



**DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW TROPICAL TUNA MEASURE
WORKSHOP 2 (TTMW2)
Electronic Meeting
6-10 September 2021**

REPUBLIC OF KOREA'S VIEWS ON THE TROPICAL TUNA MEASURE

WCPFC-TTMW2-2021-DP01

6 August 2021

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Republic of Korea's Views on certain elements of Tropical Tuna Measure

I. Current objectives and baseline periods versus new objectives

A. Bigeye and Yellowfin tuna

We would like to reiterate our position expressed in the first workshop(TTMW1). The Republic of Korea sees the management objective and the associated total allowable catch/effort level as a package, and believes that the Commission should agree on management objectives which would lead to certain level of increases of fishing opportunities from the baseline(2016-2018), at least for a short-term time frame.

For both bigeye and yellowfin tuna, CMM 2020-01 specifies that, pending agreement on a TRP, the spawning biomass depletion ratio($SB/SB_{F=0}$) is to be maintained at or above the average $SB/SB_{F=0}$ for 2012-2015. According to the SSP(WCPFC-SC17-2021/MI-WP-01), achieving that depletion level for bigeye tuna implies increases in fishing from 2016-2018 levels by 38%(recent recruitment) and 22%(long-term recruitment). For yellowfin tuna, it implies increased fishing by 29%.

An appropriate level of increases in fishing should be decided taking account of various factors including socio-economic implications.

B. Skipjack tuna

CMM 2020-01 specifies that the spawning biomass of skipjack tuna is to be maintained on average at a level consistent with the interim target reference point of 50% of the spawning biomass in the absence of fishing. According to 2019 stock assessment, $SB/SB_{F=0}$ for 2012 is 42% and the fishing efforts(sum of days fished in EEZ and high seas) in recent years were lower than those of 2012. Given that the risk of breaching the LRP is 0% under all depletion levels examined(i.e. 36% to 50%), 50% seems to be an overly ambitious target which may result in constraining fishing effort more than necessary or hamper the optimum utilization of the skipjack tuna resources. We believe that a TRP of around 40% of $SB_{F=0}$ or 2012 level could be an option for the management objective.

However, maintaining the spawning biomass of skipjack tuna at 2012 level does not necessarily mean that the level of fishing in the respective fisheries should be the same as or similar to those in 2012. We may refer to the total fishing effort or catch of 2012 in setting the TRP or management objective but the management options for each fishery should be carefully examined and adjusted because 2012 is one of the unusual years when the high seas were closed to purse seine fisheries. This would require further discussions.

II. Balance between fisheries and high seas effort control

We do not have any specific comments to make at this point on the balance between purse seine and longline fisheries with regards to fishing opportunities but when it comes to MCS measures, it is quite natural from our perspective to have additional or more stringent measures for purse seine fishery because it usually accounts for around 70% of the total WCPO tuna catch while longline fishery accounts for 10% or so. Nevertheless, in any case, we are open to discussions on necessary MCS measures for both purse seine and longline fisheries.

Apart from the balance between purse seine and longline fisheries, we believe that the Commission should pay keen attention to the changes in the purse seine effort in high seas over the two decades. The proportion of fishing efforts in high seas versus EEZs used to be approximately 20:80 but this balance was broken when the high seas pockets were closed to purse seine fisheries in 2010, 2011 and 2012. The proportion changed to 3.5:96.5 on average during this period. This period was also referred to in setting the high seas purse seine effort limits in the tropical tuna CMM. As a result, certain CCMs had to reduce their purse seine effort in the high seas by 80~90% from their historical level while some other CCMs fished without any limit. Figure 10 of WCPFC-SC17-2021/MI-IP-11 demonstrates the overall situation well :

