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NINTH REGULAR SESSION
Manila, Philippines
2-6 December 2012

PEW Position Paper to WCPFC9

WCPFC9-2012-OP04
26 November 2012

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16 November, 2012

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing on behalf of the Pew Environment Group, in regards to the discussions that will take place at the upcoming 9th Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) in Manila, Philippines.

The WCPFC has a unique and important responsibility as custodian of the world's largest tuna fishery in an area covering 20 percent of the Earth's surface. This responsibility requires strong conservation and management actions through joint commitments and compliance. Unfortunately, Commission Members, Cooperating Non-members, and Participating Territories (CCMs, collectively) have failed to take sufficient actions in recent meetings.

At the 8th Regular Session of the WCPFC (WCPFC 8) in Guam earlier this year, CCMs were unable to reach consensus on more than a one year conservation measure for the tropical tuna fishery. National positions and interests took precedence over making difficult yet critical management decisions, and the stewardship of the world's most valuable tuna fishery took a step back. Further, even with a mandate to protect sharks and clear scientific evidence of the need for action for several species, CCMs took meaningful action on only one shark species.

All WCPFC CCMs must be willing to compromise from their current positions to ensure that this does not happen again and that clear, multiyear action is taken at WCPFC 9 in December. This year's meeting is critical for the future of bigeye and Pacific bluefin tuna and many shark species in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

Please take a moment to view our **WCPFC policy statement** and a short video featuring Pew's policy experts and footage from the region. **Click on the image below to watch Pew's WCPFC9 video.**

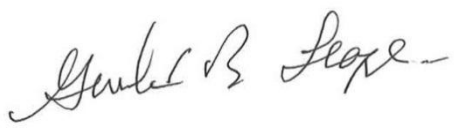
In particular, the Pew Environment Group calls CCMs to take the following actions at the 9th Regular Session of the Commission:

- **Adopt an Effective Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for Tropical Tunas that ends overfishing of bigeye tuna**
    - Catch fewer juvenile bigeye by limiting the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) to 2010 levels
    - Catch fewer adult bigeye and more accurately report longline catch
    - Maintain and expand high seas pocket closures
    - Implement a compliance regime with CMMs
- **Implement Catch Limits and Improve Monitoring and Transparency**
    - Improve FAD management
    - Establish target and limit reference points for all WCPFC-managed tuna species
        - Implement science-based catch limits for Pacific bluefin tuna
    - Increase the transparency of the International Scientific Committee (ISC) for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean scientific process
- **Adopt Conservation and Management Measures to Protect Sharks**
    - Prohibit the retention of silky and hammerhead sharks
    - Prohibit purse seine vessels from intentionally setting nets around whale sharks
    - Mandate the use of shark bycatch mitigation methods
    - Prohibit the removal of shark fins at sea to improve enforcement of the shark finning ban
- **Strengthen Controls Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing**
    - Improve port State measures to deter IUU fishing activities
    - Require International Maritime Organization (IMO) numbers for vessels over 24 meters in length and 100 gross tonnes in weight operating in the WCPFC area
    - Review and strengthen WCPFC controls for transshipment at sea and require all vessels, including those within EEZs in the Convention Area, to comply with the WCPFC's vessel monitoring and surveillance (VMS) rules

We look forward to working with you and your delegation in Manila to agree on new conservation and management measures that end overfishing of bigeye and Pacific bluefin tuna, protect sharks, and strengthen controls to ensure legal and regulated fishing based on sound science.

Please feel free to contact me anytime at gleape@pewtrusts.org.

Sincerely,



Gerry Leape
Senior Officer, International Policy
The Pew Environment Group

THE PEW ENVIRONMENT GROUP

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE 9TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION (WCPFC)
DECEMBER 2–6, 2012 | MANILA, PHILIPPINES

POLICY STATEMENT

WCPFC—
IT'S TIME TO MAKE IT WORK

Yellowfin tuna, © C and M Fallows

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Pew Environment Group calls on Members, Cooperating Non-members, and Participating Territories (CCMs, collectively) of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) to take the following critical actions at the 9th Regular Session of the Commission:

