



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
TENTH REGULAR SESSION**

Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands
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**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION
PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH, AND STATISTICS**

WCPFC-SC10-AR/CCM-15

NEW CALEDONIA

WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION

NEW CALEDONIA - ANNUAL REPORT 2013

Part 1

Scientific data was provided to the Commission in accordance with the decision relating to the provision of scientific data to the Commission by 30 April 2014	YES
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Summary:

Fishing for tuna and associated species by New Caledonian vessels started in 1981 with pole-and-line (less than 3 vessels) which stopped very rapidly (1981: 228 mt; 1982: 998 mt; 1983: 492 mt).

Some domestic longliners started operating at the same time and it took almost 20 years before this domestic fleet had a significant activity.

This fleet operates in the New Caledonian EEZ, and very rarely fishes in the adjacent high seas.

In 2013, 17 of the 18 licensed domestic longliners fished in the New Caledonian EEZ. Similarly to past years there were no foreign vessels licensed or chartered to operate in the New Caledonian EEZ.

There was a 1% decrease of the total catch reported last year compared to 2012. The annual catch of 2,675 mt was mainly composed of albacore which is the target species of all the vessels and accounts for 65% of the total (1,732 mt compared to 1,715 in 2012). Yellowfin was second with 531 mt (20%). Striped marlin and swordfish are bycatch of the fishery (51 mt and 9 tonnes respectively).

Catches of sharks have been decreasing since 2006, due to an increasing use of monofilament branchlines and the adoption of a regulation in April 2013 prohibiting the retention on-board of any shark or ray. Until then, makos were the only sharks species kept on-board to be sold on the local market (trunks).

In 2013, observer activities carried out under the New Caledonia programme reached a 6.7% coverage rate of the longline sets. The objectives of this activity are to collect information to be checked with the other sources of data, and to provide accurate data for stock assessments (biological samples, size composition ...).

During all the trips observed in 2013, no sea turtle interaction and 13 seabird interactions were reported.

The incidental catch of shark and ray species was reported by the observer programme at 435 individuals in 2013. The corresponding estimated tonnage for the species of interest (blue shark, silky shark, oceanic white tip shark, thresher sharks, porbeagle shark south of 20° South and hammerhead sharks) is less than 10 mt.

Catch statistics

As a counterpart to their licenses the New Caledonian fishing companies must provide logsheets which are collected at the end of the trips. The coverage rate of logsheets is 100%.

In accordance with the provision of scientific data to the Commission all the logsheets data are made available to the SPC/OFP dropbox by batches.

Effort and catch statistics in table 1 are extracted from these logsheets.

The total catch of 2,675 mt in 2013 represents a 1% decrease from the 2012 level.

As the target species of the New Caledonian tuna fisheries, the South Pacific albacore is the predominant species in the catch with 1,732 mt (65%). Albacore annual catch south of 20° South for the years 2006-2013 were 793 mt, 837 mt, 1,096 mt, 1,061 mt, 1,396 mt, 1,039 mt, 880 mt and 895 mt respectively.

In 2013 the average weight of albacore was 17 kg, which is very similar to the weights recorded in the previous years. With regard to yellowfin 28 kg is 3 kg more than 2012, however similar to 2011.

No New Caledonian vessel targets bigeye, sharks, marlins or swordfish. Therefore, all the catch reported for these species are bycatch. In particular, only 51 mt of striped marlin (south of 15° South) and 9 mt of swordfish were landed in 2013, of which 7 mt were caught south of 20° South.

Makos were the only sharks retained and sold for meat consumption in New Caledonia (trunks), totaling 2 mt in 2013, until the adoption of a new regulation for the conservation of shark in April which prohibits the retention of any shark and ray.

The incidental catch of shark and ray species was reported by the observer programme at 435 individuals in 2013. The corresponding estimated tonnage for the species of interest (blue shark, silky shark, oceanic white tip shark, thresher sharks, porbeagle shark south of 20° South and hammerhead sharks) is less than 10 mt (see table 1bis).

Many species show seasonal patterns in their abundance around New Caledonia which induces similar fluctuations in the catch levels reported (see table 3 and figure 3).

Fleet structure and fishing activity

In 2013 18 domestic tuna longliners were licensed to fish. 17 of them were active.

Similarly to past years there were no foreign vessels licensed or chartered to operate in the New Caledonian EEZ.

