



**COMMISSION**  
**Tenth Regular Session**  
2<sup>th</sup> December – 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013  
Cairns, AUSTRALIA

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**LETTER TO WCPFC ON SKIPJACK LIMIT FOR NZ EEZ**

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**WCPFC10-2013-DP18**  
**16 November 2013**



15 November 2013

Glenn Hurry  
Executive Director  
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission  
PO Box 2356  
Kolonía, Pohnpei State 96941  
Federated State of Micronesia

Dear Glenn

**RE: SKIPJACK LIMIT FOR NEW ZEALAND EEZ**

Paragraph 14 of WCPFC CMM2012-01 places an obligation on non-PNA member CCMs to “establish effort limits or equivalent catch limits for purse seine fisheries within their EEZs that reflect the geographical distributions of skipjack, yellowfin, and bigeye tunas, and are consistent with the objectives for those species”. Limits established pursuant to this provision are to be provided to the Commission by the relevant coastal States no later than 16 November 2013.

Ambiguity in CMM 2012-01

Due to the placement of paragraph 14 in the section of the CMM covering the **Purse seine fishery in tropical area (20N – 20S)** it is ambiguous whether or not the obligation in paragraph 14 applies to coastal States whose EEZs lie outside of 20 degrees North – 20 degrees South. Discussions at the recent Tokyo workshop on the tropical tuna measure made it clear there is no shared understanding on this issue among CCMs. This has made it difficult for New Zealand to proceed with establishment of a binding catch or effort limit for the New Zealand EEZ in the absence of a clear requirement and commitment by others to do so.

Having said that, New Zealand is committed to joining others in putting in place appropriate measures to limit catch and/or effort for skipjack tuna that would apply within the NZ EEZ as part of the Commission’s overall efforts to ensure effective management of this stock and asks that the Commission makes efforts to clarify the obligation that would apply to CCMs with EEZs that fall outside of 20 degrees North – 20 degrees South.

Characteristics of the NZ skipjack purse seine fishery

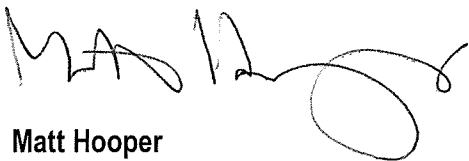
New Zealand’s EEZ is on the margins of the migratory range of skipjack tuna meaning there is significant variation year to year as to the number of fish available in NZ waters. The New Zealand skipjack fishery is highly influenced by environmental factors and is also subject to the impacts of the high level of fishing effort in the equatorial Pacific.

The season is generally around four months duration but in some years conditions are more favourable and the season can start earlier and/or extend for longer. New Zealand is able to fully exploit the resource found in our waters with our existing fleet and wishes to preserve the opportunity to catch skipjack tuna when the fish are present in New Zealand waters. In some years catches will be poor while in other years there is potential for higher levels of catch.

The NZ fishery is entirely based on free schools with spotter planes or helicopters used to locate schools of fish for purse seine operators. There is no juvenile bigeye or yellowfin bycatch associated with the fishery and therefore no impact on bigeye or yellowfin tuna stocks.

Any limit that New Zealand establishes for the purse seine skipjack fishery in our EEZ will reflect these factors.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Hooper', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**Matt Hooper**

Head of New Zealand Delegation to WCPFC