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

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FRENCH POLYNESIA



WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC COMMISSION

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

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<p>Scientific data was provided to the Commission in accordance with the decision relating to the provision of scientific data to the Commission by the 30 april 2014.</p>	<p>YES</p>
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Abstract

French Polynesia professional tuna fleet in 2013 comprised 65 longliners (ranging from 13 m to 24 m) operating only within French Polynesia Economic Zone and 437 small boats (5m to 11 m) using artisanal gears (pole and line, handlines, trolling...) and operating inside the territorial waters.

The overall nominal catches for the professional tuna fisheries in 2013 is estimated around 9 632 metric tons, albacore accounting for 39%, yellowfin tuna for 13 %, skipjack for 10 % and big eye tuna for 8 %.

Effort and total catch trends of the longline fleet show a slow decrease since 2005 after a steady increase since the beginning of this fleet in the early 90's. In contrast these trends for the artisanal near shore fishery show a slow and steady increase partly driven by the increase of the population.

Since 2006, all sharks except mako are fully protected inside the entire French Polynesia Economic Zone. In december 2012, the mako was also protected making French Polynesia EEZ the biggest sanctuary for sharks.

1 Annual Fisheries Information

Tuna fishery is a major component of the development of French Polynesia economy, either for economical and social aspects. Its professional tuna fishery is divided into two components : a small scale coastal fishery and an offshore long line fishery. There is no longer fishing agreement inside the EEZ for foreign fleet since December 2000 .

Fleet structure and effort

The **professional coastal fishery** comprises two types of boat: the *poti marara*, (literally ‘flying-fish boats’) which are small boats, 6-8 m in length, made from wood or FRP and suitable for many different fishing techniques (trolling, vertical longlining or harpooning) and the *bonitiers* (‘skipjack boats’), which are 10-to-12 m long boats made from wood or FRP, targeting skipjack using mainly pole-and-line. This fleet operates inside the territorial waters.

Figure 1 – Nominal catch by fishing gear for the small scale nearshore fishery

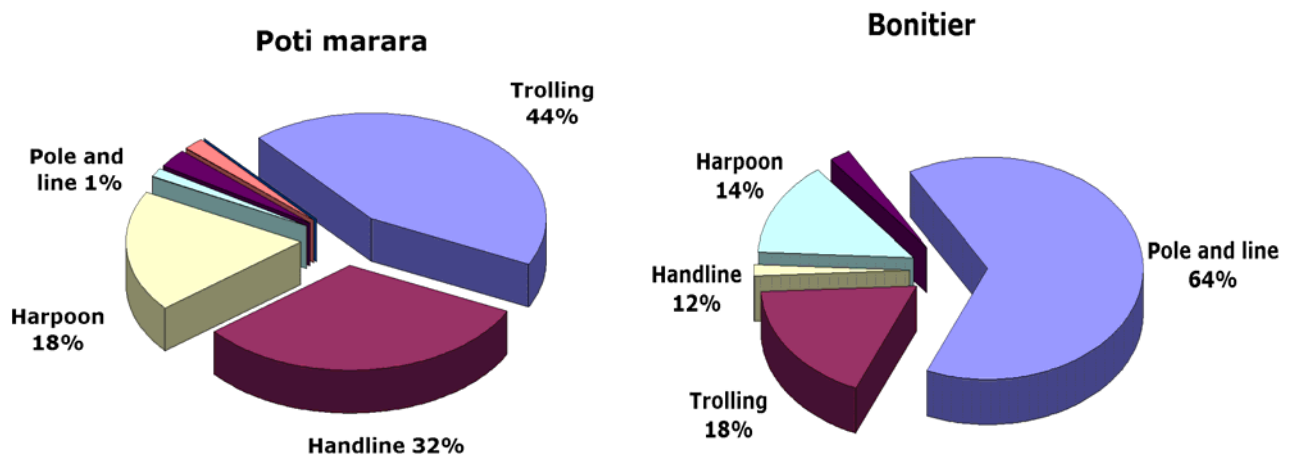


Table 1 – Fleet structure of the small scale nearshore fishery

Type of boats	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Poti marara	291	313	320	361	377	390
Bonitier	47	47	48	52	50	47

