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**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION
PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH, AND STATISTICS**

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REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Annual Report Part 1 Information of fisheries, statistics and research

Oceanic and Industrial Affairs Division
Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority
Republic of the Marshall Islands

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Scientific data was provided to the Commission in accordance with the decision relating to the provision of scientific data to the Commission by 30 April 2010	Yes
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SUMMARY

The tuna fishery in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is comprised of foreign flagged purse seine, pole-and-line and longline vessels and RMI-flagged purse seine and longline vessels. Most of the foreign flagged longline vessels operate in support of domestic development activities and are based locally.

With a new purse seine vessel joining the fishery in 2009, total catch of the national fleet operating throughout the Western and Central Pacific Ocean was 44,342 mt, an increase of around 27% compared to the previous year. There was also an increase in catch from the national longline fleet however the increase was not as pronounced.

Overall catch estimates from licensed foreign fleets operating in the RMI EEZ in 2009 amounted to just over 20,000 mt with 76% of the catch attributed to the purse seine fleets and a majority of the catch comprising of skipjack tuna.

BACKGROUND

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) has an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and territorial waters of around 2 million km². The tuna fishery is the most important fishery both in terms of scale and economics in the RMI.

The Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) is responsible for the management and development of the tuna fishery in the RMI. The fishery comprises of longline, purse seine, and pole-and-line vessels fishing under various access arrangements. The RMI is a party to a number of regional and international management arrangements such as the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) and the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA). With the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission in place, the RMI is also obliged to comply with the management measures of the Commission.

FLAG STATE REPORTING

Annual catch and effort estimates for the national purse seine fleet, fishing throughout the WCPFC Convention Area during the last five years, are presented in Table 1a with historical estimates further provided in Figure 1a. Catch estimates for purse seine fleet in 2009 amounted to over 44,300 mt, around a 27% increase from the previous year. A portion of this increase can be attributed to the addition of one new entrant in the purse seine fishery. Skipjack tuna catch, in 2009, accounted for about 91% of total catch with the rest comprising of yellowfin (4%) and bigeye tuna (5%). Additionally, the reported catch and effort estimates from the national longline fleet are illustrated in Table 1b and Figure 1b. Catches from the longline fleet also experience an increase, albeit a slight one, in 2009 with estimates totaling 567 mt, by primary species.

Table 1a. Annual catch (mt) and effort (days) estimates for the Marshall Islands purse seine vessels, by primary species, for the WCPFC Convention Area, 2005-2009

Species	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
DAYS FISHING AND SEARCHING	1233	976	1216	1041	1183
SKIPJACK	47565	38881	53916	26500	40517
YELLOWFIN	7628	1436	3370	4151	1577
BIGEYE	971	2032	2118	1567	2248

Notes

1. These catch estimates also apply to the WCPO Area (the Pacific Ocean west of 150°W)
2. Catches were taken from logsheet data and the coverage of the logsheet data is considered to be 100%.

Table 1b. Annual catch (mt) and effort (hooks) estimates for the Marshall Islands longline vessels, by primary species, for the WCPFC Convention Area, 2005-2009

Species	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
100s OF HOOKS	0	0	177	18347	12756
YELLOWFIN	0	0	2	91	120
BIGEYE	0	0	3	375	381
BLUE MARLIN	0	0	1	63	52
BLACK MARLIN	0	0	0	0	0
SKIPJACK	0	0	0	0	0
ALBACORE	0	0	0	15	10
PACIFIC BLUEFIN	0	0	0	0	0
STRIPED MARLIN	0	0	0	1	0
SWORDFISH	0	0	0	7	4

Notes

1. These catch estimates also apply to the following areas
 - a. The WCPO Area (the Pacific Ocean west of 150°W)
 - b. The WCPFC Convention Area north of the equator
 - c. The WCPO Area north of the equator
2. The MARSHALL ISLANDS longline fleet does not fish in any other areas for which catch estimates are required by the WCPFC
3. Catch estimates were determined from logsheet data adjusted with unloadings data, and the coverage of both types of data is considered to be 100%.

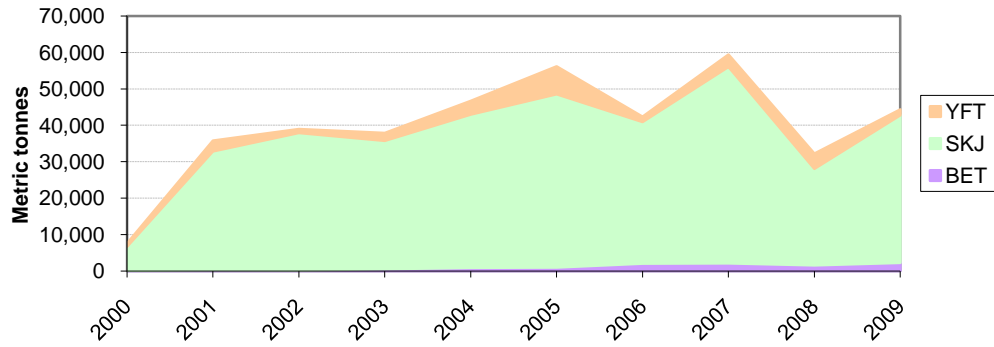


Figure 1a. Historical annual catch for the Marshall Islands purse seine vessels, by primary species, for the WCPFC Convention Area

