



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

WCPFC-SC8-AR/CCM-21

SOLOMON ISLANDS



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2012



**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC
FISHERIES COMMISSION**

**PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND
STATISTICS 2011**

SOLOMON ISLANDS

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Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources

Aug 2012

Scientific data was provided to the Commission in accordance with the decision relating to the provision of scientific data to the Commission by the 30 th April 2012	YES
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On behalf of the Solomon Islands Government, I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the support by SPC in providing expertise and technical assistance towards improving the tuna data collection and management systems of Solomon Islands, and particularly in developing and maintaining the TUFMAN database, which makes it easier to prepare and produce this report. I would also like to thank FFA and WCPFC for funding support provided for Solomon Islands to be represented at (i) the FFA Science Working Group (SWG) meeting and (ii) the 8th Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC7), meeting Busan, Korea.



ABSTRACT

The Solomon Islands tuna fishery comprises of the industrial commercial (domestic and foreign fleets) sector and non-industrial (artisanal/subsistence) sector. The tuna fishery is very important to the people of Solomon Islands economically and socially. The commercial industrial sector generates substantial revenues for the national economy through access fees, processing, exporting, duties and levies. The artisanal fishery contributes to the social wellbeing of Solomon Islanders.

In 2011 a total of 482 fishing vessels (including US Treaty and FSM Arrangement vessels) were licensed to fish in the Solomon Islands EEZ. These included 202 purse seine, 256 longline, and 24 pole and line vessels. This is an increase of more than 50 vessels compared with the the 425 fishing vessels licensed to fish in 2010 (180 purse seine, 216 tuna longline, 13 shark logline, and 16 pole and line).

The provisional 2011 total annual catch estimates within the Solomon Islands EEZ for all gear type was more than 150,000 mt, which comprised more than 117,000 mt skipjack, 24,000 mt yellowfin, 1,500 mt bigeye, 1500 mt albacore and approximately 3,000 mt of other species. From the total catch, about 95% came from the purse seine fishery and the remaining 5% came from both longline and pole and line fleets. It should be noted that these totals are based on provisional, and in some cases very incomplete, data.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) has been tasked to properly managing the fishery in sustainable manner to ensure long term benefits to Solomon Islands are maintained. This is challenging due to the complexity of the Solomon Islands tuna fisheries, including multi-gear and multi-species fisheries, the geographical nature of the EEZ, inadequate information on the artisanal sector, and increasing fishing pressure.



INTRODUCTION

The overall objective of this report is to provide a brief report on the status and developments of Solomon Islands tuna fishery. The Solomon Islands tuna fishery comprises the commercial industrial sector and the artisanal (small scale & subsistence) sector. Both sectors are vitally important to the people of Solomon Islands economically and socially. The industrial sector consists of the domestic and locally based foreign fleets as well as the foreign distant water fleets. The commercial industrial sector is very important to the Solomon Islands' economy as it generates substantial income through access fees, processing, exporting, employment, duties and levies.

On the other hand the artisanal sector has contributed significantly to the social wellbeing of Solomon Islanders for many decades. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between small scale and subsistence fishers in Solomon Islands. However, characteristics, such as use of outboard motor (OBM) powered canoes, eskies, ice, and traditional dug-out canoes are some key elements to distinguish small scale fishers from subsistence fishers.

The domestic industrial fleet comprises both the purse seine, and pole and line vessels operated by National Fisheries Developments Ltd (NFD). Soltai Fishing and Processing Ltd now called Soltuna Ltd no longer operates pole and line fleets, but now concentrates on fish processing and canning for local and overseas markets. There were no locally registered or domestic longline vessels operated by local companies in 2011, however a number of small foreign longline vessels operated under charter arrangements with local companies. These vessels are reported under national fleet in this report.

The foreign distant water fleets comprise purse seine, longline and pole and line vessels, operated under either the bilateral or multilateral arrangements (US Treaty and FSM Arrangements).



The bilateral arrangements between Solomon Islands and certain distant water fishing nations started in the 1990s and, the number of vessels from distant water fleets operating in the Solomon Islands EEZ has increased since then. More than 80% of the catch is taken by this fleet and landed outside of Solomon Islands

The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) is tasked with managing the fishery in a sustainable manner to ensure long term benefits. The Government of Solomon Islands is changing policies to ensure Solomon Islands receive a greater share of the benefits from its fisheries, including by encouraging investment in onshore processing facilities.

1.0. Flag State Reporting

1.1.1. Domestic Fleet

The Solomon Islands domestic fleet fluctuated between a total of 5 - 14 fishing vessels for the last 5 years, significantly fewer than in the previous period. The reduction in the number of vessels was due to factors including, the ethnic tensions which adversely affected the Solomon Islands economically and socially in 1999 – 2003. The pole and line fleet was most affected and eventually operations ceased in 2009. The pole and line fleet started operating again in 2011 under a different company.

There have been no major changes in the domestic fleet between 2010 and 2011. The only change was in the pole and line fishery, with 2 additional vessels registered in the fleet to make a total of 3 vessels. The pole and line fishery of Solomon Islands had been one of the largest in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) in the 1980s and 1990s. In these periods, Solomon Islands had registered about 38 vessels per year on average.

The number of purse seine in the fleet remained at 5. There were no domestic longline vessels licensed in 2011.



1.1.2. Chartered vessels

A Number of foreign longline and purse seine vessels operate in Solomon Islands EEZ under charter arrangements with local companies. The number of vessels in this fleet continues to increase from late 2000s until 2011. This is due to an increase in the number of small Taiwanese and Chinese longline vessels being registered under the arrangement.

In 2011 about 9 purse seine vessels and 150 longline vessels were registered under charter arrangements to fish in the Solomon Islands EEZ. This is an increase of 2 vessels in the purse seine fleet and 51 vessels in the longline fleet for from 2010 to 2011. One of the changes is that, in 2010 longline vessels were chartered by 2 companies while in 2011, all longline fishing vessels were chartered by one local company.

