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TWENTY-FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

Nuku'alofa, Tonga
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**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION
PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS**

**WCPFC-SC21-AR/CCM-13
02 July 2025**

REPUBLIC OF MARSHALL ISLANDS

Annual Report to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
Part 1: Information of fisheries, statistics and research

Republic of the Marshall Islands



Oceanic and Industrial Affairs Division
Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority

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 2025	Yes
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1 SUMMARY

Commercial fishing activities for highly migratory species in the Marshall Islands are carried out by both domestically flagged and foreign chartered vessels. In 2024, eleven Marshall Islands-flagged purse seine vessels operated throughout the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO), with a total reported catch of 90,156 metric tons. Additionally, twenty-nine chartered longline vessels associated with the domestically based Marshall Islands Fishing Venture (MIFV) recorded an estimated retained catch of 4,472 metric tons.

Within the Marshall Islands Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the majority of catch is taken by purse seine vessels, although longline and pole-and-line operations are also active. In 2024, the total estimated catch within the EEZ across all gear types was 38,324 metric tons, comprising 86% from purse seine, 14% from longline, and less than 1% from pole-and-line. Purse seine catch in the EEZ decreased from 49,422 metric tons in 2023 to 33,149 metric tons in 2024.

The Marshall Islands Observer Program deployed 44 active observers in 2024, who undertook 135 purse seine and 43 longline trips. Observers also continued to monitor transshipment and unloading activities in Majuro port, supporting compliance and data verification objectives.

2 FLAG STATE REPORTING

Annual catch and effort estimates for the Marshall Islands' nationally flagged purse seine fleet operating throughout the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Convention Area (WCPFC-CA) over the past five years are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1. In 2024, the total estimated catch by this fleet was 90,156 metric tons. Skipjack tuna was the dominant species, accounting for approximately 90% of the total catch, followed by yellowfin tuna at 9% and bigeye tuna at 1%.

Catch estimates for the 29 foreign longline vessels chartered in 2024 are provided in Table 2. These vessels are all domestically based and fish almost exclusively within the Marshall Islands EEZ. Vessel numbers for both the purse seine and chartered longline fleets are shown in Table 3.

Figures 2 and 3 display the spatial distribution of catch for the RMI-flagged purse seine and chartered longline fleets in 2023 and 2024. In 2024, purse seine fishing effort and catch areas shifted westward. Longline vessels predominantly operate in the RMI EEZ, with effort concentrated in the southern portion of the zone.

Table 1. Annual catch and effort estimates for the Marshall Islands purse seine vessels, by species and year, in the WCPFC Convention Area

Species	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Retain	Discard	Retain	Discard	Retain	Discard	Retain	Discard	Retain	Discard
ALBACORE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	160	0
BIGEYE TUNA	718	24	683	23	433	0	713	19	829	3
PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SKIPJACK	74,625	1,521	81,741	1,362	81,445	34	59,723	411	81,074	598
YELLOWFIN	6,564	245	7,005	213	4,088	5	7,072	43	8,086	9
BLACK MARLIN	2	7	2	6	0	20	5	4	1	4
BLUE MARLIN	1	9	1	10	6	1	7	5	5	7
STRIPED MARLIN	3	3	3	2	12	0	0	1	1	0
SWORDFISH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BLUE SHARK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SILKY SHARK	0	72	0	47	0	66	0	59	0	101
HAMMERHEAD SHARK	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.14
MAKO SHARK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OCEANIC WHITETIP SHARK	0	1	0	0	0	16	0	3	0	6
PORBEAGLE / SALMON SHARK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WHALE SHARK	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	8
THRESHER SHARK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	81,913	1,895	89,435	1,664	85,984	142	67,520	546	90,156	736

