



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
TENTH REGULAR SESSION**

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

WCPFC-SC10-AR/CCM-11

KIRIBATI

Part one report: Annual report to the commission for 2013.

1. SUMMARY

Tuna fishery in Kiribati consists of foreign fishing fleets licensed to fish in Kiribati EEZ, artisanal fishery and Kiribati joint venture and chartered fishing vessels.

The licensed fishing vessels engaged in purse-seining, longlining and pole and lining. The purse-seine and pole and line fishing vessels targeted skipjack and small yellowfin while longline targeted bigeye tuna. Kiribati under its Joint Venture arrangements operated 9 purse-seine fishing vessels that flagged under Kiribati including one chartered vessel. Kiribati also has foreign based flagged vessels, that is 3 purse-seine fishing vessels and 6 longline vessels that actively fished within the Convention area. Kiribati also has artisanal fishery that consists of local fishermen using small skiff with 15-40 horse-power engine and target mainly skipjack and small yellowfin tuna using trolling and handlining.

Tuna remain the most important resources to Kiribati as the licensing revenue from foreign fishing vessels includes Kiribati dividends from its Joint Venture Fishing Companies composed almost 70% of the Government budget last year. In addition, tuna provides the major source of protein for the local people. For this the sustainable management of the tuna resource is very vital to the Country which is merely the reasoned that Kiribati continued to part-take in the arrangement that ensure for the sustainable tuna resources that are conducted through the WCPFC, FFA and PNA.

2. Background;

Kiribati Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is located in the Western Central Pacific Ocean, with 33 islands and covering approximately 3.5 million km² of ocean within 167°W–146°E and 8°N–14°S. It is make up of three groups of islands the Gilbert region in the west, the Phoenix region in the centre and the Line Islands in the east.

There are four tuna species that are commercially fished by foreign fishing vessels that are licensed to fish by the Government. These include skipjack tuna, *Katsuwonus pelamis*; albacore tuna, *Thunnus alalunga*; yellowfin tuna (YFT), *T. albacores*; and big eye tuna (BET), *T. obesus*.

Kiribati does not have the capacity to harvest its own tuna resource therefore engaged in join-ventured fishing operation with other foreign fishing companies mainly to increase its share from the harvesting of tuna. In 2013 Kiribati operate 7 joint venture fishing companies mainly to maximise its benefit from the harvesting of tuna. There are 10 purse-seine fishing vessels

fished under the arrangement which includes 9 Kiribati flagged vessels and one chartered vessel.

The artisanal fishery is also part of the tuna fishery in Kiribati which comprises of local fishermen employing small skiffs or crafts, usually less than 7 meters with 15-40 horse-power engines. Such fishery catches a certain portion of the tuna resource mainly for local consumption. The gear used by the artisanal fishermen to harvest tuna includes vertical hand-lining and trolling and fishing often conducted within the vicinity of the islands of Kiribati.

3. FLAG STATE REPORTING

3.1 Kiribati's Flagged Vessels

The number of national fleets active within the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission area continued to increase since 2008. In 2013, Kiribati registered on the WCPFC's vessels register a total of 57 vessels (8 bunker vessels, 28 reefer carriers, 6 longline vessels, 1 pole and lines vessel and 14 purse-seine vessels). This is a further increase in the number of fishing vessels registered under Kiribati flagged from 14 vessels in 2012 to 21 vessels in 2013 respectively. Two longline vessels previously flagged under china changed flag to Kiribati in 2013. That same year four purse-seine vessels re-flagged to Kiribati as part of the Joint Venture Fishing Arrangements Kiribati have with its foreign fishing partners.

The total number of artisanal boats in 2013 was estimated to be 4968 which is based on the result of the 2010 artisanal survey.

Table 1 below provides the number of Kiribati's fishing vessels active within the Commission area for the last 3 years.