Table 1: Number of vessels by gear type in the Solomon Islands Domestic fleet from 2007 - 2011

Gear type	Year				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Long line	0	0	0	0	0
Purse seine	5	4	7	5	5
Pole & Line	9	1	0	1	3
Total	14	5	7	6	8

Table 1a: Number of vessels by gear type and by flag chartered by Solomon Islands local companies for 2010 - 2011

Gear type	Year	Flag							Total
		CHN	FJ	FSM	RMI	PH	TW	VAN	
Long line	2010	60	23	0	0	0	13	1	97
	2011	57	22	0	0	0	69	0	148
Purse seine	2010	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	7
	2011	5	0	1	1	2	0	0	9
Pole & Line	2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2011	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



1.2.0. Data Coverage

Tuna fisheries data collection for the domestic and foreign charter fleets operating in the Solomon Islands EEZ include, logsheet data, observer data, port sampling data, unloading data and license data. In addition, weekly reports and zone entry and exit reports were also collected from foreign chartered vessels. Collections of operational data from fishing vessels are a requirement under fishing licenses, as well as a provision of Fisheries Act 1998.

Vessels Monitoring System (VMS) data were also collected from these two fleets for compliance and data verification purposes. In this report VMS data is used to verify and determine the coverage of logsheets data. The assumption is that VMS data provides close to 100% coverage of a fishing vessel whilst in the EEZ. Therefore, comparing the catch logsheets against the VMS data allows us to determine the actual logsheets coverage. For instance the logsheets coverage rate against the VMS data for the domestic fleet in the last four years (Figure 1.) ranges from 67% in 2009 to 85% 2011.

In contrast the data coverage rate (logsheet vs VMS data) for chartered foreign vessels ranges from 7% to 78 % for the last four years. The highest logsheets coverage was recorded in 2011 by the Chinese fleet.

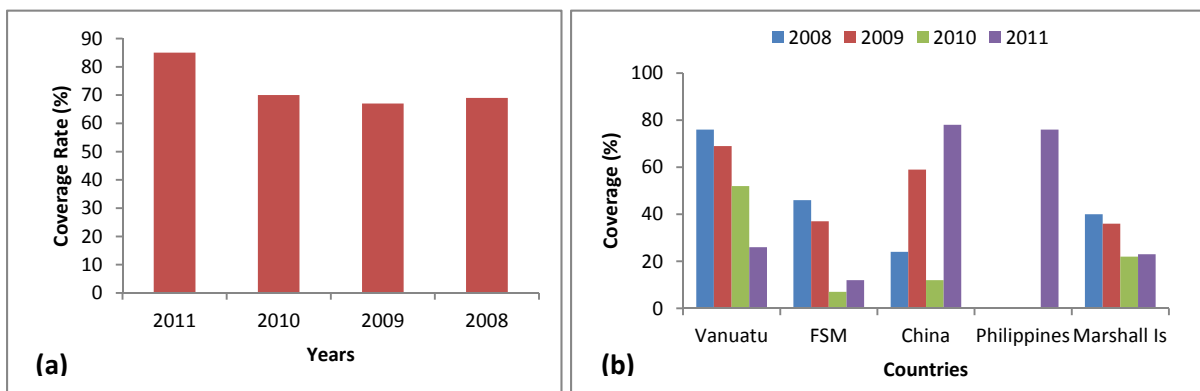


Fig 1: Logsheet data coverage by percentage (%) against VMS data for purse seine vessels for the (a) domestic and (b) chartered fleets for 2008-2011



1.3.0 Catch Estimates

1.3.1. Purse Seine

The annual catch estimates for the domestic fleet fluctuated between 16,000 mt to 28,000 mt per year for the last 5 years. The highest catch was recorded in 2011 with more than 27,000mt. This is an increased of more than 6,000 mt compared to 2010, (revised total of more than 21,000 mt). The lowest catch was recorded in 2008 with a total of more than 16,000 mt.

Since 2006, the purse seine catch has been dominated by skipjack tuna followed by yellowfin tuna. In 2011, more than 63% of the total catch was skipjack tuna followed by yellowfin with 35.9%, other species 0.5% and bigeye tuna with only 0.2%. The fishing effort increased from more than 500 days in 2010 to more than 900 days in 2011.

The catch estimates for 2011 in respect of the chartered foreign purse seine vessels totalled more than 4,000 mt with the Chinese fleet recording about 67% of the total catch, Marshall Islands 22% and FSM 11%. The catch comprised about 94% skipjack, 5.6% yellowfin and 0.4% of bigeye tuna. More catch logsheets are yet to be received from this fleet and entered into the system.

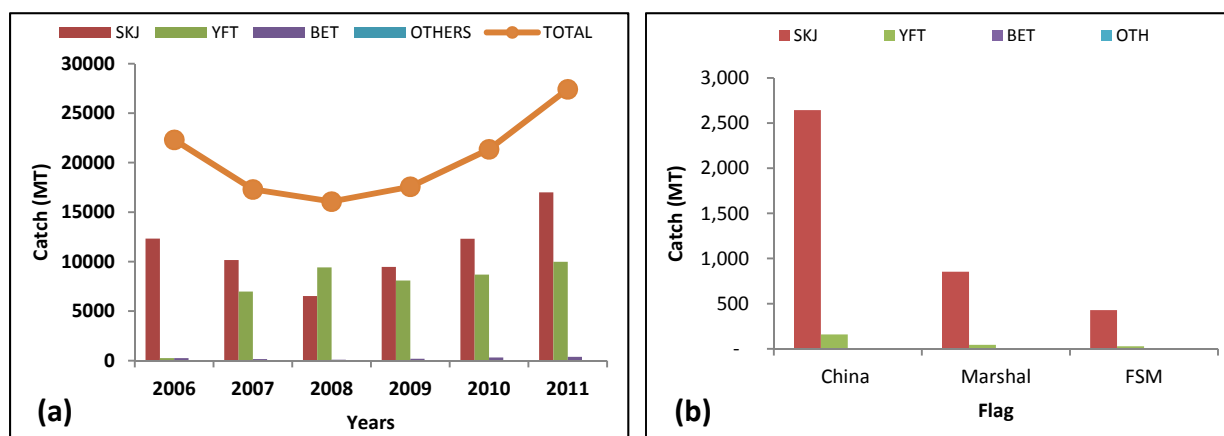


Fig 2. Total annual catch in Solomon Islands EEZ (a) by species for the domestic purse seine fleet 2006 - 2011, (b) Foreign charter purse seine for 2011