1. **Adopt an Effective Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for Tropical Tunas that Ends Overfishing of Bigeye Tuna**
   - 1.1 Catch fewer juvenile bigeye by limiting the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) to 2010 levels
   - 1.2 Catch fewer adult bigeye and more accurately report longline catch
   - 1.3 Maintain and expand high seas pocket closures
   - 1.4 Implement a compliance regime with CMMs

2. **Implement Catch Limits and Improve Monitoring and Transparency**
   - 2.1 Improve FAD management
   - 2.2 Establish target and limit reference points for all WCPFC-managed tuna species
     - 2.2.1 Implement science-based catch limits for Pacific bluefin tuna
   - 2.3 Increase the transparency of the International Scientific Committee (ISC) for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean scientific process

3. **Adopt Conservation and Management Measures to Protect Sharks**
   - 3.1 Prohibit the retention of silky and hammerhead sharks
   - 3.2 Prohibit purse seine vessels from intentionally setting nets around whale sharks
   - 3.3 Mandate the use of shark bycatch mitigation methods
   - 3.4 Prohibit the removal of shark fins at sea to improve enforcement of the shark finning ban

4. **Strengthen Controls Against Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing**
   - 4.1 Improve port State measures to deter IUU fishing activities
   - 4.2 Require International Maritime Organization (IMO) numbers for vessels of 100 gross tonnes or more or 24 meters or greater operating in the WCPFC area
   - 4.3 Review and strengthen WCPFC controls for transshipment at sea and require all vessels, including those within EEZs in the Convention Area, to comply with the WCPFC's vessel monitoring and surveillance (VMS) rules

WCPFC—IT'S TIME TO MAKE IT WORK

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) has a unique and important responsibility as custodian of the world's largest tuna fishery in an area covering 20 percent of the Earth's surface. The WCPFC aims to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fish stocks in the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO). The Commission is also the Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) with the clearest mandate to protect sharks. These responsibilities require strong conservation and management actions through joint commitments and compliance. Unfortunately, the Commission's Members, Cooperating Non-members, and Participating Territories (CCMs, collectively) have failed to take the needed actions in recent meetings.

At the 8th Regular Session of the WCPFC (WCPFC8) earlier this year, CCMs were unable to reach consensus on conservation action for the tropical tuna fishery. National positions and interests took precedence over difficult yet critical management decisions, and stewardship of the world's most valuable tuna fishery took a step back. Further, even with a mandate to protect sharks and with clear scientific evidence of the need for action on several species, CCMs took meaningful action on only one shark species. All WCPFC members share a responsibility to ensure that this does not happen again and to take clear action at WCPFC9 in December.

This year's meeting is critical for the future of bigeye and Pacific bluefin tuna and many shark species in the WCPO. Governments must come together to agree on conservation and management measures that end overfishing of bigeye tuna, protect sharks, and strengthen controls to ensure legal and regulated fishing based on sound science.

Silky shark, © Chris and Monique Fallows

1. ADOPT AN EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE (CMM) FOR TROPICAL TUNAS THAT ENDS OVERFISHING OF BIGEYE TUNA

Although all CCMs play a critical role in ensuring the overall health of fisheries and the broader ecosystem, there has been a clear lack of leadership in the WCPO on the issue of bigeye tuna conservation. The longline fishery for this species is worth hundreds of millions of dollars and is closely linked with other ecosystem conservation considerations, such as catches of turtles, sharks, and seabirds.

Overfishing of bigeye tuna continues, and only a multipronged management measure can address the problem effectively. To date, WCPFC members have adopted actions such as fish aggregating device (FAD) closures and longline reductions that help decrease bigeye mortality. In recent discussions at the 9th Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC9) earlier this year, many governments took the view that they have made a sufficient contribution and that further action must come from somewhere else. However, according to the Scientific Committee, "measures that reduce fishing mortality across a range of fish sizes (e.g. fishing gear) are likely to produce the best results".[1] This means that all WCPFC members must do more to reduce mortality if a new CMM is to end overfishing. Given that the vast majority of bigeye tuna fishing mortality comes from purse seiners using FADs and from longline fisheries, any new measure must focus on further reducing mortality from both of these gears. **Effective management can be achieved only by joint action based on strong scientific advice and a commitment to compliance.**

1.1 CATCH FEWER JUVENILE BIGEYE BY LIMITING FAD USE TO 2010 LEVELS

FAD closures have been effective in reducing bigeye tuna catch during the closure period, but unrestricted FAD use in the non-closure period resulted in a record number of FAD sets in 2011.[2] The 8th Session of the Scientific Committee (SC8) **recommended limiting FAD sets to 2010 levels to end overfishing of bigeye**. In practical terms, this means capping the number of FAD sets in a given year to about 15,000, according to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). Certain CCMs, such as Japan, have already taken steps to reduce their numbers of FAD sets, and it is time for other CCMs to follow Japan's example and for the Commission to adopt a firm limit.

