

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

TWENTY-FOURTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 3-7 August 1992)

COUNTRY STATEMENT

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Introduction

Prior to 1972, fisheries in the Solomon Islands was mainly that of a subsistence nature where most of the catch was for the immediate household and family needs. In 1972, a tuna joint venture agreement was signed between the Solomon Islands Government and Taiyo Gyogyo Fishing Company of Japan to form Solomon Taiyo Limited (STL). In 1977, a second commercial tuna company, the National Fisheries Limited (NFD) was established as a joint venture between the Solomon Islands Government and STL and was purposely to encourage local involvement in the tuna industry and to supply additional fish to STL. Under the privatisation policy of the current Government, NFD was sold in mid-1990 and is now wholly owned by the BC Packers Company Ltd. A third joint venture company, the Makirabelle Ltd was established in 1991 and is a joint venture between Makira Province of Solomon Islands and Frabelle Fishing Company of the Philippines.

Solomon Taiyo Ltd in anticipating further expansion in its operations, moved and established a new fishing base in Noro, Western Province. A new cannery with a production capacity of 1.2 million cases of canned tuna was completed and commissioned in late 1989. Work on cold storage and other support facilities have now been completed and utilised. As a cost cutting measure, STL is very interested in establishing a can manufacturing company locally and is still negotiating with some potential partners.

The old STL base at Tulagi, Central Province, has been taken over by NFD but only the cold storage has been utilised.

On the provincial level, efforts have continued to be focused on the encouragement and development of fisheries in this sector through the establishment of fisheries projects in the Provinces together with the organisation and running of courses for fishermen. In addition to other negative factors that are associated with resources exploited by this fishery, the main problems encountered in developing fisheries in this sector are due mainly to the scattered nature and spatially populated islands of Solomon Islands.

Some resource assessment work has also been carried out by the Fisheries Division and these include several deep bottom fish surveys, pearl oyster surveys and turtle surveys. A three-year collaborative baitfish research project with CSIRO of Australia and in-country tuna tagging project with SPC have been completed as well. Finance and manpower constraints have been our major obstacle in carrying out research work.

Total foreign revenue earned from exports during 1991 amounted to SI\$228,713,163, of which 51% was from fisheries exports. Tuna and tuna related products accounted for about 47% of these foreign revenue earnings and 4% from other marine products (Fig.1). These have clearly reflected the importance of fishery to the economy of Solomon Islands.

Commercial Tuna Fisheries

Fisheries in the Solomon Islands during 1991 continued to be dominated by the domestic commercial tuna fishery. Catches from this fishery for the year amounted to a total of approximately 50,075 mt of tuna, of which about 76% was from the pole-and-line operations, 16% from the group seiners and 8% from the single seine operations (Fig. 2).

A total of 37 pole-and-line vessels were operated by STL and NFD during 1991 and these included chartered vessels from Fiji and Kiribati. The purse seine operations on the other hand had three group seiners and one single seiner working during the year.

Catches by the domestic surface fishery during 1991 were relatively good and an overall total of 37,939.7 mt was taken by the pole-and-line fishery, the second highest achieved since the establishment of the tuna industry in 1972 (Table 1). Group purse seine operations attained a record catch of 7,877.7 mt for the year and the single seine catch of 4,258.3 mt was the second highest recorded as well.

Catches taken by these domestic tuna fisheries are mainly from the Main Group Archipelago and the surrounding waters.

A total of 1,043,800 buckets, equivalent to 2,296 mt of baitfish was taken by the pole-and-line industry and an average of 45 buckets per haul obtained for the year (Table 2). Most of the baitfishing effort was in the Western Province, followed by Ysabel Province and Central Province in the third place. There were a total of 105 registered baitground in 1991 and was an increase from the previous year.

Foreign tuna vessels are also licensed to fish in Solomon Islands waters and these included longline vessels from Japan and the Republic of China (Taiwan), US purse seiners under the Multilateral Fisheries Treaty and long range pole-and-line vessels from Japan. During 1991, a total of 36 Japanese long-range pole-and-line vessels and 40 longliners, 20 Taiwanese longline vessels and 48 US purse seine vessels were licensed to fish in Solomon Islands waters.

Provincial Fisheries Development

Several projects have been put in place in the Provinces to encourage fisheries development in this sector and to serve the majority of Solomon Islanders, approximately 90% that live in rural areas. Brief comments on these projects are provided here for information purposes.

EEC Rural Fishing Enterprises Project

The objectives of the project are to develop commercial fishing enterprises at five of the existing provincial centres but due to financial and manpower constraints, it has been decided lately that only three of these centres will be utilised by the project. These will include Tatamba on Ysabel Province, Marau on Guadalcanal Province and Yandina from the Central Province.

Under current arrangements, the project will provide supporting facilities and equipment, fishing boats, a fish carrier vessel and management to run the centres. In consulting with Provincial authorities, fishermen and Fisheries Officers, it has been decided that the day-to-day running of the project will be carried out on a company style organisation and on this basis, the project will be making permanent loan of equipment to the company.

So far 14 boats have been built by this project, 10 of which are now with the Tatamba Fisheries Centre, 4 at Marau and the others with Yandina Fisheries Centre. A total of 24 trainees from these three centres have completed fisheries training at the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education.

