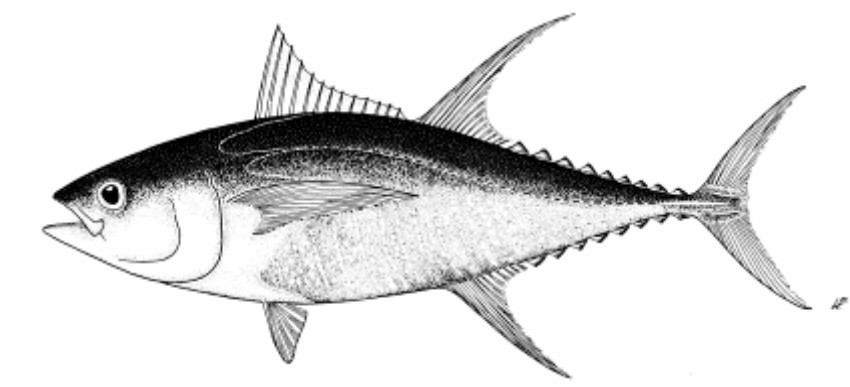


## **COUNTRY FISHERIES REPORT – NIUE**



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July 2007

# COUNTRY FISHERIES REPORT

## NIUE

### 1. Introduction

Niue has a small EEZ (~450,000 km<sup>2</sup>) and one of the smallest members of the Western Central Pacific Fishing Commission with a newly developed fishing fleet consisting of foreign fishing vessels licensed to fish in its waters (EEZ).

The Fishery follow 3 components which all are targeting the same species given the nature of the land formation, Niue does not pertain fringing reefs or lagoons so access to highly migratory species is easy for all fishers which are all sought out by both canoe fishers to the industrial longliners making management and data collection a tougher task.

Niue now has a Fish factory that holds 6000metric tonnes and is employing locals as factory workers; furthermore the Company has further intentions of employing more local workers with the intention of moving into managerial positions.

Legislative moves to strengthen the national legislation that will incorporate the measures adopted by the Commission has been in place and ensures the data collection is creditable and is carried out in a manner that will give a good result for stock assessment purposes.

### 2. Fleet Structure

Niues fleet consist of only long liners which are all Commission member flagged vessels. The fleet is only sanctioned to fish in Niues EEZ.

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

<b>VESSEL TYPE</b>	<b>Size Class 10-15 metres</b>	<b>Size Class 15m +</b>
<b>Longline</b>	7	5

### 3. Annual Catches in the WCPFC Convention Area, 2001-2005

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the catch by species from the Niue longline fleet during 2006.

**Table 2. Catch and effort for the Niue longline vessels in the WCPFC Convention Area, 2006.**

Year Vessel	Flag	alb_c	bet_c	yft_c	oth_c	total	MONTHLY ACTIVITY (days report)							
							jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	jul	aug
2006 FAI MANU 7	PF	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006 FAI MANU 8	PF	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006 JACQUI M	CK	149.9	16.3	30.5	32.0	228.7	6	10	14	16	21	8	23	17
2006 JAY BELINDA	CK	61.7	5.7	10.4	9.8	87.4	0	0	9	15	17	17	9	3
2006 MONUINA	NU	1.3	0.2	1.2	0.4	3.2	0	0	10	7	0	0	0	0
2006 SEA PRINCESS	NU	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

213.0	22.2	42.2	43.0	320.3
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#### CPUE in kgs / 100 hooks

Month	100s of hooks				
	alb	yft	bet	wah	
5	271.0	30.4	9.3	3.4	1.3
6	162.0	30.9	10.8	3.5	0.9
7	134.5	55.4	9.9	2.9	2.1
8	87.5	17.6	1.1	0.8	1.3
9	436.5	12.4	5.1	1.1	1.3
10	526.5	13.8	9.9	1.3	0.9
11	489.0	24.3	22.1	6.4	2.0
12	524.5	13.7	18.8	5.7	1.2
		20.5	12.9	3.5	1.4

These catches has certainly increased initially towards the end of the year (2005) with the injection of the larger vessels, however with one larger boat returning early to its country of registration and mechanical and bad weather has seen the other larger vessels un operative has seen a temporary decline in catch numbers at the end of 2005 and the beginning of 2006.

Mid 2006 and towards the end there has been a steady and rise of the catch numbers and the rate of catch mainly due to the consistent fishing of one fishing vessel (Jacqui M).

