

# Tuna Market Intelligence

Issue 58, August 29, 2017

*Your fortnightly report on trends and influencers on the global tuna market from the Pacific Islands.*

## MARKET UPDATE

Skipjack prices in Bangkok have risen to \$2,100 per metric ton while other regions are leading at \$2,200. The expectation is that Bangkok will soon follow this lead.

The current WCPFC FAD ban, the 72 day closure of purse seine fishing in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, coupled with imminent closures in the Indian Ocean and poor catches can be expected to push prices even higher in the next quarter.

## INFLUENCERS REPORT

### PNA to hire CFO

PNA is now seeking to recruit a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to work in the PNA Head Office. This position is open to citizens of the 8 PNA partner countries only. Interested persons are invited to visit the website: [http://www.vanguardpng.com/current\\_vacancies.php](http://www.vanguardpng.com/current_vacancies.php)

Applicants need to complete the Application Form and follow the website instructions to forward to Vanguard International, including a brief CV. Alternatively please call (675) 3217464 for more information. Applications close on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

### PNA FAD measures contribute to positive big eye report

After many years of negative news on the health of the Pacific bigeye tuna stock, a recent scientific report by the WCPFC shows positive indications for the first time. This is welcomed by the PNA countries which have been constantly and strongly focused on big-eye recovery, through the initiative and implementation of many measures to manage FAD fishing.

Since 1982, the 8 small Pacific island nations united as The Parties to the Nauru Agreement, (PNA) have been at the forefront of tuna conservation and management in the Western Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO). PNA have lead the region's tuna conservation initiatives in their joint 14.8 million Km<sup>2</sup> EEZs, with many world firsts

including, 100% observer coverage, satellite tracking of purse seiners, in port transshipment with monitoring, vessel registry, and mandatory log books, among many other measures. Today these 8 developing nations, together maintain within their pristine waters, one of the healthiest skipjack and yellowfin purse seine tuna fisheries in the world.

Mr Ludwig Kumoru , PNA CEO, today said “ the recently announced improved status of Big eye stocks by the Western and Central Pacific Fishery Commission (WCPFC) - Science Committee meeting in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, is very encouraging.”

He recalled, it was the 2007 WCPFC meeting in Guam, that scientists flagged the demise of the WCPO Bigeye stock, (a large slow growing tuna), as of a immediate concern. In 2008, PNA lead conservation initiatives by introducing measures including high seas pocket closures, in-zone seasonal FAD bans, and tuna catch retention for purse seiners to protect the big-eye. A decade later PNA continues to lead in FAD monitoring and tracking, near real time e-reporting, e-Catch Documentation Scheme (e-CDS), and other management tools and measures.

Regrettably while the PNA countries make such efforts to within their own EEZ's, many fishing nations operating industrialized longliner vessels and targeting mature Bigeye for the sashimi trade have failed to agree within the WCPFC to take equivalent measures to protect this tuna. A common story in all high seas RFMOs.

In 2011 the PNA achieving MSC certification for targeted purse seine Free school fishing was a global first, bringing industrially caught and credible MSC certified free school caught tunas to the global community. PNA has effectively used this as a economic incentive to lead change overall and seen reduced industry dependence on targeted FAD fishing in the purse seine fishery in PNA waters, at a time when FAD fishing in all other ocean

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areas grew explosively. . Reduced FAD usage and other measures helps conserve the many non target species taken as bycatch with the FAD associated fishing methods, not just juvenile bigeye.

As scientists anticipated, the wide range of conservation measures lead by the PNA countries [including MSC Free School fishing], have together contributed positively to the ongoing Bigeye stock recovering. In conclusion, Mr Kumoru, stated, “this is a good start and PNA looks forward to evidence of continued improvements, especially in the Big Eye stock status in the next stock assessment in 2020. PNA will continue to work towards seeing the entire PNA ocean ecosystem including a sustainable managed FAD fishery, being fully MSC certified within the coming 5 years.”

Mr Ludwig Kumoru CEO, PNA.

## **PNA pays tribute to Victorio Uherbelau, former Director-General of FFA**

Mr. Ludwig Kumoru, CEO of PNA, in a tribute to the late Victorio Uherbelau, expressed his deepest sadness and condolences to his family and people of Palau, having just learned of his passing. Vic Uherbelau passed away Sunday at his home in Koror, Palau.