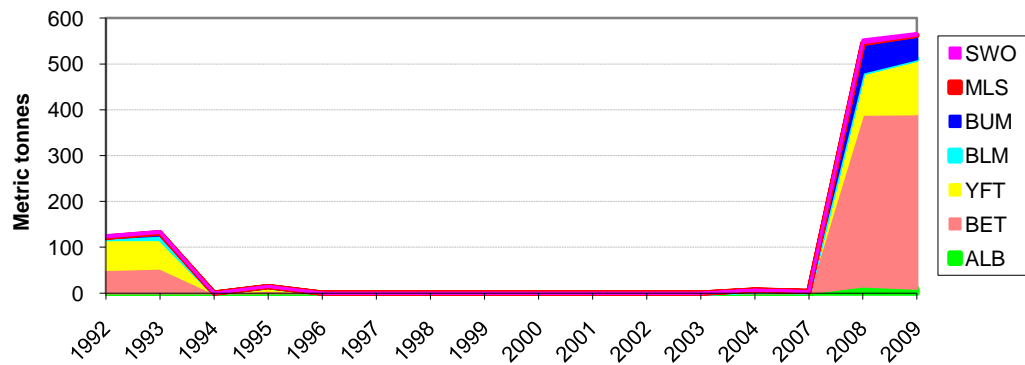


Figure 1b. Historical annual catch for the Marshall Islands longline vessels, by primary species, for the WCPFC Convention Area

Six national purse seine and four longline vessels were active in the Convention Area during 2009 (Figure 2, Tables 2a & 2b). As the relationship with respect to nationality of catch is still being progressed, a number of domestically-based foreign longline vessels are not included in this list, but may be included in the future.

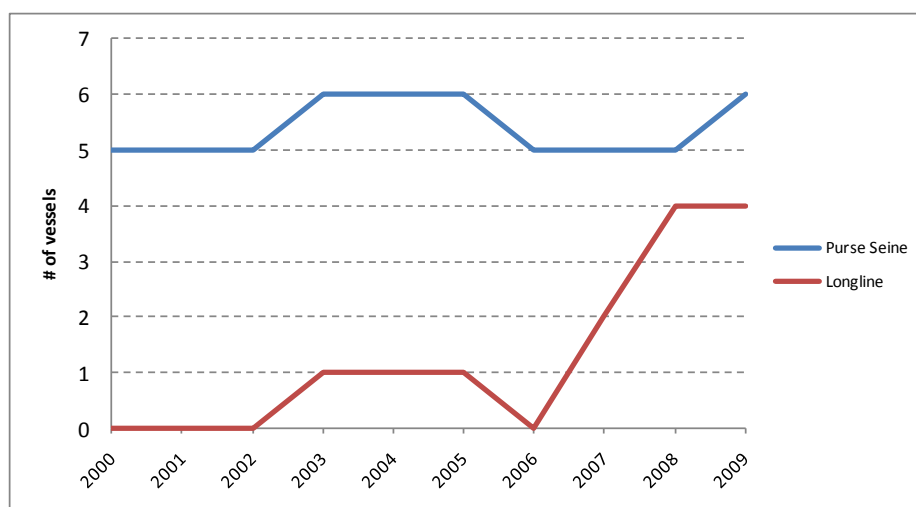


Figure 2. Historical annual vessel numbers for the Marshall Islands, by gear, for the WCPFC Convention Area

Table 2a. Number of Marshall Islands purse seine vessels, by size category, active in the WCPFC Convention Area, 2005-2009

Size class (GRT)	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
0-500					
500-1,000					
1,000-1,500	6	5	5	5	5
1,500+	0	0	0	0	1

Table 2b. Number of Marshall Islands longline vessels, by size category, active in the WCPFC Convention Area, 2005-2009

Size class (GRT)	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
0-10					
10-50					
50-200	1	0	2	4	4
200-500					
500+					

Figure 3a provides an illustration of the distribution of effort for the national purse seine fleet over the past two years. As the fleet is based out of Majuro, the effort is concentrated in the southern half of the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and other adjacent EEZs and high seas areas. There is an apparent eastward shift in effort during 2009 possibly due to the development of an El Nino event in the latter part of the year. On the other hand, the national longline fleet fishes primarily in the RMI EEZ (Figure 3b).

