



**COMMISSION
SEVENTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**
Electronic Meeting
8 – 15 December 2020

**LETTER FROM PARTICIPANTS OF THE DONGWON INDUSTRIES FISHERY
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (FIP) IN THE WCPO**

**WCPFC17-2020-OP15
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Submitted by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)



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Dear Delegates,

The vessel owners and industry participants of the **WCPO –purse seine (Dongwon Industries)** fishery improvement project (FIPs) in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean submit this letter—in line with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) position statements—to acknowledge progress to date in the WCPFC and to request additional support from Cooperating Non- members and Participating Territories (CCMs) for measures that will further tuna conservation at the Commission meeting beginning 7 December, 2020.

These FIPs recognize—and are experiencing—the unprecedented challenges presented by COVID-19 and its economic and social impacts on the fishery sector in the Pacific Ocean. However, we do not believe that these current circumstances should prevent the WCPFC from taking action to ensure sustainable management of tuna stocks and marine ecosystems. Indeed, there is more than ever a dire and critical need for coordination among industry, fisher communities, and relevant governments to achieve these outcomes.

The priorities reflected here are included in the FIP to help the fishery be eligible to meet the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard for certification.

2020 Priorities

Precautionary and comprehensive management measures and harvest strategies

There are several critical measures and issues that require immediate attention by WCPFC this year:

- We support maintaining a robust tropical tuna conservation and management measure along the lines of *CMM 2018-01*, while recognizing that it could be strengthened in both the long and short term to achieve an improved and more equitable conservation outcome;
- Support and endorse further implementation of *CMM 2014-06* to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines;
- Establish a revised replacement target reference point (TRP) for skipjack;
- Establish precautionary TRPs for bigeye and yellowfin;
- Endorse steps toward adoption of a harvest control rule (HRC) for the skipjack purse seine fishery; and
- Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority.

Reduce the environmental impacts of purse seine fishing

We encourage the WCPFC to develop and implement science-based and enforceable FAD management measures to mitigate harm to ecosystems. We support research, strategies and incentives that promote a transition to more biodegradable FADs within a determined set timeframe. These FIPs are willing to provide data on FADs to improve the monitoring and accountability of FAD usage.

We urge that any required actions are accompanied by compliance systems that are both effective and fully implemented. Therefore, we recommend an amendment to *CMM 2018-01* this year, or a new CMM in 2021.

Effective and fair enforcement

At this year's meeting, we urge the Commission to undertake any opportunity to further review and amend its transshipment regulation (*CMM 2009-06*) and adopt substantive improvements to curtail opportunities for IUU fishing, trafficking, and labor abuses.

We seek required real-time (or near real-time) reporting of transshipment activity and for any vessels that fail to comply to be added to the draft IUU vessel list. Tuna transshipped at sea without observer certification should not access the market.

Additionally, we support the compliance of crew welfare-related clauses in the Resolution 2018-01 by all vessels.

We support all actions to ensure a strong compliance process and contribute to transparent, fair, and effective enforcement within the WCPFC. The members of the Commission should present a compliance action plan for the identified infractions. The WCPFC should continue discussions on how to respond to repeated and significant non-compliance.

Data quality and quantity

This FIP recognizes that comprehensive observer coverage is critically needed to contribute data to understand the health of stocks, as well as to monitor compliance. To this end, we collaborate in initiatives that support enriching data collection and compliance.

During normal operations, the major purse seine vessels represented here continue to implement 100% observer coverage. Additionally, we continue to support measures to ensure on-board observer safety.

For more information, access this FIP's *FisheryProgress.org* profile [here](#).

FIP outcomes to-date

- The FIP has publicly advocated its WCPFC 2020 position statement and WCPFC Harvest Control Rule and Harvest Strategy position statement (published on [FisheryProgress.org](#))
- The Pacific Community (SPC) observer data has been obtained for associated sets for the years 2017 – 2019. This has allowed an analysis of what the catch composition of non-target species in the fishery is. A list of likely Principle 2 species for FAD-sets has also been compiled. Using the SPC data it has been further possible to identify areas for improvement relating to ETP species mortality associated with operations. This information has closed out task 2.1a.
- All vessels have been confirmed to be on the ISSF PVR.
- Fishery-specific information has been collated from the client and SPC for the vessels participating in the FIP and has showed that 99% of interactions with FAD-associated operations are target species related (see outcome of task 2.1a).
- Workplan task 2.5a (ecological trap hypothesis of FADs) has been completed with a study conducted by Key Traceability. The work will go towards evidence and knowledge-based fishery management, such as FAD management plans for the fishery that consider findings in this literature review.

Western and Central Pacific Ocean – purse seine (Dongwon Industries) FIP

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