SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
FOURTEENTH REGULAR SESSION

Busan, Republic of Korea
8-16 August 2018

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

WCPFC-SC14-AR/CCM-20

PHILIPPINES

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE WESTERN and CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISION (WCPFC)

PART1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

PHILIPPINE ANNUAL FISHERY REPORT UPDATE

June 2018

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, 2018	Yes
If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions:	

PHILIPPINE ANNUAL FISHERY REPORT 2018

Summary

The Philippines expresses its strong commitment to promote effective management in order to achieve the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) in accordance with the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and the WCPF Convention. In giving effect to the provisions of the WCPF Convention, the Philippines upholds that conservation and management measures developed by the Commission, including the recent CMM 2016-01 on the conservation and management of bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack in WCPO.

There are various ongoing activities such as the National Stock Assessment Program (NSAP), Philippine Fisheries Observer Program (PFOP), catch documentation/validation, Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), collaborations with various government agencies (e.g. PSA, PFDA) including the tuna industry, supports Philippine efforts towards improving tuna data collection. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has 434trained observers (60% are active) and 60 trained debriefers. The VMS has already been operationalized particularly for those vessels operating in international waters (e.g. HSP1, Indian Ocean, other PIC waters).

Philippines was given limited access to High Seas Pocket 1 as Special Management Area (SMA) allowing only 36 traditional fresh/ice chilled fishing vessels operating as a group. Philippine-flagged vessels operating in HSP1 are managed under the DA-BFAR Fisheries Administrative Order 245-3 (FAO 245-3). Out of 36 catcher vessels there were thirty three (33) vessels that entered HSP1 for 2017. The total catch of these vessels operating in HSP1 for the period of January to December 2017 is around 25, 514MT [Purse Seine (PS) = 20,554MT and Ringnet (RN) = 4,960MT] equal to 2, 696fishing day/s (PS = 2,266 fishing days and RN = 430 fishing days).

The provisional catch estimates for the three tuna species of concern of the WCPFC in 2017are as follows: skipjack – 143,240MT; yellowfin – 87,111MT; bigeye – 6,129MT; and albacore – 223MT with a total provisional catch of 236,479MT.

The Sustainable Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the West Pacific and East Asian Seas Project (WPEA-SM) whichaims to improve the management of highly migratory species in the West Pacific and East Asian Seasarea, continues to help strengthen national capacities and international participation of Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam in the work of the Commission.

Philippines through the BFAR-NFRDI and other concerned agencies together with the tuna industry is doing a lot of efforts to improve data collection and to strengthen its national capacity and international cooperation particularly on various transboundary concerns in relation to the sustainable conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks.

BACKGROUND

The Philippinesis still one of the top fish producing countries in the world. Over 1.6 million Filipinos depend on the fishing industry for their livelihood. ThePhilippines is also considered a major tuna producer in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO).The fishing industry's contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Products (GDP) in 2015 was 1.3% and 1.5% at current and constant prices, respectively *(Philippine Fisheries Profile, 2016)*.

Also in 2015, the foreign trade performance of the fishery industry gave a net surplus of 475 million dollars. With a total export value of 950 million US dollars and import value of 475million US dollars.Tuna remained as the top export commodity with a collective volume of 103,543MT for fresh/chilled/frozen, smoked/dried, and canned tuna products valued at US $283million.Canned tuna, though, constitutes bulk of tuna products being exported. In general, tuna exportsis up by 6% in terms of volume and in terms of value by 3.67% than the previous year. Major markets for this commodity include USA, Japan and United Kingdom*(Philippine Fisheries Profile, 2016)*.

Chilled/frozen fish comprised the bulk of the total import in terms of value. Tuna, mackerel and sardines are the major import fish commodities in 2015. Tuna has the largest import share of 40% with an import value of US $188million. Chilled/frozen tuna were mostly supplied by Papua New Guinea 17%; Taiwan (ROC) 8%; China, 3%, Korea, 5% and Japan, 2.3%. Other fishery imports include mackerel, 18.5% and sardines 1%. *(Philippine Fisheries Profile, 2016)*.