Gear	LONGLINE		
	2011	2012	2013
0-10			
10-50			
50-200	1		1
200-500		1	5

500+		3	
Gear	PURSE-SEINE		
Size class (GRT)	2011	2012	2012
0-500			
500-1,000	1		1
1,000-1,500	5	6	10
1,500+	1	3	1
Gear	POLE and LINE		
Size class (GRT)	2011	2012	2013
0-10			
10-50			
50-200			
200-500	1	1	1
500+			
Gear	ARTISANAL TROLL		
Length (m)	2011	2012	2013
> 7	4766	4766	4766

**Source: TUFMAN v5.0*

3.2 Annual Catches in the WCPFC Convention area

3.2.1 Longline Fishery

The number of Kiribati longline flagged vessels increased from 4 vessels in 2012 to 6 vessels in 2013 respectively. The 6 fleets registered under Kiribati actively fishing in the WCPFC convention area and caught a total of 797 mt of tuna in 2013. This is an increase of 31% in comparison to the catch level obtained in 2012 as the number of longline vessels registered that year also increase (Table 1).

Table 2: Annual catch (mt) in the WCPFC Convention area for Kiribati's Longline fleet for 2010-2012

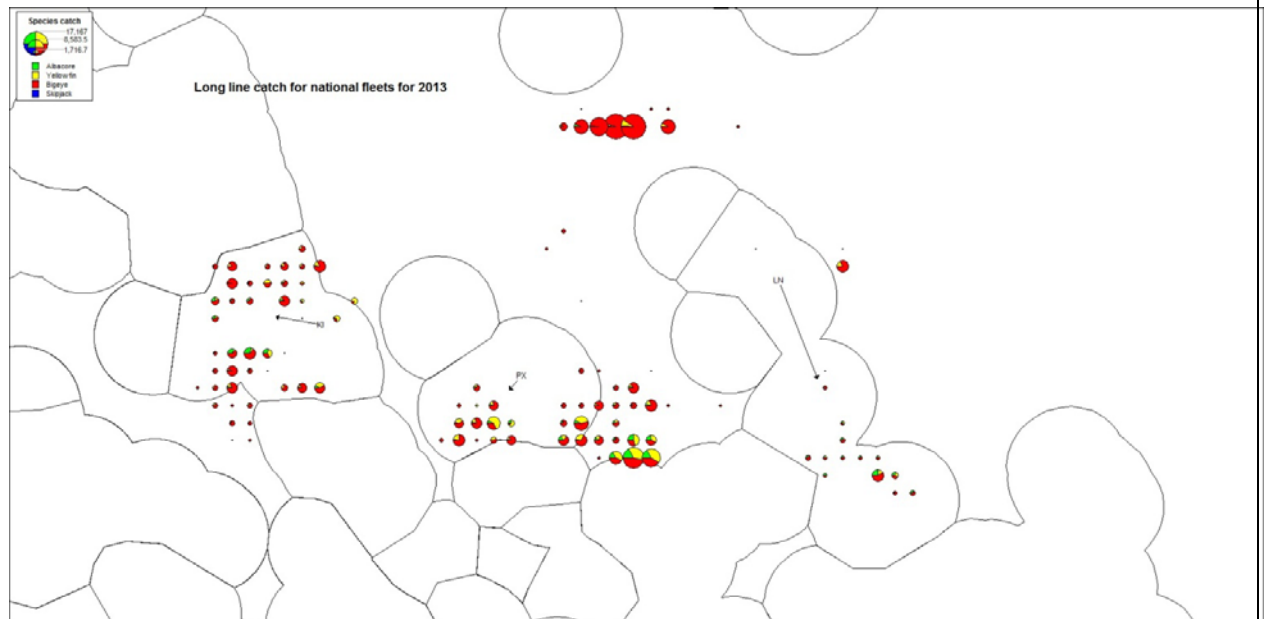
Gear	LONGLINE		
Species	2011	2012	2013
YELLOWFIN	115.06	116.23	175
BIGEYE	70.34	450.96	582
SKIPJACK	0.13	0	0
ALBACORE	177.21	42.98	40
OTHERS	7.78	0	0

**Source: TUFMAN*

3.3 Spatial Distribution of tuna catches for national longline fleets for 2013.

The distribution of catch as shown in Figure 1 for Kiribati longline fleets concentrated in the Kiribati EEZ and the eastern highseas as the active vessels did not have a valid license to fish in other waters except in Kiribati and the eastern highseas. The vessels mainly targeted bigeye tuna but also caught yellowfin tuna. The map indicated that higher bigeye catches was observed within the eastern highseas, within an area above the Line Islands.