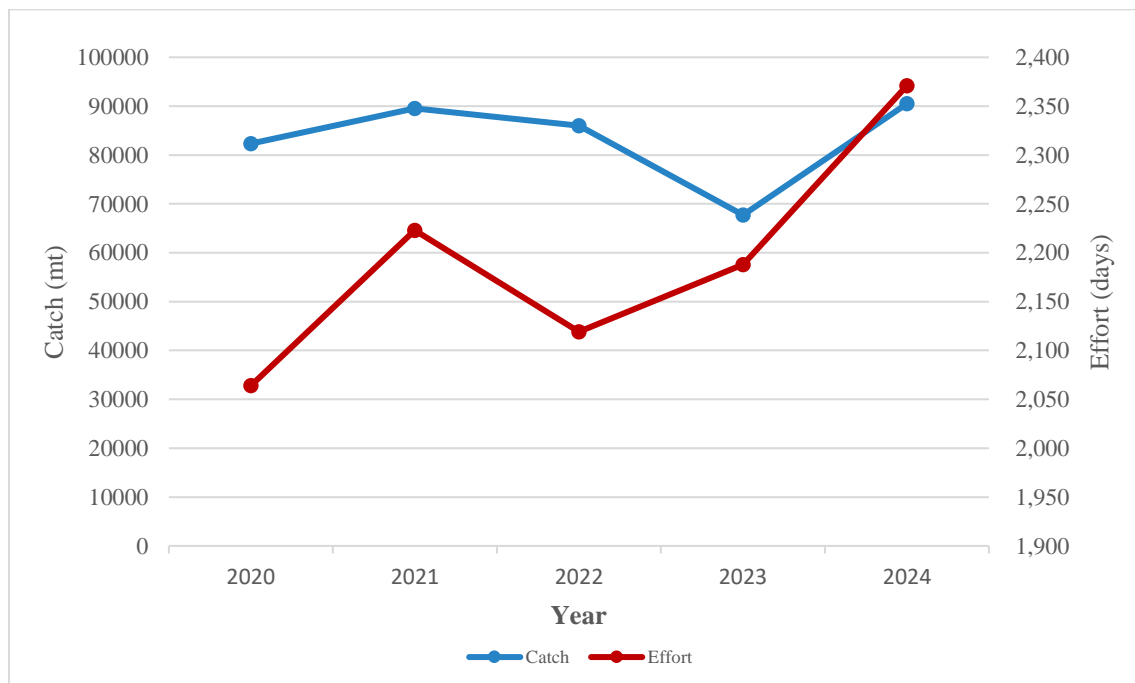


Figure 1. Annual catch and effort for the Marshall Islands purse seine vessels in the WCPFC Convention Area

Table 2. Annual catch estimates for the Marshall Islands-chartered longline vessels, by species and year, for the WCPFC Convention Area

Species	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Retain	Discard	Retain	Discard	Retain	Discard	Retain	Discard	Retain	Discard
ALBACORE	9	0	53	1	149	1	93	2	289	2
BIGEYE TUNA	751	13	915	13	1,151	22	1,414	14	2,065	42
PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
SKIPJACK	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	50
YELLOWFIN	730	13	620	14	940	24	667	9	1,695	110
BLACK MARLIN	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	6
BLUE MARLIN	98	0	130	0	188	0	125	0	399	13
STRIPED MARLIN	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
SWORDFISH	10	7	15	8	15	0	16	5	22	17
BLUE SHARK	0	13	0	114	0	245	0	460	0	408
SILKY SHARK	0	10	0	68	0	47	0	319	0	630
HAMMERHEAD SHARK	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
MAKO SHARK	0	1	0	4	0	2	0	1	0	8
OCEANIC WHITETIP SHARK	0	1	0	13	0	4	0	5	0	33
PORBEAGLE / SALMON SHARK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WHALE SHARK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
THRESHER SHARK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1,599	59	1,733	236	2,446	348	2,314	818	4,472	1,341

Table 3. Number of Marshall Islands-chartered and flagged vessels, by size category, active in the WCPFC Convention Area, 2020-2024

Longline					Purse Seine				
GRT		0-50	51-200	201-500	500+	0-50	51-200	201-500	500+
Year									
2020		0	23	0	0	0	0	7	4
2021		0	27	0	0	0	0	7	4
2022		0	23	0	0	0	0	7	4
2023		0	29	0	0	0	0	7	4
2024		0	29	0	0	0	0	7	4