ANNUAL FISHERIES INFORMATION

A. FLEET STRUCTURE

The fishing sector consists of municipal and commercial components, with the former involving vessels less than 3 GT in size, and under the jurisdiction of the Local Government Units (LGUs). The number of municipal vessels is not well documented in most areas. The larger commercial vessels (> 3GT) are required to fish outside municipal waters, beyond 15km off the shoreline and are required to secure commercial fishing vessel license (CFVL) at the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources which is subject to renewal every three (3) years. With the implementation of RA 9379 or the Handline Fishing Law, this gives a separate category for the handline vessels which were formerly considered under the municipal fishing vessels.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) classification of registered Philippine vessels operating in the Western and Central Pacific Region is shownin Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of Philippine registered vessels in WCPFC
Source: WCPFC Website, as of 18 April 2018

Type of Vessel	Number of Registered Vessels				Total
	<250 GT	>250 - 500GT	>500 - 1,000GT	> 1,000 GT	
Fish Carrier	101	9	7	15	**132**
Purse seine	45	10	14	22	**91**
Support Vessel	173	1			**174**
Total	**319**	**20**	**21**	**37**	**397**

B. ANNUAL TUNA CATCH IN THE PHILIPPINE EEZ

Since 1987, the official fishery statistics for the Philippines have been compiled by the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS), based on probability (stratified random sampling by data collectors) and non-probability surveys (interviews by regular BAS staff) surveys, supplemented by secondary data from administrative sources e.g. landings sites and ports (Vallesteros, 2002). Annual Fisheries Statistics for commercial, municipal, inland and aquaculture sectors are published for three year time framesand include volume and value of production by province and by region, information on fish prices and foreign trade statistics.

Catch breakdown by the 31 main marine species is available[1]. Estimates of annual bigeye and yellowfin catches for the past years have been reported as a combined catch(yellowfin/bigeye tuna) but for 2005 BAS started to separate catches for these two species of tunas (Table 2).However, there is still a need to improve the identification of these two (2) species to accurately reflect the actual catch of yellowfin and bigeye.

The annual tuna catch estimates include all the tuna catch unloaded in Philippine portsregardless where they were caught and does not separate those catches from foreign waters or whether it is caught by foreign-flagged vessel.

Table 2. Total tuna catch, by species, for 2012-2017
Source: PSA Annual Fisheries Statistics; 2017data are provisional

Year	Commercial			Municipal			TOTAL
	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	
2012	163,026	77,730	7,912	41,327	45,698	4,568	**340,262**
2013	168,183	83,142	6,899	40,963	46,742	4,962	**350,891**
2014	194,583	94,256	6,188	39,270	45,664	4,980	**384,942**
2015	199,153	102,400	5,258	34,392	40,987	5,614	**387,804**
2016	181,610	70,565	8,106	30,321	35,103	7,505	**333,209**
2017	211,794	70,565	19,325	29,872	36,730	8,623	**375,299**

Note: The annual tuna catch estimates for 2012-2017includes all the tuna catch unloaded in Philippine ports regardless where they were caught and does not separate those catches from foreign waters or caught by foreign-flagged vessel which may account for around 172,601MT for 2017.

The 11thTuna Fisheries Catch Estimates Review Workshop last 28- 29May 2018 was conducted to review and validate Philippine catch estimates by species and gear type. Data from different sources, namely, BFAR (NSAP, logsheets, cannery receipts, Philippine FOP), PSA, PFDA and industry were presented and reviewed. Table 3 provides a breakdown of catch by gear and species according to the process undertaken in the workshop with the current 2017PSA estimates. After removing the foreign-flagged catch landed in the Philippines (172,601MT) from the PSA estimate, there was a difference of around 34,884MT. The difference could be due to the difficulties in estimating the diverse municipal fisheries and could be explained as possible bias in the probability surveys due to very low coverage.The workshop participants noted that while the industrial fleet estimates are now becoming more reliable, there is still some problem in determining and validating the estimates of the small-scale municipal fisheries that needs to be resolved in the near future. But the workshop also noted that the estimation process has been improving compared to the previous years.