Table 2 shows that all active vessels in 2013 are less than 200 tons GRT. These vessels have limited cruising range. Although the larger longliners nearing 150 tons can stay at sea for two or more weeks the average trip length for the whole fleet is only 11 days, 7 of which are fished.

There was no fishing activity north of the equator, nor south of 30° South.

Globally, 342 fishing trips were reported in 2013, totaling 3,648 days at sea and 2,439 days fished.

Monitoring activities

Observer activity has been carried out in New Caledonia for more than 20 years. After being operated under EU-funded programmes, this activity is now funded by the New Caledonia government.

Observer activity

In 2013, 23 trips were observed by 3 observers onboard 13 vessels of the domestic companies, representing 287 days at sea and almost 12 000 fish observed. Over this period of time the observer activity covered about 6.7 % of all the longline sets. The detailed data from this activity are provided in table 4 in annex.

During trips observed in 2013, no turtle interaction was reported and 13 seabirds were incidentally captured (tables 6 and 7).

Except makos, the incidental catch of shark and ray species, which are all discarded, was reported by the New Caledonia observer programme at 435 sharks and 123 rays in 2013. All 4 oceanic whitetip sharks observed were released alive.

Port sampling activity

In 2013, due to funding limitation no port sampling was carried out. However, length frequency data are still collected by observers on-board the vessels.

No unloading or transshipment involving foreign vessels, carriers and bunkers, took place in the domestic ports.

Vessel Monitoring System

New Caledonia has been operating a Vessel Monitoring System in its EEZ since early 2005.

All licensed vessels must have transmitters on board. Due to safety regulations all of them are equipped with Inmarsat-C terminals but some vessels also have a dedicated Argos beacon on board.

The monitoring is carried out by the New Caledonia fisheries department, so as to help:

- a. check the VMS data with the number of logsheets provided by the fishing companies
- b. the French Navy survey the EEZ.

Since 2010 all the location data have been managed under a dedicated software which can accept various sources of VMS data and provide related statistics.

TABLES AND FIGURES
ANNEX

Table 1: estimates of days fished and catch by species from New Caledonian longliners in the WCPFC area

Metric tonnes of	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*
South Pacific Albacore	1590	1 358	1 324	1 506	1 649	1 939	1736	1715	1732
Yellowfin	448	414	393	424	487	505	585	573	531
Bigeye	76	35	53	62	51	44	41	49	51
Striped Marlin	74	54	63	103	71	65	76	57	51
Black Marlin	28	24	35	39	34	42	55	66	53
Blue Marlin	21	13	12	8	9	10	23		
Swordfish	12	10	19	15	7	8	10	10	9
Mako shark	26	14	13	14	10	10	10	13	2
Others	197	187	210	216	228	236	260	228	246
TOTAL	2472	2 109	2 122	2 387	2 546	2 859	2796	2710	2675
Days fished	2836	2 134	2 531	2 751	2 674	2 541	2536	2612	2439

*: preliminary data

Table 1bis: estimated mortality for shark species of interest from New Caledonian longliners in the WCPFC area

2013	Estimated shark mortality (mt)
Blue shark	8,3
Silky shark	0,4
Thresher sharks	-
Oceanic whitetip shark	-
Hammerhead sharks	-
porbeagle shark	-

Figure 1: historical annual catch by the New Caledonia longliners (from logsheets / CES) in the WCPFC area