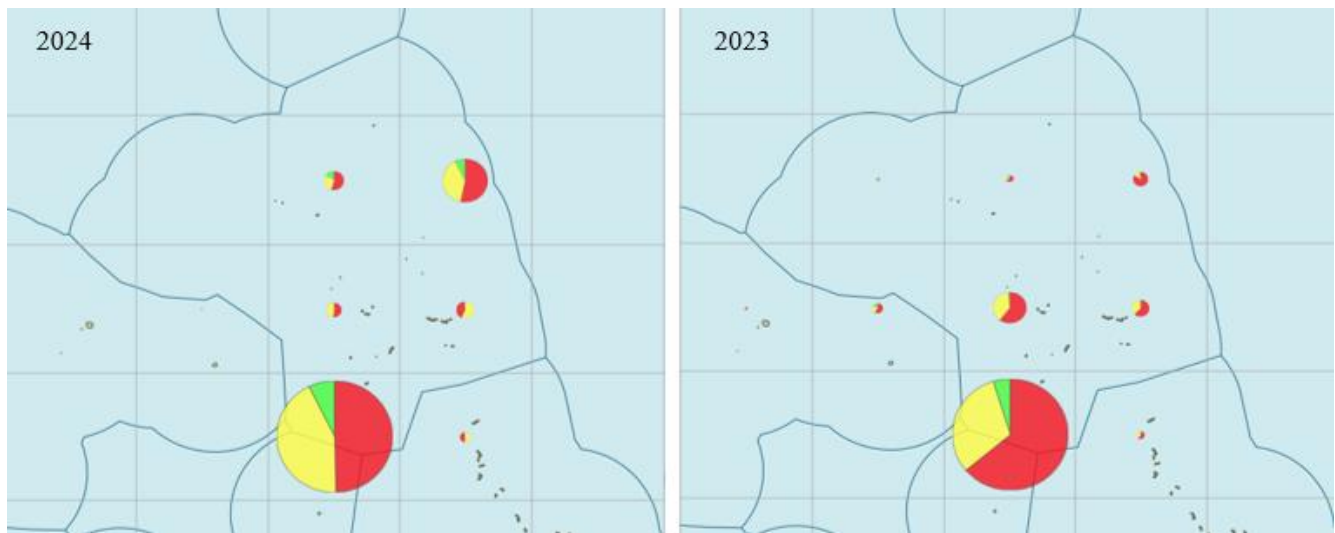


Figure 2. Annual distribution of catch by the Marshall Islands-chartered longline vessels in the WCPFC Convention Area in 2024 and 2023 (Red - BET, Yellow - YFT, Green - ALB)

