



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE  
FIFTH REGULAR SESSION**

10-21 August 2009  
Port Vila, Vanuatu

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

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**WCPFC-SC5-AR/CCM-25**

**TUVALU**

# Tuvalu Part 1 Report

Submission to the 5th Regular Meeting  
Scientific Committee (WCPFC)

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## **Summary**

Fleet structure in 2008 remains relatively the same as in the past years. A sudden surge in fishing effort (days) has occurred in most recent years particularly for the US purse seine fleets. Some fishing vessels transhiped their catches in the Funafuti lagoon in 2008.

In terms of catch, the artisanal fleet landed a total catch of 25.7mt. In contrast the foreign fleets made a total catch of 36,463mt. The purse seine fleet accounted for 99.6% of this total. The longline fleets contributed 0.3%. Unfortunately no catch data is available for the Pole and Line fleets.

Collection of artisanal catches is extremely poor. The fish centers in the rural areas represent the only places where fisheries information can be obtained. However, information is very limited and restricted to fish purchases and fish sales only.

# 1 Background to the Fishery

There is no large scale fishing taking place domestically at the present time. However, there are many small skiffs comprising of artisanal operators operating independently over a wide area. Fish are sold and consumed locally.

Fisheries information and catch data are not collected at this point in time. Nonetheless, records of fish sales and fish purchases do exist and are the only information currently available. These records come from the various fish markets based in the rural areas. Such records are submitted on a monthly basis to the fisheries department. Due to the restrictive and selective nature (on what fish to take and by what quantity) of these fish markets, it is believed that these data represent just a small proportion of the actual total catch taken by these small-scale operators.

Tuvalu continues to be an attractive fishing ground to the foreign fleets especially to the purse seine fleets. Transshipment is highly uncommon and in 2008 we did registered two fishing licenses for two carriers. Some of the by-catches were offloaded at Funafuti during transshipment process.

## 2 Flag state

### 2.1 The artisanal wooden skiffs

The catches in the table were obtained from fish markets based in the rural areas. The market intake of fish varies between the different markets. However they all share some common features in regards to operational limitations. There are many factors impacting the intake of fish and can range from financial, mechanical to social constraints. All these factors can result in temporary closure of the market to further fish uptake.

**Table 1: Annual fish intakes reported by the seven markets located in rural areas.**

Year	YFT	SKJ	Others	Total
2004	13.9	14.8	4.5	33.2
2005	11.3	8.2	3.9	23.4
2006	3.3	9.1	2.3	14.7
2007	9	17.2	3.3	29.5
2008	10.5	11.7	3.4	25.7

### 3 Coastal state

#### 3.1 Foreign fleets

**Table 2: annual fishing licenses by fleet types between 2004 & 2008. Fishing applications has been quite stable for the LL and the P&L fleets over the years, but has grown very sharply for the PS fleets.**

Fleet	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
PS	69	57	45	155	136
LL	55	51	45	96	68
PL	19	3	3	6	6
Carrier					2
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>212</b>

#### 3.2 Purse seine fleets

**Table 2: Fishing days for the different fleets for the past five-year period. Purse seine fishing is dominated by the NZ, US and Korean fleets. Fishing effort (days) continue to increase and peaks in 2008.**

Nationalities	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Chinese Taipei	0	14	18	9	2
FSM	48	26	24	23	17
Japan	65	12	21	0	0
Korea	1	6	1	373	152
New Zealand	276	86	166	191	206
USA	583	314	425	284	784
Vanuatu	51	45	16	23	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,023</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>1,164</b>

(Source: Regional tuna fisheries database, SPC)