#### Annual Catches in EEZ

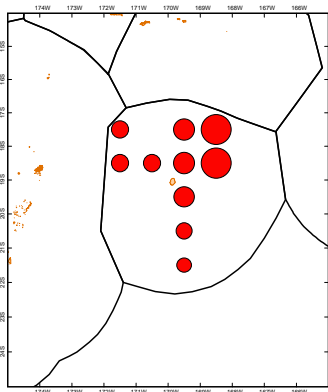
In 2002, 21 licensed vessels (TW and AS flag) caught approximately 50-100mt of tuna in the EEZ. Over the period 2003–2004, there were no catches in Niue's EEZ by commercial fisheries, due to the development of a local based joint venture and the associate discontinuation of licensing of foreign vessels under access arrangements.

Domestic commercial longline fishing 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.

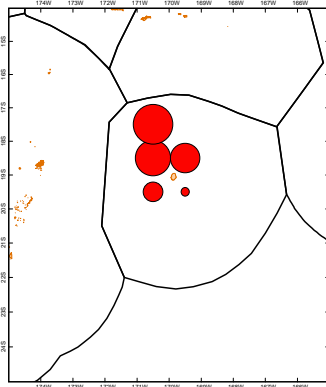
The development of the fishery has now given the catch numbers by tonnage a considerable rise which is from 33 tonnes to 270 metric tonnes of tuna alone, which is a large change due mainly from catch data of local fishers on small vessel craft to the commercial Industrial Long liners.

Figure 1 shows a breakdown of effort by month by the Niue longline fleet during 2005 and the first few months of 2006. Effort is generally within 60-100 nautical miles of Niue Island. Figure 2

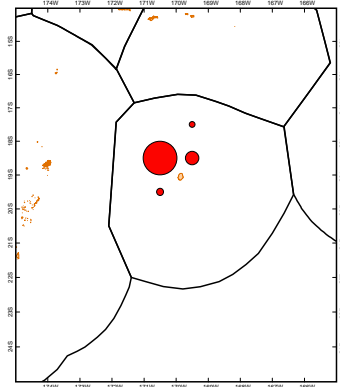
shows the quarterly breakdown of catch for the main species taken by the Niue longline fleet. Most of the catch comprised albacore in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters of 2005. In contrast, yellowfin was clearly the main part of the catch in the northern and eastern areas during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2005.