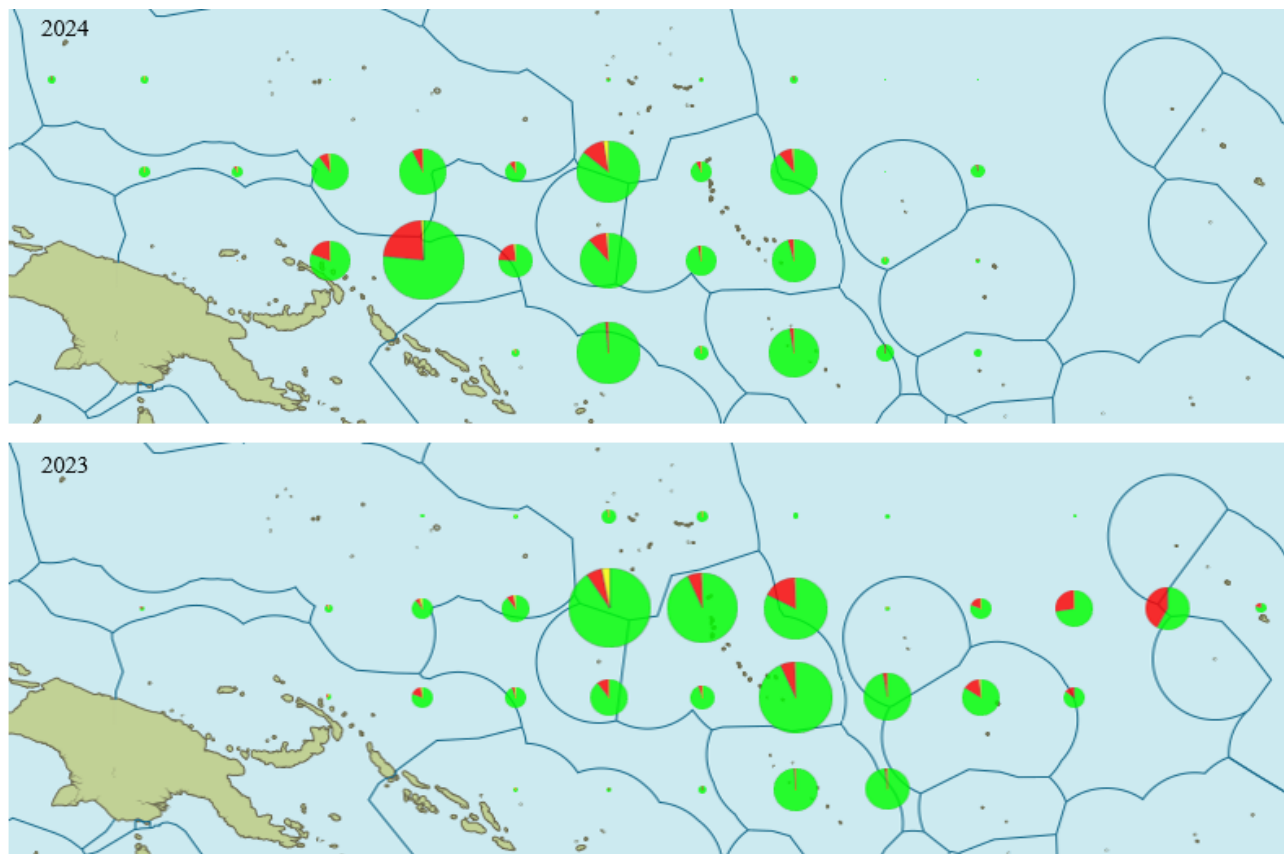


Figure 3. Annual distribution of catch by the Marshall Islands purse seine vessels in the WCPFC Convention Area in 2024 and 2023 (Green – SKJ, Red – YFT, Yellow – BET)

3 COASTAL STATE REPORTING

Table 4 provides a summary of foreign-flagged vessels licensed to fish in Marshall Islands waters over the past five years. A total of 218 foreign vessels were licensed during this period; however, not all actively fished within the RMI EEZ. Foreign longline vessels affiliated with the domestically based Marshall Islands Fishing Venture (MIFV) have operated under charter arrangements with the RMI since 2016. As such, catches from these chartered vessels are included in the flag state reporting outlined above.

Table 4. Number of foreign longline, pole-and-line and purse seine vessels licensed to fish in the RMI EEZ, by year and flag

FLAG	GEAR	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
CHINA	LL	20	18	22	29	29
	PS	9	9	10	12	12
FSM	LL	10	12	11	10	11
FSMA	PS	70	83	79	86	93
JAPAN	LL	2	2	1	6	0
	PL	21	25	3	13	5
	PS	28	29	22	25	28
KIRIBATI	PS	3	4	2	2	0
KOREA	PS	25	21	20	22	16
NAURU	PS	0	0	0	2	0
PHILIPPINES	PS	15	15	15	6	0
CH-TAIPEI	LL	0	0	0	0	0
	PS	18	21	23	22	21
TUVALU	PS	0	1	1	1	1
VANUATU	PS	0	0	0	3	2
USA	PS	25	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	LL	32	32	34	45	40
	PL	21	25	3	13	5
	PS	193	183	172	181	173

Available logsheet data indicate that total catch by purse seine fleets operating in the RMI EEZ decreased from 49,422 metric tons in 2023 to 33,149 mt in 2024 with 38% taken by the Chinese Taipei fleet (Table 5). The catch rates in the RMI EEZ are usually influenced by the prevailing environmental conditions, with higher catches recorded during or immediately following strong El Nino periods. Skipjack tuna continues to be the dominant catch, accounting for 92% of the total catch in 2024.

The domestically-based foreign longline fleet comprises vessels from China and FSM and are managed and operated under Marshall Islands Fishing Venture, Ltd., a subsidiary of Luen Thai. There were no Japanese long line vessels licensed during the year. In-zone longline catch estimates are provided in Table 6. Bigeye and yellowfin catches continue to account for the major part of the target catch composition. While most longline effort occurs in the southern portion of the RMI EEZ, it remains more widely distributed compared to purse seine operations.

Provisional catch estimates for the pole-and-line fleet show a significant decline in 2024, with total catch dropping to 27 metric tons from 516 metric tons in the previous year (Table 7). Skipjack tuna continues to represent nearly the entirety of the catch for this fleet.

