



**COMMISSION  
EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION**

Tumon, Guam, USA

26-30 March 2012

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**NAURU'S PROPOSAL FOR A CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE TO  
PROHIBIT LONGLINING IN CERTAIN REGIONS OF THE WCP-CA**

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WCPFC8-2011-DP/45

26 March 2012

Explanatory Note

We regret that this submission is later than the conventional politeness of 30 days prior to the WCPFC meeting. However, this is a simple proposal and should not require much time to assimilate. We would request that it be circulated for discussion.

**Proposal**

For a prohibition on distant-water longline fishing within the fully-enclosed high seas enclaves in the Convention Area, from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013.

**Rationale**

High seas longlining is not currently subject to adequate control, particularly in its impact upon species of concern. Observer coverage remains poor, and we investigate many more incidents involving longliners than purse-seiners or other fishing methods. Purse-seiners are subject to more stringent standards and have a much better reporting and compliance record, despite the fact that their impact on both target and non-target stocks is generally lighter. Yet purse-seiners have been prohibited from fishing in certain areas of the high seas. There is clear inequity in the application of management measures between the two fisheries.

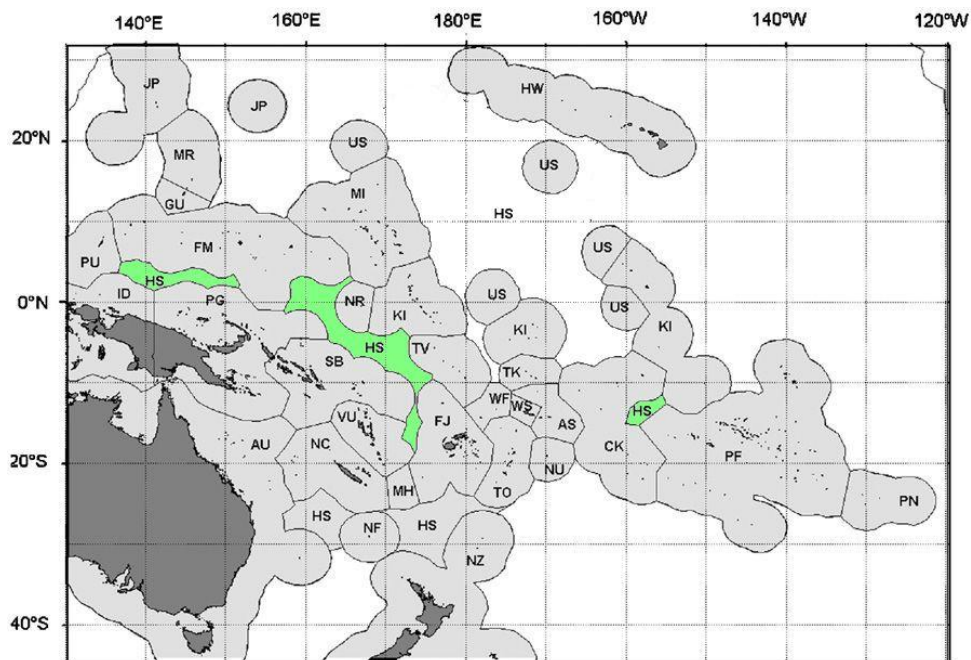
Most flag states do not have the capacity to adequately monitor and regulate their distant-water longline vessels; they are reluctant to pool resources and permissions to allow the Commission itself to adequately regulate the high seas; and there is no sign of the longline industry itself achieving effective self-regulation. The recent massive increase in albacore longlining in the South Pacific is testament to that.

Few would deny that the rule of law, and enforcement of that rule, is weaker on the high seas than in areas managed by national authorities. We are concerned that management of high seas fisheries will continue to be weak for as long as the Commission is not granted adequate powers to oversee these areas.

At the same time, many coastal states are worried about the impacts of fishing on the status of certain target stocks and, heeding the advice of scientists that fishing mortality must be reduced, are applying increasingly stringent, regionally-harmonised measures within their own zones. Most of these coastal states are developing countries, while most of the vessels fishing on the high seas are flagged to more developed countries. There is obviously a disproportionate burden on developing states with respect to the cost of conservation.

## Impacts

We are restricting this proposal to the tropical high seas enclaves in recognition of the fact that these enclaves are much less critical to the profitability of distant-water longline fisheries than higher-latitude high seas within the Convention Area.