Figure 1: Spatial Distribution of tuna catch for national fleets in 2013



3.2.2 Purse-Seine Fishery

Accordingly the catches for Kiribati purse-seine flagged vessel totalled to 72,241 mt in 2013. The observed catches have improved by 38% when compared to the 2012 catches and by 55% in comparison to the 2011 catch level. The catches elevated in 2013 as a result in the expansion of the number of Kiribati purse-seine vessels as noted in table 1.

The spatial distribution of catches for the 13 purse-seine fleets actively fishing in 2013 was splayed in Figure 2.

Table 3: Annual Catch (mt) in the WCPFC Convention area for Kiribati's Purse-Seine fleets for 2010-2012

SPECIES	YEAR		
Species	2011	2012	2013
SKIPJACK	35,818.46	42,527	61,645
YELLOWFIN	6,450.83	8,914.5	7,857
BIGEYE	4245.08	725.5	2,739

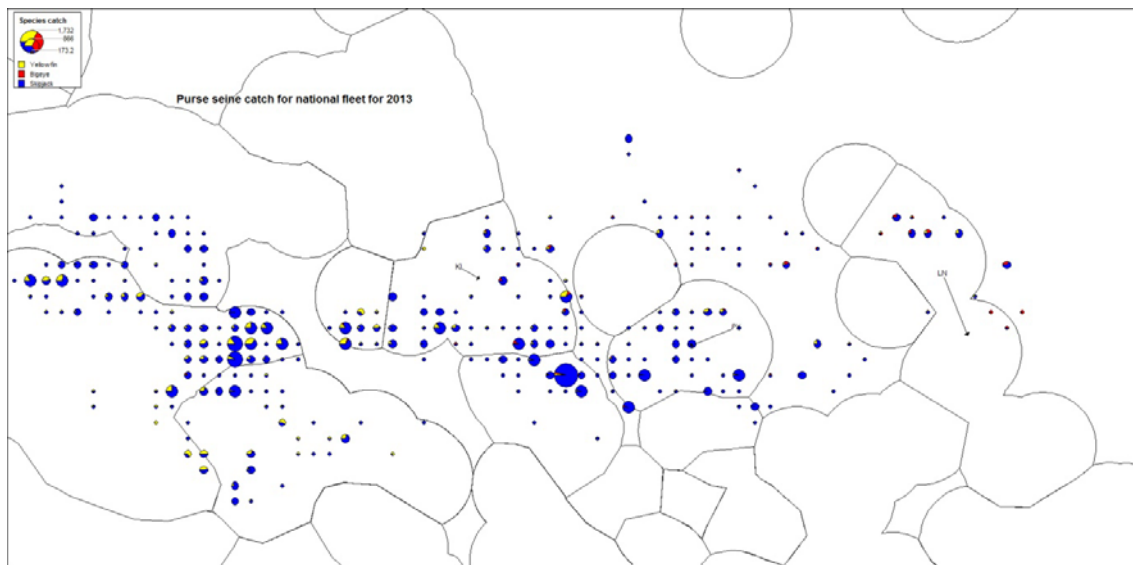
Catch distribution for purse seine national fleet vessels 2013

The distribution of catch for Kiribati purse-seine fleets as displayed in figure 1 indicated that the active fishing vessels fished throughout the waters of the PNA but mostly in the west that is in PNG, FSM, Solomon and Gilbert area.

Some fleets like Pacific star, Jeanine and Betty C concentrate their fishing activities in the East, mostly in the Phoenix, Line Islands and the eastern highseas area.