Table 5. Annual catches of the purse seine fleets operating in the RMI EEZ, by flag and species, 2020-2024

Catches (metric tonnes)							Catches (metric tonnes)						
Flag	Year	SKJ	YFT	BET	OTH	TOTAL	Flag	Year	SKJ	YFT	BET	OTH	TOTAL
China	2020	0	0	0	0	0	RMI	2020	9,027	482	154	0	9,663
	2021	0	0	0	0	0		2021	12,083	2,220	123	0	14,426
	2022	435	20	0	0	455		2022	17,531	505	144	0	18,180
	2023	70	11	1	0	82		2023	6,093	488	244	0	6,824
	2024	0	0	0	0	0		2024	5,733	406	58	0	6,197
FSM	2020	5,207	1,184	108	0	6,498	Solomon Is	2020	251	129	25	0	405
	2021	6,959	3,047	89	0	10,095		2021	20	495	35	0	550
	2022	3,750	224	78	0	4,052		2022	8,004	0	0	0	8,004
	2023	8,904	1,132	27	0	10,063		2023	255	50	0	0	305
	2024	2,795	359	53	0	3,207		2024	0	0	0	0	0
Japan	2020	40	30	0	0	70	Chinese Taipei	2020	2,798	711	256	0	3,765
	2021	1,386	2,097	10	0	3,493		2021	7,210	4,679	143	0	12,032
	2022	318	2	0	0	320		2022	8,203	400	209	0	8,811
	2023	543	27	2	0	572		2023	9,311	1,570	37	0	10,918
	2024	0	0	0	0	0		2024	11,384	1,164	150	0	12,698
Kiribati	2020	2,899	1,343	40	0	4,281	Tuvalu	2020	0	0	0	0	0
	2021	2,345	840	5	0	3,190		2021	681	508	7	0	1,195
	2022	4,451	186	30	0	4,667		2022	756	89	5	0	850
	2023	2,133	446	23	1	2,603		2023	403	67	0	0	470
	2024	5,733	261	29	0	6,023		2024	0	0	0	0	0
Korea	2020	3,963	1,860	118	0	5,942	Vanuatu	2020	0	0	0	0	0
	2021	2,077	2,898	23	0	4,998		2021	80	75	0	0	155
	2022	251	19	0	0	270		2022	0	0	0	0	0
	2023	4,308	572	3	0	4,883		2023	11,384	30	0	0	11,414
	2024	255	10	0	0	265		2024	0	0	0	0	0
Nauru	2020	3,678	1,136	100	0	4,914	USA	2020	1,340	323	75	0	1,738
	2021	3,364	1,937	85	0	5,386		2021	0	0	0	0	0
	2022	3,044	493	62	0	3,599		2022	0	0	0	0	0
	2023	1,203	76	9	0	1,288		2023	0	0	0	0	0
	2024	4,455	265	39	0	4,759		2024	0	0	0	0	0
PNG	2020	0	99	0	0	99	TOTAL EEZ	2020	29,203	7,296	876	0	37,375
	2021	1	19	0	0	20		2021	36,206	18,815	520	0	55,540
	2022	0	0	0	0	0		2022	46,743	1,938	528	0	49,208
	2023	0	0	0	0	0		2023	44,606	4,469	346	1	49,422
	2024	0	0	0	0	0		2024	30,355	2,465	329	0	33,149

Table 6. Annual catches of longline fleets operating in the RMI EEZ, by flag and species, 2020-2024

Flag	Year	Catch (metric tonnes)				TOTAL
		ALB	BET	YFT	OTH	
China	2020	0	18	6	0	24
	2021	1	20	17	0	38
	2022	0	0	0	0	0
	2023	21	16	8	0	44
	2024	1	7	6	0	14
FSM	2020	9	457	385	0	851
	2021	25	414	266	0	706
	2022	62	353	314	0	729
	2023	32	471	232	0	734
	2024	98	689	621	0	1,408
Japan	2020	1	180	25	0	206
	2021	32	109	108	0	250
	2022	24	96	88	0	209
	2023	13	101	29	0	143
	2024	0	0	0	0	0
RMI-Chartered	2020	7	386	448	0	841
	2021	47	596	484	1	1,128
	2022	113	822	758	1	1,694
	2023	84	1,385	646	0	2,116
	2024	245	1,928	1,553	0	3,726
TOTAL EEZ	2020	16	1,040	864	1	1,922
	2021	106	1,139	876	1	2,122
	2022	199	1,271	1,160	1	2,632
	2023	150	1,973	914	0	3,037
	2024	344	2,624	2,180	0	5,148