Table 3. Reconciliation of 2017Tuna Catch Estimates by Gear and Species with the 2017PSATotal Tuna Catch Estimates (in MT)

[1] Around 20% of the municipal catch and 6-8% of the commercial landings are not captured by these 30 species

Source: EleventhPhilippine/WCPFC Annual Tuna Catch Estimates Review Workshop Report

GEAR/SPECIES	SKJ	YFT	BET	ALB	TOTAL
Purse seine	48,846	17,444	1,708	0	**67,998**
Ringnet	27,827	9,592	611	19	**38,049**
Hook-and-line	13,780	38,778	1,800	114	**54,472**
Others	4,878	4,187	335	90	**9,490**
TOTAL	**95,331**	**70,001**	**4,454**	**223**	**170,008**

* Note: Provisional catch estimate does not include catches of Philippine flagged purse seine vessels in PNG which accounts for around 66,694MT for 2017.

Also included in the tuna catch estimates are catches of Philippine-flagged vessels fishing in high seas pocket #1 (HSP1). Since2013, Philippines was given limited access to High Seas Pocket 1 as Special Management Area (SMA) allowing only 36 traditional fresh/ice chilled fishing vessels operating as a group. Philippine-flagged vessels have been operating under the Regulations and Implementing Guidelines on Group Tuna Purse Seine Operations in High Seas Pocket Number 1 as a Special Management Area (DA-BFAR-FAO 245-3). Out of 36 catcher vessels there were thirty three (33) vessels that entered HSP1 for 2017. The total catch of these vessels operating in HSP1 for the period of January to December 2017 is around 25,514MT [Purse Seine (PS) = 20,554MT and Ringnet (RN) = 4,960MT] equal to 2,696 fishing day/s (PS = 2,266 fishing days and RN = 430 fishing days).

Tuna catch breakdown by gear is not available from the present Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA, formerly BAS) national statistics publication. However, the WCPFC Tuna Fishery Yearbook has also provided an estimated breakdown of catch by gear (Table 4).

No other fishing by foreign flag vessels is permitted in the Philippines EEZ, but a considerable amount of IUU fishing, based on the regularity of apprehensions of vessels illegally fishing in Philippine waters, would seem to occur, much of it involving tuna vessels. A desk study carried out in 1995 (PTRP, 1995) concluded that IUU longline catches of up to 10,000MT (40% yellowfin) may have been taken in some years.

Landingsby foreign longline vessels are permitted in Davao (Toril) port, where around 1,000 - 4,000MT (2012 – 2017) of mostly tuna is landed annually (Table 8).

Table 4. Estimated catch of oceanic tuna species, by gear type, for 2011–2016 in Western and Central Pacific Oceans (in MT)

Source: WCPFC Tuna Fishery Yearbook 2016

Year/Species	Handline	Hook-and-Line	Longline	Purse seine	Ringnet	Others	Total
2012							
Skipjack	439	10,600	-	113,817	23,255	3,078	151,189
Yellowfin	14,449	8,400	61	45,381	5,590	1,247	75,128
Bigeye	508	1,000	248	4,466	655	43	6,920
Total	15,396	20,000	309	163,664	29,500	4,368	233,237
2013							
Skipjack	708	10,360	-	100,077	30,714	2,910	144,769
Yellowfin	12,731	11,000	27	44,815	6,829	3,365	78,767
Bigeye	767	440	167	3,664	449	216	5,703
Total	14,206	21,800	194	148,556	37,992	6,491	229,239
2014							
Skipjack	3,806	6,374	111	130,426	37,885	6,086	184,688
Yellowfin	26,925	8,434	153	50,359	7,118	3,258	96,247
Bigeye	713	58	63	4,347	499	92	5,772
Total	31,444	14,866	327	185,132	45,502	9,436	286,707
2015							
Skipjack	2,820	12,833	-	88,891	37,471	11,797	153,812
Yellowfin	20,825	17,726	-	40,716	7,955	2,266	89,488
Bigeye	743	585	-	2,612	373	220	4,533
Total	24,388	31,144	-	132,219	45,799	14,283	247,833
2016							
Skipjack	1,954	5,864	-	89,240	26,475	6,420	129,953
Yellowfin	17,593	14,188	-	38,418	8,290	2,546	81,035
Bigeye	850	327	-	2,026	636	124	3,963
Total	20,397	20,379	-	129,684	35,401	9,090	214,951