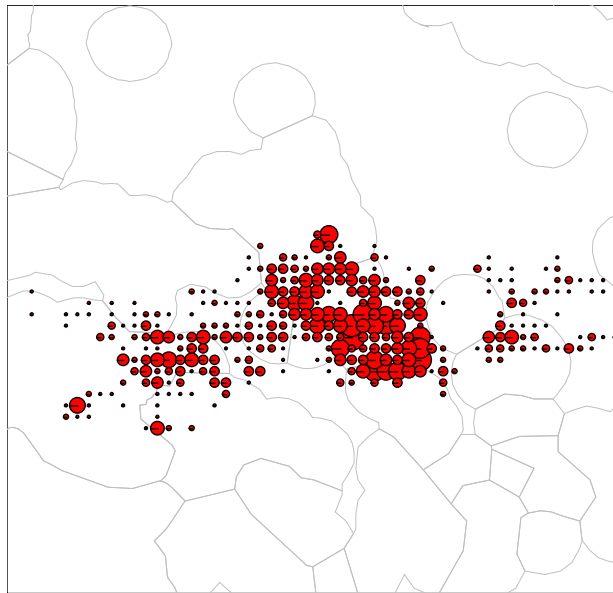
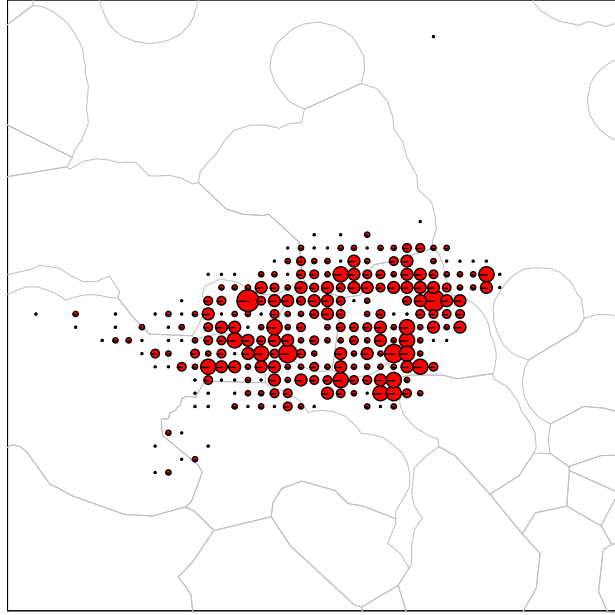


Figure 3a. Annual distribution of effort (days fishing and searching) by the Marshall Islands purse seine vessels active in the WCPFC Convention Area for 2008 (top) and 2009 (bottom)

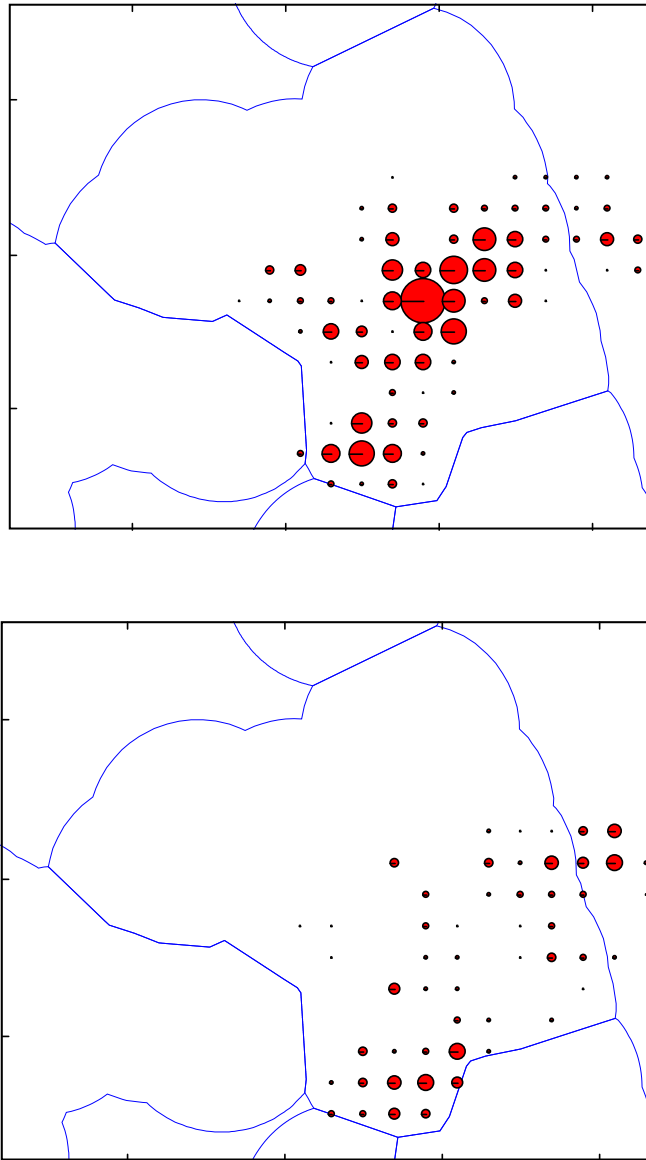


Figure 3b. Annual distribution effort (100s of hooks) by the Marshall Islands longline vessels active in the WCPFC Convention Area for 2008 (top) and 2009 (bottom)

Observed interactions with species of special interest are shown in Tables 3a and 3b. Data are derived from available trips conducted by MIMRA observers and are not limited to trips on RMI fleets. During 2009, no interactions were reported from purse seine trips whilst five turtle interactions were observed from the longline trips. Increased demands on the MIMRA Observer Program has meant increased data to be processed thus estimates for 2009 are considered provisional at this stage.

