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

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Submitted by New Caledonia

**2025 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE
WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION
PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH, AND STATISTICS**

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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 2026: [Yes/No]	Yes
If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions:	

1 Abstract

Tuna and associated species fishing by New Caledonian vessels began in 1981 with a small pole-and-line fishery (fewer than 3 vessels), which rapidly ceased operations (1981: 228 mt; 1982: 998 mt; 1983: 492 mt). While domestic longliners started operations around the same time, it took nearly 20 years for this domestic fleet to achieve significant activity.

The New Caledonian fleet operates exclusively within the New Caledonian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In 2025, the Government of New Caledonia granted 14 licenses to domestic longline vessels, all of which were active. As in previous years, no foreign vessels were licensed or chartered to operate within the EEZ.

In 2025, the total catch decreased by 19 % compared to 2024. The annual catches of 2,404.5 mt were mainly composed of albacore, the main target species of all the vessels, which accounted for 73% of the total catches (1,748.1 mt). Yellowfin tuna represented 19% of the total catch (465.6 mt). Striped marlin is the main bycatch of the fishery (82.6 mt; 3.4% of the total catch).

Catches of sharks continue to be mitigated by the increasing use of monofilament branch lines and the adoption of the regulation in April 2013 prohibiting the catch, disturbance, and retention on-board of any shark or ray.

In 2025, observer activities carried out under the New Caledonia Observer Program reached a 10.1 % coverage rate of the longline hooks. The aim of this activity is to collect information on all the components of the fishery harvest to be checked with other sources of data and to provide accurate data for stock assessments (biological samples, size composition, estimates of incidental catch).

During all the trips observed in 2025, there was 1 sea bird (a black-footed albatross), 1 sea turtle, and 1 giant manta ray interaction reported. The incidental catches of shark species were reported by the Observer Program as 735 individuals in 2025.

Port sampling continued in New Caledonia, carried out by observers from the New Caledonia fisheries Observer Program, in collaboration with local fishing companies.

2 Background

Longline fishing was introduced to the Pacific and New Caledonia by the Japanese in the 1930s. After World War II, several fishing bases were established throughout the Pacific and the number of Japanese longliners operating increased to 200 vessels by the 1960s. Until then, the longliners targeted albacore tuna for canneries, but from 1970, the Japanese turned to fishing for tuna closer to the equator, such as yellowfin and bigeye tuna.

From 1978, the year of creation of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of New Caledonia, foreign fishing was subject to the prior signature of bilateral agreements between the fishing countries and France. Successive Franco-Japanese agreements were signed until 2001, by which time Japanese fishing had almost disappeared from the New Caledonian EEZ.

The development of the domestic longline fleet started in 1983 and the early 2000s saw a significant increase in the number of longline vessels. However, from 2003 onwards, the lack of skilled manpower led to an under-utilisation of the vessels and several fishing companies stopped their activity. The number of fishing vessels continued to decrease gradually until 2013, the fishing fleet in 2025 was composed of 14 vessels, owned by 4 local companies.

3 Flag State Reporting

3.1 Annual catch estimates for the national longline fleet

In 2025, the catch level estimate of WCPFC key species is 2,404.5 mt. The main tuna species estimated catch is 2,275.8 mt (Albacore, Yellowfin, Bigeye, Skipjack).

As the target species of the New Caledonian fishery, the South Pacific albacore and yellowfin tunas are predominant in the catches with respectively 1,748.1 mt (73 %) and 465.6 mt (19 %) in 2025 (Table 1).

No New Caledonian vessel targets bigeye, marlins or swordfish. Therefore, all reported catches for these species are bycatch. In 2025, 38.5 mt of bigeye, 82.6 mt of striped marlin and 7.8 mt of swordfish were caught (Table 1).

Minimal fishing activity occurred south of 25° South in 2025, with only 30,800 hooks deployed during 16 sets between 25°S and 30°S.

No New Caledonian vessel takes part in transshipment activities in the WCPFC area.

Species	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Albacore	1,774	2,119.4	1,858.1	2,021.6	1,748.1
Bigeye tuna	59	64.9	38.7	28.4	38.5
Black marlin	35	36.3	27.3	27.4	25.5
Blue marlin	16	20.8	13.9	8.0	11.4
Striped marlin	98	129.9	137.8	113.3	82.6
Pacific bluefin tuna	0	0.4	0.5	0.5	1.4
Skipjack tuna	12	50.2	7.6	21.9	23.6
Swordfish	10	12.1	11.1	10.1	7.8
Yellowfin tuna	624	589.4	425.8	729.6	465.6
Total	2,628	3,023.4	2,520.8	2,960.8	2,404.5

Table 1: Annual catch estimates, in metric tons, for the New Caledonia longline fleet, by primary species and year, in the WCPFC Convention Area over 2021-2025. Source - Tufman 2, report 3605.

New Caledonia's Flag vessels for the past 5 years (Table 1) had caught an average of 2,866 mt per year.