Table 7. Annual catches of pole-and-line fleet operating in the RMI EEZ, by flag and species, 2020-2024

Flag	Year	Catch (metric tonnes)			TOTAL
		BET	SKJ	YFT	
Japan	2020	0	2,609	10	2,619
	2021	0	761	14	775
	2022	2	880	13	895
	2023	0	516	0	516
	2024	0	27	0	27

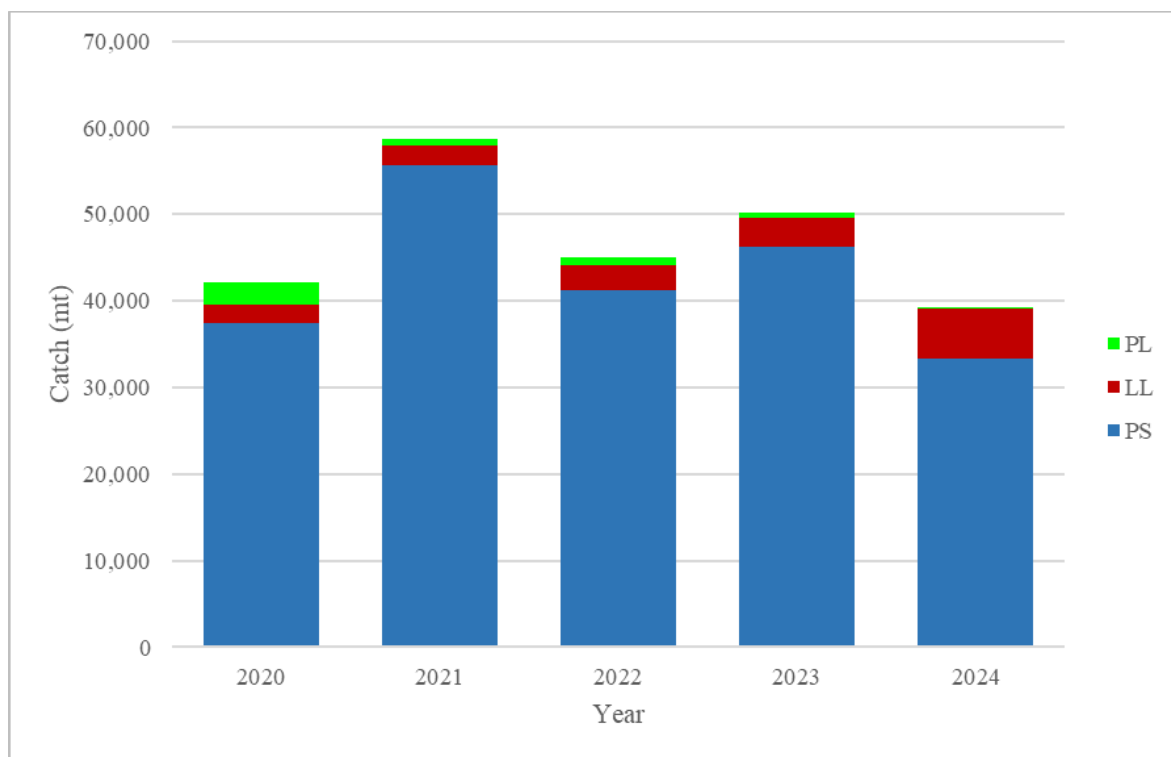


Figure 4. Total catch by the different gears operating in the RMI EEZ

4 DISPOSAL OF CATCH

As mentioned earlier, the Marshall Islands Fishing Venture, Ltd. (MIFV) operates the Longline Fish base with domestically-based foreign longline vessels. In 2024, there was a provisional total of 6,439 metric tons of fish unloaded by the longline fleet and most of it was bound for export markets (Table 8). The MIFV exports mainly fresh chilled tuna species to markets in the US. Frozen fish (rejects and bycatch) are shipped to Asia via transport containers and/or sold locally.