C. ANNUAL CATCHES IN THE CONVENTION AREA

In addition to the estimated catch by Philippine vessels in the EEZ (see above), to this must be added catches by Philippines flag vessels taken outside the EEZ and elsewhere in the Convention area. The extra - EEZ catches are assumed to include those made by purse seine and ring net vessels in adjacent areas and based in overseas ports, and catches by the wide-ranging handline vessels. BFAR has already required fishing vessels such as purse seine and ringnet to adopt the logsheet system to address the above issue. The fisheries data collection system records all catch landed by Philippineregistered vessels including those fish caught outside Philippine waters (e.g. PNG, PIN waters).

Purse seine catches in the PIC waters

Data on the catch by Philippine flag purse seine vessels fishing in Papua New Guinea(PNG) waters are available from the SPC Regional Database, and are summarized for the period 2012-2017below.

Table 5. Catch by Philippine flag purse seine vessels in PIC waters,2012-2017.
Source: SPC Regional Tuna Fishery Databaseand BFAR 12

Year	No. of Vessels	Catch (in MT)			
		Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
2012	25	56,501	30,452	700	87,653
2013	27	49,014	35,226	597	84,837
2014	29	64,191	39,945	2,843	106,979
2015	23	46,298	27,384	1,578	75,260
2016	22	47,825	22,451	1,118	71,394
2017	34	47,909	17,110	1,675	66,694

* 2017 – preliminary; with fishing access in PNG, from BFAR Regional Office No.12

Longline catches

Since 2015 to present, there is no Philippine longline vesselthat operates within the WCPFC Convention Area (WCPFC-CA). But there were two (2) or more distant-water Philippine longlinevessels that operate in the past that have been granted fishing access in other PIC waters (e.g. Kiribati), catches for these vesselsaresummarized below.

Table 6. CatchesofDistant – water Philippine flag longlinevessel/s fishing in the WCPFC Convention Area for 2011 – 2014 (MT)

Species	2011	2012	2013	2014
Yellowfin	**145.77**	**60.63**	**27.16**	**2.78**
Bigeye	**777.06**	**247.83**	**166.56**	**52.90**
Albacore	**36.39**	**23.96**	**30.47**	**1.16**
Others	**174.96**	**62.66**	**10.69**	**38.67**
Total	**1,134.18**	**398.08**	**234.87**	**95.51**

DISPOSAL OF CATCH

Most of the **municipal** tuna catches are landed as wet fish all over the Philippines. Much of the municipal catch is processed by drying, salting, smoking etc. A portion of the municipal tuna catch would enter large scale commercial processing like the large handline-caught tuna exported as sashimi and marketed either frozen or smoked, mostly in General Santos City and possibly small amounts are sold as wet fish direct to canneries.

The **commercial** domestic tuna catch of oceanic tunas is increasingly directed towards processing by domestic canneries, based in the Philippines and elsewhere, with lesser amounts to frozen smoked operations. The estimated 157,000MT annual output of 9 canneries is mostly supplied by landings from Philippine purse seiners and ring netters, both local vessels and via carriers from overseas operations. Overseas operations also supply canneries in PNG (~50,000MT p.a.); some tuna is imported to supplement cannery supply.

Official figures for **exports of tuna products** for theperiod 2013-2017are tabulated below. The first category includes chilled sashimi quality fish and frozen whole fish for tuna canning.