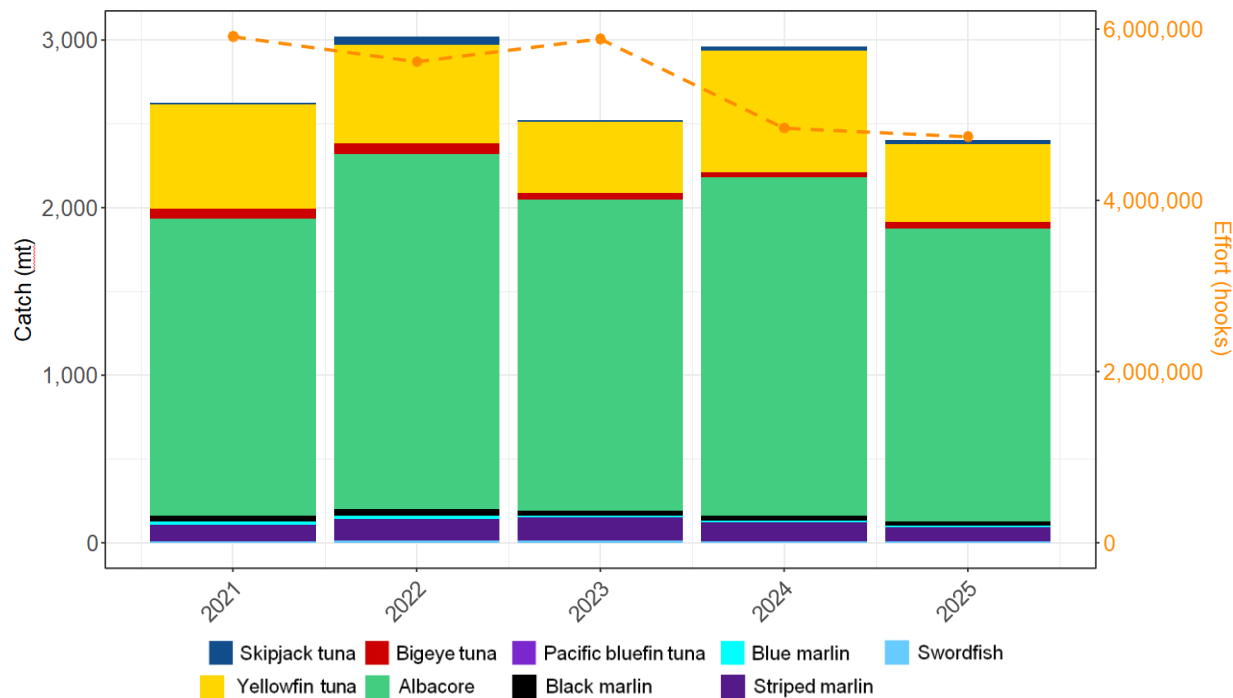


Figure 1: Historical annual catch estimates (mt) and effort (no. of hooks) for the New Caledonia longline fleet, by primary species and year, in the WCPFC Convention Area for 2021-2025. Source - Tufman 2, report 3605 and 3597 (hooks).

3.2 Fleet and activity

In 2025, 14 licensed domestic longliners belonging to local fishing companies were active (Table 2).

All active vessels in 2025 are operating exclusively within the 51–200 GRT category (Table 2). These vessels have a limited cruising range within the EEZ. The larger longliners nearing 150 tons can stay at sea for two or more weeks. Fishing campaigns last on average 12 days and fishing activity lasts on average 8 days.

A total of 265 fishing trips were reported in 2025, totalling 2,175 fishing days (- 2.9 % compared to 2024) and approximately 4.7 million hooks (- 2.1 % compared to 2024). These data indicate a consolidation and stabilization of the fishing effort, as the fleet continues to adapt its strategy to current operational constraints (such as fuel prices and depredation).

As in previous years, no fishing activity by the New Caledonian fleet was reported either north of the equator or south of 30° South.

No New Caledonian vessel takes part in transshipment activities in the WCPFC area.

Gear	Size Category (GRT)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Longline	0 - 50	1	0	0	0	0
	51 - 200	17	15	16	15	14
	201 - 500	0	0	0	0	0
	500+	0	0	0	0	0

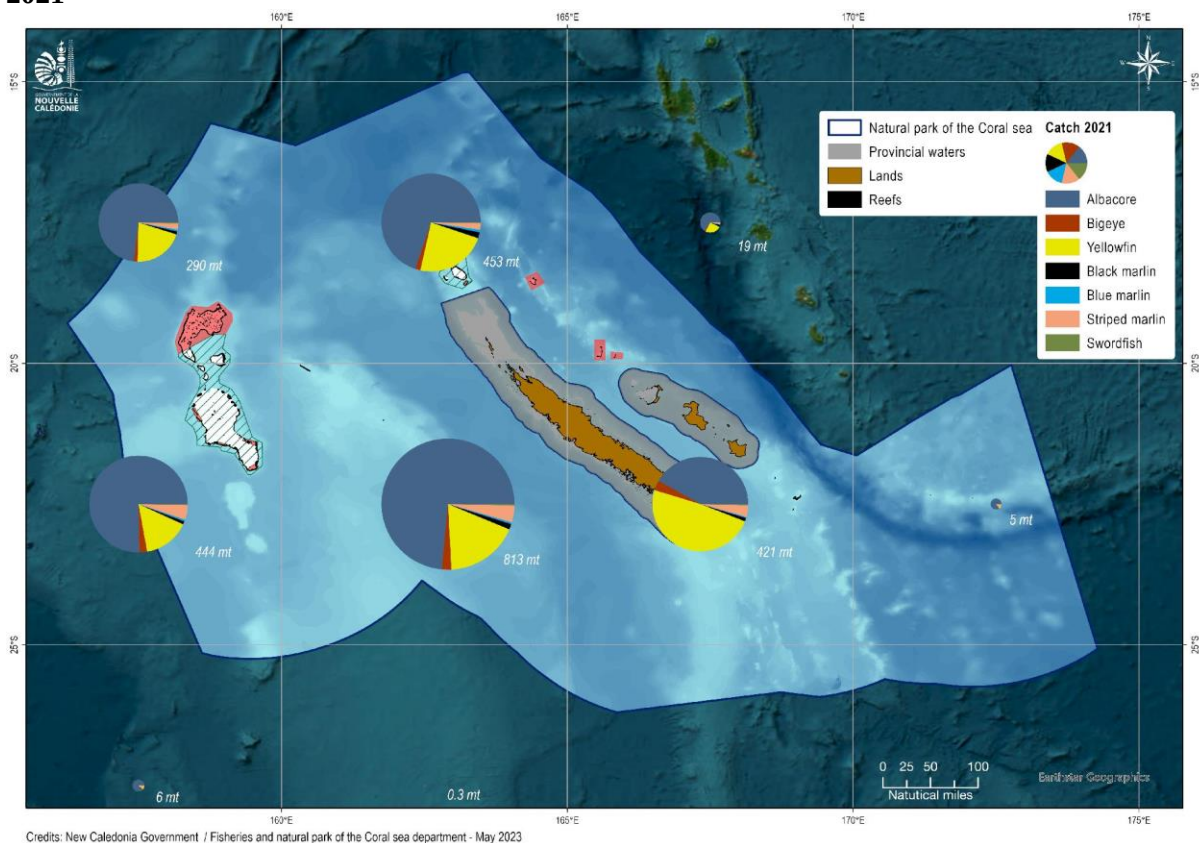
Table 2: Number of New Caledonia longline vessels, by size category, active in the WCPFC Convention Area, over 2021-2025. Source - Tufman 2, report 3605.