The vessels targetted skipjack but there are some yellowfin tuna and bigeye catches observed (Figure 1). It is obvious that the proportion of bigeye catch was greater as you moved eastward.

Figure 2: Spatial Distribution of Kiribati purse-seine fleets for 2013



**Source: TUFMAN*

3.2.3 Pole & Line Fishery

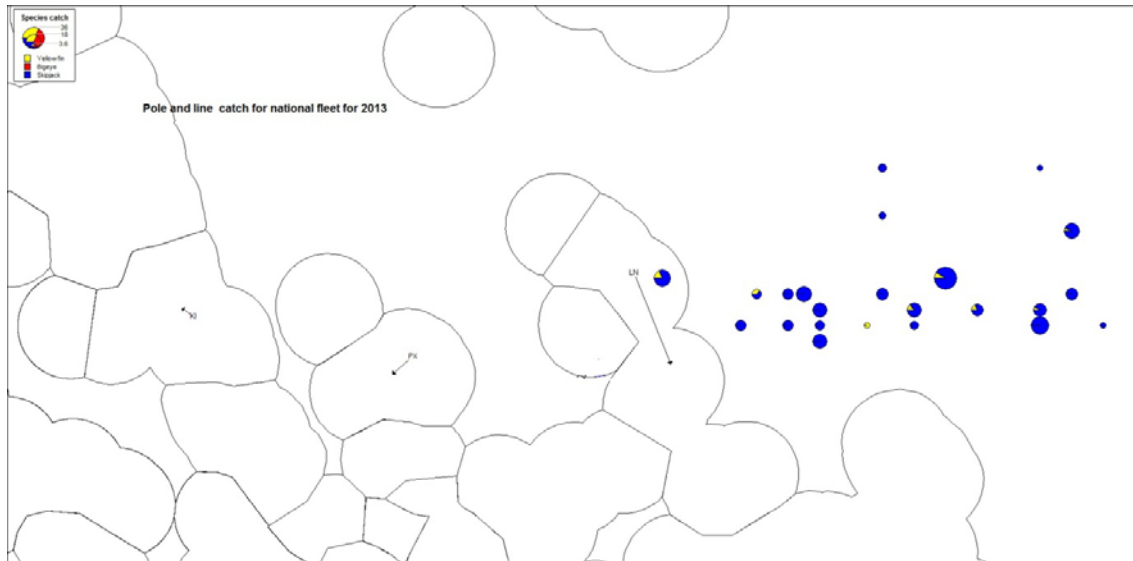
Kiribati's pole-line vessel, Akawa, which commenced fishing in 2009 fished mainly within the Kiribati's EEZ but to a greater extent, the Line Islands and the high seas (Fig 4).

The total catch for Akawa in 2013 was 377 mt, an increase of 39% in comparison to total catch observed in 2012 as the vessel spend more days fishing in Kiribati in 2013 than in 2012.

Table 4: Annual Catch (mt) in the WCPFC Convention area for Kiribati's Pole & Line fleet for 2008-2012

Gear	POLE and LINE		
	2011	2012	2013
Species			
YELLOWFIN	1.5	58	72
BIGEYE	0	0	0
SKIPJACK	24.5	177	305

Figure 3: Distribution of fishing effort for Kiribati Pole-line fleet active in the WCPFC Convention Area for 2013



***Source: MFMRD TUFMAN database, 2013**

In 2013, Kiribati one and only Pole and Line fished mostly in the Eastern side of the Western Central Pacific Ocean but mostly within the line islands and Eastern Highseas. The vessel mainly targeted skipjack with a few tonnes of yellowfin tuna. The vessel did not fish in the waters of other PNA as well as within the Gilbert and Phoenix islands (Figure 3).

3.2.4 Artisanal Fishery

The artisanal fishery uses boat of not more that 7 meters with 30-40 HP outboard engines to catch tuna. Both trolling and hand lining are used by the artisanal fishermen to fish for tuna mainly skipjack and yellowfin within the 12nm of the islands. The estimated tuna catches for the artisanal boats are shown in the following table which is based on the result of the 2010 artisanal fisheries survey as no survey made since then (Table 5). It is important to note also that Kiribati is introducing a new vessel registration program for vessels under 7 m along with the monitoring programme for the artisanal vessels. Such register will ensure for more complete data for artisanal fishery.