Table 3a. Observed annual estimated catches of species of special interest (seabird, turtle and marine mammals) from Marshall Islands observers on purse seine vessels, in the WCPFC Convention Area, for 2007-2009 to the extent available.

Category	Species	Individuals encountered					
		2007		2008		2009	
		No.	Dead	No.	Dead	No.	Dead
Marine Turtles	Green Turtle	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Loggerhead Turtle	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Hawksbill turtle	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Leatherback turtle	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Olive Ridley Turtle	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Turtles (unidentified)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Marine Mammals	Dolphins and Porpoises	28	0	0	0	0	0
	Toothed Whales	9	0	0	0	0	0
	Non-toothed Whales	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Marine Mammals (unident.)	1	0	0	0	0	0
Whale Shark	Whale Shark	3	0	1	0	0	0
Birds	Birds	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Turtles		1	0	0	0	0	0
Total Marine Mammals		38	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3b. Observed annual estimated catches of species of special interest (seabird, turtle and marine mammals) for the Marshall Islands-based longline vessels (China, FSM and RMI-flagged), in the WCPFC Convention Area, for 2007-2009 to the extent available.

Category	Species	Individuals encountered					
		2007		2008		2009	
		No.	Dead	No.	Dead	No.	Dead
Marine Turtles	Green Turtle	4	4	1	1	0	0
	Loggerhead Turtle	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Hawksbill turtle	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Leatherback turtle	9	9	0	0	5	5
	Olive Ridley Turtle	3	1	0	0	0	0
	Turtles (unidentified)	2	2	0	0	0	0
Marine Mammals	Dolphins and Porpoises	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Toothed Whales	3	1	0	0	0	0
	Non-toothed Whales	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Marine Mammals (unident.)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whale Shark	Whale Shark	0	0	0	0	0	0
Birds	Birds	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total Turtles		19	17	1	1	5	5
Total Marine Mammals		3	1	0	0	0	0

Further, provisional estimated total catch of non-target species are provided in Table 4a and Table 4b for the different fleets. Rainbow runner is typically the main non-target species taken by the purse seine fleet, but the following species/species groups are also commonly caught – small baitfish, silky (and other) sharks, blue and black marlin, triggerfish and mahi mahi. According to observer data, the proportion of non-target catch is considerably higher from the longline fleet (~36% in 2009). The data suggest that, for locally-based longline vessels the most predominant species in each category are still: Blue marlin (billfish), Blue shark (sharks and rays), wahoo (“other” finfish).

Table 4a. Annual estimated catches of non-target, associated and dependent species, including sharks, by Marshall Islands observers on purse seine vessels, in the WCPFC Convention Area, for 2007-2009 to the extent available.

Category	Species	Catch estimates					
		2007		2008		2009	
		MT	%	MT	%	MT	%
Billfish	Blue marlin	25.1	0.0418%	16.9	0.0520%	14.5	0.0325%
	Black marlin	2.9	0.0049%	0.0	0.0000%	1.4	0.0031%
	Other Billfish	3.6	0.0060%	1.0	0.0032%	3.4	0.0076%
Sharks and Rays	Blue shark	0.0	0.0000%	2.8	0.0086%	0.0	0.0000%
	Mako sharks	0.1	0.0001%	0.1	0.0004%	0.0	0.0000%
	Oceanic whitetip shark	0.8	0.0013%	0.0	0.0001%	0.0	0.0000%
	Silky shark	18.2	0.0304%	20.1	0.0617%	8.3	0.0187%
	Other sharks and rays	1.2	0.0020%	1.9	0.0057%	8.3	0.0187%
Other finfish	Bullet/Frigate tunas	0.4	0.0006%	228.5	0.7014%	0.0	0.0000%
	Kawakawa	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%	0.1	0.0003%
	Rainbow Runner	299.3	0.4995%	48.9	0.1501%	124.0	0.2786%
	Wahoo	4.8	0.0081%	5.6	0.0173%	1.8	0.0041%
	Common dolphinfish	12.6	0.0210%	21.4	0.0657%	8.4	0.0189%
	Triggerfish	81.8	0.1365%	2.8	0.0085%	4.8	0.0109%
	Barracudas	0.1	0.0002%	0.0	0.0000%	0.1	0.0001%
	Escolars	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%
	Lanctfishes	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%
	Ocean sunfish	0.4	0.0006%	0.0	0.0000%	0.2	0.0005%
	Oilfish	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%
	Opah	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%
	Pomfrets	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%
	Small baitfish	62.6	0.1044%	1.6	0.0048%	6.8	0.0153%
	Other fish	13.0	0.0217%	12.7	0.0389%	1.5	0.0034%
	Total billfish	32	0.0528%	18	0.0552%	19	0.0432%
	Total sharks and rays	20	0.0338%	25	0.0765%	17	0.0374%
	Total finfish	475	0.7925%	322	0.9867%	148	0.3321%
Total non-target		527	0.8791%	364	1.1184%	184	0.4128%

Table 4b. Annual estimated catches of non-target, associated and dependent species, including sharks, by the Marshall Islands-based longline vessels (China, FSM and RMI-flagged), in the WCPFC Convention Area, for 2007-2009 to the extent available.