1.3.2. Pole and line

The Solomon Islands pole and line fishery had been one of the largest in the WCPO prior to 1999. The fishery was dominated by the domestic fleet, which recorded an average of more than 25,000 mt per year for 1980 - 1999. The pole and line catch continued to decrease since 2000, as a result of factors including the ethnic tension and financial. In 2006 only 6,988 mt was recorded and the catch decline further to 1,340 mt in 2008. In 2011, about 870 mt were recorded, of which 721.6 mt was skipjack and 149.1 mt of yellowfin tuna.

Table 2: Annual catch estimates for the Solomon Islands domestic Pole and Line fleet, by species in the Solomon Islands EEZ 2006 - 2011

Year	Searching & Fishing Days	Assoc. Sets	Un-Assoc. Sets	Catch (MT)			
				SKJ	YFT	BET	Total
2006	1,640	-	-	6,224	734	0	6,988
2007	1,044	-	-	3,579	321	37	4,003
2008	-	-	-	1151	189	0	1,340
2009	-	-	-	0	0	0	0
2010	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2011				721.6	149.1	0	870.7

1.3.3. Longline.

There have been no domestic or Solomon Islands flagged vessels licensed to fish in Solomon Islands EEZ in the longline fishery since 1986. Nine foreign vessels were chartered by a local company and operated in Solomon Islands EEZ from 1995 – 2005, but the fleet ceased to operate due to financial and legal problems. Since the late 2000s, the number of small longline vessels operating in the Solomon Islands EEZ has increased significantly. The increase was particularly due to an increase in the number of Taiwanese and Chinese flagged vessels as more were chartered by local companies.

The 2011 data received from the industry is incomplete. Catches recorded so far total more than 2,400 mt with Taiwan recording about 2,000 mt of the total catch followed by Fiji with 300 mt and China with 113 mt.

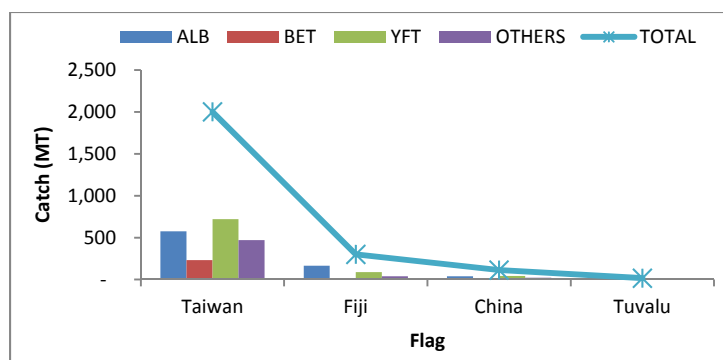


Fig. 3. Total catch estimates by species and by flag for longline vessels operated in Solomon Is. EEZ under charter arrangements for 2011 (Note: data in complete)

1.4.0 Catch Distribution

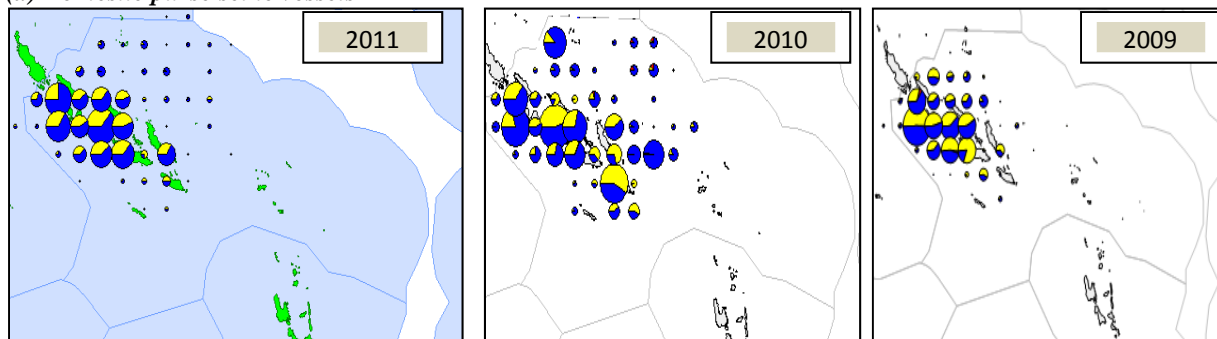
The catch distribution was determined by extracting the catch and effort data from the catch logsheets received from the vessels. As indicated in Figure 4(a) the domestic purse seine vessels concentrated their efforts in the Main Group Archipelagic (MGA) waters. The fishing pattern shown Figure 4(a) for the domestic fleet is similar through the period 2009 – 20011. There is limited fishing by domestic fleet in other parts of the EEZ.

Figure 4(b) shows the fishing effort for chartered foreign for 2011. Effort distribution is similar to domestic vessels with fishing concentrated in the MGA and in the northeast of the EEZ.

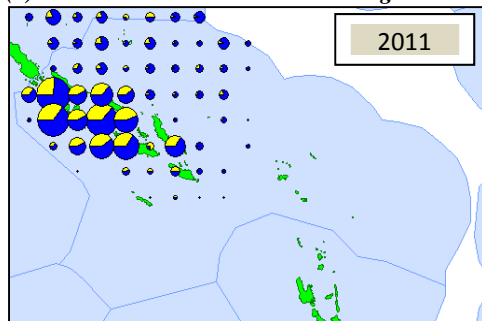
Figure 4(c) shows that fishing effort by chartered foreign longline vessels was spread throughout the EEZ. Albacore is usually targeted in the southern part of the zone, vessels targeting yellowfin and bigeye tuna fished more in the northern part of the EEZ.