Majuro port is the only designated port for transshipment in the RMI. There were an estimated 160 purse seine transshipments and landings undertaken in Majuro in 2024 with a provisional total of 116,915 metric tons unloaded (Table 9). Due to a shift in fishing effort toward western areas of the WCPO, the number of vessel entries into Majuro declined significantly. While transshipments by the national purse seine fleet are primarily conducted in Majuro, regional foreign ports are occasionally utilized (Table 10).

Table 8. Total unloaded catch (mt) for domestically-based longline vessels in 2024

Species	Unloaded Catch (mt)
Albacore	418
Big Eye	2,912
Blue Marlin	428
MahiMahi	32
Moon Fish	1
Sailfish	29
SkipJack	14
Striped Marlin	6
Sword Fish	35
Wahoo	105
Yellow Fin	2,457
TOTAL	6,439

Table 9. Provisional purse seine transshipments and landings in Majuro port in 2024

Flag	Number of PS Transshipments	SKJ	YFT	BET
China	5	1,532	26	4
Federated States of Micronesia	26	16,386	987	219
Marshall Islands	36	25,749	1,548	814
Nauru	29	19,831	1,171	300
Taiwan	61	44,539	1,993	516
Tuvalu	3	1,262	38	0
TOTAL	160	109,299	5,763	1,853

Table 10. Purse seine transshipments by RMI-flagged vessels in 2024**Annex II (1)**

Species	Quantity Transshipped (MT)	Transshipped in port	Transshipped in WCP-CA	Caught in WCP-CA	Product Form
SKJ	80,618	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen Whole
YFT	8,195	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen Whole
BET	1,524	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen Whole

Annex II (2)

Port	Number of Transshipments	Transshipped in port	Transshipped in WCP-CA	Caught in WCP-CA	Product Form
HONIARA	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen Whole
MAJURO	36	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen Whole
POHNPEI	27	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen Whole
RABAU	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen Whole
TARAWA	35	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen Whole

5 ONSHORE DEVELOPMENTS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

MIMRA, on behalf of the Government, continues to maintain a joint venture partnership with Koo's Fishing Company, Ltd. (KFC). This collaboration provides an additional revenue stream as well as a catalyst for further on-shore developments. In addition, MIMRA's partnership with the Nature Conservancy (TNC), Pacific Islands Tuna Provisions (PITP), and the EU and German cooperation funded FISH4ACP program have contributed to recent initiatives aimed at promoting tuna landings and expanding domestic participation in the tuna value chain. A key achievement under the FISH4ACP program was the acquisition of a Starloader machine, which is expected to significantly increase the efficiency of transferring fish from dockside to freezer containers, thereby supporting efforts to scale up shore-based operations.

Pan Pacific Foods (PPF) continued operations in 2024, though its activities were limited to cold storage and containerization of fish. As previously reported, PPF also operates six RMI-flagged purse seine vessels that supply raw material to the facility. However, no processing of fish occurred during the year due to staffing constraints, although the plant remained active in exporting containerized tuna.

Total exports in 2024 amounted to 13,885 metric tons, with whole containerized tuna comprising the majority (Table 11). MIFV and Pacific International Inc. (PII) have steadily increased their volumes of whole tuna exports in recent years. PPF recorded the highest export volume among national operators, with 6,804 metric tons of whole tuna shipped in 2024. The RMI remains committed to strengthening onshore development opportunities through continued engagement with national stakeholders and development partners.

Table 11. Total Purse Seine whole tuna exports (mt) in 2024, by destination and species

Destination	SKJ	YFT	BET
CHINA	5,348	266	0
JAPAN	0	120	0
PHILIPPINES	2,208	0	0
THAILAND	5,454	40	16
CH-TAIPEI	97	29	5
VIETNAM	277	25	0
TOTAL	13,384	480	21

6 FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE FISHERY

The RMI continues to support domestic fisheries development aspirations in the region so long as it goes hand in hand with sustainable management measures that do not put a disproportionate burden on SIDS, in accordance with Article 30 of the Convention.

Other notable future prospects for the RMI tuna fishery involve further observer and debriefer capacity development as MIMRA continues to progressively train and recruit additional fisheries observers. Since late 2015, MIMRA has also utilized observers to carry out port monitoring duties on transshipments taking place in Majuro port. Efforts continued in 2024 to advance the development of port monitoring applications and to expand the use of electronic crane scales for all unloading and transshipment operations.

