

Sri Lanka tuna and swordfish - longline

Overview

FIP Description

History: In April 2017, a new fishery improvement project (FIP) for Sri Lanka's tuna longline fishery was launched at the Seafood Expo Global in Brussels (Belgium) by the President of the Seafood Exporters' Association of Sri Lanka (SEASL) Prabhath Subasinghe. In May the SEASL signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development, the Honourable Mahinda Amaraweera, MP to improve the biological and ecological status of Sri Lanka's tuna and billfish longline fishery. The MoU also commits the parties to implement fishery-specific management measures that will maintain the status of the fishery at a level consistent with a sustainably managed fishery. In July Pelagikos pvt Ltd was appointed to administer and manage, design, plan, monitor and evaluate the new FIP. The progress made by the FIP to improve the Sri Lankan tuna longline fishery since July, is presented in this the first FIP bulletin.

In July, the SEASL commissioned a Gap Analysis to establish the scope of the new longline fishery improvement project and to internally assess with members of the new FIP, the status of the fishery / fisheries against the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) Fishery Standard. The Gap Analysis Final Report was submitted to the SEASL by Pelagikos pvt Ltd at the end of April 2018. In November 2017 the SEASL commissioned a pre-assessment of the longline fishery against the MSC Fishery Standard by a Certified Assessment Body (CAB). The CAB pre-assessment report was submitted to the SEASL in March 2018. The CAB pre-assessment was co-financed by the SEASL and New England Seafood International Pvt Ltd.

Context: The new FIP is a collaboration between Sri Lanka's leading seafood manufacturers, the government's regulatory and export authorities, boat owners' associations, skippers and their crew. Representatives of these associations, agencies and authorities comprise the decision making 'members' of the new Sri Lankan tuna longline FIP. The first Steering Committee was convened by the Secretary to the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development (MFARD) at the end of July 2017. 'Focal points' were appointed by each member of the new FIP. The scope of the new FIP was discussed and agreed in the second Steering Committee meeting held in October 2017. In this meeting, the immediate opportunities (including certification) and challenges that need to be overcome to further improve Sri Lanka's tuna longline fishery were presented and discussed.

Scope: In 2016, Sri Lankan vessels harvested 77,029.24 metric tons of tuna (86%) and billfish (14%) from Sri Lanka's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and international waters, using gillnets, longlines, ring nets, handlines

and trolling lines according to the National Aquatic Resources, Research and Development Agency (NARA). Key species included skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye and albacore tuna, together with Indo-pacific sailfish, swordfish and black, blue and striped marlin. The scope of the new FIP was determined based on the consideration of the following three factors:

- (1) The export demand for fresh and frozen tuna and billfish products.
- (2) The types of vessels and gears supplying tuna and billfish for export.
- (3) The current and short-term status of key export species.

Sri Lanka's fresh and frozen seafood export industry is driven by demand for yellowfin tuna products. Demand for bigeye, Indo-pacific sailfish, swordfish and marlin products is also important to the industry. Artisanal (<15m) and semi-industrial (<24 m) multiday fishing boats, deploying short (500 – 1,500 hooks) longlines are the main source of tuna and billfish for Sri Lankan exporters. 498 longline multiday boats were registered to fish within and beyond Sri Lanka's EEZ in 2017. 80% of these vessels were registered under the District Fisheries Offices in Chilaw (Thodduwawa and Wennappuwa) and Negombo. A further 300 or so longline multiday boats were registered for the EEZ only. IOTC stock assessments indicate that bigeye tuna and swordfish stocks are currently fished at a level consistent with a sustainably managed fishery (Green). The yellowfin tuna stock is judged to be overfished and subject to overfishing (Red). However, interim reference points and harvest control rules are in place to ensure that the stock recovers within the next three years. Sailfish and blue marlin stocks are overfished or subject to overfishing (Orange). Black and striped marlin stocks are judged to be overfished and subject to overfishing (Red). The absence of reference points for these species means that it is unlikely that the stocks will recover within the next three years. Based on the new Sri Lankan Longline FIP's internal assessment, members of the FIP agreed the scope of the new Sri Lanka FIP to be

Geographic:	Sri Lanka's Exclusive Economic Zone & International Waters in the Indian Ocean
Vessel Type:	Sri Lankan multiday fishing boats registered to fish in the EEZ or High Seas
Gear Type:	Deep-set Longline
Target Species:	Yellowfin tuna, Bigeye tuna, Swordfish

How is this FIP Doing?