3.3 Distribution of catches of target species for different national fisheries

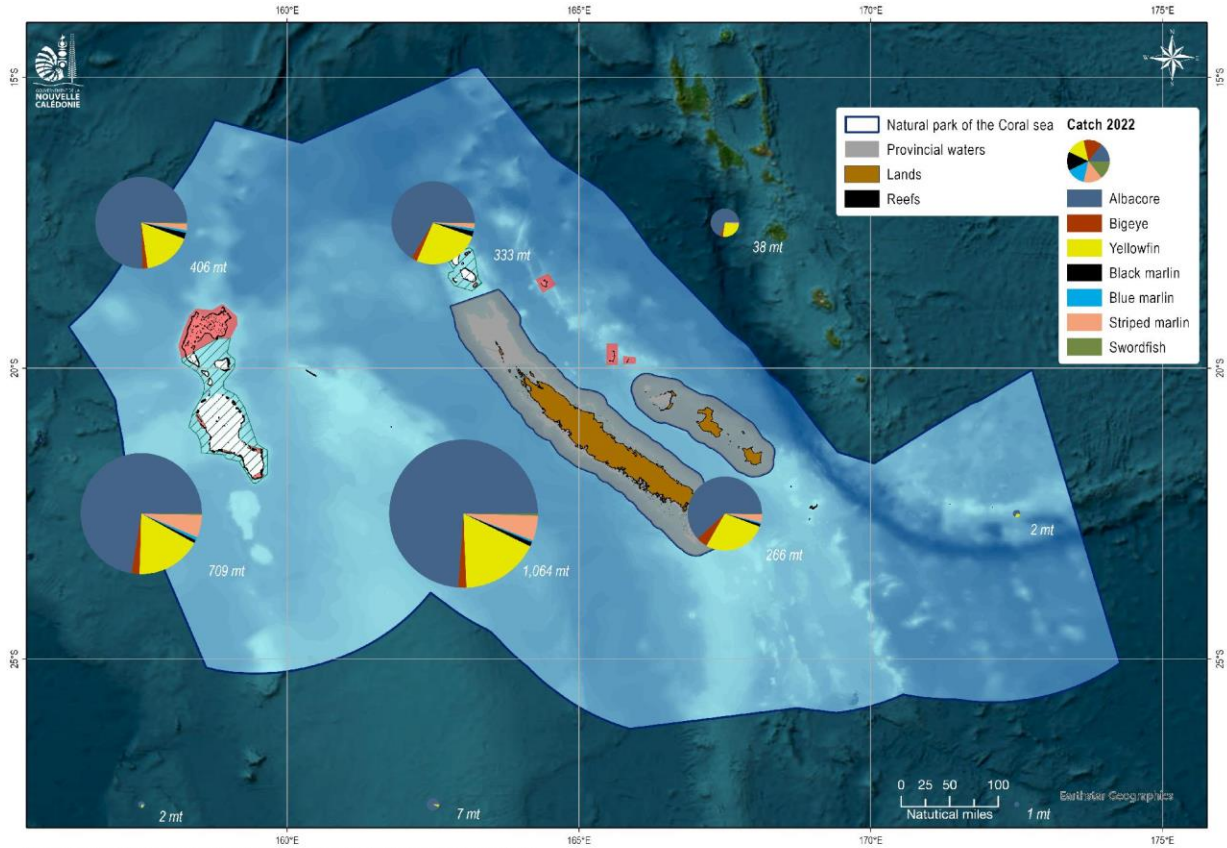
As illustrated in Figure 3, the spatial distribution of the catch for the primary target species (albacore, yellowfin, and bigeye tuna) remains concentrated within the New Caledonian EEZ, particularly around the main island and offshore reefs. The fishing effort and resulting catches show consistent spatial patterns across the 2021-2025 period. Albacore and yellowfin tuna consistently dominate the catches in the central and southern fishing grounds of the EEZ, reflecting stable targeting strategies by the domestic fleet despite the recent overall reduction in active vessels.

Figure 2 (a-e) below shows the annual distribution of primary species caught by the New Caledonian longliners fleet from 2021 to 2025.