1.2 CATCH FEWER ADULT BIGEYE AND MORE ACCURATELY REPORT LONGLINE CATCH

Until fewer bigeye tuna are caught and until misreporting in the longline fishery is addressed, CMMs will continue to fall short of their objectives, scientists will have incomplete and inaccurate data for stock assessments, and potential benefits from maintaining sustainable stocks in the region will be undermined.

Longline vessels have the most to gain from bigeye conservation and stand to lose the most if bigeye populations decrease further. SC8 recommends reductions in fishing mortality across all gears, including longlines, to end overfishing of bigeye. **A continuation of the advice in 2008-01 would achieve the required mortality reduction**, but misreporting of target catch remains a widespread compliance issue in the region and continues to undermine CMMs.[3]

To fully address these problems, 100 percent of the longline fishing activity in WCPFC fisheries should be observed. However, we recognize that 100 percent observer coverage is unrealistic in the near term. Given the high impact that large-scale freezer longliners have on target, associated, and dependent species, the WCPFC should mandate 100 percent observer coverage on these vessels. Pew also recommends that the WCPFC increase coverage levels on all other longliners to at least 20 percent, in accordance with the best available scientific advice.[4] The WCPFC should also investigate the potential for use of electronic observer systems as an alternative to human observers.

Bigeye tuna and FAD, © M Ushioda SeaPics

LEADERSHIP IS NEEDED ON BIGEYE TUNA CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Although all CCMs play a critical role in ensuring the overall health of fisheries and the broader ecosystem, there has been a clear lack of leadership on the issue of bigeye conservation. The bigeye tuna longline fishery is worth hundreds of millions of dollars and is closely linked with other ecosystem conservation issues, such as catches of turtles, sharks, and seabirds.

According to Article 30 of its Convention, the WCPFC must implement measures to ensure that a disproportionate burden of conservation action is not placed on developing States Parties, and territories and possessions. In short, the WCPFC CCMs that benefit the most from bigeye fishing should lead conservation efforts. However, many of those CCMs have argued that further cuts by their longliners would be an unfair hardship. According to economic statistics, however, the value of the catch from the top five bigeye-catching CCMs has increased by more than 17 percent since 2008 (when the previous measure was adopted), compared with a cumulative 3.8 percent decline in value for all other CCMs and cooperating non-members (CNM).

Within the WCPFC, five CCMs gain most of the benefits from the bigeye longline fishery: They receive 84 percent of the value, or "benefit", from bigeye fishing. These CCMs also have significant purse seine fleets that fish on FADs. These CCMs should lead holistic conservation initiatives that limit FAD use and reduce longline effort, in line with the spirit of the WCPFC and the letter of its treaty.

Table 1: CCMs that benefit the most from bigeye tuna in longline and purse seine fisheries

CCMs that benefit the most from bigeye tuna	Value of longline bigeye landed in 2011[5] (in millions of USD)	Value of bigeye tuna catch in 2008 (in millions of USD)	Change in value since 2008
Republic of Korea	195	141	35.4%
Japan	158	162	- 2.5%
Chinese Taipei	133	126	5.6%
China	116	89	30.3%
United States	50	39	28.2%
Total value of catch of top 5 BET catchers	**652**	**557**	**17.1%**
Total value of BET catch of all other CCMs and CNMs in WCPFC	**125**	**130**	**-3.8%**

1.3 MAINTAIN AND EXPAND HIGH SEAS POCKET CLOSURES

High seas pocket closures should be maintained until measures to prevent and deter illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) activity in those areas, which are complementary to in-zone measures, are implemented effectively. Opening the pockets without those measures would weaken monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) and increase the region's vulnerability to IUU activities. The closures should also be expanded to cover longline fisheries until strengthened transshipment measures are fully implemented.