7 DATA COLLECTION SYSTEM AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Data management and handling capacity remain critical components of MIMRA's fisheries operations. The support of the SPC-Oceanic Fisheries Programme (SPC-OFP) continues to play a central role in advancing RMI's data collection and processing systems. MIMRA employs a dedicated port sampler who covers nearly 100% of longline unloadings at the MIFV fish base. Data collected by the port sampler, in collaboration with other staff, are entered into the TUFMAN II database. MIMRA also utilizes SPC's Onshore Port Sampling App, which has significantly improved data flow and enabled the integration of biological sampling data.

Looking ahead, MIMRA intends to transition toward using the PNA Fisheries Information Management System (FIMS) as its primary platform for data management and handling, while continuing to complement it with existing systems such as TUFMAN II. This shift is driven in part by increased uptake of FIMS electronic reporting (ER), particularly among longline vessels operating in the RMI, with ER coverage exceeding 90% in 2023 and maintaining high levels into 2024. The FIMS electronic monitoring (EM) module was developed during the year, and efforts to implement full EM coverage across locally based fleets remain a key MIMRA priority.

In 2024, a total of 44 active observers were employed under the MIMRA Observer Program. The Observer Office conducted multiple training sessions, including refresher courses, Marine Stewardship Council

(MSC) training, and FIMS e-Observer training in collaboration with the PNA Office. A total of 135 purse seine and 43 longline vessel trips were observed in 2024 (Table 12), representing a significant increase in observer coverage compared to the previous year.

Table 12. Observer trips by flag in 2024

Arrangement	Flag	Trips	Sea Days
FSMA	FM	26	644
	NR	11	303
	KI	2	47
	TV	1	27
Bilateral	TW	95	2,496
MIFV (LL)	FM	5	79
	CN	38	584
TOTAL		178	4,180

APPENDIX 1 – CMM REPORTING



ADDENDUM TO ANNUAL REPORT PART 1

8 April 2024¹

SECTION A: SPECIFIC INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED IN ANNUAL REPORT PART 1 AS REQUIRED BY CMMS AND OTHER DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION.

CMM 2019-03 [North Pacific Albacore], Para 3	This is not a target catch for RMI vessels however, 291 mt of NP ALB were caught as bycatch by the chartered longline fleet operating in the RMI EEZ.									
CMM 2006-04 [South West striped Marlin], Para 4	Not applicable. No RMI vessels fishing south of 15°S.									
CMM 2009-03 [Swordfish], Para 8	Not applicable. No RMI vessels fish south 20°S.									
CMM 2009-06 [Transshipment], Para 11 (ANNEX II)	103 in-port transshipments (Honiara 2; Majuro 36; Pohnpei 27; Rabaul 3; Tarawa 35) = 90,337 mt (prov.). See table 10.									
CMM 2011-03 [Impact of PS fishing on cetaceans], Para 5	<p>RMI continues to undertake more awareness work on this specific reporting obligation with vessel masters.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Interactions with cetaceans on RMI-flagged purse seine vessels</p> <table><tr><th>Species</th><th>Number</th><th>Fate</th></tr><tr><td>FALSE KILLER WHALE</td><td>5</td><td>Released</td></tr><tr><td>TOTAL</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr></table>	Species	Number	Fate	FALSE KILLER WHALE	5	Released	TOTAL	5	
Species	Number	Fate								
FALSE KILLER WHALE	5	Released								
TOTAL	5									

¹ Reporting requirements requested by CMMS and decisions of the Commission, as of WCPFC20 (Dec 2023). First issued on 8 April 2024. Changes made from Addendum for 2022 include the revised CMM 2023-03 for North Pacific Swordfish and **WCPFC20 Agreed Audit Points**.

Observer coverage (WCPFC 11 decision – para 484(b))	This does not apply to RMI. There were no RMI flagged longline fishing vessels in 2024.
CMM 2015-02 [South Pacific Albacore] Para 4	Not applicable. No RMI vessels fished south of 20°S
CMM 2018-03 [Seabirds] Para 13	There were no RMI flagged longline fishing vessels in 2024.
CMM 2023-03 [North Pacific Swordfish], para 4	Not applicable. No RMI vessels fished north of 20°N.