a) 2021

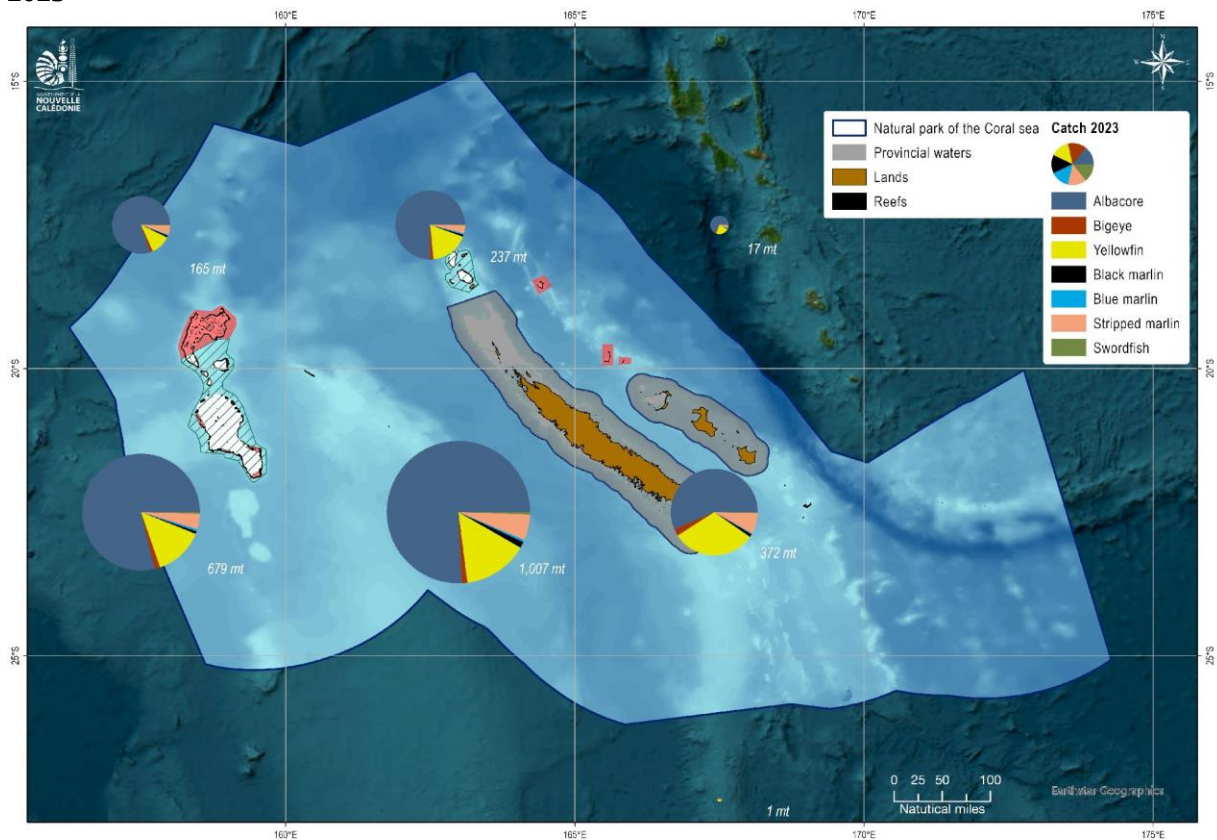


b) 2022



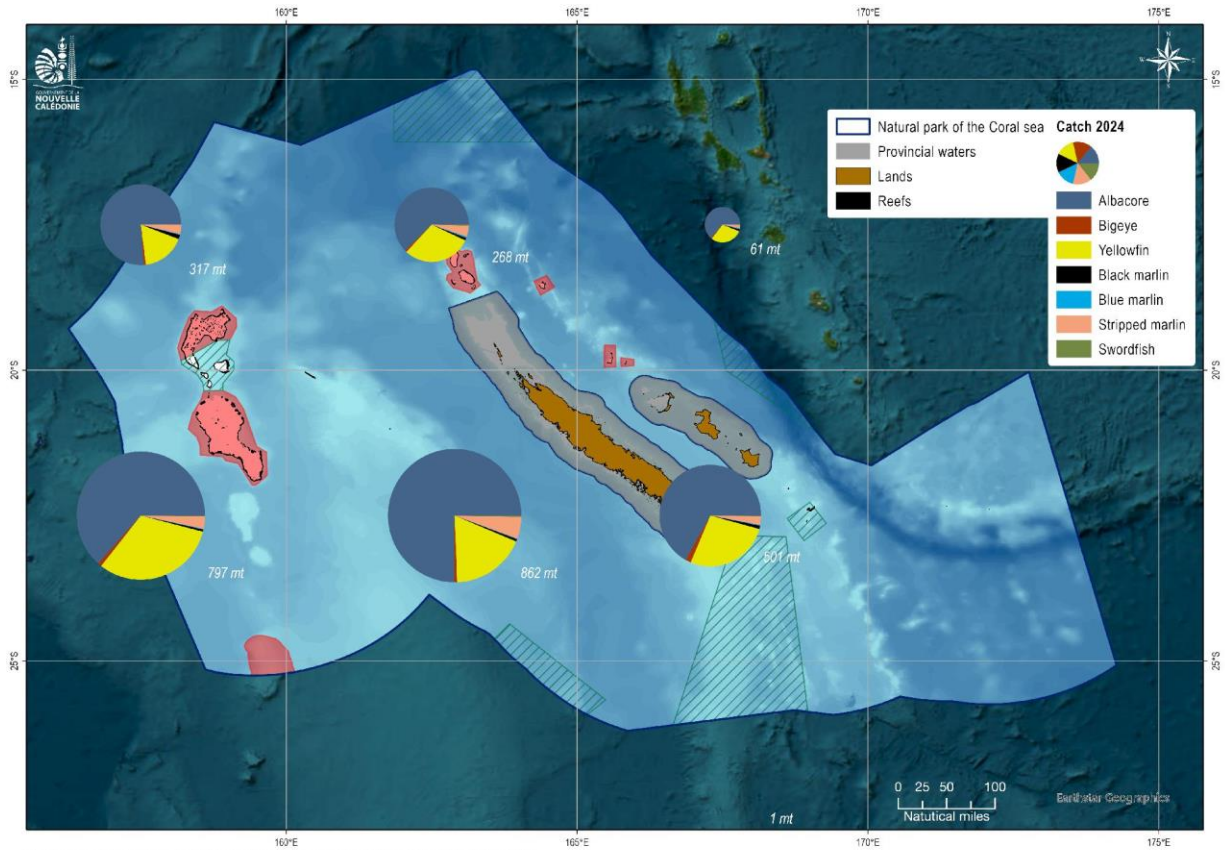
Credits: New Caledonia Government / Fisheries and natural park of the Coral sea department - May 2023