(a) Domestic purse seine vessels



(b) Purse seine under chartered arrangement



(c) Longline vessels under chartered arrangements

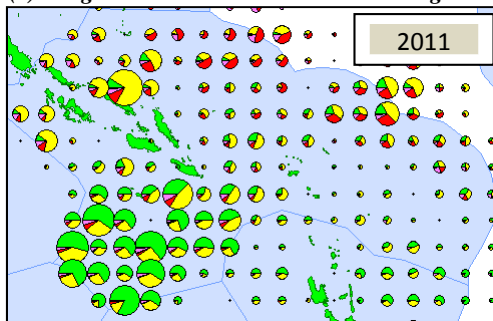


Fig 4: Annual catch and effort distributions for the Solomon Islands (a) Domestic Purse Seine fleet for 2009-2011 (b) chartered purse seine vessels-2011 and (c) chartered longline vessels-2011.

2.0 Coastal State Reporting

2.1.0 Foreign Fleet

The foreign fleets that operated in Solomon Islands comprise of purse seine, longline and pole and line, mainly from certain distant water fishing nations (DWFN). These vessels either operated under the bilateral or multilateral arrangements. Some foreign vessels operated under joint venture or chartered arrangements, which in this report, will be covered under the national fleet.

The DWFNs that have bilateral arrangements with Solomon Islands include Japan, Korea, Taiwan, New Zealand and recently Spain under the EU arrangement. Vessels under the



multilateral arrangement are mainly from the US fleet (US Treaty) and from the PNA member countries (the FSM arrangements).

There was an increase in the number of vessels in the foreign fleet after Solomon Islands first established bilateral arrangements with certain DWFNs in the 1990s. In the late 2000s, the number fluctuated between 200 to 240 fishing vessels per year. In 2011 a total of 296 fishing vessels were registered to fish in Solomon Islands EEZ compared to 318 vessels in 2010. This decrease was due at least in part to non-renewal of the shark longline vessels in 2011. The shark longline fishery had ceased following the MFMR decision to halt all commercial fishing targeting sharks..

Table 3: Number of Foreign fishing vessels (under bilateral & multilateral arrangements) by year, flag, and gear type registered to fish in Solomon islands EEZ for 2007 - 2011

Flag	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Japan	33 LL	25 LL	24 LL	28 LL	36 LL
	8 PL	12 PL	10 PL	13 PL	22 PL
	34 PS	34PS	34 PS	35PS	35 PS
Korea	47 LL	38 LL	12 LL	13 LL	17 LL
	28 PS	30 PS	26 PS	28 PS	28 PS
New Zealand	4 PS	4PS	3 PS	4 PS	1 PS
Taiwan	36 LL	37 LL	49 LL	89 LL	53 LL
	33 PS	34 PS	33 PS	35 PS	35 PS
Spain		1 LL	1 LL	4 PS	0
		4 PS	3 PS		
US Treaty			39 PS	39 PS	39
FSMA	26 PS	27 PS	30 PS	>30 PS	>30

Note: Vessels register in the above table 2007 - 2010 also include vessels under charter arrangements. Foreign chartered vessels are excluded in the 2011 vessel listing.

2.2.0 Data Coverage

The data coverage for foreign vessels varies between fleets, countries and even the type of data collected. There have been some significant improvements in data collections among the foreign fleets in recent years. Data collections from the foreign fleets include catch logsheets, observers' data, license data, unloading and transshipment data, weekly reports and zone exit & entry reports.



The level of coverage for the catch logsheets data was determined by comparing logheets received against the VMS data. The assumption is that the VMS data is likely to provide close to 100% coverage as the systems track the presence of the vessels in the EEZ on daily basis. The logsheet coverage is much higher in purse seine vessels compared to the longline and pole and line fleets.

In the purse seine fishery, logsheet coverage for the Korean, Taiwanese and Japanese fleets seems to be higher than other countries. The Spanish (EU) coverage is low compared with the rest of the fleets. The logsheets data coverage rate for 2008 was very good as indicated in Figure 4, with coverage rates ranges from 75% to 100%. The coverage for 2010 seems low compared to the other years, ranging from low of 15% to a high of 90%.

The logsheets coverage for the foreign longline fleets ranges from low to medium in 2010 and 2011 respectively. Generally the Japanese longline fleets coverage is highest, followed by Taiwan and Korea. The data coverage for 2011 seems to be very low, as a lot of logsheets are yet to be received from the fishing vessels and entered into the TUFMAN database. Logsheets coverage on the purse seine vessels is higher and good among all fleets compared to the longline fleets.

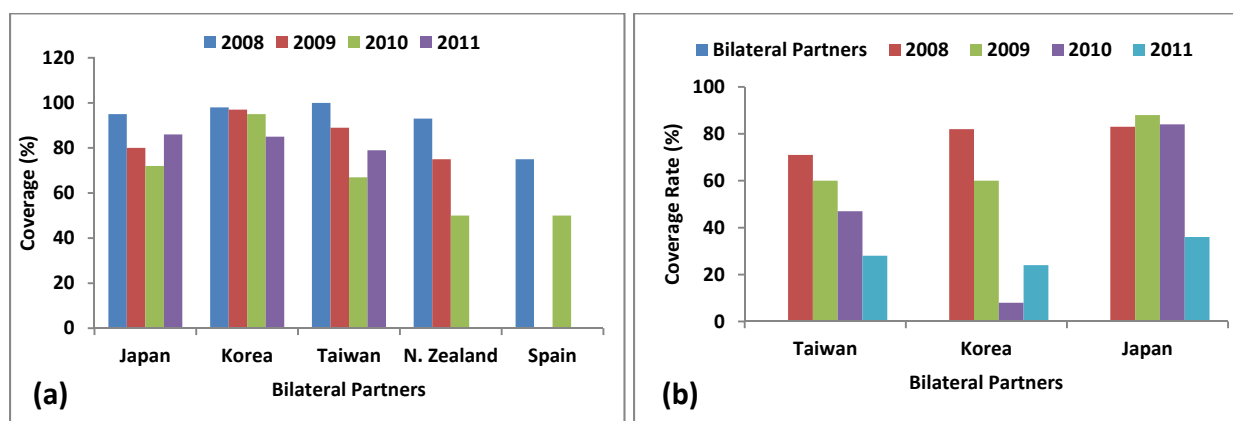


Fig 5: Percentage of logsheet coverage against VMS data for (a) purse seine and (b) longline vessels under bilateral arrangements for 2008 - 2011



