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PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH, AND STATISTICS

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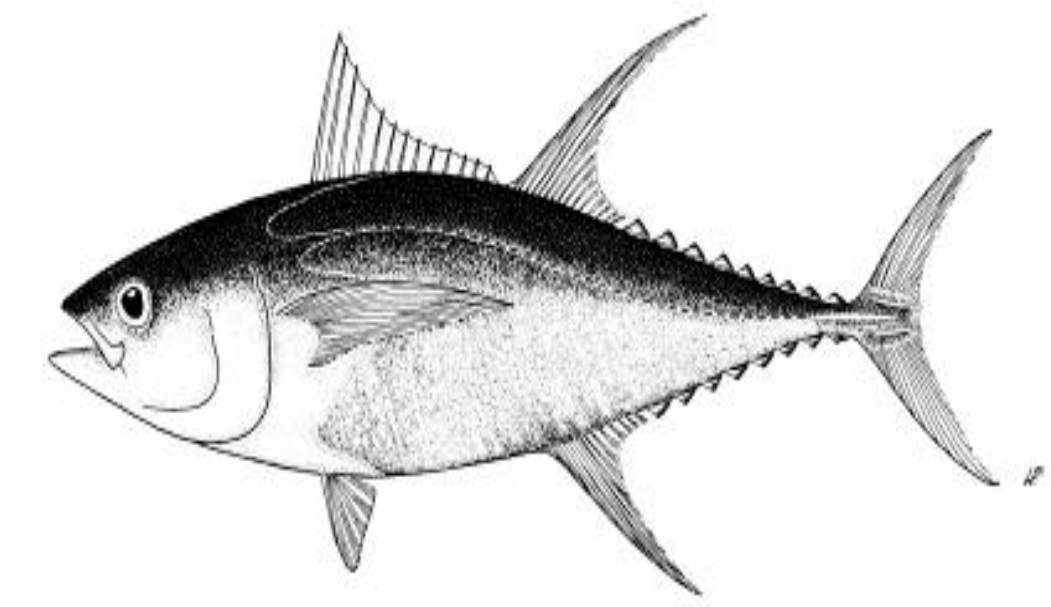
NIUE

WCPFC–SC112

COUNTRY FISHERIES REPORT – NIUE



Fisheries Division

Ministry of Natural Resources
Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries
Niue

2016

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 2016	**NO**

1. Abstract

In 2015, the number of longline vessels licensed to fish in Niue decreased from five to three. The effort and therefore the total weight for the year thus decreased significantly compared to the previous two years. Albacore remained the dominant species making up over 70% of the total weight, followed by yellowfin then bigeye. Niue licensed two purse seine vessels in 2015. However no catch was reported by these vessels.

2. Background

Catch that had been caught in the past by longline vessels has Albacore at 80 per cent from the overall species caught, with yellowfin and others following.

At the peak of the Niue Fishing Factory processing plant, 2010 was the best catch rate being recorded with the timeline of 3 months fished. At this stage only a few Long Line operators were engaged in the Fishery.

The Fishing vessels were all Cook Island flagged and offloaded in American Samoa, with transhipment of all vessels at Niue designated port, with 100 percent observer coverage during transhipment. Niue has since licensed vessels flagged to other countries, including Fiji and Taiwan.

At the 10th Annual WCPFC meeting in Cairns, Niue declared its longline and purse seine limits. These limits are incorporated into the National Pelagic Management and Development Plan.

3. Annual Data Summary and Species Catch Distribution by Longline vessels from 2009-2014.

The catch total (MT) in Niue's EEZ in 2015 by longline vessels decreased by about 80% from the previous year. The reduction in the number of vessels and the number of trips by these vessels contributed to this decline. Albacore remains the dominant catch followed by yellowfin and bigeye. There were no significant changes to catch of other fish.

There were no reports of catches by the purse seine vessels.

		Catch (metric tonnes)									
YEAR	No. of Vessels	ALBACORE	BIGEYE	SKIPJACK	YELLOWFIN	BLACK MARLIN	BLUE MARLIN	STRIPED MARLIN	SWORDFISH	OTHER	TOTAL
2009	3	138	7	5	12	1	1	4	1	8	177
2010	6	97	4	1	8	0	1	0	0	5	116
2011	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2013	6	416	18	9	44	0	19	2	4	31	542
2014	5	325	26	13	84	0	19	1	3	22	491
2015	3	57	4	1	11	0	3	0	0	3	79

Table1. Annual catch estimates in Niue's EEZ. Data Source: Operational (logsheet) catch/effort data, unraised. The catch for 2010 is for the first 4 months of the year before fishing operations by the fisheries partner ceased.

4. Flag State Reporting

Niue is not a flag state

5. Coastal State Reporting

Niue has a Management plan for pelagic fishing, with limits set on main tuna species targeted based on the best catch rates and those neighbouring countries catches that are similar in size and rate.

Niue reports its tuna fisheries catches to the Scientific Committee of the WCPFC.

6. Socio-economic factors

Pelagic fish that is caught by offshore foreign vessels is not sold in Niue. This catch is offloaded at ports designated by the flag state.

Fish that is caught by small artisanal vessels remains the main source of fish for locals. It is sold to restaurants and to the general public at around $15 per kilo. All fishermen whether they are subsistence or chartered sell fish to general stores and restaurants or directly to the general public.

7. Disposal of catch

The Disposal of catch is at the designated port of transhipment.

Sharks that are caught in Niue's waters must be discarded as per Niue's legislation and the National Pelagic Management plan.

8. Onshore developments

The processing plant is still inactive and most shore developments are of access to onshore facilities (wharf upgrade).

The wharf upgrade is to provide ease of access and safer offload to fishing vessels given the open nature of Niue's only port. This was identified by the last operations as one key area for improvement.

9. Future Prospects of the fishery

The Pelagic Development and Management plan is a mechanism to drive current and future prospects which can be aided by long term and short term partnerships.

10. Status of tuna fishery data collection systems

The process of data collection is enshrined in the Licensing terms and conditions of foreign vessels fishing in Niue waters. Reporting and data collection is mandatory with authorised Officers rights to set the terms, though these are based on data requirements of SPC and WCPFC.

Penalties are imposed on denying or refusal of access to data.

For Artisanal data, a data officer has been appointed to collect the data 4 days per week. In previous years fishermen were relied upon to record their own data. Along with the offshore data, this data is entered and stored in the TUFMAN database developed by SPC.

11. Research activities covering target and non-target species

Apart from catch and effort data collections of both offshore and inshore tuna fisheries, there were no other research activities relating to pelagic fisheries species in Niue's EEZ in 2015.

A wahoo tagging program was done in 2010 with satellite tags and using the ARGOS satellite tracking device to track the movement of wahoo.

Research of pelagic species is subject to the availability of funding and requirements under the National Pelagic Management and Development Plan.