c) 2023



Credits: New Caledonia Government / Fisheries and natural park of the Coral sea department - June 2024

d) 2024



e) 2025

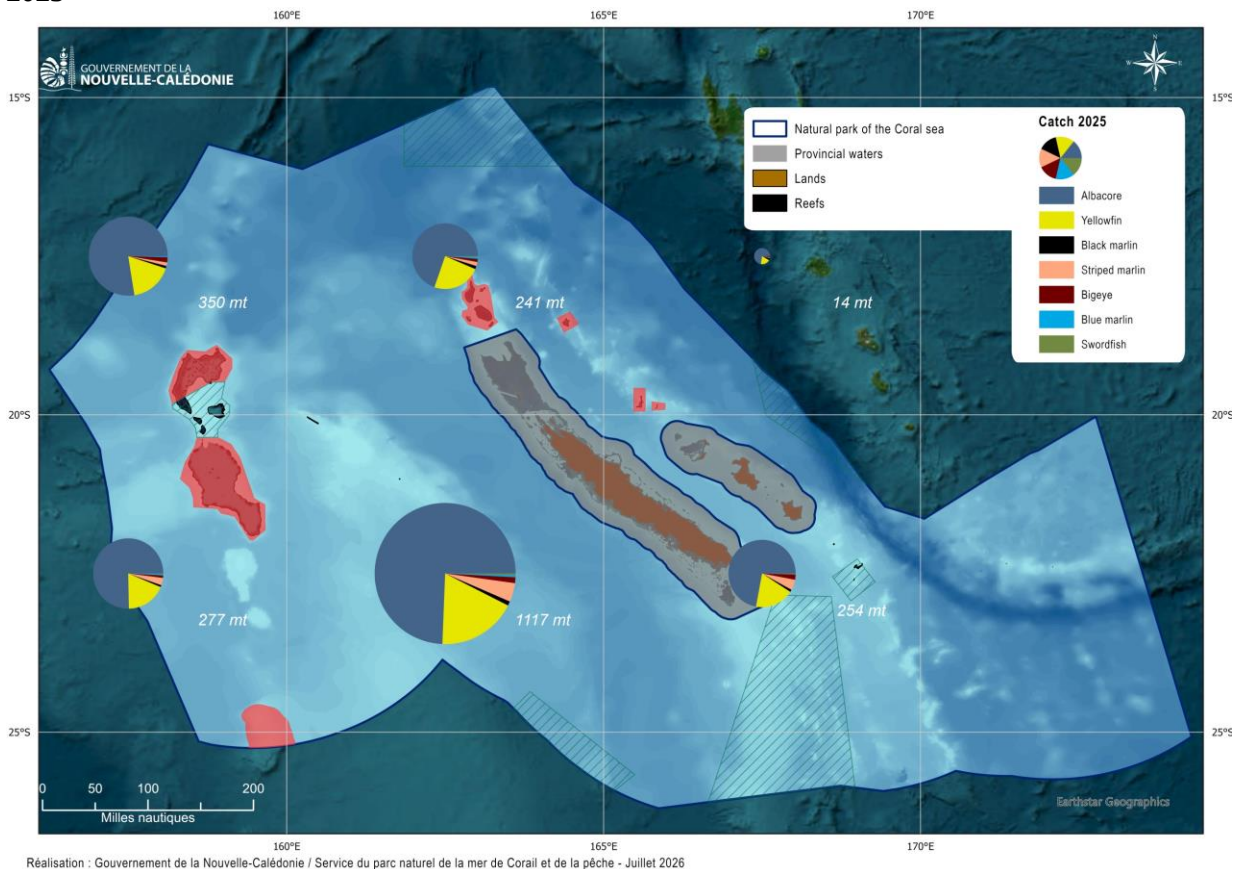


Figure 2 (a-e): Annual distribution of primary species caught by the New Caledonian longliners fleet from 2021 to 2025. The catches are aggregated by 5 degrees squares and the diameter of each pie chart varies according to total tonnage of each square. The green and red areas represent natural reserves and integral reserves, respectively, where fishing is prohibited.