Although the size of the *poti marara* fleet shows significant fluctuations among years, this fleet seems to increase slowly. Total effort in 2013 is estimated around 46 465 fishing days. It is noteworthy that there is also a large number of non professional *poti marara* whose fishing effort and catches are difficult to estimate. In the other hand, the *bonitiers*’ fleet has steadily decreased but the size of this fleet now seems to be stabilized. Nevertheless, consistent with the low level of coverage, short term trends are difficult to highlight for these two fleets.

The **longliners fleet** could be sorted into two types of vessels : fresh fish longliners and freezer longliners. This fleet operates exclusively inside the French Polynesia EEZ. Total effort for the WCPF-CA is approximately 16 million hooks.

- Fresh fish longliners, comprise boats 11-to-20 m in length made of aluminium or FRP. These boats make 15 days trips, partly due to the limited time of conservation on ice as well as their limited range.
- Freezer longliners are mostly 21-26 m steel vessels. These boats have freezer capacity and can remain at sea for 1 1/2 up to 3 months. However, the last sets are often used to target fresh-fish that is kept on ice or in slurry. Since the drop of the catch rate in 2003, freezer boats tend to operate as fresh tuna boats as the price on the local market is generally higher for the fresh tunas.

Table 2 – Fleet structure of the longline fishery

Type of boats	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Fresh longliners	34	33	30	30	34	36
Freezer longliners	34	35	31	29	30	29

Annual catch by species

The overall nominal catches for the professional tuna fisheries in 2013 is estimated around 9 632 metric tons, albacore accounting for 39%, yellowfin tuna for 13 %, skipjack for 10 % and big eye tuna for 8 %.

Table 3 – Annual catch estimates for the bonitier fleet

Metric tons	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Skipjack	543	676	503	334	431	295
Yellowfin tuna	82	77	53	76	85	105
Dolphin fish	41	31	61	20	28	41
Billfish	25	17	5	27	29	34
Wahoo	26	12	19	26	21	31
Albacore tuna	12	21	14	21	26	45
Other	43	22	35	34	40	29
Total	772	855	691	538	660	579

Table 4 – Annual catch estimates for the poti marara fleet

Metric tons	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Skipjack	443	605	628	540	788	578
Yellowfin tuna	327	400	503	482	637	511
Dolphin fish	418	319	445	348	368	517
Billfish	151	178	251	231	253	224
Wahoo	59	69	127	109	107	118
Albacore tuna	160	211	190	233	248	294
Other	150	136	200	205	223	300
Total	1 708	1 918	2 343	2 149	2 624	2 541

Table 5 – Annual catch estimates for the longline fleet

Metric tons	2 008	2 009	2 010	2 011	2 012	2 013
Albacore tuna	3 068	3 560	3 483	3 225	3 594	3 396
Yellowfin tuna	447	716	418	491	758	594
Big eye tuna	490	587	436	607	654	763
Blue marlin	224	223	260	201	241	234
Striped marlin	142	104	127	124	117	103
Swordfish	80	71	80	89	116	124
Black marlin	0	0	0	0	1	0
Wahoo	180	162	205	191	182	201
Opah	120	99	113	134	136	143
Dolphin fish	68	81	204	121	143	177
Oilfish	23	42	62	51	57	89
Mako shark	10	14	21	14	0	15
Skipjack	18	25	22	19	50	33
Pomfret	17	17	20	23	27	38
Spearfish	13	15	41	39	35	38
Sailfish	1	4	7	6	5	6
Misc.	39	96	62	206	218	297
Total	4 940	5 816	5 562	5 541	6 333	6 251

Discards of the longline fleet are estimated around 0,4 % of the catches (24 t). There is no discard for the coastal fleet.