1.4 IMPLEMENT A COMPLIANCE REGIME WITH CMMS

Noncompliance with CMMs threatens fish populations and associated and dependent species, as well as the very credibility of the WCPFC. It also undermines the activities of those who play by the rules. To ensure that CCMs are fully accountable for their fishing activities, the **WCPFC should agree to implement a comprehensive and transparent compliance regime that systematically reviews fishing activities and automatically imposes appropriate penalties on CCMs that violate conservation and management measures.** This process should be open and transparent to all WCPFC observers so that civil society can learn how all parties are carrying out their stewardship responsibilities for the Pacific's highly migratory species.

2. IMPLEMENT CATCH LIMITS AND IMPROVE MONITORING AND TRANSPARENCY

WCPFC CCMs have an opportunity this year to strengthen management across multiple fisheries by committing to critical articles of the WCPF Convention, notably Article 5 on the principles and measures for conservation and management, Article 6 on the application of the precautionary approach, and Article 21 on transparency. Specifically, this can be accomplished by managing and monitoring the use of FADs, setting target and limit reference points for tuna fisheries, and improving transparency in management of fisheries in the North Pacific, especially for Pacific bluefin tuna.

2.1 IMPROVE FAD MANAGEMENT

CCM compliance with FAD management requirements has been extremely poor, as noted in WCPFC-TCC7-2011-OB-01[6], and the uncontrolled proliferation of FADs must be addressed as a matter of priority. In addition to limiting FAD sets, **CCMs fishing with FADs should be required to submit management plans and information on FAD numbers (deployed, recovered, lost)** so that the Scientific Committee has better information on extent of use, potential ecosystem impacts associated with the uncontrolled proliferation, and marine debris data. Moreover, the use of FADs may give fishing operators access to fishing areas beyond their license, including EEZs where they are not authorized to fish. In this context, FADs could enable a form of IUU fishing, and it is therefore critical to develop MCS tools to regulate and control them.

FAD management requirements should be clearly stipulated, in line with the recent International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) resolution 31 (WCC-2012-Res-031-EN) on tuna management. The motion urged RFMOs and IUCN State and government agency Members with vessels fishing on drifting FADs to take the following actions on FAD management:

a. Develop and submit to their respective RFMOs FAD management plans that are standard across fleets and regions so that RFMO scientific committees have better information on the extent of their use, potential ecosystem impacts associated with the uncontrolled proliferation of drifting FADs, and marine debris information.
b. Undertake research and scientific trials to determine how to reduce catch of nontarget species when fishing on drifting FADs.

2.2 ESTABLISH TARGET AND LIMIT REFERENCE POINTS FOR ALL WCPFC-MANAGED TUNA SPECIES

Article 6 of the WCPFC Convention states, "In applying the precautionary approach, the members of the Commission shall: (a) apply the guidelines set out in Annex II of the Agreement…and determine, on the basis of the best scientific information available, stock-specific reference points and the action to be taken if they are exceeded".

The 2012 Management Objectives Workshop was a first step to implementing this critical requirement. **WCPFC CCMs should adopt interim target and limit reference points**, building off the outcomes of the Management Objectives Workshop, various papers presented at SC8, and Working Paper WCPFC-TCC7-2011-01. Further discussion on reference points and harvest control rules should continue to ensure that limit reference points have a low chance of being exceeded and that targets achieve the desired outcomes.

2.2.1 Implement science-based catch limits for Pacific bluefin tuna

The Pacific bluefin tuna fishery is now the world's largest, with the majority of the catch taken in WCPFC waters. However, management has not kept up with the growth of the fishery, overfishing is occurring, and preliminary results from the 2012 assessment indicate the continued decline of the species.[7] **The Northern Committee should convene in Manila to review the results of the latest stock assessment and adopt science-based catch limits for implementation in 2013.** This is a critical starting point for the process of setting target and limit reference points for Pacific bluefin. The WCPFC should also implement measures to reduce juvenile catch, as recommended by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC), by adopting a minimum size of 30 kg with a 40 percent tolerance for undersized fish.