Vic had a distinguished career over many decades. Many of us looked up to him as a leader in regional fisheries when we first started our careers. Vic was distinguished as the first Palauan lawyer, he guided Palau internationally for decades and indeed, in his years as Director General of FFA, he led the broader Pacific island region, through many trying times in various international forums.

Vic has always championed the interests of our region’s small island states, this was not a small task as these newly independent nations had to come to terms with being the hub of the biggest tuna fishery in the world, and increasingly key in the oceanscape issues, which are now very much in the forefront.

Although soft-spoken, he rose to every challenge with his forceful leadership, never shying clear of protecting or promoting Pacific islands interests, nor his visions for his beloved Palau.

Vic never retired, even this year my office had the pleasure of working with Vic in Palau on development projects for the village cooperatives he supported. Vic’s passing this week is a great loss to the Palau, PNA and the Pacific.

Together, with the late Senator Matt Zackheras and late Senator Tony De Brum, both of RMI, the region has this month lost 3 great champions of the PNA, our fisheries and the Pacific Ocean.

May they rest in peace.

Mr Ludwig Kumoru CEO, PNA.

## **Micro-canning ready to expand in the Pacific Region**

The micro-canning that PNA initiated in PNA Party countries including the Solomon Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands and has, to date, been supported by PNA and Pacifical is getting ready to take off in a bigger way.

Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs has announced it will support this PNA initiative, with technical support to PNA countries for micro-canning development. They will assist with 16 development projects in the Pacific region, all linked to fighting hunger; further PNA micro-canning training to PNA countries is included in this package. They will support training in selected countries, as well as overall support to PNA in labeling, manuals, posters, product analysis, marketing support, economic modeling and business planning, as well as a study into food security issues.

The foreign affairs department states that “this innovation will provide local employment and will enable consumers to purchase professionally produced, locally

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sourced, locally canned, and high value protein at an affordable price.”

The micro-canneries uses fishery bycatch including tuna that is too small, or other species that cannot be exported from the region’s purse seine sector. Currently 10,000 tons of bycatch are caught annually in PNA waters. The project has also been canning other marine products and primary produce such as pineapples and breadfruit, all assisting with food security and providing a nutritious shelf stable product.

## **Solomon Islands’ National Fisheries Developments, Ltd. is awarded US 10 million loan**

The Solomon Islands’ National Fisheries Developments, Ltd. (NFD) company has been awarded a USD 10 million loan from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) which is a member of the World Bank Group, and the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program Private Sector Window.

The funding will allow NFD to purchase a new fishing vessel and will provide monies for maintenance to their existing fleet. The company will also receive advisory services on environmental and social risk management.

In 2013, NFD’s sister company, SolTuna Limited, a tuna processor, was awarded USD 9 million in grant monies. The two loans will help the companies boost employment in the Solomon Islands, a nation that currently has 30% unemployment, and which depends on their tuna fisheries for 18% of its GDP.

The media source Voxy quoted Vivik Pathak, the IFC Director of East Asia and the Pacific, as saying, "IFC's engagements with NFD and SolTuna will boost their combined capacity to catch and process fish - an important source of revenue in the region - and also build on sustainable management practices and set a higher standard for the wild-catch fishing industry.”

## **New Zealand Fishery receives MSC certification**

Talley’s Group Limited received the Marine Stewardship Council’s (MSC) ‘blue tick’ of sustainability for their New Zealand domestic operation. The New Zealand company,

with a fleet of two large purse seiners, fishes from December to April in northern New Zealand waters. The MSC certification means that Talley’s fishery uses environmentally friendly fishing methods without use of fish aggregating devices.

## **Pacific Tuna Forum 2017 and 1<sup>st</sup> Seafood and Technology Expo to be hosted in PNG**

PNG will host the 1<sup>st</sup> Seafood and Technology Expo on September 12<sup>th</sup> and the Pacific Tuna Forum 2017 September 13 -14 in Port Moresby. It will be the 6<sup>th</sup> Regional Tuna Industry and Trade Conference with the theme, “Fostering Greater Social, Economic and Financial Benefits through Sustainable Tuna Management and Development.”