Category	Species	Catch estimates					
		2007		2008		2009	
		MT	%	MT	%	MT	%
Billfish	Blue marlin	570.1	8.2060%	297.5	3.9136%	438.3	5.6215%
	Black marlin	42.9	0.6171%	10.1	0.1331%	186.8	2.3963%
	Striped marlin	158.7	2.2843%	117.8	1.5499%	279.1	3.5793%
	Swordfish	92.8	1.3362%	51.1	0.6721%	204.8	2.6265%
	Other Billfish	18.4	0.2649%	53.9	0.7089%	42.6	0.5463%
Sharks and Rays	Blue shark	818.5	11.7825%	501.0	6.5902%	422.2	5.4150%
	Mako sharks	98.1	1.4128%	68.1	0.8962%	159.7	2.0485%
	Oceanic whitetip shark	208.7	3.0040%	153.5	2.0185%	138.6	1.7770%
	Silky shark	589.9	8.4913%	618.9	8.1411%	198.2	2.5424%
	Other sharks and rays	138.7	1.9963%	833.1	10.9584%	487.2	6.2487%
Other finfish	Bullet/Frigate tunas	0.7	0.0102%	2.7	0.0357%	0.4	0.0048%
	Kawakawa	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%
	Rainbow Runner	0.7	0.0099%	0.3	0.0043%	0.0	0.0000%
	Wahoo	177.9	2.5604%	104.8	1.3789%	100.3	1.2863%
	Common dolphinfish	43.2	0.6214%	100.6	1.3237%	25.4	0.3255%
	Triggerfish	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%
	Barracudas	3.5	0.0505%	8.8	0.1158%	5.6	0.0715%
	Escolars	11.6	0.1671%	23.5	0.3095%	8.5	0.1096%
	Lanctfishes	10.4	0.1494%	7.9	0.1039%	6.4	0.0826%
	Ocean sunfish	28.3	0.4075%	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%
	Oilfish	4.8	0.0696%	2.2	0.0292%	6.4	0.0826%
	Opah	35.9	0.5166%	55.2	0.7262%	32.4	0.4161%
	Pomfrets	17.9	0.2582%	9.5	0.1245%	24.0	0.3081%
	Small baitfish	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%	0.0	0.0000%
	Other fish	39.4	0.5668%	108.6	1.4286%	114.3	1.4657%
	Total billfish	883	12.7085%	530	6.9777%	1,152	14.7698%
	Total sharks and rays	1,854	26.6868%	2,175	28.6044%	1,406	18.0315%
	Total finfish	374	5.3877%	424	5.5804%	324	4.1526%
	Total non-target	3,111	44.7829%	3,129	41.1624%	2,881	36.9539%

COASTAL STATE REPORTING

Tables 5-7 provide a description of foreign-flagged vessels licensed to fish in the Marshall Islands waters over the past five years. Domestically-based foreign longline vessels operating under the Marshall Islands Fishing Venture fly foreign flags of registration and not necessarily the flag of the countries operating and managing these vessels, which is essentially the Marshall Islands.

Table 5. Number of foreign longline vessels licensed to fish in the Marshall Islands EEZ, by year and flag.

	Longline						
	CHINA	FSM	JAPAN	KOREA	CH-TAIPEI	BELIZE	TOTAL
2005	43	6	25	2	5	7	88
2006	40	9	34	1	6	0	90
2007	36	6	21	0	1	0	64
2008	39	6	6	0	2	0	53
2009	33	6	6	0	0	0	45

Table 6. Number of foreign pole-and-line vessels licensed to fish in the Marshall Islands EEZ, by year and flag.

	Pole-and-line
	JAPAN
2005	35
2006	23
2007	22
2008	25
2009	12

Table 7. Number of foreign purse seine vessels licensed to fish in the Marshall Islands EEZ, by year and flag.

	YEAR				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
CHINA	5	8	12	10	4
FSM	6	1	3	4	4
JAPAN	34	33	35	28	30
KIRIBATI	1	1	1	1	1
KOREA	27	20	20	27	26
NZ	3	3	0	1	1
PNG	17	16	17	15	17
CH-TAIPEI	34	19	13	27	18
VANUATU	8	8	7	4	3
SOLOMON	3	0	0	0	0
USA	15	12	22	32	38
TOTAL	153	121	130	149	142

Available logsheet data indicate that total catch by purse seine fleets operating in the RMI EEZ decreased from 24,158 mt in 2008 to 15,258 mt in 2009 (Table 8). Skipjack tuna continues to be the dominant catch, accounting for over 95% of the total catch in the last year. Most of the purse seine fishing in-zone is restricted to southern areas of the EEZ.

