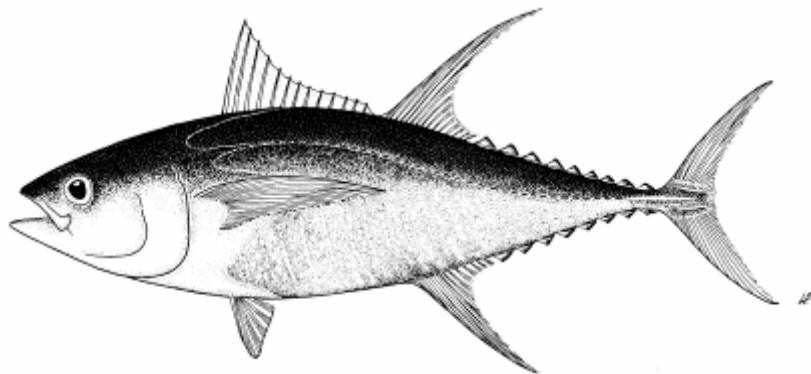




**1st Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission**
WCPFC-SC1
Noumea, New Caledonia
8-19 August 2005

COUNTRY FISHERIES REPORT – NIUE



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August 2005

COUNTRY FISHERIES REPORT

NIUE

Introduction

Niue has a small EEZ (~450,000 km²) which has only been fished reasonably lightly and sporadically by longline vessels of foreign distant water fishing fleets under license access arrangements in the past. The highest number of vessels licensed in any one year has been 48, with catches in the order of several hundred metric tonnes per annum. The local offshore tuna fishery consists of three components, a small artisanal boat and canoe fishery, small tourism related sport fishery, and the newly developing commercial domestic longline fishery. Tuna resources are considered by Niue as a major natural resource available to support significant economic development opportunities in the fisheries sector.

Fleet Structure

Niue does not currently have a fleet operating in the WCPFC under its flag, however since the beginning of 2005 it now licenses 13 vessels to fish under charter arrangement. The latter vessels, ranging in size from 10-29 metres, fish into the new government joint venture fish processing facility (Niue Fish Processors Ltd). The number of vessels under charter arrangement is expected to increase to 20 over the next 12 months.

VESSEL TYPE	Size Class 10-15 metres	Size Class 15m +
Longline	8	5

Table 1: Vessel numbers by size class licensed to fish in Niue waters under charter.

Annual Catches in the WCPFC Convention Area, 2000-2004

No catch has been taken in the WCPFC high seas area by Niue for this period.

Annual Catches in EEZ

No catches have been taken in Niue's EEZ by commercial fisheries since 2003, due to the development of a local based joint venture and the associate discontinuation of licensing of foreign vessels under access arrangements. In 2002 however, 21 licensed vessels (TW and AS flag) caught approximately 50-100mt of tuna in the EEZ.

Domestic commercial longline fishing has commenced with 4 small vessels fishing since May 2005. Over the three-month period May – July the estimated total catch of these vessels has been around 33 tonnes. This is expected to increase significantly as larger vessels licensed arrive, and operations under the new joint venture become fully developed. The predominant catch in the zone has been albacore tuna, accounting for around 60% of catch taken.

Final Market Destination of Catches

Frozen albacore is currently exported to the two canneries in Pago Pago, American Samoa, with small quantities of fresh Bigeye and Yellowfin tuna being exported to New Zealand and US markets.

Onshore Developments

A new processing plant capable of processing up to 6000mt of fish per annum was completed and commissioned in late 2004. A new dedicated air service (Reef Air) has also been established under joint venture to freight fish out of Niue, and significant wharf and harbour development are in the advanced planning stages.

Future Prospects

The offshore tuna fishery is managed under a tuna management and development plan. The number of licenses and larger vessels under charter is expected to increase to 20 over the next year, with smaller local boats not yet limited. Port sampling and observer programmes are in place and have commenced and Niue is working closely with SPC in the development of collection of data and data management systems.