Species of special interest

All sharks are prohibited to fishing and fining is also prohibited. French Polynesia EEZ is now the biggest sanctuary for sharks. According to the logsheets collected and the observers data, 5 308 sharks (324 t) have been caught and released. Concerning the oceanic white tip shark, 46 specimens (2,2 t) have been reported by observer, 74% alive. Catch estimates for this species is 32,4 t.

No accidental catch of turtle was reported.

No accidental catch of bird was reported.

The only reported cetacean interactions relate to depredation.

Disposal of the catches

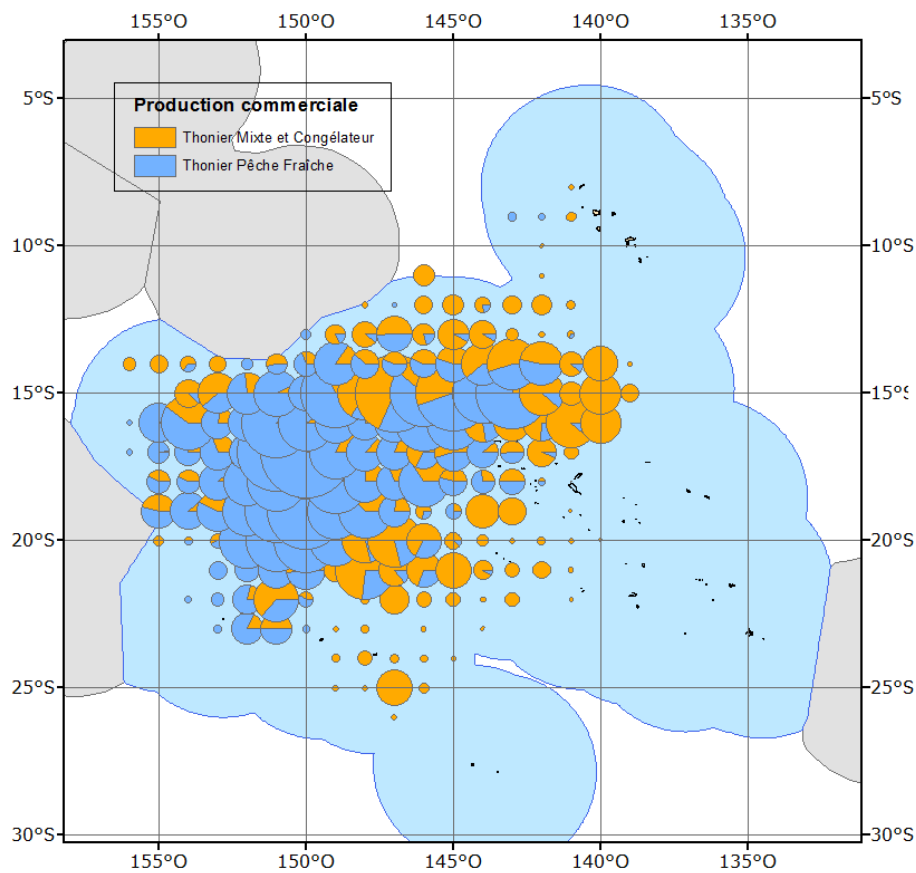
Catches from the nearshore fishery are stored on ice and sold fresh within the island of production. Although, the freezer longliners represent half of the fleet, only 7 % of the commercial longliners catches are landed frozen (whole or loined). An equivalent of 28 % of the commercial longline catches are exported : 90% of the frozen landings and 26 % of the fresh landings.

Fishing patterns

More than three fourth of the nearshore fishery is based in the Society archipelago. Although the individual fishing effort shows some vicissitude the global fishing effort is relatively stable within the year and no clear seasonal trends can be highlighted.

The longliners fleet, most entirely based in Tahiti, usually exploit half of the EEZ but the core fishing ground remains historically in the north part of the EEZ (10°-20° S /140°-150°W).