Pacific Bluefin, © Richard Hermann

2.3 INCREASE THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE ISC SCIENTIFIC PROCESS

The WCPFC relies on the ISC to provide scientific stock assessments for the species managed by the Northern Committee, including Pacific bluefin tuna. This year, however, the ISC failed to complete the bluefin assessment in a timely manner, leaving the Northern Committee without the critical scientific information needed to recommend effective catch limits and complementary management measures. The ISC also lacks transparency in its process, refusing to admit nongovernmental observers to meetings and declining to share its assessment reports. Its failure to release its stock assessment documents and reports also poses problems for the Scientific Committee, as was the case with the North Pacific striped marlin assessment this year. These actions are not consistent with the high standards under which the WCPFC operates. **It should consider other, more transparent arrangements such as working with the SPC to assess northern stocks going forward.**

3. ADOPT CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO PROTECT SHARKS

Sharks are among the ocean's most vulnerable animals. According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, 143 shark species are threatened or near threatened with extinction. Even though the WCPFC is the most modern of the tuna RFMOs and has the clearest mandate to protect species within its jurisdiction, it has taken meaningful action on only one shark species. The WCPFC must act to ensure that targeted fishing and bycatch do not deplete shark populations and drive them to extinction.

3.1 PROHIBIT THE RETENTION OF SILKY AND HAMMERHEAD SHARKS

The 2012 stock assessments for silky sharks *(Carcharhinus falciformis)* show that they are overfished and that overfishing is occurring in the WCPO.[8, 9] Although the Scientific Committee determined that management advice could not be provided because of concerns about data and biases in the assessment, it did note that some basic fisheries indicators are showing declines in recent years. It also recommended mitigation measures to reduce the impact of nontarget fisheries on this species.[10] **Because the best available science shows that silky sharks are overfished and that overfishing is occurring, retention of silky sharks should be prohibited while efforts are made to improve the stock assessment.**

Scalloped *(Sphyrna lewini)*, smooth *(Sphyrna zygaena)* and great *(Sphyrna mokarran)* hammerhead sharks are species of significant global concern and have recently been proposed for inclusion on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). These species of hammerheads, along with the winghead shark *(Eusphyra blochii)*, are among the 13 Key Shark Species identified by the WCPFC. Unfortunately, no resources are assigned to these species under the Shark Research Plan (SRP), and no assessments are planned. Although little is known about the status of hammerhead populations in the WCPO, an assessment off the east coast of Australia found that catch rates of hammerheads have decreased by more than 85 percent over 44 years.[11] **Because of significant concerns about the status of hammerhead populations, and because no scientific assessment or advice is expected in the near future, the WCPFC should prohibit the retaining on board, transshipping, storing, and landing of hammerhead sharks.**

3.2 PROHIBIT PURSE SEINE VESSELS FROM INTENTIONALLY SETTING NETS AROUND WHALE SHARKS

The practice of setting purse seines on whale sharks *(Rhincodon typus)* in the WCPO is a significant concern. The observed interaction and mortality rates imply that total whale shark mortalities in the purse seine fishery were approximately 56 animals in 2009 and 19 animals in 2010.[12]

Mortality occurs in approximately one in every 10 sets involving a whale shark interaction.[13] To protect these slow-moving, vulnerable sharks, the WCPFC should prohibit purse seine vessels from intentionally setting nets around whale sharks in the convention area. Further, because whale sharks rarely escape unassisted before the net is closed, vessel operators must be required to safely release entangled whale sharks.

The Pew Environment Group supports the SC8 recommendation that the whale shark be defined as a Key Shark Species of the WCPFC. Although this designation and an eventual stock assessment would be a useful endeavor, **immediate action is needed to reduce whale shark mortality, and we urge the WCPFC to prohibit the intentional setting of purse seine nets on whale sharks.**

Whale shark, © Olivier Roux/Marine Photobank

3.3 MANDATE THE USE OF SHARK BYCATCH MITIGATION METHODS

Shark bycatch in WCPFC fisheries is detrimental to the survival of many populations of these animals. Their life history characteristics make them extremely susceptible to fishing pressure, and the recovery potential for depleted shark species is significantly lower than that of other fish species. Bycatch of oceanic whitetip *(Carcharhinus longimanus)* and silky sharks is of special concern considering the recent assessments showing that the populations are overfished and that overfishing is occurring. The status of blue sharks is also a matter of concern. **Pew supports SC8's recommendation that bycatch mitigation measures be put in place.**

