



Parties to the Nauru Agreement

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Media Statement

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 Km² 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 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 .”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kumoru'.

Mr Ludwig Kumoru
CEO, PNA.

27/8/17