Table 7. Tuna exports by commodity, 2013 –2017
Source: PSA Fisheries Statistics for 2013–2017

Tuna commodity, by volume (MT)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Fresh/chilled/frozen	20,177	28,808	26,815	22,381	25,637
Dried/smoked	2,725	1,460	548	1,252	1,434
Canned	29,660	58,660	73,411	66,284	75,928
TOTAL VALUE (million USD)	664.50	459.83	414.42	274.26	283.50

* 2017 provisional data

ONSHORE DEVELOPMENTS

A. HARBOR INFRASTRUCTURE

The General Santos Fish Port Complex (GSFPC), the country's major tuna unloading port, with210,761MTtotal unloadings in 2017, has undergone expansion and improvement. Major components of the said expansion/improvement project includesconstruction of deep wharves, cold storage and processing area, port handling equipment, power substation, waste water treatment plant, water supply system and other ancillary facilities. GSFPC port facilities have already met international standards for HACCP GMP-SSOP and accredited by the European Union (EU), Japan and United States. Six other major fish ports in the country are proposed for rehabilitation in the near future. TheNavotas Fish Port Complex, in Metro Manila is the second largesttunalandings are recorded with unloadings of around 10,000 MT annually. Rehabilitation project for NFPC includes upgrading of port facilities *(such as roads, electrical and power system, landing quay and west breakwater),* construction of cold storage and processing plant, and waste water treatment facilities.

B. PROCESSING PLANTS

There are currently 9tuna canneries in the Philippines, 7in General Santos and 2 in Zamboanga.

There are two Philippine-owned and operated canneries in Papua New Guineaone in Madang and another one in Lae processing around 50,000MT per year.

Most of the handline catch supply fresh and frozen sashimi grade to the export processors and some to the domestic market. There are more than 17 frozen tuna processors in the Philippines, 70% of which are located in General Santos City and supports about 3,000jobs. Majority of its production is exported to US and European countries.

OTHER CMM REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A. Conservation and Management Measure-2005-03 (North Pacific Albacore)

In 2017, Philippine catches for north pacific albacore is around 223MT. Catches for this species were mainly contributed by municipal hook-and-line fishery using vessels less than 3GT, targeting yellowfin tuna, operating in the northern part of the Philippines and seasonal in nature. Philippines has difficulty in quantifying fishing effort for this fishery due to the diverse nature of this fishery in the country.But with increased port sampling coverage by our National Stock Assessment Program (NSAP), Philippines will be able to quantify fishing effort in the coming years.

B. Conservation and Management Measure 2017-06(Seabirds)

Based on available information (e.g. observer reports), there were no reported seabird interaction for 2017since there are no Philippine-flag vessel operating in the WCPFC convention area (*North of 23º North* or *South of 30º South*) and even for vessels operating within *23º North - 30º South.*

C. Conservation and Management Measure 2009-03 (Swordfish)

Philippines does not have vessels that mainly targets swordfish but our fleet do have some records of catches for this species of around 15MT in 2017as by-catch for our hook-and-line fishery thatwere mainly operating in Philippine waters and none of our vessel was operating south of 20ºS.

D. Conservation and Management Measure 2010-07 (Sharks)*

Since 2009, Philippines has been implementing itsNational Plan of Action for Sharks. Based on available reports (e.g. observer reports, port sampling),the total estimated releases for sharks in 2017 was66 that occurred in Philippine EEZ and HSP1 [(Black-tip shark- 1 released dead); (Blue shark - 1 released alive); (Copper shark – 1 released dead); Cookie shark – 1 released dead); (Goblin shark – 1 released dead); (Oceanic Whitetip shark – 1 released dead); (Silky sharks – 53released dead and 7 released alive)].

E. Conservation and Management Measure 2011-03 (Protection of Cetaceans from Purse seine Operation)*

Based on available reports for 2017, when a cetacean was unintentionally encircled in the purse seine net during the purse seine operation, Philippinepurse seine vessel crew always tried their best effort or always took reasonable steps to ensure the cetacean safe release including stopping the net roll and not recommencing fishing operation until the animal has been released safely and alive and no longer at risk of recapture.In 2017, there wasa total of 37instances that a cetacean was unintentionally encircled by a purse seine net, 1was released alive and36 released dead [e.g. (Bottlenosedolphin – 3 instances encircled and 3 releaseddead); (Indo-Pacific Bottlenose dolphin – 3instances encircled and 3 releaseddead); (Rough-toothed dolphin - 31 instances encircled with30 released dead and 1 released alive)]. These reported instances occurred in Philippine EEZ and HSP1.