The domestically-based foreign longline fleet comprises of vessels from China and FSM which are managed and operated through a local joint-venture fishing company. Japanese longline vessels offload their catch in ports in Japan. Catch estimates for 2006-2009 for the domestically-based vessels have been raised using unloadings data. The overall catch estimates by foreign longline fleets in 2009 indicate a slight increase from the previous year (Table 9). Bigeye catch continues to account for the major part of the target catch composition. As with the purse seine fishery, most of the longline fishing effort occurs in the southern areas of the RMI EEZ however in the longline fishery, effort is more widely distributed throughout the zone.

In 2009, catches from the pole-and-line fleet continued to decline to 438 mt after a five-year peak of over 4,500 mt in 2007 (Table 10). Skipjack is the main species making up the catch composition for this fleet and in fact 100% of the reported catch in 2009 was of this species. However, there remains no observer data to from this fleet for validation purposes.

Table 8. Annual catches by purse seine fleets in the Marshall Islands EEZ, by flag and species, 2005-2009 (Source : Unraised logsheet data collected by MIMRA)

Fleet	Year	Catch (metric tonnes)				TOTAL
		ALB	BET	SKJ	YFT	
CN	2005	0	0	0	0	0
	2006	0	3	334	111	449
	2007	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	0	0	0	0	0
	2009	0	0	203	0	203
FSMA	2005	0	107	6,833	830	7,770
	2006	0	120	6,441	620	7,181
	2007	0	241	4,237	384	4,863
	2008	0	244	7,196	1,797	9,237
	2009	0	160	8,863	239	9,262
JP	2005	0	24	1,312	131	1,467
	2006	0	0	3,252	169	3,421
	2007	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	0	0	636	282	918
	2009	0	7	379	31	417
KR	2005	0	0	1,995	0	1,995
	2006	0	19	1,231	260	1,511
	2007	0	5	215	124	345
	2008	0	7	375	177	559
	2009	0	0	772	0	772
NZ	2005	0	5	661	37	704
	2006	0	0	0	0	0
	2007	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	0	0	0	0	0
	2009	0	0	0	0	0
TW	2005	0	0	1,488	0	1,488
	2006	0	11	1,705	218	1,933
	2007	0	38	1,672	338	2,049
	2008	0	144	3,630	1,610	5,384
	2009	0	6	1,564	49	1,619
US	2005	0	116	2,932	336	3,384
	2006	0	4	167	8	180
	2007	0	6	376	21	403
	2008	0	194	3,514	2,087	5,795
	2009	0	30	2,661	105	2,795
VU	2005	0	9	3,376	90	3,475
	2006	0	27	771	185	983
	2007	0	16	3,946	166	4,127
	2008	0	22	1,953	290	2,265
	2009	0	7	142	41	190
TOTAL EEZ	2005	0	261	18,597	1,425	20,283
	2006	0	185	13,901	1,572	15,658
	2007	0	307	10,446	1,034	11,786
	2008	0	611	17,304	6,243	24,158
	2009	0	210	14,584	464	15,258

Tables 9. Annual catches by foreign longline fleets in the Marshall Islands EEZ, by flag and species, 2005-2009 (Source : 2006-2009 catch estimates of locally-based fleet derived from best combination of logsheet and unloadings data, others are unraised logsheet data collected by MIMRA)

Flag	Year	Catch (metric tonnes)				Total
		ALB	BET	YFT	OTH	
China	2005	20	1,030	600	2	1,651
	2006	39	1,908	1,478	388	3,811
	2007	14	2,028	727	348	3,116
	2008	58	2,270	554	394	3,275
	2009	57	2,156	732	359	3,304
FSM	2005	0	136	74	2	211
	2006	4	417	235	76	732
	2007	3	359	133	66	561
	2008	9	434	112	76	631
	2009	23	711	227	98	1,059
Japan	2005	12	106	45	0	163
	2006	23	120	70	0	212
	2007	5	114	40	0	159
	2008	0	0	0	0	0
	2009	0	0	0	0	0
Ch-Taipei	2005	0	35	21	0	56
	2006	0	5	7	0	12
	2007	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	0	10	2	0	12
	2009	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL EEZ	2005	33	1,307	738	3	2,081
	2006	65	2,449	1,790	463	4,768
	2007	21	2,501	899	415	3,836
	2008	67	2,714	668	470	3,918
	2009	80	2,867	959	457	4,363

Table 10. Annual catches by foreign pole-and-line fleets in the Marshall Islands EEZ, by flag and species, 2005-2009 (Source: Unraised logsheet data collected by MIMRA)

Fleet	Year	Catch (metric tonnes)				TOTAL
		BET	SKJ	YFT	OTH	
JAPAN	2005	0	653	1	1	655
	2006	0	978	8	1	987
	2007	0	4,517	1	0	4,518
	2008	9	2,447	6	0	2,462
	2009	0	438	0	0	438

DISPOSAL OF CATCH

The Marshall Islands Fishing Venture (MIFV) operates the Longline Fishbase with domestically-based foreign longline vessels as well as the national longline fleet. There was an increase in total unloadings in 2009 compared to the previous year and most of the

unloaded catches were bound for export markets (Tables 11 & 12). The MIFV exports mainly fresh chilled tuna species to markets in the US, China and Canada. Frozen fish (rejects and bycatch), designated as OTHER, are shipped to China via transport containers and/or sold locally.