Many longline vessels use wire leaders (also known as steel traces) to secure their catch on lines. Shark bycatch is higher on longlines that use wire leaders, because sharks are unable to break through the wire to escape. Thus the use of wire leaders creates a de facto targeted but unregulated shark fishery. **Prohibiting wire leaders is a clear solution for reducing shark bycatch in longline fisheries.** In addition, the use of monofilament can actually increase the catch of some target species such as tuna and swordfish.[14, 15] For example, research undertaken off the northeast Australian coast showed that monofilament leaders catch more target species (with a statistically increased catch of bigeye tuna), thereby increasing earnings per trip, while wire leaders catch more sharks. The study showed a clear financial incentive for fishers to use nylon leaders: The longliners deploying only nylon leaders made approximately US$8,000 more per year than did longliners fishing with wire leaders.[16]

Sharks that are brought next to the vessel alive when the fishing gear is retrieved can easily be freed with the use of line cutters. Thus a prohibition on wire leaders would also facilitate compliance with the WCPFC's CMM 2010–07 paragraph 10, which says that "CCMs shall take measures to encourage the release of live sharks that are caught incidentally and are not used for food or other purposes". **Gear modifications, such as the use of single monofilament nylon leaders, should be mandated so that fewer sharks are caught as bycatch in WCPFC tuna fisheries.**

3.4 PROHIBIT THE REMOVAL OF SHARK FINS AT SEA TO IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT OF THE SHARK FINNING BAN

The WCPFC's ban on shark finning—the wasteful practice of slicing off a shark's fins and discarding the body at sea—contains loopholes that hamper enforcement. **The ban can be strengthened by prohibiting the removal of shark fins at sea**, which would also facilitate collection of species-specific catch data and help ensure compliance with existing WCPFC conservation and management measures for sharks.

4. STRENGTHEN CONTROLS AGAINST ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED, AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING

IUU fishing continues to be a serious concern in the WCPFC area, where the practice exacerbates overfishing, undermines conservation measures, and threatens food security for coastal communities.

4.1 IMPROVE PORT STATE MEASURES TO DETER IUU FISHING ACTIVITIES

A 2009 project to develop a Regional Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Strategy for Pacific oceanic fisheries concluded that the majority of IUU activity in the region is associated with licensed vessels. The project identified inadequate reporting as an area of concern and underlined the need to strengthen catch monitoring and validation throughout the supply chain.[17] In this context, port State measures (PSMs) have proved to be effective at preventing the entry of illegal fish into the market and in removing the economic incentive for IUU fishing operators to continue with their activities. The United Nations General Assembly has urged States to ratify the Food and Agriculture Organization's Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) of 2009, cooperate through RFMOs, and adopt all necessary port State measures.[18] In addition, States at Rio+20 agreed to expedite national processes to ratify the PSMA and implement measures that identify vessels engaged in IUU fishing.[19]

The WCPFC's Performance Review Report recommended that "in considering Port State Measures, the Commission should take into account minimum standards in the PSMA, measures and practices of other RFMOs in implementing such standards and developments in the broader system of Port controls".[20] Analysis conducted by the Pew Environment Group comparing the PSMs in the WCPFC with those established by the PSMA revealed a number of gaps in the WCPFC's PSMs, such as no comprehensive inspection scheme, no requirement for vessels to provide information before entering ports, and no prohibition of port entry to IUU vessels.[21]

The Pew Environment Group is aware that a number of WCPFC CCMs will need time to fully implement the provisions of the PSMA. However, the **WCPFC should initiate constructive action toward the development of stronger control measures by gradually adopting enhanced PSMs.** In this context, the European Union's proposal discussed at TCC8, for a CMM to establish a WCPFC scheme for minimum standards for inspection in port, offers a good basis for progress that would complement the MCS minimum standards already applicable in the region. In addition, the proposal recognizes the needs and requirements of Small Island developing states and territories. Providing support to developing States to effectively implement PSMs will be crucial to the effectiveness of a new regional port inspection scheme. Any efforts in this direction should take into account existing initiatives in the region, such as the ACP Fish II Programme.[23]