2.3. Annual catch in Solomon Islands EEZ

2.3.1. Purse seine

The estimated annual catches by the foreign fleets were obtained from the catch logsheets submitted to MFMR by the vessels or fishing associations. The provisional total annual catch estimates in Solomon Islands EEZ for the foreign purse seine fleet for 2011 is more than 111,000 mt (including US treaty and FSMA vessels). These comprise of more than 97,000mt of skipjack, 12,000 mt of yellowfin and more than 800 mt of bigeye tuna.

The Korean fleet has dominated the catch within the Solomon Islands EEZ for the last 5 years, followed by the Taiwanese and the Japanese fleet. Provisional data indicated that in 2011 the Korean fleet recorded a total of 45,988 mt, a slight reduction from the 2010 catch of 49,137mt. The Taiwanese fleet recorded 17,314.8 mt in 2011, a slight reduction from the 2010 catch of 18,654 mt. The Japanese fleet experienced the same trend with 6,075 mt in 2011 and 9,885mt in 2010.

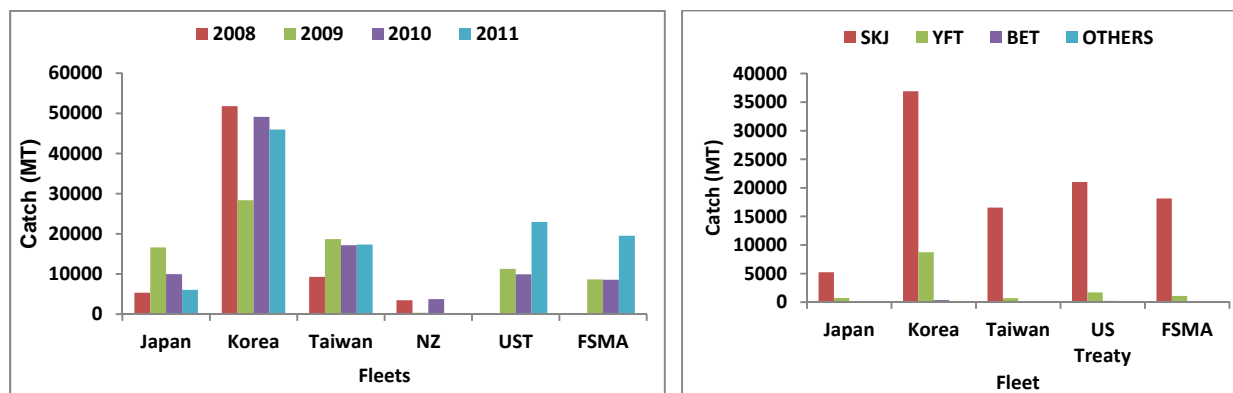


Fig 6. Foreign Purse seine fleets catch estimates (a) total annual catch by fleet- 2008 - 2011, & (b) catch by species by fleet - 2011 for SI EEZ



2.3.2. Longline

The provisional total annual catch estimates for the foreign longline fleet in the Solomon Islands EEZ for vessels under bilateral arrangements was about 3,660 mt in 2011. Note that, as Figure 7(a), based on the provisional data, indicates the Japanese fleet dominated the catch in 2011 with more than 70% of the total catch, followed by Taiwan with 20% and Korea with 10%.

As shown in Figure 7(b), no Korean longline vessels were licensed in the period 2007 – 2009 and therefore, Korea did not register any catch in that period. However, they did register a few longline vessels in 2011, which is reflected in the catch recorded in the same year. The other foreign longline vessels (China, Fiji, Vanuatu and some Taiwanese) are reported under the national fleet as they operated under charter arrangements.

It's worth noting here that the MFMR is yet to receive all the longline logsheets for the foreign fleets under bilateral arrangements for 2011. Timely submissions of catch logsheets by the fishing vessels to MFMR is a requirement under the fisheries legislation and fishing license conditions.

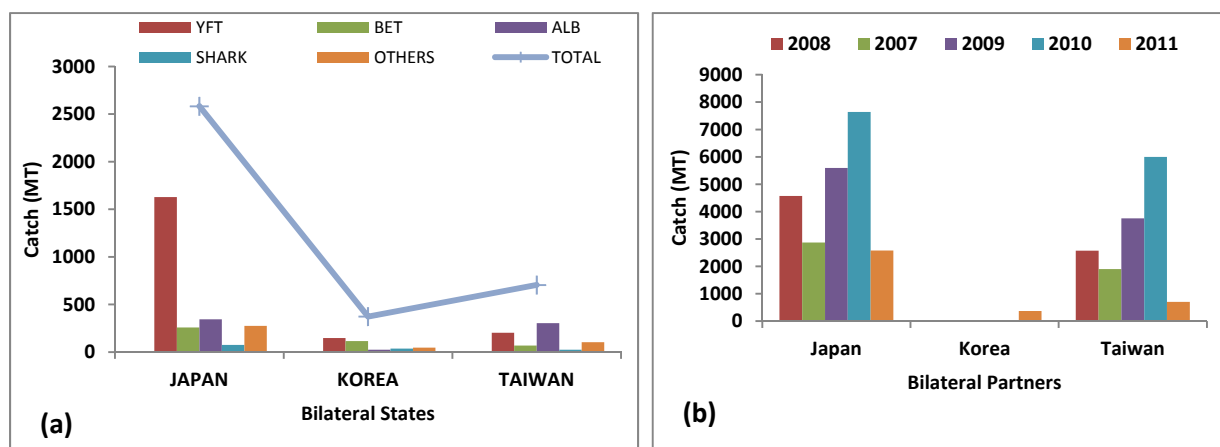


Fig 7. Catch estimates for vessels under bilateral arrangements (a) total and major tuna species for 2011 and (b) by total for 2007-2011



2.3.3. Pole and Line

As shown in Table 4, the catch by the Japanese distant water pole and line fleet increased from 365 mt in 2009 to 1,145 mt in 2010. The provisional catch for 2011 is 456 mt.