Table 11. Total unloaded catch (mt) for domestically-based longline vessels, 2008

SPECIES	EXP	OTH	TOTAL
ALBACORE	17	52	69
BIGEYE	2,706	107	2,813
YELLOWFIN	592	100	692
BLUE MARLIN	38	444	482
MAHI MAHI / DOLPHINFISH	13	37	50
OPAH / MOONFISH	12	44	56
SAILFISH (INDO-PACIFIC)	0	1	1
SHARKS (UNIDENTIFIED)	0	215	215
SHORT-BILLED SPEARFISH	0	0	0
SWORDFISH	19	28	47
WAHOO	20	97	117
	3,378	1,000	4,378

Table 12 . Total unloaded catch (mt) for domestically-based longline vessels, 2009

Species	EXP	OTH	TOTAL
ALBACORE	2	83	85
BIGEYE	2,989	142	3,131
BLUE MARLIN	51	424	475
MAHI MAHI / DOLPHINFISH	3	14	17
OPAH / MOONFISH	10	15	25
SAILFISH (INDO-PACIFIC)	0	2	2
SHARKS (UNIDENTIFIED)	0	70	70
SWORDFISH	15	34	49
WAHOO	9	48	56
YELLOWFIN	818	203	1,021
	3,895	1,035	4,931

ONSHORE DEVELOPMENTS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

As briefly highlighted last year, the revitalized loining plant, managed by Pan Pacific Foods (RMI), Inc. resumed full production in April 2009 after a short hiatus owing to technical issues and repairs. At the time, the total number of local Marshallese employed and listed on the payroll was 1,798 with daily average of 420 working only one shift per day. Production output for 2009 was at 25mt daily. Total volume of inventory in 2009 was 667mt of pre-cooked loins and 136mt of tuna flakes compared to 25mt and 23mt respectively in 2008.

In 2009, the managing company opted to purchase a purse seine vessel to help supply raw materials to the plant. The vessel, F/V LOJET, operated by Pan Pacific Fishing (RMI), is duly registered in the RMI and is authorized and listed on the WCPFC Register of Fishing

Vessels. In addition to fishing in the RMI EEZ, the vessel is also licensed to fish in both Nauru and Kiribati. It is envisaged that 2 additional vessels will be added to the fleet to supplement the current arrangement of raw material provisions for the plant.

The Joint Venture between MIMRA and Koo's Fishing Company, Ltd. (KFC), operating under the name Marshall Islands Fishing Company (MIFCO), which commenced in March 2006, is ongoing with the vessel, Marshalls 201, operating under the FSM Arrangement for Regional Fisheries Access administered by the FFA. This venture continues to provide additional revenue stream and overall economic prospects for the small yet vibrant domestic fisheries sector in the RMI. The company has recently secured 2 additional fishing vessels which will also operate under MIFCO subject to finalization of complementary measures and plans.

The KFC fleet continues to operate also under the FSMA as in years past. On-shore expansion entails by-catch processing and exports in the near future with the recent construction and eventual completion of a multi-purpose cold storage facility within the KFC Headquarters compound.

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE FISHERY

Transshipment in Majuro port continues to pick up in recent years and remains an important catalyst for economic development in the RMI. It is envisaged that MIMRA and all concerned will continue and advocate for in-port transshipment noting the favorable economic spin-offs associated with this vital activity. Further clarity on this issue is evident in the recent adoption of the WCPFC transshipment measure on which the RMI was a strong advocate and was deeply involved in its initial formulation beginning in 2007.

Transshipment activities continue to comprise a significant source of revenue for the RMI and Majuro port has become a very vital link and hub for transshipment. The increase in number of such activities carried out in Majuro lagoon/port has proven over time to be a positive indicator for economic spin offs in private sector areas dealing directly and indirectly when vessels call into Majuro port from time to time (e.g. fuel sales with Marshalls Energy Company, etc). The RMI acknowledges and appreciates this as both an opportunity for collection of revenue and as an opportunity with responsibility to collect catch data from vessels. Consistent with international agreements and under the *Marine Resources Act 1997*, transshipment at sea under any circumstances is prohibited.

In late 2009, the RMI, through MIMRA, formally wrote to the SPC-OFP to notify of its clear intention to attribute all longline catches in the RMI EEZ to the RMI. This is in line with the recent efforts by FFA Members to shift longline catch attribution from a flag-based to a zone-based arrangement.

In summary, the RMI remains keen to further develop its domestic fishery through innovative and sustainable means. All of these prospects are lined up bearing in mind all the while the ongoing crucial scientific advice and conservation concerns through practicable measures to safeguard the last remaining healthy tuna stocks in the world.