Micronesia © Adam Baske, Pew

4.2 REQUIRE IMO NUMBERS FOR VESSELS OF 100 GROSS TONNES OR MORE OR 24 METERS OR GREATER OPERATING IN THE WCPFC AREA

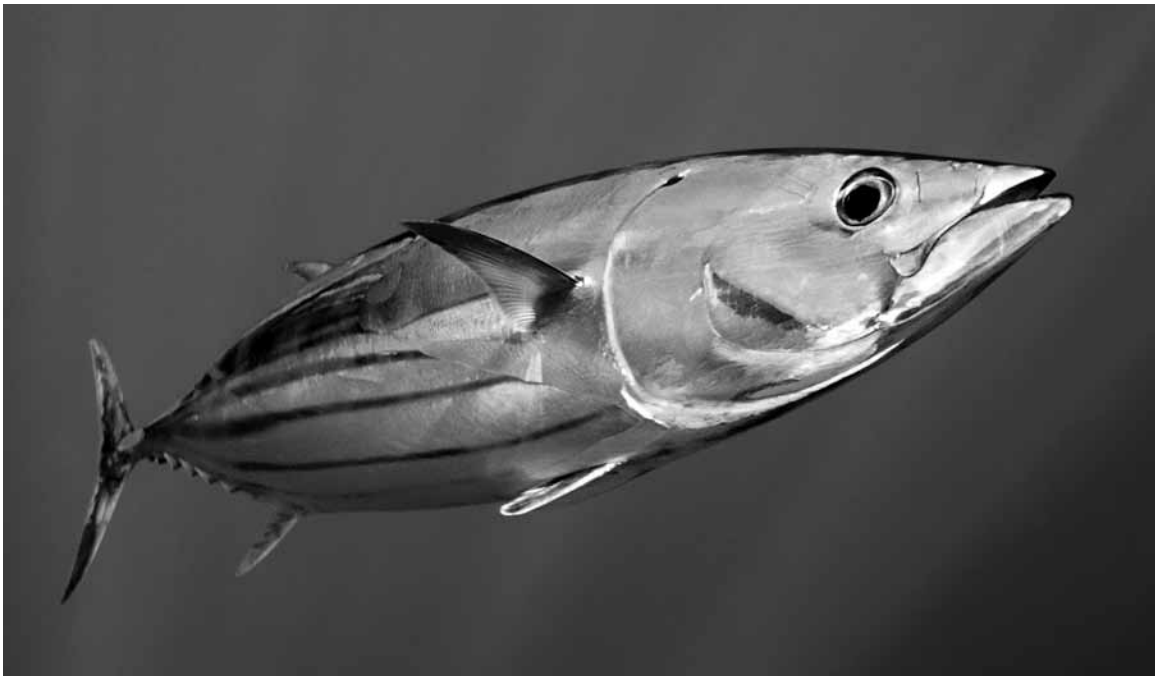
The implementation of unique vessel identifiers (UVIs) for tuna vessels is critical to increase transparency in the fisheries sector and to enhance coordinated action against IUU fishing operators. The only fully developed and currently used UVI is the International Maritime Organization (IMO) number, provided through registry with the IHS Fairplay ship numbering scheme (previously Lloyd's Register).[24]

In accordance with the recommendations of Kobe III[25] and the WCPFC's Performance Review Report,[26] **the WCPFC should require any fishing and support vessel of 100 gross tonnes (GT) or 24 meters or greater that is authorized to operate in the Convention Area to register with the IHS Fairplay ship numbering system and obtain an IMO number.** This number should be on record, used in all relevant communications, and made publicly available.[27]

4.3 REVIEW AND STRENGTHEN WCPFC CONTROLS FOR TRANSSHIPMENT AT SEA AND REQUIRE ALL VESSELS, INCLUDING THOSE WITHIN EEZS IN THE CONVENTION AREA, TO COMPLY WITH THE WCPFC'S VESSEL MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE (VMS) RULES

At-sea transshipment, especially on the high seas, is commonly used around the globe to launder IUU catch. Therefore, high seas transshipment needs to be limited and strictly controlled. Pew supports the recommendation from TCC8 that the WCPFC's high seas transshipment rules be reviewed in 2013 with the aim of strengthening them at WCPFC10.