As can be seen from the map, the proposed closure is relatively small compared to the total area available to longlining (which includes EEZs as well as remaining high seas areas). While we would prefer closing the entire high seas to longlining, because the same concerns about the effectiveness of management apply equally to higher latitudes and more easterly longitudes, we assume that such a large closure would not be supported by a majority or consensus of CCMs. This closure is targeted on the areas of most concern to us, particularly the area bounded by the EEZs of Nauru, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Federated States of Micronesia and Marshall Islands, which adjoins half the perimeter of the Nauru EEZ, and from which our recent acquisition of WCPFC 100nm buffer zone VMS data has revealed frequent fishing-related encroachments by unlicensed longliners into our EEZ (a list of which we will table in time for consideration at the next commission IUU session). We also recognise that these fully-enclosed enclaves have a different status under the Convention from other high seas areas.

There will be a requirement to monitor longliners in the high seas enclaves at least as stringently as the monitoring required by the prohibition on purse-seining in these areas.

Purse-seine monitoring was greatly assisted by the increase in observer coverage aboard internationally-mobile vessels licenced to fish in EEZs of the region, and by improvements in electronic vessel monitoring systems. We would suggest that all of the high seas enclaves are designated as special management areas subject to an enhanced level of oversight by the Commission and adjacent countries, where entry and exit is reported rigorously, boarding and inspection processes are streamlined, where transit should be expeditious, where gear should be completely stowed for all transits of these areas, and where meetings between vessels are prohibited for any reason apart from an emergency involving complete breakdown, or danger of injury or loss of life. Bearing in mind the difficulties of rapidly increasing longline observer coverage, trials in the use of onboard video monitoring and analysis should be given additional weight.

The Commission Secretariat should be tasked with actively monitoring all vessels in these areas by VMS and other means, and be given the initiative to report any unusual incidents to adjacent countries as they occur, and to make an annual report to the full Commission membership on the status of, and activities within, each special high seas management area.

### **Conclusion**

The Delegation of Nauru requests that this proposal be considered for agreement by the Commission at its Eighth Session. A form of wording for a draft CMM to implement this proposal is attached.



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**PROHIBITION ON DISTANT-WATER LONGLINING IN  
CERTAIN AREAS OF THE HIGH SEAS**

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Conservation and Management Measure 2012/XX

*The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission;*

*In accordance with the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (the Convention);*

*Aware of the difficulty of managing the impacts of distant-water longlining in the high seas pockets of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean given the current state of development of the capacity and powers of the Commission to manage fishing on the high seas;*

*Alarmed by the apparent frequency of unapproved transshipments of controlled species by distant-water longliners operating in high seas pockets within the Convention Area, and encroachments by high seas longliners into adjacent exclusive economic zones;*

*Concerned by the time it will take to achieve an effective independent observation program for longliners, particularly those operating in areas beyond national jurisdiction;*

*Recalling the advice of the 7<sup>th</sup> Scientific Committee of the Commission that further reductions in fishing mortality need to be achieved in order to restore the sustainability of the bigeye tuna stock;*

*Desiring to achieve greater equity among fisheries in a region where purse-seine fishing is already prohibited within these high seas areas;*

*Required by Article 8 of the Convention to pay special attention to areas of high seas in the Convention Area entirely surrounded by exclusive economic zones; and*

*Taking into account the needs of small island developing States, and territories and possessions, in the Convention Area whose economies, food supplies and livelihoods are overwhelmingly dependent on the exploitation of marine living resources;*

Adopts the following Conservation and Management Measure in accordance with Article 10 of the Convention:

1. In this Conservation and Management Measure:

*“special high seas area”* means any of the following:

- (a) the high seas area bounded by the exclusive economic zones of the Federated States of Micronesia, Indonesia, Palau and Papua New Guinea;
  - (b) the high seas area bounded by the exclusive economic zones of the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu;
  - (c) any additional high seas area located within 10N and 20N latitude and 170E and 150W longitude that is completely enclosed by the exclusive economic zones of CCMs.
2. CCMs must prohibit their flag vessels from longline fishing in the special high seas areas.
  3. Paragraph 2 does not apply to a longline vessel flagged in or based in a port of a coastal State adjacent to the special high seas area in which that vessel operates.
  4. The Commission Secretariat must actively monitor all fishing and fishery support vessels transiting through or operating in the special high seas areas through the Commission Vessel Monitoring System and by exchange of information with the flag States of such vessels and adjacent coastal States.
  5. If a fishing vessel (other than a vessel mentioned in paragraph 3) appears to engage in any activity in a special high seas area other than expeditious transit through the area, the Secretariat must report the activity to the following States:
    - (a) the flag State of the vessel;
    - (b) the coastal States adjacent to that special high seas area.
  6. The Commission Secretariat must prepare a report to every Commission Technical and Compliance Committee meeting, covering the period since the previous such report or since the date of coming into force of this measure, summarising each activity reported under paragraph 5, including details of any unresolved incidents.
  7. The Commission must place a high priority on the development of an effective independent observation programme for longline fishing, including trials of onboard camera systems.
  8. This Measure comes into force on 1 January 2013