Figure 2 – Geographical distribution of the commercial catch of the longliners



2 Research and statistics

Statistical data collection system

The data collection system for the longline fishery comprises six components.

- *Fishing license*

Fishing license for the domestic vessels is delivered for the life of the boat, presuming it does not change property and clears its annual visit for security. Any change of property or main modification on the vessel is subject to a re-licensing procedure. Currently, French Polynesia has not limited the number of domestic vessels authorised to operate in its EEZ.

Fishing permit for foreign vessels is delivered on an annual basis; no permit has been authorised since the end of the fishing agreement on December 2000.

- *Boat activity*

Every week day, the Fisheries office census the activity of the fleet at the fishing port. The main purpose is to monitor (in real time) the gross activity of the fleet. These data are also used as the main input for estimating the production of the vessels which do not report their catches correctly. In 2013, this census will be combined with the analyses of the VMS data.

- *Logbook*

Licensed operators are required to record and submit daily records of fishing activities at an operational level to the Fisheries Office. Coverage rate is estimated around 86 %.

- *Unloadings*

Most of the licensed long line boats have an obligation to unload their catches within the fishing port of Papeete. The port manager has to monitor the amount of fish unloaded in order to collect unloading fees. Coverage rate for the overall landings is estimated around 100 % of the commercial catches.

- *Observer programme*

The French polynesia's Observer Program began in September 2002 with EU funding by the PROCFISH projet (2002-2007) and then by the SCIFISH project. In 2013, the staff was made of six observers, two port samplers and one coordinator. Observers trips were conducted only on board of domestic longliners. For administrative reason, the monitoring was postponed the first two month of the year and resume in march. Therefore the coverage for 2013 is only 4,4 % of the fishing days. Protocols and forms are those used by SPC. Data are processed by SPC.

Table 6 – Observers trips in French Polynesia since 2005.

Year	No observers	No trips	No days at sea	No sets	No hooks	% coverage
2005	3	18	422	255	635,114	2.9 %
2006	6	20	487	312	723,149	5.9 %
2007	2	17	217	138	305,977	1.8%
2008	4	17	300	206	510,115	2.5 %
2009	6	51	800	488	1,130,574	6.5%
2010	5	44	768	453	894,426	6.5%
2011	6	33	531	355	1,13,880	6.2 %
2012	6	34	521	282	543474	4,1 %
2013	6	38	697	346	658578	4,4%

▪ *Port sampling*

There has been regular but low coverage sampling in Papeete for several years and very limited in recent year due to logistical difficulties. However, these difficulties were partly overcome by the completion of a centralised unloading facility in Papeete and since 2005 a team of two port samplers carried out port-sampling operations.

Table 7 – Port sampling operations since 2005

Year	No unloadings	No unloadings sampled	Sampling coverage
2005	892	232	26%
2006	876	210	24%
2007	926	335	36%
2008	858	439	51%
2009	883	477	54%
2010	841	407	48%
2011	883	446	51%
2012	938	386	41%
2013	972	346	36%

Coastal fishery

Data collection for the coastal fisheries is more difficult to handle since the vessels are scattered all around the numerous islands of French Polynesia. The monitoring process rely on two components : a licensing procedure and logsheets. Coverage rate for the logsheets is 98%.

Research

The observers regularly collect biological samples of the four main tunas (muscle, liver, stomach, gonads and otholiths) and swordfish (otholiths) which are sent to the Oceanic Fisheries Program of the SPC.

During the year 2009, observers were trained by staff from CSIRO to tag swordfish with pop up mark. The first specimen was tagged in december 2009 and one more specimen was tagged in 2010. Two tags were deployed in 2012 (one in march and one in october). No tag has been deployed in 2013.

In January 2013, a longliner retrieve a tag on a blue marlin (75 kg) tagged in Kona (Hawaii) on the 9th august 2012.