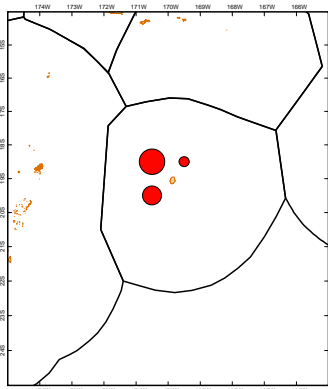
April



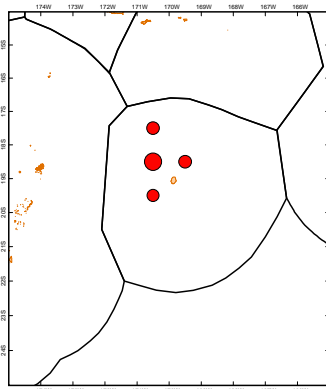
May



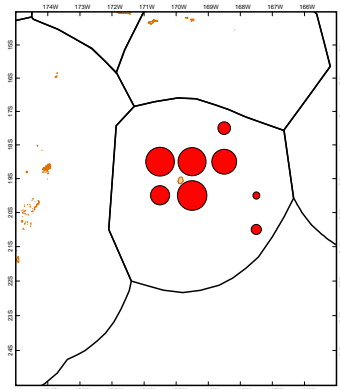
June



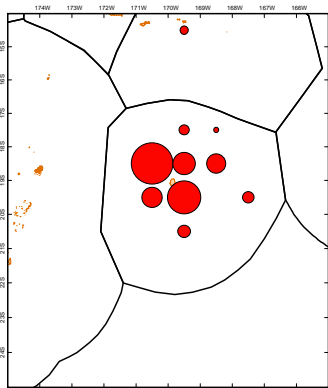
July



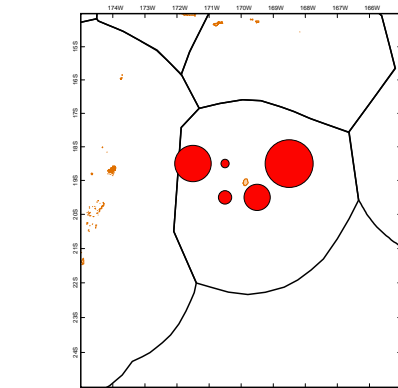
August



September



October

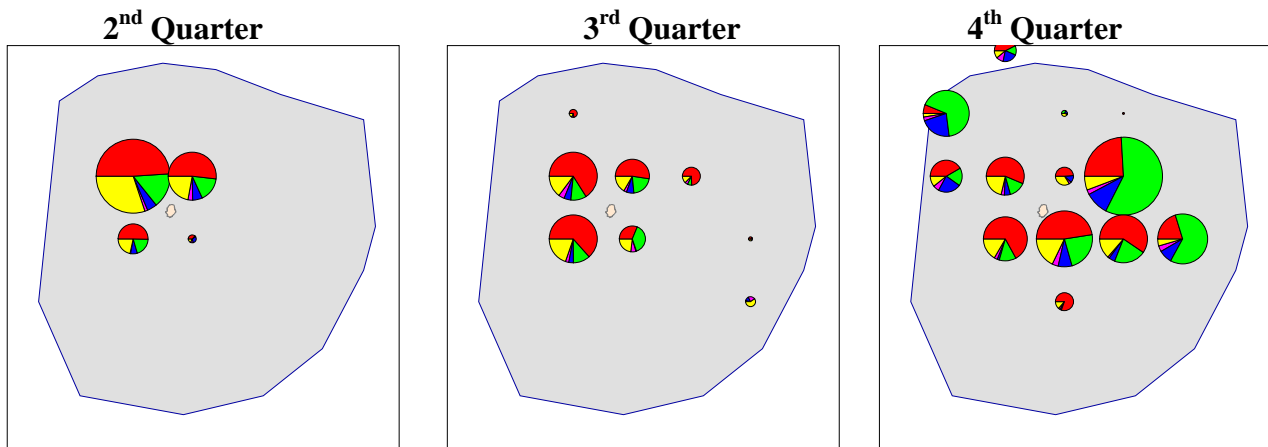


November



December

**Figure 1. Monthly distribution of effort (100s of hooks) by the Niue Longline fleet during 2005 - 2006**



**Figure 2. Quarterly distribution of catch by species for the Niue Longline fleet during 2005**  
(Red – Albacore; Green – Yellowfin; Blue – Bigeye; Crimson – Wahoo; Yellow – Other)

#### 4. 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 and also to Japan, the export fish is mostly whole shashimi with loins.

#### 5. Onshore Developments

The new processing plant capable of processing up to 6000mt of fish per annum, is now fully operative and is employing local clientele for its operations. Reef air is also planning to fly fish off to neighbouring access markets, and significant wharf and harbour development are in the advanced planning stages.

Wharf developments is under consideration that seeks to ensure the quality of fish especially during unloading rather than by hand which is time consuming, strenuous and adds to lowering of fish quality.

Water pipes have been installed which can be directly used for vessels tied on the wharf and for use of local fishers.

Port security measures are also considered at this point which also aide in unloading and transportation of catch to the processing factory.

National legislation is also planning to be reviewed in order to accommodate management measures adopted by the Commission.

Training with SPC on stock assessment has given an opportunity for staff to interpret data for stock assessment purposes, this training has been on going and it's in its second stage.

#### 6. 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 over the next year. Observer

programmes are in consideration as a priority and Niue is working closely with SPC in the development of collection of data and data management systems.

Port Sampling has been the main source of data collection, with recording of 40 – 50% catch landed on shore mainly due to staff numbers.

SPC has been a major help with data interpretation and information and management systems.

Port sampling data collection has continued throughout 2005 and into 2006, the trips of vessels have been rather short taking 1 – 3 days and returning with high catches. The whole fisheries section is involved in port sampling as vessels return at odd hours involving shift work for staff.

Niue has also not just filled out the port sampling sheets but also has set up a spread sheet or data base of its own as a back up data and with further training by SPC on stock assessment would enable Niue to assess and interpret its own data and help advice managers in decision making.

There are observers that has gone through the SPC observer programme on the Island however there is a temporary halt in the national observer program which is due to resume soon, most of the observers are working for fisheries which may add to the temporary halt as there would be a shortage of staff if fisheries staff is on board vessels.