Tabl 4. Annual Catch estimates for the Japanese foreign Pole and line fleet operating in Solomon Islands waters

JAPANESE POLE AND LINE FLEET				
YEAR	CATCH			
	SKIPJACK	YELLOWFIN	BIGEYE	TOTAL
2006	72	0	0	72
2007	35	0	0	35
2008	590.7	3.5	0	594.2
2009	363	2	0	365
2010	1145	0	0	1145
2011	451	5	0	456

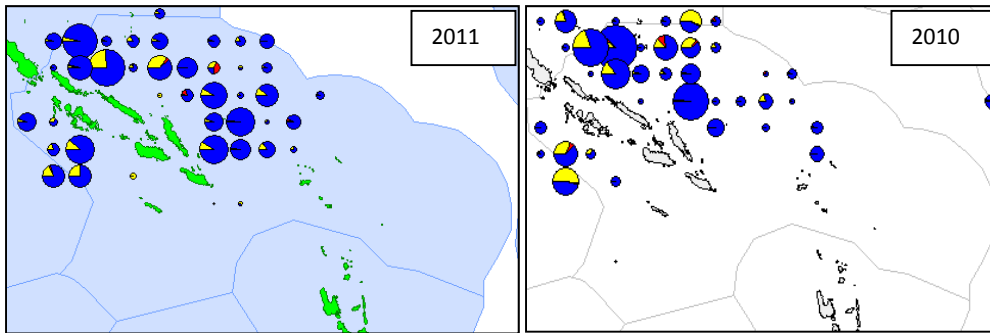
2.4. Catch and effort Distribution

2.4.1. Purse seine

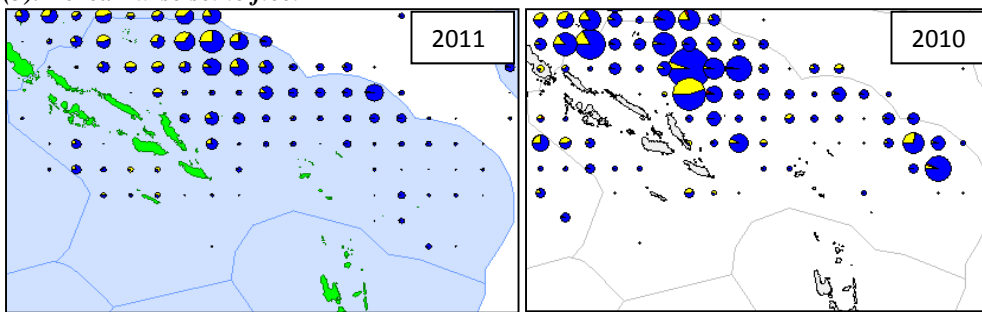
As shown in Figure 8, the annual catch and effort for the foreign purse seine fleets varies between different flags and years. Figure 8(a) shows the Japanese fleet fished mostly in the northwest of the EEZ in both 2010 and 2011. Fishing by the Korean fleet (figure 8(b)) was spread out across the north of the EEZ in both years. The Taiwanese fleet (Figure 8(c)) fished mostly in the northwest of the EEZ in 2010, but its effort was spread out across the north of the EEZ in 2011. In 2010 the New Zealand fleet focused all its fishing in the east of the EEZ.



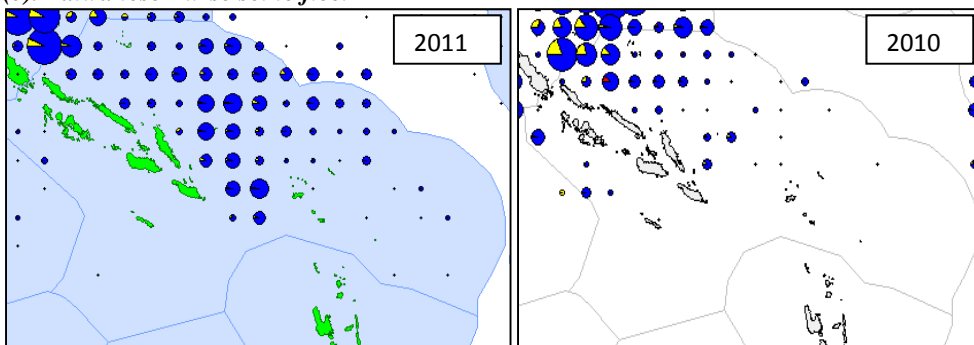
(a) *Japanese Purse seine fleet*



(b) *Korea Purse seine fleet*



(c) *Taiwanese Purse seine fleet*



(d) *New Zealand purse seine fleet*

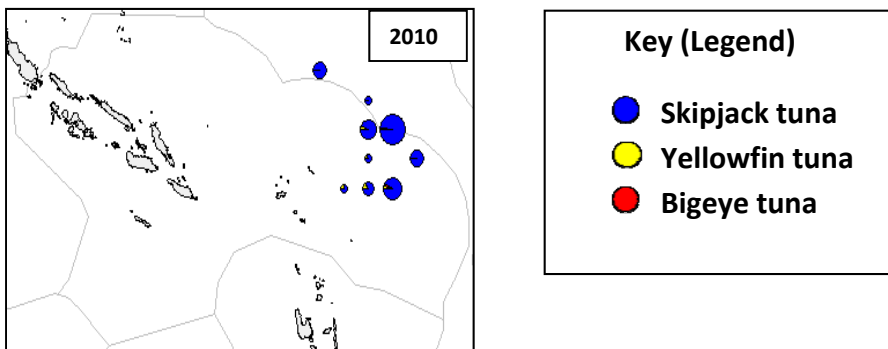


Fig 8. Annual catch and effort distributions for the Foreign Purse seine Fleet licensed to fish in Solomon Islands EEZ under bilateral arrangements.