Based on the report of the fishing master, they would usually stop the net roll once they noticed a cetacean and let the cetacean move out of the net. There are also instances that they do not notice the cetacean prior to net setting or during net rolling.

F. Conservation and Management Measure 2011-04 (Oceanic White-tip Shark)*

Philippines has already prohibited its vessels from retaining on board, transshipping, storing on a fishing vessel, or landing any oceanic whitetip shark, in whole or in part, in the fisheries covered by the Convention and require its vessels to release any oceanic whitetip shark that is caught as soon as possible after the shark is brought alongside the vessel, and to do so in a manner that results in as little harm to the shark as possible. In 2017, there was only one estimated instance that an oceanic white-tip wasunintentionally encircled in the purse seine net during the purse seine operation (1 release but subsequently died). This instance occurred in HSP1.

G. Conservation and Management Measure 2012-04 (Protection of Whale Sharks from Purse Seine Operation)*

Since 1998, whale sharks are considered protected species in the Philippines under Fisheries Administrative Order No. 193 or the Ban on the taking or catching, selling, purchasing and possessing, transporting and exporting of Whale Sharks and Manta Rays (FAO 193 series of 1998). Based on available reports in 2017, there were noreported alleged incidents or instancesthat a whale shark was encircled in the purse seine net during the purse seine operation in Philippine EEZ or HSP1.

H. Conservation and Management Measure 2013-08 (Silky Sharks)*

Since the effectivity of CMM 2013-08 (July 1, 2014), Philippines has already prohibited its vessels from retaining on board, transshipping, storing on a fishing vessel, or landing any silky sharks, in whole or in part, in the fisheries covered by the Convention and require its vessels to release any silky shark that is caught as soon as possible after the shark is brought alongside the vessel, and to do so in a manner that results in as little harm to the shark as possible. Based on available reports for 2017, there was total estimated releasesof 60 forsilky shark (53released dead and 7 released alive). Thesewereincidentally caught silky sharks during the purse seine operation that occurred both in Philippine EEZ and HSP1.

I. Conservation and Management Measure 2016-04 (Pacific bluefin tuna)

The Philippines does not conduct fishing activities targeting Pacific bluefin tunas in the area north of 20° N. However, in some years, there are by-catches of Pacific Bluefin tunas in areas south of 20° N. These fishing vessels utilize handline/hook-and-line fishing gears. For 2017, two(2) pieces of Pacific Bluefin tunas were reported caught weighing around565 kilograms (1 pc @ ~350kgs and 1 pc @ ~215kgs). Philippines has improved its catch documentation mechanisms to monitor all tuna landings throughout the country.

STATUS of TUNA FISHERY DATA COLLECTION SYSTEMS

A. LOGSHEETS DATA COLLECTION

Since 2008, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) launched the catch documentation scheme which includes the catch and effort logsheet system for the purse seine and ringnet vessels. Aside from this BFAR also requires canneries to submit monthly cannery unloading data. TUFMAN Database and PECAN Database systemsare being utilized to process the data collected fromlogsheets and cannery receipts, respectively. All these efforts are geared towards improving tuna statistics/data gathering.DA-BFAR Fisheries Administrative Order (FAO 238): Rules and Regulations Governing the Implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1005/2008 on Catch Certification Scheme requires all vessels especially those exporting in EU market to submit catch logsheets as requirement for the issuance of Catch Certificates and this helped improve timely logsheets data compliance. Recently, BFAR Administrative Circular No. 251 (Series of 2014) entitled Traceability System for Fish and Fishing Products which establishes traceability system for wild-caught, farmed fish and other aquatic products. One of the data requirements for wild-caught fish products for traceability/documentation is to submit logsheets data.