In addition, all WCPFC CCMs should comply with VMS rules as set forth by Article 24(8) of the WCPF Convention and CMM 2007-02.[28] **The current loophole in the Commission's MCS system, which allows for certain vessels to "disappear" while in coastal states' EEZs by not requiring VMS reporting, must be closed as a matter of priority to prevent and deter IUU fishing within the Convention Area.**



Skipjack tuna, © M Ushioda SeaPics

ENDNOTES

1 Summary Report of Scientific Committee's 7th Regular Session to the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, 2011, http://www.wcpfc.int/node/3403

2 Summary Report of Scientific Committee's 8th Regular Session to the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, 2011. http://www.wcpfc.int/node/4054

3 "Safeguarding the Stocks: A Report on Analytical Projects to Support the Development of a Regional MCS Strategy for Pacific Oceanic Fisheries," 2009, http://www.m2cms.com.au/uploaded/5/FFA%20MCS%20Final%20Synopsis%20Report.pdf.

4 Elizabeth Babcock and Ellen Pikitch, "How Much Observer Coverage Is Enough to Adequately Estimate Bycatch." Pew Institute of Ocean Science, 2003, http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Protecting_ocean_life/oceana_bycatch_110403.pdf

5 FFA catch and value database. http://www.ffa.int/catch_value

6 http://www.wcpfc.int/doc/wcpfc-tcc7-2011-b-01/pew-environment-group-review-fad-management-plans

7 Report of the Twelfth Meeting of the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean, Plenary Session. 18-23 July 2012, Sapporo, Japan.

8 J. Rice and S. Harley, "Stock Assessment of Oceanic Whitetip Sharks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean," WCPFC-SC8-2012/SA-WP-06, Rev. 1, 2012.

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10 Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, Scientific Committee, Eighth Regular Session, Busan, Korea, 7-15 August 2012, summary report, adopted version.

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21 Pew Environment Group, "Closing the Gap: Comparing Tuna RFMO Port State Measures With the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures," June 2011, http://www.pewenvironment.org/uploadedFiles/PEG/Publications/Report/Tuna_RFMO_Report_July2011.pdf.

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23 The ACP FISH II Programme is a 4.5-year programme financed by the European Development Fund on behalf of ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of states) countries. The aim of the programme is to improve fisheries management in ACP countries so as to ensure that fisheries resources under the jurisdiction of these countries are exploited in a sustainable manner. http://www.acpfish2-eu.org/

24 IHS Fairplay http://www.ihs.com/products/maritime-information/ships/world-register.aspx

25 At the first joint meeting of the tuna RFMOs held in Kobe, Japan, in 2007, participants agreed to work toward the creation of a harmonized list of vessels "including use of a permanent unique identifier for each vessel such as an IMO number", see Report of the Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs, 2007, p. 2; Appendix 14, Key areas and challenges (I), paragraph 7 and Technical work to cooperate across RFMOs (II), para. 2. As part of the Kobe process, at the first workshop on the Consolidated List of Authorized Vessels of Tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (CLAV) in 2011, participants agreed that "the IMO number represents the best option to identify individual vessels", Workshop on Exchange of Information and Maintenance of the Consolidated List of Authorized Vessels of Tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations. Rome, 7-9 February 2011, T-RFMO CLAV Technical Report No. 1, 2011, p. 8, see also Second Workshop on Exchange of Information and Maintenance of the Consolidated List of Authorized Vessels of Tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, Rome, 6-7 June 2012, T-RFMO CLAV Technical Report No. 2, 2012.

26 WCPFC's Performance Review Report recommends the introduction of a Lloyd's Fairplay Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI/IMO) for vessels of 24 meters or more in length. Supra note (ii), Section 6.1.5.

27 This requirement is consistent with the conclusions and recommendations of the Technical Consultation to Identify a Structure and Strategy for the Development and Implementation of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Rome, 8-12 November 2010), FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 956, 6-7.

28 Particularly, paragraph 6 (c) of the CMM, which enables any CCM to request the application of the WCPFC's VMS to waters under its national jurisdiction.

Hammerhead shark, © Mark Doherty/Shutterstock.com

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