Current Status:



Actions Progress This shows the proportion of actions in the workplan that the FIP has completed.

13%

Actions Overview This shows the proportion of actions that are behind schedule, on track, completed, or not yet started.

Behind	On Track	Complete	Future
20%	67%	13%	0%

Red Indicator Progress This shows the proportion of actions specifically addressing red indicators that are behind schedule, on track, completed, or not yet started. This helps users understand the progress the FIP is making on the biggest challenges in the fishery.

Behind	On Track	Complete	Future
0%	80%	20%	0%

FIP Objective(s)

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The overall goal (long-term objective) of the FIP is to get the Sri Lankan tuna longline fishery MSC certified by December 2028.

The intermediate objectives of the FIP are:

1. To achieve > 80 % Compliance with IOTC Resolutions, and other commitments made by Sri Lanka under the UN Law of the Sea Convention, UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and FAO Compliance Agreement by September 2028.
2. Eliminate catches and bycatches of turtles, marine mammals and seabirds by September 2028.
3. Conserve and manage the resources of sharks in the IOTC area of competence by September 2028.
4. Complete implementation of the social workplan of the FIP by September 2028.

FIP Type

Comprehensive

FIP Stage

Stage 4: Improvements in Fishing Practices or Fishery Management

Start and Projected End Dates

April, 2018 -
September, 2028

Species

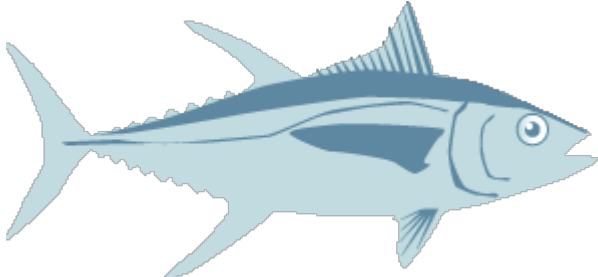
Common Name

Yellowfin Tuna

Scientific Name

Thunnus albacares

[Buying Guide Link Image](#)



[Yellowfin Tuna](#)

[Buying Guide](#)

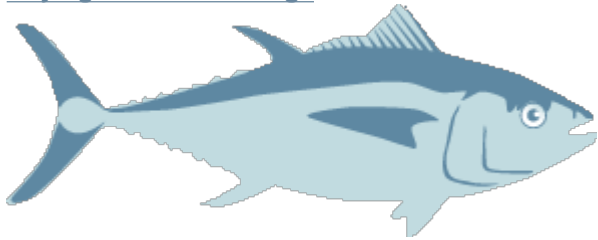
Common Name

Bigeye Tuna

Scientific Name

Thunnus obesus

[Buying Guide Link Image](#)



[Bigeye Tuna](#)

[Buying Guide](#)

Common Name

Swordfish

Scientific Name

Xiphias gladius

[Buying Guide Link Image](#)



[Swordfish](#)

[Buying Guide](#)

Gear Type

[Longline](#)

Location

FAO Major Fishing Area

[Area 51 \(Indian Ocean, Western\)](#)

[Area 57 \(Indian Ocean, Eastern\)](#)

Exclusive Economic Zones

Country

Sri Lanka

Geographic Scope

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Sri Lanka and the north-west waters of the Indian Ocean

Country Flag of Vessel

Sri Lanka

Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO)

IOTC

Estimated Total FIP Landings

9282 metric tons

FIP Leads

Organization Name

Seafood Exporters Association of Sri Lanka

Organization Type

Industry

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