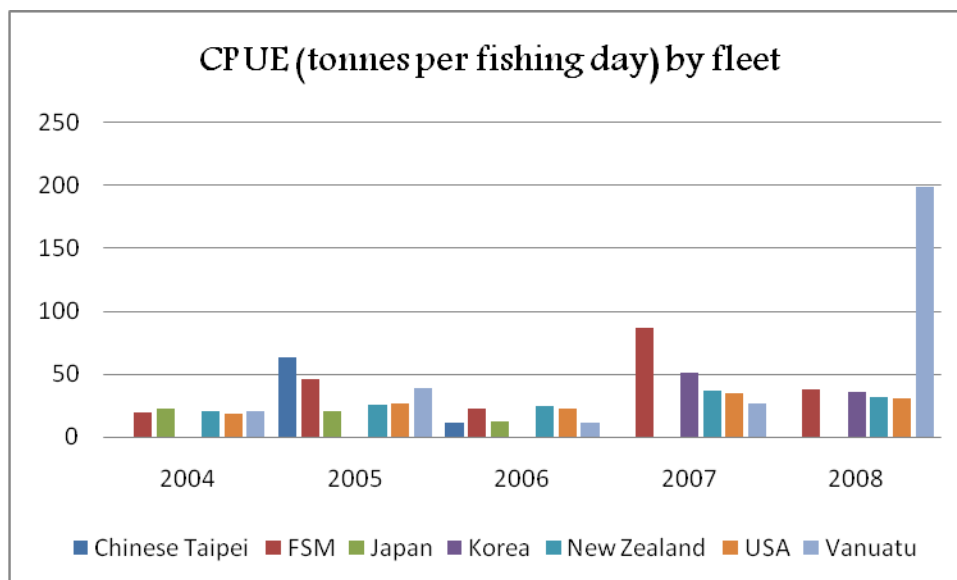
**Table 3: Total metric tons of tuna landed by flag and year. Total annual catch dropped dramatically in 2005 but then increased drastically to record levels in 2007 and 2008. This trend corresponds with the increase in fishing effort in recent years.**

Nationalities	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Chinese Taipei	0	885	210	0	0
FSM	941	1183	526	1985	645
Japan	1449	244	253	0	0
Korea	0	0	0	18910	5367
New Zealand	5635	2153	3991	7018	6511
USA	10689	8384	9715	9687	23543

Vanuatu	1061	1742	177	611	397
<b>Total</b>	<b>19775</b>	<b>14591</b>	<b>14872</b>	<b>38211</b>	<b>36463</b>

(Source: Regional tuna fisheries database, SPC)

Figure 1: Catch rates (metric tons per fishing day) by flag. All fleets show comparable catch rate except for some fleets. The Vanuatu fleet recorded an unusually very high catch rate of over 150 tons in 2008.



### 3.3 Long line fleets

Table 4: Total annual tonnages of Tuna landed by flag.

Nationalities	Tuna sp.	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Korea	ALB	41	157	3	61	13
	YFT	220	340	13	363	30
	BET	138	252	23	270	35
	OTH	0	0	0	0	18
Chinese Taipei	ALB	4	15	0	0	0
	YFT	4	46	3	0	0
	BET	2	60	1	0	0
	OTH	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>409</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>96</b>

(Source: TUFMAN database operated by SPC)

### 3.4 Pole and line

Six fishing licenses were issued in 2008 to the pole and line fleet. However, no report (operational, catch etc) has been relayed to the fisheries department to the date of writing.

## 4 Disposal of catch

### 4.1 Domestic catches

Most of the artisanal catches, in the rural areas, is delivered to the fish markets. These fish markets however can only take a certain amount at any given point in time and is constrained by many factors. For Funafuti, artisanal catches are sold completely outside the market. There is no such thing as discards in the artisanal level.

### 4.2 Foreign fleets catches

Few tons of the by-catch tunas were delivered to the fisheries department during transshipment activities of some purse seine and long liners vessels in late 2008. The catch was sold to the public at a very low price.

## 5 Future Prospect

A single purse seine is anticipated to start its fishing operations in 2008. This purse seine will be under a joint partnership with one fishing company from Taiwan. The vessel is expected to fish in waters of several countries in the WCPFC including the Tuvalu EEZ.

## 6 Status of Tuna fishery data collection systems

### 6.1 Domestic catches

There has not been a data collection program for many years now due capacity problem. However, fisheries information at operational level is readily available though scattered. And therefore a collection system if to be established, needs to consider how best the information can be obtained given the limit in resources, ownership of data, disparity in information being recorded and so forth.