



WCPFC10
Tenth Regular Session
2th December – 6th December 2013
Cairns, AUSTRALIA

ADVICE ON PURSE SEINE EEZ LIMITS - AUSTRALIA

WCPFC10-2013-DP19
17 November 2013

This letter was received by WCPFC Secretariat on 15 November 2013



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture

Ref: 2013-14493

Dr. Charles Karnella
Chair
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
PO Box 2356
Kolonja, Pohnpei 96941
Federated States of Micronesia

Dear Dr. Karnella

I write to you to outline Australia's purse seine effort, or equivalent catch, limits for skipjack tuna, bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna within Australia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in accordance with paragraph 14 of CMM 2012-01. Please place this letter on the Commissions website as a delegation paper for the 10th Regular Session of the Commission.

In determining purse seine limits for the Australian EEZ, Australia has considered the objectives of the conservation and management measure (CMM 2012-01) and the geographical distribution of the resources including the estimated biomasses contained in Australia's EEZ as required by CMM 2012-01. We have also undertaken a review of the available information including but not limited to:

- the status of the resources and the existing level of fishing effort
- historical catch and effort in the Australian EEZ including past, present and future fishing patterns
- the contributions we have made and will continue to make to conservation and management of the stocks, including the provision of accurate data and support for scientific research in the Convention Area
- our strong record of compliance with WCPFC conservation and management measures, and
- Australia's skipjack development aspirations.

Moreover, Australia's determination has been made consistent with Australia's obligations under the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)*, the *United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement*, the *Convention to the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean* and Australia's domestic fisheries legislation and policies.

Australia notes that there is ambiguity in CMM 2012-01 regarding the area of application of the measure. Specifically, it is unclear whether paragraph 14 pertains to the area between 20 degrees North and 20 degrees South or the entire Convention Area. Australia notes that it would be best to resolve this ambiguity during the negotiations of CMM 2013-01 in December.

Having undertaken this analysis, Australia has implemented a precautionary annual catch limit for skipjack of 30 000 tonnes and 600 tonnes for bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna for purse seine fishing vessels within the WCPFC component of the Australian EEZ.

Australia notes that these catch limits include expansion of the Australian skipjack fishery consistent with our development aspirations and the WCPFC Convention, and that these limits can be refined as the data available to WCPFC members improves.

Australia also highlights that consistent with Australian fisheries legislation and policies, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority can, and has, set more precautionary management measures than those determined at WCPFC, including reduced total allowable catches for Australia's domestic fishing fleets as has been the case of bigeye tuna in the longline fishery.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Neil". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gordon Neil
Australian Commission to WCPFC

15 November 2013