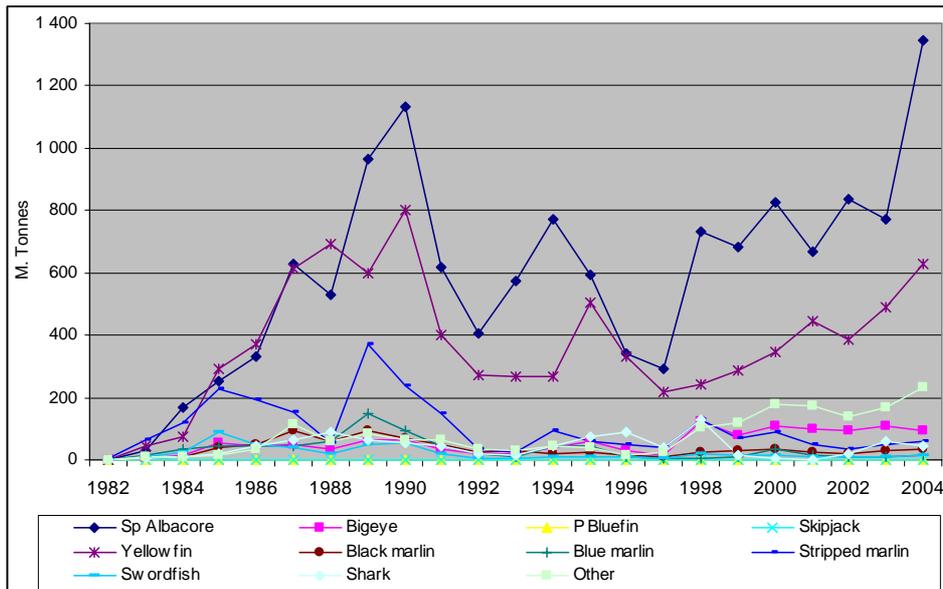


Table 2: number of domestic longliners active by GRT class

	0-50	51-200
2006	8	13
2007	8	15
2008	7	16
2009	6	15
2010	3	14
2011	2	17
2012	0	19
2013	0	17

Figure 2: New Caledonian longline vessels licensed

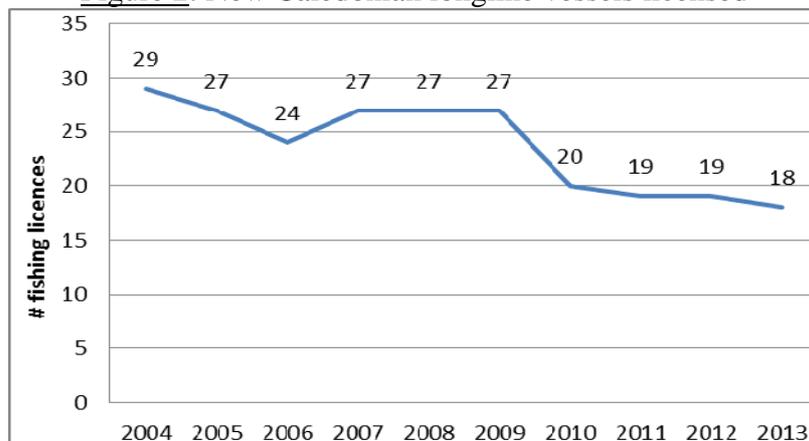


Table 3: number of fish caught per month in 2013

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
SP Albacore	8 511	6 983	4 393	2 855	8 589	7 334	11 018	7 657	8 457	8 648	14 006	11 114
Yellowfin	1 087	1 386	2 246	2 487	3 063	1 092	2 127	1 440	1 264	1 221	413	1 438
Bigeye	29	92	154	176	253	177	177	151	92	76	39	85
Striped marlin	36	23	11	24	63	29	46	56	36	164	130	180
Other marlins	53	76	72	45	55	16	33	28	45	41	39	37
Swordfish	10	13	10	15	17	12	16	2	6	10	13	17
Makos	13	6	8	10	24							
Others	1 557	1 160	965	1 033	1 580	1 680	1 658	1 294	1 826	1 797	1 294	3 709
Total	11 296	9 739	7 859	6 645	13 644	10 340	15 075	10 628	11 726	11 957	15 934	16 580

Figure 3: yearly average weight of SP albacore and yellowfin (kg)

