and within the WCPFC area (WCPFC 11 decision – para 484(b)).

The main focus of the longline observer program is to collect scientific data on interactions with protected species. The observer program also collects catch composition and biological data on retained and discarded catch and information on fishing operations. Biological data includes measurements of a systematic subsample of 33% of all fish brought on deck, including bycatch species. Prior to 2006, observers attempted to measure 100% of tunas, billfishes and sharks brought on deck, but not other species. Researchers use observer-collected protected species data to estimate the total number of interactions with those species.

10.c Port Sampling

Weight data are collected from U.S. longline and purse-seine fisheries, but no other biological data are collected at port for these fisheries. For the small-boat troll fishery in American Samoa, samplers perform shoreside fisher interviews for catch and effort data and also take length measurements.

11.0 Research Activities

Addendum

Fishery Interactions with Protected Species

Information is provided on fishery interactions with non-fish species by the American Samoa-based longline fishery during 2024–2025 (Table 4a–4d). This includes interactions with marine mammals (Table 4a) and sea turtles (Table 4b) and interactions with seabirds (Table 4c–4d). CMM 2011-03 requires CCMs to report instances in which cetaceans have been encircled by purse-seine nets. In 2024 and 2025, there were no reports of U.S. purse-seine vessels encircling cetaceans.

CMM 2018-03 requires CCMs to report on seabirds including 1) the proportion of observed effort with specific mitigation measures used; and 2) observed and reported species-specific

bycatch rates and numbers or statistically rigorous estimates of species-specific seabird interaction rates and total numbers by latitudinal band. The American Samoa-based longline fishery only fishes in the latitudinal band 23° N–25° S. For this fishery no bird mitigation measures are required. The 2024 number of observed seabird captures and fishing effort for the American Samoa-based longline fishery are provided (Table 4c) along with the species-specific seabird catch estimates (Table 4d). Observed seabird interactions and species-specific capture estimates for 2025 have been suppressed to protect data confidentiality.

Table 4a. Estimated total number of fishery interactions for marine mammals in the American Samoa longline fishery for 2024–2025.

Marine Mammals	2025[1]	2024
Striped dolphin (S*tenella coeruleoalba*)	N.A	0
False killer whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*)	N.A	0
Shortfinned pilot whale (*Globicephala*	N.A	0
Rough-toothed dolphin (*Steno bradenensis*)	N.A	0
Total Marine Mammals	**N.A**	**0**

[1] Marine mammal interaction estimates are not yet available for 2025.

Table 4b. Estimated total number of fishery interactions[1] for sea turtles in the American Samoa longline fishery for 2024–2025.

Sea Turtles	2025	2024
Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)	4	11
Olive Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*)	4	11
Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)	11	11
Hawksbill *(Eretmochelys imbricata*)	0	0
Total Sea Turtles	**19**	**33**

[1] Estimates are calculated from observed interactions using expansion methods developed for the Pacific Island Regional Observer Program. Sources: Pacific Islands Regional Office observer program reports and Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center Internal Reports.

Table 4c. The rate (captures per 1,000 observed hooks) and number of observed seabird captures and fishing effort for the American Samoa-based longline fishery in the WCPFC Convention Area for 2024–2025. (Note some effort data are suppressed due to confidentiality. Data are reported for 23° N–25° S with no fishery effort for other WCPFC reporting latitudinal bands (north of 23, 25° N–30° S or south of 30° S).)

Effort and Observed Seabird Captures 23° N–25° S						
Fishing Effort					Observed Seabird Captures	
Year	Number of Vessels	Number of Hooks Set	Observed Hooks	% Hooks Observed	Number	Rate

2024	8	4,189,499	411,595	10.1	1	0.00[1]
2025[2]	9	4,169,043	-	-	-	-

[1] Rate is calculated as 1/(observed hooks) *1000
[2] Observer data for 2025 is not shown due to confidentiality

Table 4d. Total number of estimated seabird captures by species in the American Samoa–based longline fishery in 2024 from 23°N to 25°S for the WCPFC Convention Area. (No fishery effort occurred in other WCPFC reporting latitudinal bands (north of 23 or south of 25° S).)

Seabirds	**2025**[1]	**2024**
	23°N–25°S	**23°N–25°S**
Blackfooted albatross (*Phoebastria nigripes*)	-	0
Brown booby (*Sula leucogaster*)	-	11
Unidentified frigatebird (*Fregatidae*)	-	0
Unidentified shearwater (*Procellariidae*)	-	0
Unidentified seabirds	-	0
Total Sea Turtles	**-**	**11**

[1] Data for 2025 is not shown due to confidentiality