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## **SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION**

### **TWENTY-SIXTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES** (Noumea, New Caledonia, 5 - 9 August 1996)

#### **COUNTRY STATEMENT**

#### **NIUE**

The development of semi to large-scale commercial fisheries in Niue remains relatively unfeasible under the existing infrastructure raceme coupled to the lack of a suitable sheltered harbour. Much of Government effort through the Fisheries Division of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries has thus been targeted at inshore resource management, enforcement of domestic legislation, research, extension/support services to local small-scale fishermen, FAD programme development, foreign licensing, Integrated Coastal Management, etc.

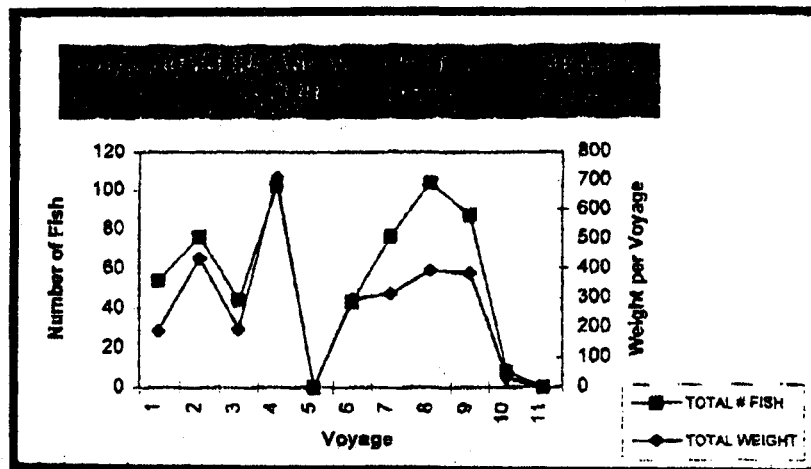
#### **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

- The installation of a VHS system was completed and has been operational approximately two to three years. In conjunction with this a recent review of the Safety at Sea Act (1980) has made the use of VHS radios compulsory for all boats 14 foot and above, and any boats used for hire/charter.
- A boat designer and builder carried out a consultancy contract, under SPC small project funding. The aim of the contract being to identify structural weaknesses of the existing boats on the island, and to produce a report identifying the problems, solutions to these problems, and to design a boat best suited to both the socio-economic and environmental conditions of Niue.
  - Spin off gains included welding repair work to local boats, training in riveting boats, and some boat building techniques (welding based).

- Licensing of a foreign fishing vessel to fish for deep sea snapper around Niue (>6miles out) and reefs in the EEZ provided some indication as to the feasibility of local ventures, by way of indicating potential catches. The vessel used was an 11 metre wooden mono hull (wood).
- Figure1 below shows the total numbers and weight of fish caught by the foreign fishing vessel noted above. No data on direct fishing effort was obtained except for days at sea and number of voyages. Fishing effort data was supposed to be provided under the licensing agreement.

**Figure 1**

Graph of total numbers and weight of fish caught by Niue Trading Vessel "Ruby".



- The recent arrival of an ex-commercial cray fisherman from New Zealand has been the introduction of some small-scale test trails using crayfish and fish pots/traps. Due to the very recent start of this there is a lack of sufficient data to provide any figures or tables here.
- The construction, installation, and maintenance of FAD's continues to be a major role of the fisheries division, with 7 FAD's currently in the water. All FAD's deployed after the 1994 SPC FAD workshop are a modified version of the SPC catenary curve design.
- A recent review of all Fisheries legislation has been carried out. All previous fisheries legislation has been compiled into either the "Domestic Fishing Act 1995" or the "Exclusive Economic Zone and Territorial Sea's Act 1995". (The latter of the two is still in the form of a Bill.)
- Niue continues to support the introduction of a Multilateral Sub-regional Agreement with Taiwanese longliners (TDSTBEA) and has not renewed the original bilateral agreement with Taiwan Deep Sea Tuna Boat Owners and Export Association (TDSTBEA).

Table 1 below gives a summary of the total catches by species by the Taiwanese longline fleet licensed to fish in Niue for the last three years.

**TOTAL TAIWANESE INZONE CATCHES AS PER LOGSHEET  
REPORT 1993, 1994, 1995, & March Quarter 1996, NIUE'S EEZ**

Species	1993	1994	1995	1996 (Mar)
No Lic Vessels	30/48	30/48	48/16	16
Albacore	344.50	662.99	210.51	107.89
Bigeye	10.96	7.678	5.65	6.32
Billfish	35.29	32.19	7.98	5.06
Yellowfin	52.95	37.46	21.92	15.66
Other	67.43	6.79	133.79	2.63
<b>Total</b>	<b>511.13</b>	<b>747.11</b>	<b>379.85</b>	<b>137.56</b>

- Some superficial surveys of areas where trochus were transplanted to has revealed that 3-4 years down the track some animals are still alive, yet there is no obvious indication of successful breeding and new recruitment to the fringing reef around the island.
- An assessment was carried out (1994) on the need for an Integrated Coastal Management Programme in Niue. The assessment report was carried out by Roger Cornforth, SPREP consultant. The assessment basically concluded that there is a persuasive need for a simple, effective, and appropriate form of Coastal Management for Niue.
- A Niue coral reference collection is in the final stages of being completed by fisheries. It is hoped that this will help facilitate carrying out and monitoring of Marine related EIA's.

**CURRENT AND FUTURE AREAS OF FOCUS**

- Given Niue's constraints with respect to carrying out research and monitoring of offshore resources the current thrust is towards resource assessment and management of inshore fishery resources, these being the primary target of local fishers.
- Proposals are currently being considered by Government to install local weighing stations at the three major boat landings which will hopefully aid in the collection of catch data. Data collection for all inshore resources is one of the highest priorities of fisheries at present.
- It is hoped that the recent introduction of quota systems to both the giant clam and crayfish resources will help these resources to recover from their currently poor status. Reseeding of young clams to the reefs is still an alternative being pursued.
- Coastal Management is another area of high interest to Niue. It is anticipated that the majority of marine resource management activities will come under an integrated coastal management programme. Inclusive in this will be the introduction of marine reserve areas.

Government continues to support the regional approach of joint fishing ventures. Recent participation of Niue at the "joint Venture Appraisal Course" held in Nadi has given participants a better knowledge of how to appraise any future proposals of the above nature.