

Pacific Ocean tuna – longline (StarKist) FIP Position Statement for WCPFC 2022

Drafted with agreement from all FIP Participants – November 2022

ATTN: WCPFC and delegates

The submission of this position statement is regarding the Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) currently being undertaken by the [StarKist Pacific Ocean longline tuna fishery](#). The fishery targets albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) and catches bigeye (*T. obesus*), skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) and yellowfin (*T. albacares*). The pelagic longline vessels are flagged to Taiwan, China, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Fiji, American Samoa, French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Panama and fish on the high seas (and occasionally in the national Exclusive Economic Zones in the Pacific). The fishery is managed regionally by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) and by the InterAmerican Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO).

The vessel owners and industry participants of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean tuna purse seine FIP submit this letter to request additional support from CCMs for the measures that will further tuna conservation at the Commission meeting beginning 27 November 2022. There are several critical measures and issues that require immediate attention by the WCPFC this year, and others that need to be advanced in 2023. We strongly urge WCPFC acts in November 2022 to ensure that Recommendations that are about to partially or fully expire, continue to be effective in 2023. Other priority issues are listed below:

Management measures for tropical tunas

- Continue to support and endorse further implementation of *CMM 2021-01* in an effort to improve the harvest strategies for tropical tuna species.
- Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack.
- Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority.
- Adopt a harvest control rule (HRC)/management procedure (MP) for the skipjack purse seine fishery.

FAD management best practices

- A clear timeframe for the transition to biodegradable FADs (BioFADs).
- A requirement for vessels to provide complete FAD position data and acoustic records from echosounder buoys (with time delay).
- Develop a FAD retrieval and recovery program, in which fisheries are educated and trained to understand the appropriate ways to reduce FAD loss and pollution.

- Refine FAD ownership rules, and develop a workplan to adopt FAD marking schemes.

Effective and fair enforcement

- Further review of the transshipment regulation and adopt substantive improvements to curtail opportunities for IUU fishing, trafficking, and labour abuses such as:
 - 100% observer coverage on all vessels engaged in at-sea transshipment;
 - Required reporting of all transshipment activity; and
 - The development and application of technologies for verification of transshipment activities.

Data quality and quantity

- We support the program to increase knowledge and understanding of the ways that fisheries can minimise the mortality rates of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna.
- Require that there is 100% human observer coverage across all purse seine vessels by 2026.
- Adopt best practices in electronic monitoring (EM) and electronic reporting (ER) standards, including ER logbooks.

For any further information, please contact the FIP lead Tom Evans at:

t.evans@keytraceability.com