The renewed active stance of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), of which the RMI is a committed member, through adoption of the 3rd Implementing Arrangement (3IA) among other things, has garnered international attention and prompted for more effective conservation and management measures while also mindful of the commercial aspects of the fishery as it relates to Pacific Island Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The RMI will continue and lobby for domestic fisheries development aspirations in the region. It is envisaged that sometime in the near future, a gradual shift in allocation of participatory rights from DWFNs to strictly domestic-based is what is needed to address the needs of all CCMs so as to ensure that no unnecessary burden is put on SIDS.

While it has indeed been a challenge, it should not be insurmountable even for a small island nation such as the RMI and it with this hope that we believe we will continue and strive to improve our overall conservation and management efforts and initiatives, all at the national, sub-regional, and ultimately the international level through engagement with other CCMs and the Secretariat as well as taking advantage of the opportunities and tangible benefits, as a Coastal State signatory to the WCPF Convention.

DATA COLLECTION SYSTEM AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

In 2009, port sampling activities continue to improve compared to the previous year (Tables 13 & 14). A total of more than 88,000 fish were measured during 2009 by a full-time port sampler stationed the MIFV longline fishbase. Collated data are sent directly to SPC-OFP on a monthly basis for analysis. Although not yet achieved, it is still an aim of MIMRA to acquire additional data entry staff to increase in-house processing to complement work undertaken at SPC.

The development of its data and statistical capability continues to be a vital tool for MIMRA. The SPC-OFP has been very instrumental in the Oceanic Division's data efforts, as evidenced by such activities as the successful integration and regular updates of the TUFMAN database at MIMRA.

MIMRA has attempted to carry observer trainings every year to meet the increasing demands placed on the Observer Program. In 2009, there were 28 active observers and a provisional total of 102 trips and 2,653 sea days were completed on both longline and purse seine vessels (Table 15). Unfortunately in the latter part of the year, there was no coverage on longline vessels due to increased demands for coverage on purse seine vessels (i.e. two-month FAD closure in 2009).

Tables 13. Port sampling (locally-based longline vessels), 2008

Month	Port	Number (Measured)					Number (not measured)				
		ALB	BET	YFT	OTH	TOTAL	ALB	BET	YFT	OTH	TOTAL
January	Majuro	0	4,466	3,381	148	7,995	265	15	64	4,173	4,517
February	Majuro	8	5,027	2,059	157	7,251	14	9	69	4,157	4,249
March	Majuro	9	5,679	1,982	142	7,812	200	65	143	4,428	4,836
April	Majuro	83	7,353	1,777	255	9,468	139	36	131	4,994	5,300
May	Majuro	221	6,106	1,190	165	7,682	48	40	69	2,592	2,749
June	Majuro	100	6,157	1,304	73	7,634	49	40	136	2,645	2,870
July	Majuro	226	5,646	2,345	75	8,292	509	78	89	2,155	2,831
August	Majuro	0	4,741	1,406	83	6,230	95	38	109	2,358	2,600
September	Majuro	1	5,124	1,325	97	6,547	128	27	58	1,970	2,183
October	Majuro	8	4,335	891	73	5,307	221	15	37	1,567	1,840
November	Majuro	9	3,663	619	61	4,352	142	10	9	1,165	1,326
December	Majuro	0	84	39	0	123	0	0	0	0	0
		665	58,381	18,318	1,329	78,693	1,810	373	914	32,204	35,301

Tables 14. Port sampling (locally-based longline vessels), 2009

Month	Port	Number (measured)				Number (not measured)			
		ALB	BET	YFT	OTH	ALB	BET	YFT	OTH
January	MAJURO	0	2,792	1,280	31	182	23	13	1,227
February	MAJURO	0	7,160	3,617	37	596	144	51	1,998
March	MAJURO	0	7,692	4,389	65	386	79	63	2,501
April	MAJURO	9	6,260	2,505	102	266	96	84	1,871
May	MAJURO	1	6,909	1,098	94	60	102	142	1,967
June	MAJURO	1	6,175	1,951	127	177	83	259	2,206
July	MAJURO	2	5,363	2,719	141	56	52	88	1,614
August	MAJURO	4	5,157	1,602	191	69	27	76	1,397
September	MAJURO	1	6,710	1,948	116	149	35	11	1,104
October	MAJURO	0	4,666	1,543	384	114	36	58	1,144
November	MAJURO	0	4,090	1,417	79	24	25	54	515
December	MAJURO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		18	62,974	24,069	1,367	2,079	702	899	17,544

Tables 15. Observed trips and days at sea in 2009

	Number of Trips			Number of Days		
Month	LL	PS	Total	LL	PS	Total
January	2	1	3	25	45	70
February	4	2	6	50	53	103
March	0	1	1	0	41	41
April	3	1	4	44	29	73
May	4	2	6	55	78	133
June	13	6	19	150	186	336
July	0	17	17	0	589	589
August	0	23	23	0	765	765
September	0	18	18	0	425	425
October	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	0	3	3	0	75	75
December	0	2	2	0	43	43
	26	76	102	324	2,329	2,653