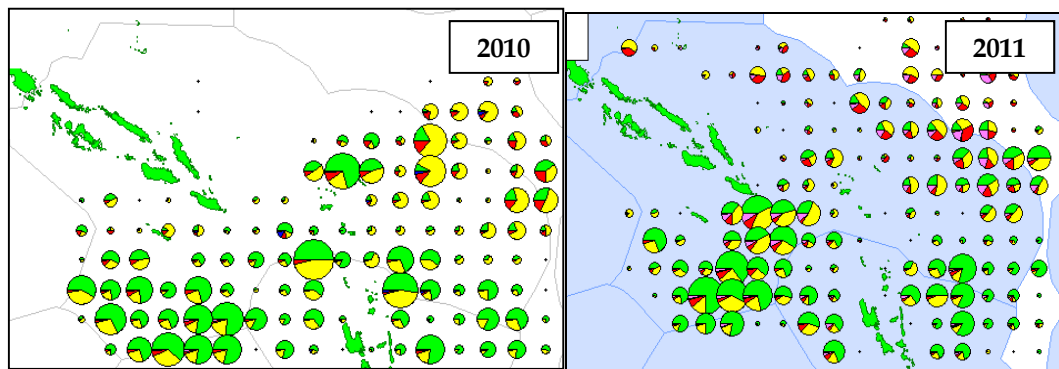


2.4.2. Longline

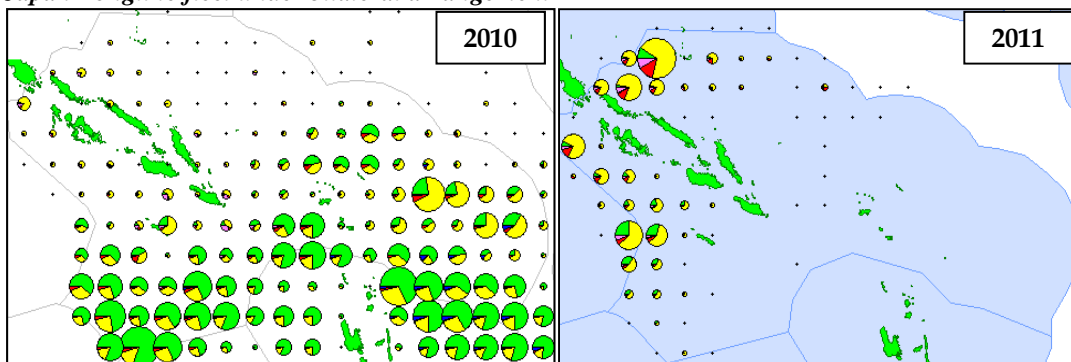
The longline vessels operating under bilateral arrangements are allowed to fish only outside of 30 NM from the baselines and are not allowed to fish in the archipelagic waters or territorial waters. As indicated in Figure 9, there is high level of efforts by these fleets in the southern part of the EEZ. The Taiwanese fleet (Figure 9(a)) concentrated its fishing in the south and east of the EEZ. Similar fishing pattern was shown by the Japanese fleet (Figure 9(b)) in 2010. However, based on the limited data received and entered to date, in 2011 the Japanese fleet fished mostly in the west of the EEZ.

Figure 9(c), indicated that, based on the limited data entered and received to date, in 2011 the Korean fleet fished more in the north of the EEZ, with little fishing effort in the south.

(a) Taiwan Longline fleet under bilateral arrangement



(b) Japan Longline fleet under bilateral arrangement



(c). Korean Longline fleet under bilateral arrangement

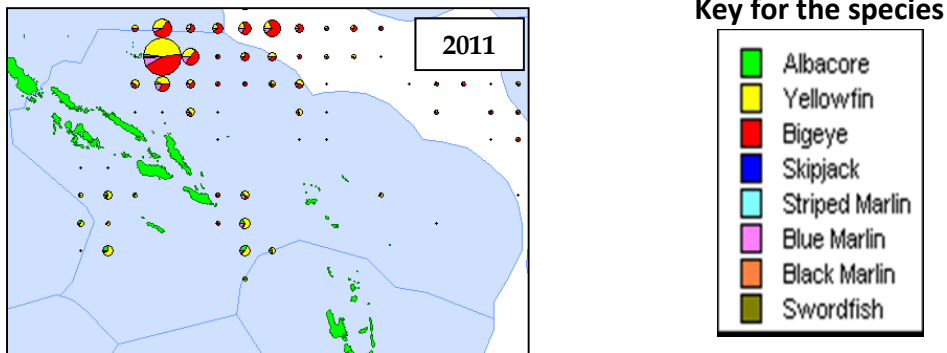


Fig. 9. Catch and effort distribution for bilateral vessels (Taiwan & Japan) and chartered foreign vessels (Fiji & China) in SI EEZ for 2010 (Note: catch distribution for chartered vessels for 2011 is under national fleet)

2.5. Distribution of catch by species

The distribution of the tuna species in the EEZ can be determined by looking at the catch by species distribution data. This is where the catch logsheets provided by fishing vessels were very important. The catch and effort data show that skipjack tuna is widely distributed from the centre of the EEZ towards the north but mainly towards the western part of the EEZ (Figure 4 & 8). There are similarities in the fishing pattern and effort among the purse seine fleets, for instance the Solomon Islands domestic fleet concentrated in the MGA and towards the western part of the EEZ. The foreign fleets (Figure 8) fished more in the north and west of the EEZ. This is where most of the purse seine efforts were spent and most catch were taken compared to other parts of the EEZ. There is less purse seine fishing effort from the centre towards the southern part of the EEZ, and only the New Zealand purse seine fleet concentrated effort towards the east of the EEZ.