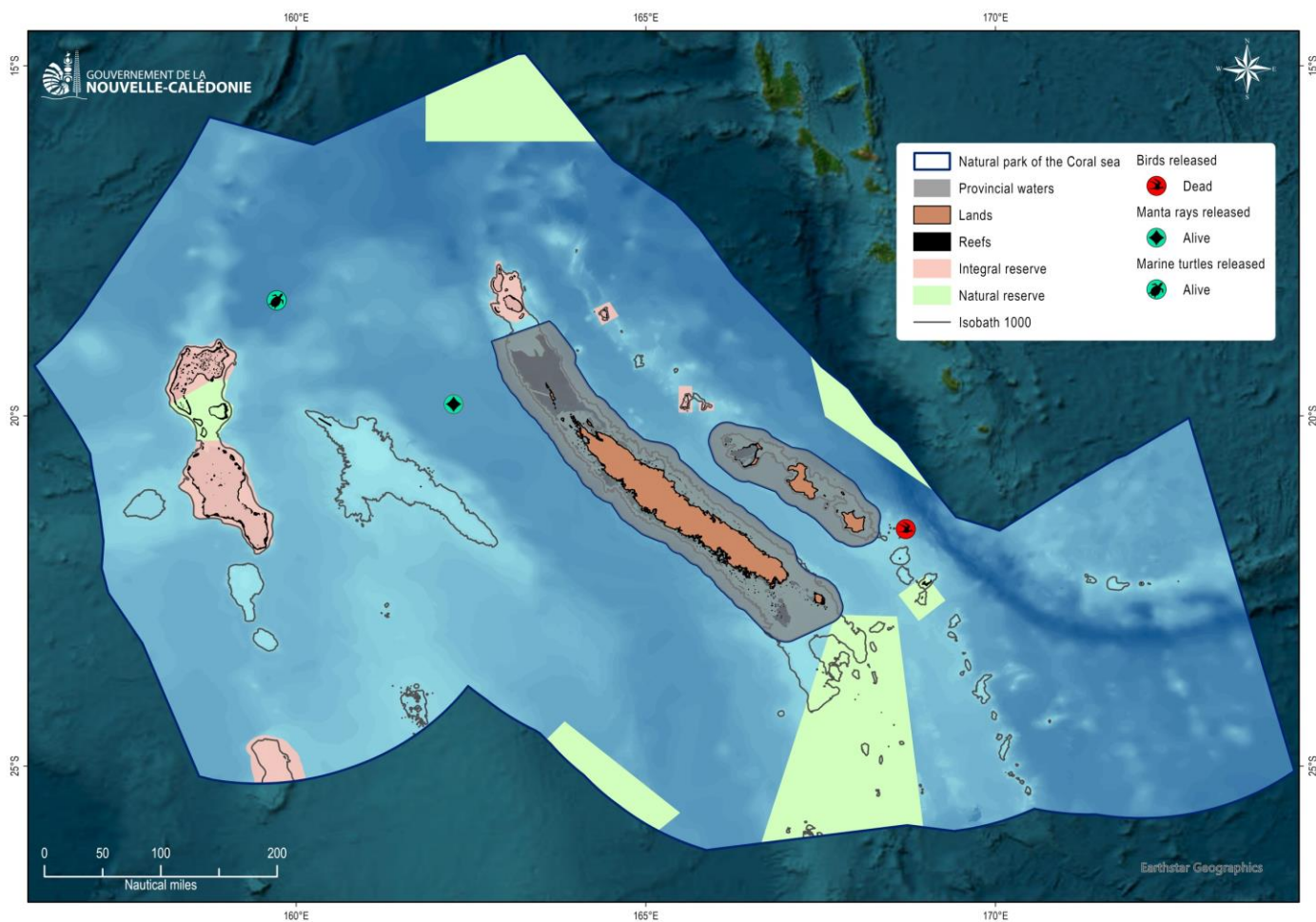
3.3.1 Observed catches of SSIs by the longline fleet

Interactions between seabirds, sea turtles, mobulid rays and marine mammals are recorded by observers of the New Caledonia Observer Program. In 2025, interactions with the fishing gear were observed for 1 seabird, 1 sea turtle and 1 mobulid ray.

Among the individuals observed, the sea turtle and the giant manta ray were released alive, while the seabird was released dead (Table 3 and Figure 3)

Year	Category	Species	Total	Alive	Dead
2021	Birds	Petrels and shearwaters	3	0	3
2021	Marine reptiles	Leatherback turtle	1	0	1
2021	Marine reptiles	Loggerhead turtle	1	1	0
2022	Birds	Boobies and gannets	1	1	0
2022	Birds	Petrels and shearwaters	3	0	3
2022	Marine mammals	False killer whale	1	1	0
2022	Marine mammals	Bottlenose dolphin	1	1	0
2023	Birds	Petrels and shearwaters	2	0	2
2023	Marine mammals	False killer whale	1	0	1
2023	Marine reptiles	Hawksbill turtle	1	1	0
2023	Marine reptiles	Leatherback turtle	1	1	0
2024	Birds	Black-footed albatross	1	1	0
2024	Birds	Boobies and gannets	1	0	1
2024	Birds	Gulls - terns and skuas	2	0	2
2024	Birds	Petrels and shearwaters	2	1	1
2024	Marine mammals	Rough-toothed dolphin	2	2	0
2024	Marine reptiles	Green turtle	3	1	2
2025	Birds	Black-footed albatross	1	0	1
2025	Marine reptiles	Marine turtles	1	1	0
2025	Rays	Giant manta	1	1	0

Table 3: Observed annual estimated catches of species of special interest (seabird, turtle and marine mammals) by the New Caledonia longline fleet, in the WCPFC Convention Area, for years 2021-2025. Source - Tufman 2, report 2953.



Credits: New Caledonia Government / Fisheries and natural park of the Coral sea department - July 2026

Figure 3: Catches of species of interest observed in 2025 by the New Caledonia Observer Program.

3.3.2 Seabirds

Year	Number of active vessels	Total hooks	Observed hooks	% observed hooks	Number of observed birds	Rate (per 1,000 hooks)
2021	18	5,885,350	430,278	7.3%	3	0.0070
2022	16	5,600,574	451,934	8.1%	4	0.0089
2023	16	5,854,872	516,140	8.8%	2	0.0039
2024	15	4,839,374	469,002	9.7%	6	0.0133
2025	14	4,743,600	480,300	10.1%	1	0.0021

Table 4: Historical effort, observed and estimated seabird captures from New Caledonia longliners

3.3.3 Sharks

Species	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
BIGEYE THRESHER SHARK	1	6	4	7	26
BIGNOSE SHARK	0	4	1	0	0
BLACKTIP REEF SHARK	1	2	0	1	0
BLACKTIP SHARK	0	7	0	0	0
BLUE SHARK	277	594	642	477	420
BRONZE WHALER SHARK	1	10	1	16	37
BULL SHARK	3	1	0	1	0
CROCODILE SHARK	0	1	1	2	0
GALAPAGOS SHARK	0	1	0	6	0
GREAT HAMMERHEAD	0	0	1	0	1
GREAT WHITE SHARK	1	0	0	0	0
GREY REEF SHARK	1	1	1	4	0
HAMMERHEAD SHARKS NEI	0	1	0	0	0
LONGFIN MAKO	16	2	10	6	6
OCEANIC WHITETIP SHARK	11	40	47	13	99
PELAGIC THRESHER SHARK	0	2	5	3	7
SAND TIGER SHARK	0	0	0	0	2
SANDBAR SHARK	2	4	6	10	2
SCALLOPED HAMMERHEAD	0	2	1	1	0
SHORTFIN MAKO	26	26	16	27	46
SILKY SHARK	10	75	39	24	51
SILVERTIP SHARK	0	1	0	5	5
SMOOTH HAMMERHEAD	0	0	2	0	2
THRESHER SHARK (VULPINUS)	1	4	6	6	5
THRESHER SHARKS NEI	0	1	0	0	0
TIGER SHARK	5	11	5	10	25
VARIOUS SHARKS NEI	62	2	30	23	1
WHITETIP REEF SHARK	0	2	2	0	0
TOTAL	418	800	820	642	735