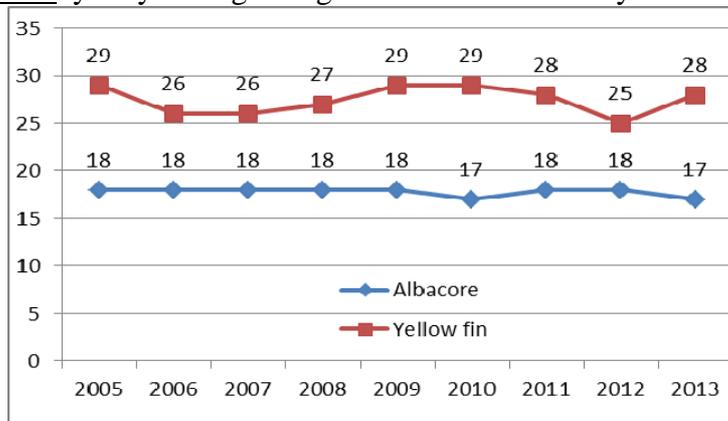


Table 4: number of observed species in 2013

Code FAO	Species	Nb	% observed
ALB	Albacore	6538	54,11%
ALO	Short snouted lancetfish	4	0,03%
ALS	Silvertip shark	1	0,01%
ALV	Thresher	3	0,02%
ALX	Long snouted lancetfish	797	6,60%
AML	Grey reef shark	6	0,05%
BAB	Blackfin barracuda	10	0,08%
BET	Bigeye tuna	145	1,20%
BIZ	Seabird	2	0,02%
BLM	Black marlin	23	0,19%
BSH	Blue shark	86	0,71%
BTH	Bigeye thresher	2	0,02%
BUM	Blue marlin	22	0,18%
CCP	Sandbar shark	3	0,02%
DOL	Common dolphinfish	908	7,51%
EBS	Brilliant pomfret	2	0,02%
FAL	Silky shark	8	0,07%
FUGU	FUGU	5	0,04%
GBA	Great barracuda	188	1,56%
GEM	Silver gemfish	1	0,01%
GES	Snake mackerel	14	0,12%
GSE	Goldenstriped soapfish	1	0,01%
LAG	Opah	144	1,19%
LEC	Escolar	22	0,18%
LGH	Oceanic puffer	3	0,02%
LMA	Longfin mako	20	0,17%
LOP	Unicornfish	1	0,01%
MLS	Striped marlin	77	0,64%
OCS	Oceanic whitetip shark	4	0,03%
OIL	Oilfish	40	0,33%
PLS	Pelagic stingray	123	1,02%
POA	Atlantic pomfret	1	0,01%
PRX	Petrels and shearwaters nei	11	0,09%
PSK	Crocodile shark	1	0,01%
PTH	Pelagic thresher	6	0,05%
RZV	Slender sunfish	28	0,23%
SFA	Indo-Pacific sailfish	15	0,12%
SHK	Shark	142	1,18%
SKJ	Skipjack tuna	289	2,39%
SMA	Shortfin mako	23	0,19%
SPK	Great hammerhead	1	0,01%
SSP	Shortbill spearfish	41	0,34%
SWO	Swordfish	26	0,22%
SXH	Longfin escolar	3	0,02%
TIG	Tiger shark	6	0,05%
TST	Sickle pomfret	6	0,05%
WAH	Wahoo	266	2,20%
YFT	Yellowfin tuna	2015	16,68%
Total		12083	100%

Figure 4: breakdown of shark and ray species recorded by observers in 2013

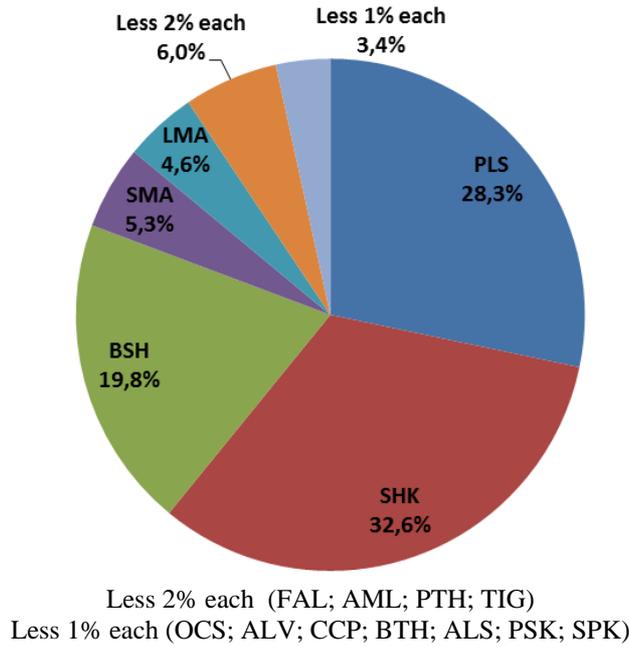


Table 5: number of fish observed in 2013 (commercial species)

Species	Tuna			Billfishes				
	ALB	BET	YFT	BLM	BUM	MLS	SFA	SSP
Number of fish observed	6538	145	2015	23	22	77	15	41

Species	Other commercial species					
	SWO	EBS	DOL	LAG	SMA	WAH
Number of fish observed	26	2	908	144	23	266