Logsheets submission is also required for all vessels under Section 38 of the Philippine Fisheries Code (Republic Act 8550) as amended by Republic Act 10654.

B. OBSERVER PROGRAM and VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM (VMS)

The BFAR regularly conducts observer training, twice in a year to recruit new observers. There are 434trained observers (60% active) ready to board the vessels especially to those vessels intending to fish during the FAD closure period within the Philippine EEZand for high sea pocket # 1 (HSP1) operation.All our HSP1 fishing operationshave 100% observer coverage.The program has 60trained debriefers (10 active) to conduct debriefing procedures and protocols to the observers. There isalso observer coverage to those vessels fishing in the PNG EEZ, provided by PNG NFA.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has operationalized the national VMS particularly for those vessels fishing in high sea pocket #1 (HSP1). The Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Philippine Fisheries Code (Republic Act 8550) as amended by Republic Act 10654, Section 119 details the implementation requirements of the Vessel Monitoring Measure (VMM) for catcher and carrier vessels 30GT and above. While Section 116 details implementation requirements for fisheries observer coverage for fishing vessels 200GT and above, and also those fishing vessels that fish during the FAD closure period.

There were three (3) DA-BFAR Fisheries Administrative Orders that supports the implementation the Philippine Fisheries Observer Program (PFOP) and operationalization of Vessels Monitoring System (VMS). These were FAO No. 240: Rules and Regulations in the Implementation of Fisheries Observer Program in the High Seas,FAO No. 241: Regulations and Implementation of the Vessel Monitoring System in the High Seas and FAO 245-3: Regulation and Implementing Guidelines on Group Tuna Purse Seine Operations in High Seas Pocket Number 1 as a Special Management Area.

Philippines is also expected to upgrade its VMS though the Integrated Marine Environment Monitoring System-Phase II (PHILO-2) Project which is expected to launch before the end of 2018.

C. PORT SAMPLING PROGRAM

The National Stock Assessment Program (NSAP) has continued to collect port sampling data (e.g. species composition, length frequency and vessel catch and effort information) in major tuna landing sites. In 2010 – 2013, the West Pacific East Asia Oceanic Fisheries Management Project (WPEA-OFMP) was able to increase port sampling coverage covering some of the major tuna landing areas around the country.Since 2014, the Philippine government through BFAR gave more funding to support expansion of the NSAP which aims to cover / monitor almost all the tuna landing areas in the country to come-up with a more reliable data particularly for the diverse municipal tuna fisheries, for our WCPFC data obligation and also for better fisheries management. Data from NSAP has been used as basis for coming up reliable tuna catch composition during the annual tuna catch estimates review workshops.

D. UNLOADING

Landings / unloadingsby foreign vessels is permitted in only one port in the Philippines - Davao (Toril), as noted earlier. Table 8 below lists the details of these foreign flag vessel unloadings in Davao Fish Port.

Table 8. Vessel Arrivals and Unloading Volumes by Foreign Vessels, Davao Fish Port, 2012 - 2017
Source: PFDA, 2018

Year	Port Calls	Volume of Unloadings (MT)
2013	297	3,994
2014	305	2,988
2015	291	2,227
2016	280	1,853
2017	355	983

RESEARCH& FUTURE ACTIVITIES COVERING TARGET & NON-TARGET SPECIES

The West Pacific East Asia Oceanic Fisheries Management Project (WPEA-OFMP) was implemented from January 2010 to December 2013. The phase-2 of this project entitled Sustainable Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the West Pacific and East Asian Seas aimsto strengthen national capacities and regional cooperation to implement fishery sector reforms that will sustain and conserve the highly migratory fish stocks in the West Pacific Ocean and East Asian Seas while considering climatic variability and changeis expected to finish in Janaury 2019. This project focused on three (3) components, namely, i) strengthened regional governance and national adaptive capacity in management of highly migratory fish stocks moving amongst the Pacific Ocean Warm Pool Large Marine Ecosystem (POWPLME) and East Asian LMEs; ii) implementation of policy, institutional and fishery management reform; and iii) knowledge sharing on highly migratory shared fish stocks.This project helps country partners (Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam), to comply with their WCPFC data requirements and obligations.