The forum is jointly organized by INFOFISH, NFA, FFA, SPC and WCPFC. PNA, PITIA and PNG FIA and is supported by GLOBEFISH-FAO. For more information about the forum, contact [info@infofish.org](mailto:info@infofish.org).

## **Operation Island Chief uncovers IUU activity**

Ten Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) nations banded together counteract Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported activity in the Pacific Ocean.

The ten day surveillance sweep, dubbed Operation Island Chief, used nine Pacific patrol boat as well as military and defense assistance from Australia, New Zealand and the US, to uncover four serious breaches of long line vessel fishing licenses. Three of the vessels were Chinese flagged and the fourth was flagged to Chinese Taipei. The breaches, which involved misreporting and non-reporting of critical information and unmarked gear in Vanuatu and the High Seas, will lead to investigations by national authorities.

Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Palau, PNG, Nauru, the Marshall Islands, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu were the Pacific countries that conducted Operation Island Chief.

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## **StarKist shuts down cannery in American Samoa**

Due to reported fish shortages and limited cold storage, StarKist has temporarily shut down its cannery operations. This is the second time within a year; StarKist also closed its cannery for a week last October. StarKist is American Samoa's largest private employer. Tri Marine closed their processing operation in Pago Pago last year. Under the US treaty the associated fleets were grown to maintain supply to these plants.

## **Filipino handliners balk at amended Fisheries Code**

At a Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) public consultation in General Santos City, Philippines, owners and operators of commercial fishing vessels opposed the draft rules and regulations set forth by BFAR, requiring implementation of vessel-monitoring measures (VMMs), in their amended Fisheries Code, Republic Act (RA) 10654. The owners and operators said the proposed rule is "anti-poor" and would kill the tuna handliner fishery due to costs of installing and paying the monthly subscription of the VMM. There are around 3,000 commercial handline vessels in the region who are currently unmonitored.

According to Manila's BusinessMirror, Section 2 of the amended Fisheries Code states that "no commercial vessel shall engage in fishing activity without the vessel-monitoring measures, which apply to licensed Philippine-flagged fishing vessels operating within and outside Philippine waters." In addition the vessel-monitory system also applies to "all licensed Philippine-flagged commercial fishing vessels authorized by the BFAR to operate in the high seas and those fishing vessels with access rights to fish in other countries' exclusive economic zones."

As a member of the WCPFC, Philippines is obligated to implement measures that are in accordance with the regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs). RA 10654 enables BFAR to check the movement and location of the fishing vessels, working toward international compliance.

## **Voluntary Code of Practice for Fisheries**

16 Stakeholders have developed a voluntary Code of Practice for fisheries. The stakeholders include groups such as Marine Management Organisation (MMO), MRAG, Oceana, The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) and WWF that are concerned with human safety as well as with food traceability and sustainability.

The Code of Practice Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 1550:2017 gives guidance and recommendations for due diligence and fair working practices. It is aimed at fisheries as well as seafood processors and importers. The code addresses traceability, chain of custody (CoC), illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and social accountability aspects of the trade.

The PAS came into effect July 31, 2017 and is available at <https://shop.bsigroup.com/forms/PASs/PAS-1550/>

This complements the PNA/Pacifal guidelines for purse seiners introduced last year, available at <http://www.pacificall.com/guidelines.html>

## **It's important to know where the tuna was caught**

Tuna caught in the Western Pacific Ocean, including tuna with the Pacificall label, have fewer contaminants and are safer to eat than those caught in more industrialized areas.

In a scientific study conducted by Scripps Institution of Oceanography, yellowfin were caught from eight sites around the globe and screened for 247 toxic compounds. The study that is published in June's issue of the academic journal, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, delineates test results for tuna that was analyzed for the presence of pesticides, coolants and flame-retardants. These are pollutants that accumulate in body tissue and make their way up the food chain. Tuna caught in the more industrialized areas had as many as 36 times the toxins as the fish caught in the remote Pacific areas.

"The most important part of the take-home message is that it's important to know where your fish was caught," said lead author of the report, Sascha Nicklisch.

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Send us your tips to [rebecca@pnatuna.com](mailto:rebecca@pnatuna.com)

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