Table 5: Historical annual shark catches observed by New Caledonia observers on longliners (2021-2025)

3.4 Annual catch estimates for non-target, associated and dependent species for the national longline fleet

Discarded Catch Estimates (MT)					
Species	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
BLUE SHARK	155	285	346	96	25
SILKY SHARK	5	7	14	6	3
HAMMERHEAD SHARK	1	1	1	3	0
SHORT FINNED MAKO SHARK	8	22	9	4	11
OCEANIC WHITE-TIP SHARK	3	10	22	0	12
PORBEABLE SHARK	0	0	0	0	0
WHALE SHARK	0	0	0	0	0
THRESHER SHARK	0	5	4	1	0
TOTAL	172	330	396	110	51

Table 6: Historical annual estimated catches of sharks (part of non-target, associated and dependent species) by New Caledonian longliners in the WCPFC area

Table 6 details the annual estimated catches of non-target, associated, and dependent species. A notable trend is the significant reduction in shark catches over the last three years, particularly for blue sharks (the most captured species), which decreased drastically from 326.1 mt in 2023 to just 25.0 mt in 2025. This steep decline reflects the strict enforcement of the local conservation regulations and the fleet's improved mitigation practices. Similarly, billfish bycatch, notably striped marlin, has shown a steady decrease from 137.8 mt in 2023 to 82.6 mt in 2025, aligning with the overall reduction in fishing effort.

4 Socio-economic factors

The latest available economic data typically trails by one year; final economic analyses for 2025 are currently underway. The socio-economic outcomes for 2025 are expected to reflect the 19% decrease in total catches.

The economic crisis, which initially began during the COVID-19 pandemic, was severely exacerbated by the events of 2024.

The most substantial impact on the fishing sector has been the closure of the direct flight route to Japan. Historically, fresh tuna exports to the Japanese market accounted for 20% of the fleet's annual volumes.

5 Onshore Developments

There were no major structural modifications completed on processing facilities in 2025. However, a significant refurbishment project for the professional offshore fishermen's port in Noumea is currently under development. Additionally, a dedicated study is underway regarding the installation of new handling and lifting equipment to improve the overall functionality and operational efficiency of the port.

6 Disposal of catch

About 80 % of pelagic species annual production is destined to the local market. The rest is exported to Europe, Japan and the United States.

Table 7 below details the different market destinations in 2024, according to the last available data.

Market	Tuna		Billfish				Other	
	Domestic	Export	Domestic		Export		Domestic	Export
%	75%	25%	94%		6%		98%	2%
Condition	nd	Fresh Frozen	Fresh	Frozen	Fresh	Frozen	Fresh	Frozen
%	nd	25% 75%	nd	nd	5%	95%	nd	nd
Metric tonnes	1861	604	104		6		114	2

Table 7 : Destination of New Caledonia fishery production in 2024 (last economic data available)

7 Future Prospects of Fishery

The implementation of the strategic actions outlined in the New Caledonia offshore fishing master plan (adopted in 2023) continued throughout 2025. This plan serves as the foundation for New Caledonia's official offshore fisheries policy. Furthermore, the comprehensive review of the legislative and regulatory framework for offshore fishing, which began in 2024, actively progressed in 2025. This ongoing modernization process focuses on updating the regulatory texts relating to resource exploitation, protected species management, the allocation of fishing licenses, and the fisheries observer program to ensure the long-term sustainability and economic resilience of the national fleet.

8 Research and Statistics

8.1 Status of tuna fisheries data collection systems

8.1.1 Logsheet data collection and verification

As a mandatory condition of their fishing licenses, New Caledonian fishing companies must submit logsheets to the fisheries authority at the end of each trip. In 2025, the coverage rate of collected logsheets maintained its operational baseline of 100 %. The transition toward electronic reporting remains active, in 2025 22.6 % of logsheets transmitted via the Onboard application developed by SPC. All collected operational data are verified and securely transferred to the SPC Ocean Fisheries Programme (SPC/OFP) via the TUFMAN2 platform in accordance with WCPFC scientific data requirements.

8.1.2 Observer program

In 2025, the New Caledonia Observer Program successfully covered 28 fishing trips, representing 469 days at sea and 220 active fishing days. A total of 480,300 hooks were directly monitored by observers, achieving an overall coverage rate of 10.1 % of the total national longline fishing effort (Table 8).

The data collected provides critical baseline inputs for regional stock assessments and cross-validation of logsheet records.

Year	Hooks deployed	Hooks observed	Rate (%)
2021	5,917,950	430,278	7.3%
2022	5,624,328	451,934	8.1%
2023	5,873,040	516,140	8.8%
2024	4,839,374	469,002	9.7%
2025	4,743,600	480,300	10.1%

Table 8: Historical estimated annual coverage of operational catch/effort and observer data

8.1.3 Port sampling program

The port sampling activities continued in 2025 through close collaboration between the New Caledonia fisheries. Observer Program and local fishing companies. This routine sampling ensures the collection of size composition data and the monitoring of fishery products landed at Noumea port (see 8.2 *Research activities / Biological Sampling*).