Table 5: Annual Catch (mt) in the WCPFC Convention area for Kiribati's fleet for 2006-2012

Gear	ARTISANAL TROLL		
Species	2011	2012	2013
SKIPJACK	8438.08	8438.08	8438.08
YELLOWFIN	4528.8	4528.8	4528.8
BIGEYE	0	0	0

3.3 Disposal of catch

Table 10: Transshipment for national fleets in 2013

In 2013, Kiribati purse-seine vessels transhipped a total of 52,941.28 mt of tuna at 7 major ports as specified in the table below. 3% of the total catches directly offloaded in Japan (2%) and Korea (1%). The rest of the catch was transhipped within the PNA ports, the majority of transshipment occurred in Solomon Islands, followed by FSM, Kiribati, PNG and Marshall islands. Kiribati pole and line vessel, Akawa transhipped all its catch in Kiribati at the Christmas Island as the area is near to the base of the vessel. Kiribati Longline vessels on the other hand offloaded 32% of the total catches for 2013 in Apia, Samoa and 68% of the catch at sea (Kiribati waters and highseas).

Gear	Port	Tonnage (mt)	Percentage
<i>Purse-seine</i>	FSM	12,271.00	23%
	Japan	1,300.28	2%
	Kiribati	7,945.00	15%
	Korea	545.00	1%
	Marshall	805.00	2%
	PNG	3,880.00	7%
	Solomon	26,195.00	49%
	subtotal	52,941.28	100%
<i>Pole and Line</i>	Kiribati	377	100%
<i>Longline</i>	At Sea	278.4	68%
	Samoa	133	32%

3.4 Future Prospect of the Fishery in Kiribati

The key priority area for Kiribati is to develop its Tuna Fishery in a sustainable manner which will be achieved by establishing of joint ventured (JV) fishing operation and fish processing with interested foreign companies. Kiribati through the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resource Development have established quite a number of joint venture fishing companies with its foreign fishing partners and operationalized a joint-ventured tuna loining processing plant in Tarawa, Kiribati. Such arrangements intended to enable better returns from the harvesting of tuna resources.

3.5 Status of tuna fishery data collection system

3.5.1 Logsheet Data Collection

Log sheet submission from Kiribati's national fleets still not accomplished the required 100% coverage but getting improved. It is anticipated that by 2014 or 2015, Kiribati will achieved near to or equal to 100% coverage logsheet data for all its national flagged vessels including those under the charter arrangement. Kiribati currently reviewing its internal process and to establish mechanisms that will ensure that all its national fleets fully complies with the entire Commission requirements that includes data submission.

Kiribati continued to have technical difficulty relating to default machines like fax, and internet connection which the office depend on to receives reports from national fleets like logsheets data and others.

3.5.2 Observer Placement for 2013.

All Kiribati purse-seine flagged vessels including chartered vessels placed 100% observers' coverage in 2013.

However the 5% observer coverage for Kiribati longline vessels still cannot attained in 2013. Kiribati will continue to work with its fishing companies to ensure that the required observer coverage for longline which is yet to be met by Kiribati will be observed in future.

3.5.3 Artisanal fishery data Collection

There was no artisanal survey conducted in 2011 and 2012 due to shortage of staff and limited funding. Fisheries artisanal survey is important in obtaining the background information with regard to tuna fishing by artisanal fisherman. Kiribati is introducing a new vessel registration program for vessels under 7 m along with the monitoring programme for the artisanal vessels. Such register may assist to ensure for more complete data for artisanal fishery to be observed in future.

3.5.5 Conclusion

Kiribati will continue to work collaboratively at a national, regional and subregional level to ensure for the sustainability of the tuna resources so future generation can also enjoy the benefits derived from the harvesting of the resources.