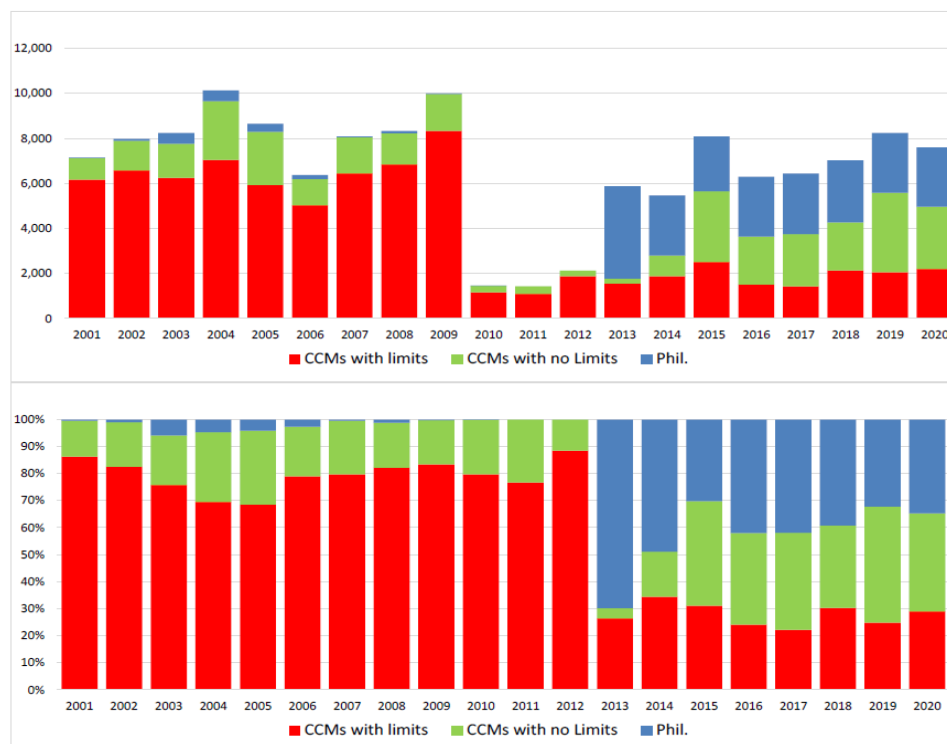


Figure 10. Purse seine effort in high seas (20°N–20°S), by fleet category.

(days fished–top and percentage days fished–bottom)

(Refer to NOTES under TABLE 2 above)

*“CCMs with no limits” are Pacific Island fleets fishing in high seas adjacent to their home waters;
Philippines effort data prior to 2013 are not available or underreported)*

The Republic of Korea expresses its concern about this very unfair and unreasonable situation. While we agree that all CCMs need to fish in the high seas, the levels of reduction or sacrifice that certain CCMs had to make were unreasonably excessive and their fishing opportunities in the high seas should be restored to some extent, if not totally. We also note that this is an issue that has to do with the agenda item “Hard limits and allocation” as well.

III. FAD Management

We would like to reiterate our position expressed in WCPFC15, WCPFC16 and TTMW1(WCPFC15-2018-DP17, WCPFC16-2019-DP16_rev1 and WCPFC-TTMW1-2021-DP06 respectively). We are of the view that any floating object that does not have a tracking buoy attached shall not be considered to be a FAD for the purpose of FAD closure. Also, the existing FAD set prohibition rule(one nautical mile rule) is not realistic and creates a number of unintended non-compliance cases. Of course, the fishing vessels would be in a better position to comply with such a rule if the current definition of FAD is amended to include floating objects with tracking buoy attached only. A “1/2 nautical mile” may be a remedial option for the time being, as proposed by the United States of America already.

The Republic of Korea does not support the continuation of footnote 1 and paragraph 17 of CMM 2020-01 which create loopholes or open-ended exemptions. We are mindful of the special requirements of SIDS, i.e. Article 10 and 30 of the Convention and believe that the Commission should give a due consideration to SIDS CCMs when developing conservation and management measures. However, in our view, that does not necessarily mean that unconditional, open-ended exemptions should be provided to those CCMs. We would like to discuss with SIDS and other interested CCMs on what would be the best way to strike a balance between the two important elements, special requirements of SIDS and the long-term conservation and sustainable use of tropical tuna resources.