In the longline fishery, more effort was observed in the southern part of the EEZ, with some fishing in both the west and east (Figure 4(c) & Figure 9). Typically more albacore are caught in the south and east of the EEZ and bigeye catches are mostly in the north. Yellowfin tuna seems to be caught more widely across the EEZ by the longline fleets.



3. Research and Statistics

MFMR is responsible for managing tuna fisheries in Solomon Islands. In this regard MFMR implements national, regional and international controls and measures to ensure the tuna fisheries of Solomon Islands are managed in a sustainable manner. One element of this management is to collect, process and managed data. MFMR collected and managed catch logsheets data from all fishing vessels operated in Solomon Islands EEZ. This is a requirement under the Fisheries Legislations as well as a license condition. Copies of all logsheets are sent to SPC for further processing and analysing.

Other data collected by the Solomon Islands include, observers', port sampling, license, weekly reports, zone entry and exit reports, transshipment and unloading data. All these data (except weekly, transshipments, weekly & zone entry/exit reports) are collected and provided to SPC to assist them in their regional tuna stock status assessments tasks and other research related roles.

Tuna data are also provided to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission on an annual basis.

4.0 Observers Coverage

The Solomon Islands national observer programme was first established in the late 1980s with 3 full time fisheries observers. Due to demand for observers on purse seine vessels, 4 additional observers were recruited in 1990. The programme was reviewed in the late 90s, which one of the recommendations was to recruit more observers but on a contract basis. More observers were then recruited in the mid and late 2000s. In 2011 more than 80 observers were signed up with the MFMR under the national observer programme.

In 2011 a total of 192 observers trips were made on both domestic and foreign vessels. More observer trips were made on foreign vessels (176 trips) than domestic vessels (16 trips). About 187 observer trips were made on purse seine vessels and only 5 trips on longline vessels. In 2010 a total of 215 observers trips were made, of which more than 94% were made on foreign fleets and about 6% from the domestic fleets. With the new longline policy in place, observer coverage in 2012 is expected to be higher than 2011.



5.0. Port Sampling

Very little port sampling has occurred in the Solomon Islands since 2007. Prior to 2007, port sampling duties were carried out by observers. However due to increasing demand for observers coverage on fishing vessels, port sampling activities were reduced and eventually suspended in 2008. Work is being undertaken to re-establish the port sampling programme.

6.0. Transshipments Data

Transshipments in Honiara and Noro Ports had been ongoing since the ban on high seas transshipments was imposed. During the last 5 years, a total of more than 700,000 mt of tuna has been transhipped in Honiara and Noro Ports. The average amount of tuna transhipped per year was around 150,000 mt. In 2011 about 191 vessels transhipped in Honiara and Noro Ports and a total of 140,467 mt of tuna were transhipped. In contrast in 2010 about 221 vessels transhipped 155,030 mt.

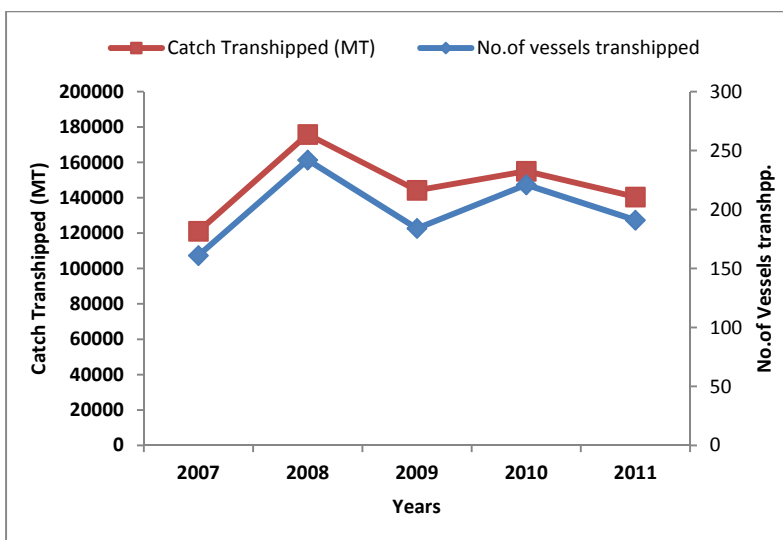


Fig 10: Total catch against vessels transhipped by year in Honiara an Noro Ports for 2007 - 2011.



7.0. Socio-economic Factors

The economic and social benefits derived from the tuna fishery cannot be well presented in this paper. However the tuna fishery has contributed significantly towards the national economy as well as the social wellbeing of the people of Solomon Islands. The fishery has brought infrastructure developments and social benefits to many rural communities, including employment opportunities, housing, health services etc. Other spin-off benefits from the fishery include markets access and food security for rural people.

The Solomon Islands Government is changing policies to ensure economic and social benefits from tuna fishery to Solomon Islands are maximized. Annually, more than 80% of the total tuna catch from the Solomon Islands EEZ is landed and process in other countries. The Government recognizes the importance of getting a higher proportion of the catch landed and processed in Solomon Islands to get maximum benefits. This could be achieved by creating more jobs and infrastructure development for the local people, especially those in the rural communities.

In promoting this approach, the Government encourages investors to invest on onshore facilities. The Government had taken the initiative by securing three sites suitable for onshore processing facilities (Suafa Bay on Malaita, and Tenaru and Doma on Guadalcanal). Investors are encouraged and recommended investing on onshore processing as future allocations of access to Solomon Islands tuna fisheries will increasingly linked to onshore processing.

Recent tuna processing developments in Solomon Islands include expansion of the Soltuna processing plant at Noro to include a second shift to process albacore from the longline fishery and construction of a new packing plant in Honiara, which is now exporting fresh and chilled tuna overseas markets. Two more establishments are in the construction stages and hopefully to starts processing in 2013.