The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA)10654 "An act to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, amending Republic Act 8550, otherwise known as " The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998", and for other purpose, took effect last October 2015. One of the policy declarations of the law was *"to ensure the rational and sustainable development, management and conservation of the fishery and aquatic resources in Philippine waters including the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and in the adjacent high seas, consistent with the primordial objective of maintaining a sound ecological balance, protecting and enhancing the quality of the international conventions and cooperate with other states and international bodies, in order to conserve and manage threatened aquatic species, straddling and highly migratory fish stocks and other living marine resources"*. Section 32 also states that *"all distant water fishing vessels shall comply with the conservation and management measures of RFMOs where they are conducting fishing"*. The IRR has outlined in detail our policy approaches and the corresponding timelines in carrying out the objectives of the law.

The14th WCPFC Regular Session in December2017has adopted Conservation and Management Measure for Bigeye, Yellowfin and Skipjack Tuna in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (CMM 2017-01). Philippineshas approved and implemented its own Fisheries Administrative Order No. 245-3(FAO 245-3) on the Regulations and Implementing Guidelines on Group Tuna Purse Seine Operations in High Seas Pocket Number 1 as a Special Management Area. This was supported by other FAOs such as theNational Tuna Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) Management Policy (FAO No. 244),FAO 236-4: Extension of FAO 236 series of 2010 or theRules and Regulations on the Operations of Purse Seine and Ring Net Vessels Using Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) locally known as *Payaos* during the FAD Closure Period, and other FAOs which have been approved and implemented.These national laws, rules and

regulations also applies to our 2018 operation in the WCPFC Convention Area. These DA-BFAR Fisheries Administrative Orders will make sure that conservation and management objectives on CMM 2017-01 will not be compromised.

In 5 May 2018, Philippine Senate adopted a resolution concurring in the accession to the Agreement on the FAO Port State Measures (PSMA)to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUUF). The said Agreement was also ratified by the President of the Philippines on 10 August 2017.

REFERENCES

BAS (2012). Tuna Fisheries Statistics of the Philippines 2002 - 2012. Fisheries Statistics Division, BAS, Dept, of Agriculture, Quezon City, Philippines.

Barut, N. and E. Garvilles. 2016. Philippine Fishery Report Update. National Fisheries Research and Development Institute, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. 12thMeeting of the WCPFC Scientific Committee (WCPFC-SC12), 3-11 August 2016, Bali, Indonesia.

BFAR 2017. Philippine Fishery Report Update 17. National Fisheries Research and Development Institute, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. 13thMeeting of the WCPFC Scientific Committee (WCPFC-SC13), 7-19 August 2017, Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

BFAR (2016) Philippine Fisheries Profile,2016. Fisheries Policy and Economics Division, BFAR, Dept, of Agriculture, Quezon City, Philippines. 70p.

BFAR (2017) Philippine Fisheries Observer Data (Preliminary Report) in HSP1 for 2016. Philippine Fisheries Observer Program, BFAR, Dept. of Agriculture, Quezon City, Philippines.

BFAR-NFRDI-WCPFC (2017). 10thPhilippine/WCPFC Annual Tuna Fisheries Catch Estimates Review Workshop Report. 29 - 30 May 2017, Puerto Princesa City, Philippines.

Lewis, A.D. (2004) Review of tuna fisheries and the tuna fishery statistical system in the Philippines. OFP, SPC, Noumea, New Caledonia

PTRP (1995) Distant Water Fishing Nation (DWFN) activity in the Philippines EEZ - a review. Desk study by OFP/SPC for the Philippines Tuna Research Project (PTRP), 55pp.

Vallesteros, C.C. (2002) Data systems for fisheries. Paper presented at the 12th Agricultural Policy Forum (“Agricultural Statistics”), Makati City, January 2002.

WCPFC Tuna Fishery Yearbook 2015. OFP, SPC, Noumea.