8.1.4 Unloading/Transshipment

No transshipment activities were carried out by the New Caledonian flagged fleet within the WCPFC Convention Area in 2025

8.2 Research activities

SharkGuard Mitigation Device Trials

To address the ecological and regulatory challenges of shark bycatch, the New Caledonia fisheries department continued its collaboration with Fishtek Marine to test the "SharkGuard" deterrence device. Following initial tests, four new trial campaigns were conducted between October and December 2025 aboard the vessels La Voie du Nord and Saint-Raphaël. During these trips, 680 devices were deployed per trajectory. The 2025 prototype integrates rechargeable batteries and a color imperceptible to sharks. Observers played a central role in these trials by systematically collecting data on equipped versus unequipped lines to scientifically evaluate the device's potential to reduce shark bycatch without impacting commercial tuna catch rates.

Depredation Monitoring

The Observer Program closely monitors depredation caused by sharks and marine mammals. In 2025, observers noted that 296 albacore and 84 yellowfin tunas were damaged by depredation, representing 3.3% of the total observed tuna catch. Extrapolated to the entire fleet's activity, the total loss due to depredation is estimated at approximately 70 tonnes for the year 2025 (compared to 100 tonnes in 2024 and 210 tonnes in 2023).

Biological Sampling (PMSB and CKMR)

Throughout 2025, biological samples were collected from a total of 7,993 fish:

- Pacific Marine Specimen Bank (PMSB): 536 fish were sampled for muscle tissue, livers, gonads, blood, stomachs, dorsal spines, and otoliths to document the ecology and biology of targeted species.
- Close-Kin Mark-Recapture (CKMR): 7,457 fish were genetically sampled (muscle tissues) to improve the understanding of tuna population connectivity and support regional stock assessment processes.

Publications

Andrew, N.L., et al., 2025. The Pacific foodfish list: a standardized list of over 1000 species of marine fish consumed by Pacific people. *Pacific Conservation Biology*. <https://doi.org/10.1071/PC24082>

Chapman, L., 2025. Adapting tuna dependent Pacific Island communities and economies to climate change: Feasibility of scaling-up national fish aggregating device (FAD) programmes in 14 Pacific Island countries. *SPC Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME)*.

Hare, S.R., Vidal, T., Castillo Jordán, C., Day, J., Hamer, P.A., Macdonald, J., Magnusson, A., Panizza, A., Peatman, T., Scott, R.D., Senina, I., Teears, T., & Pilling, G.M., 2025. La pêche thonière dans le Pacifique occidental et central : bilan de l'activité halieutique et état des stocks de thonidés (2023). *Division Pêche, aquaculture et écosystèmes marins (FAME) de la CPS*.

Mollier, M., Derville, S., Mazé, C., Virgili, A., Lerebourg, C., Prioul, F., Hamer, P., Hosken, M., McKechnie, S. & Tixier, P., 2025. Both environmental conditions and fisher behaviour influence the occurrence of shark and odontocete depredation on the longline catch in New Caledonia. *Fisheries Research*, 285, 107378. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2025.107378>

Lehodey, P., Senina, I., Nicol, S., Bell, J., Calmettes, B., Forestier, R., Gorgues W., Menkes C., Hampton J, Lengaigne M., Sen Gupta A. & Williams, P. , 2025. Implications of climate change for oceanic fisheries in the tropical Pacific Islands region. *Climate Implications for Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Pacific Islands*.

9. Addendum

8.0.1 Section A

8.0.1.1 CMM 2009-03 [Swordfish], Para 8

Year	Vessels	Catches	Weight (mt)
2021	18	85	8
2022	16	95	9
2023	16	102	10
2024	15	63	5
2025	14	78	6

Table 9: Total number of vessels fishing for swordfish and the catch (mt) of swordfish south of 20S. Source - Tufman 2, report 2918.

Table 8 indicates that while no New Caledonian vessels actively targeted swordfish south of 20°S, incidental catches naturally occurred during standard operations. The volume of swordfish caught as bycatch in this specific area has decreased continuously over the last three years, dropping from 102 individuals (10 mt) in 2023 to 78 individuals (6 mt) in 2025.

8.0.1.2 Observer coverage (WCPFC11 decision - para 484(b))

Hooks			Fishing days			Sea days			Trips		
hooks	obs	cov %	fish days	obs	cov %	sea days	obs	cov %	trips	obs	cov %
47,436	4,803	10.1	2,175	220	10.1	3,428	469	13.7	265	28	10.6

Table 10: Observer coverage of longline fleet activity where hooks are in hundred hooks from logbook data and fishing days, sea days, and trips are all calculated from VMS data. Source - Tufman 2, report 2986.

8.0.1.3 CMM 2009-06 [Transshipment], Para 11 (Annex II)

No NC flagged vessel transhipped in 2025.

8.0.1.4 CMM 2011-03 [Impact of PS fishing on cetaceans], Para 5

New-Caledonia has no flagged purse seine vessels.

8.0.1.5 CMM 2018-3 [Seabirds], Para 13

Fishing activities only take place within the EEZ of New-Caledonia, there is no regulatory mitigation measure in New-Caledonia. The only bird accidentally caught and observed in 2025 in the NC-EEZ was released dead. The

details are available in the Annual Report Part 1 (Table 4 and Figure 5).

Section B

8.0.1.6 CMM 2006-04 [Southwest Pacific striped marlin], Para 4

No vessel targeted striped marlin south of 15°S in 2025. However, the catch reported on logsheets is 81 mt for 14 vessels.

Year	Vessels	Catches	Weight
2021	18	1,453	97.1
2022	16	1,658	127.2
2023	16	1,776	137.3
2024	15	1,455	111.0
2025	14	1,248	81.3

Table 11: Summary of all longline vessels fishing south of 15S and all associated catch of striped marlin.
Source - Tufman 2, report: 2917.

8.0.1.7 CMM 2019-03 [North Pacific Albacore], Para 3

New Caledonia has no fishing activity north of the equator.

8.0.1.8 CMM 2023-03 [North Pacific Swordfish], Para 4

New Caledonia has no fishing activity north of the equator.