OFCE/SIG North Malaita Project

This is a three-year project and is located in the northern region of Malaita Province. A total of seven fishing groups have been established under the project and assistance provided to the groups will include the provision of fishing gears, canoes, outboard motors, eskis, fish finders and small generators for recharging batteries. Ice machines and cool rooms have been installed by the project at Malu'u and Takwa, a cool room at Auki, the Headquarters of Malaita Province and an ice machine at Ata'a. Training is also provided to Fishermen from these seven groups under the Project.

This project has been extended until March 1993 to complete some outstanding work which has not been completed by the project at due date early this year.

US AID Funded Solomon Islands Rural Fishing and Marketing Development Project

This project is involved with the establishment of four new fisheries centres and the upgrading of three existing ones in the Provinces. Three of these centres have now been completed and construction work has started on two. Generators and ice-making machines for these centres have also been received.

A consultancy and a high-level workshop in association with this project have been held recently to look at the operation and management aspects of these centres. Senior government officers from both the provinces and the central government were involved in the workshop.

Rural Fishing Groups Project

This project is funded under the Canadian agency ICOD which has now ceased to exist and the specific objectives of its first phase were to establish four viable commercial fishing groups in Western Province; and to build and put into operation four inshore fishing boats which will be utilised by these groups. Only three of these groups were successful.

Arrangements on the second phase of the project have just begun and will involve the formation of a fishing association, supply of fishing gears and the training of association members.

Table 1: TUNA FISHERY OVERVIEW, BY GEAR TYPE AND YEAR

YEAR	DOMESTIC:			
	POLE & LINE mt	GROUP P/SEINE mt	SINGLE P/SEINE mt	TOTAL mt
1971	4,711.4	-	-	4,711.4
1972	7,905.0	-	-	7,905.0
1973	6,512.7	-	-	6,512.7
1974	10,331.5	-	-	10,331.5
1975	7,169.1	-	-	7,169.1
1976	15,799.7	-	-	15,799.7
1977	12,115.2	-	-	12,115.2
1978	17,454.7	-	-	17,454.7
1979	23,800.9	-	-	23,800.9
1980	21,935.5	961.8	-	22,897.3
1981	22,626.0	2,873.4	-	25,499.4
1982	17,322.2	3,091.2	-	20,413.4
1983	29,266.4	5,415.3	-	34,681.7
1984	30,599.6	5,447.2	-	36,046.8
1985	25,234.9	5,762.9	-	30,997.8
1986	38,645.0	5,943.2	-	44,588.2
1987	23,925.1	7,333.0	537.0	31,795.1
1988	33,051.7	6,646.0	4,073.9	43,771.6
1989	25,868.6	6,923.0	4,287.2	37,078.8
1990	21,557.0	6,830.0	2,211.6	30,598.6
1991	37,939.7	7,877.7	4,258.3	50,075.7

Table 2: ANNUAL BAITFISH CATCH AND EFFORT FOR DOMESTIC POLE-AND-LINE VESSELS, 1973-1991

YEAR	BAIT CATCH (BUCKETS)	NIGHTS FISHED	BKTS/ NIGHT	TOTAL HAULS	BUCKETS PER HAUL	BAIT CATCH (mt)
1973	118,808	1,722	69	N/A	-	488.8
1974	91,371	1,503	61	N/A	-	375.9
1975	130,587	1,563	84	N/A	-	537.2
1976	167,685	1,967	85	N/A	-	689.9
1977	225,076	2,913	77	N/A	-	926.0
1978	238,965	3,597	66	N/A	-	983.1
1979	303,741	4,858	63	N/A	-	1,249.6
1980	325,645	4,903	66	N/A	-	1,339.7
1981	645,811	4,892	132	10,580	61.0	1,420.8
1982	672,203	5,335	126	14,525	46.3	1,478.8
1983	895,631	6,844	131	17,543	51.1	1,970.4
1984	813,570	6,548	124	18,167	44.8	1,789.9
1985	1,015,539	7,593	134	20,024	50.7	2,234.2
1986	1,075,263	8,150	132	21,878	49.1	2,365.6
1987	956,323	7,372	130	21,671	44.1	2,103.9
1988	1,135,289	8,008	142	21,251	53.4	2,497.6
1989	968,301	7,347	132	19,281	50.2	2,130.3
1990	863,163	6,638	130	18,923	45.6	1,899.0
1991	1,043,811	7,866	133	23,261	44.9	2,296.4

Note: One bucket of bait = approx. 2.2 kgs wet weight of baitfish

BAITFISH CATCH (IN BUCKETS OF BAIT) BY PROVINCE, 1982-1991

Province	Central	Western	Malaita	Makira	Isabel	G/canal	Others	TOTAL
1982	141,640	410,902	6,883	-	112,773	-	-	672,198
1983	264,991	548,537	9,319	-	72,784	-	-	895,631
1984	93,358	563,479	5,161	241	145,966	68	5,297	813,570
1985	166,001	690,730	16,263	-	129,199	4,848	8,496	1,015,537
1986	86,597	716,825	4,001	-	256,490	1,189	10,161	1,075,263
1987	82,449	769,626	8,334	2	63,982	9,214	22,726	956,333
1988	129,745	899,300	1,937	-	98,550	4,914	843	1,135,289
1989	52,797	711,950	4,100	-	172,309	19,671	7,474	968,301
1990	15,061	713,294	6,093	-	116,374	11,774	567	863,163
1991	49,042	839,645	12,175	-	115,518	26,561	870	1,043,811

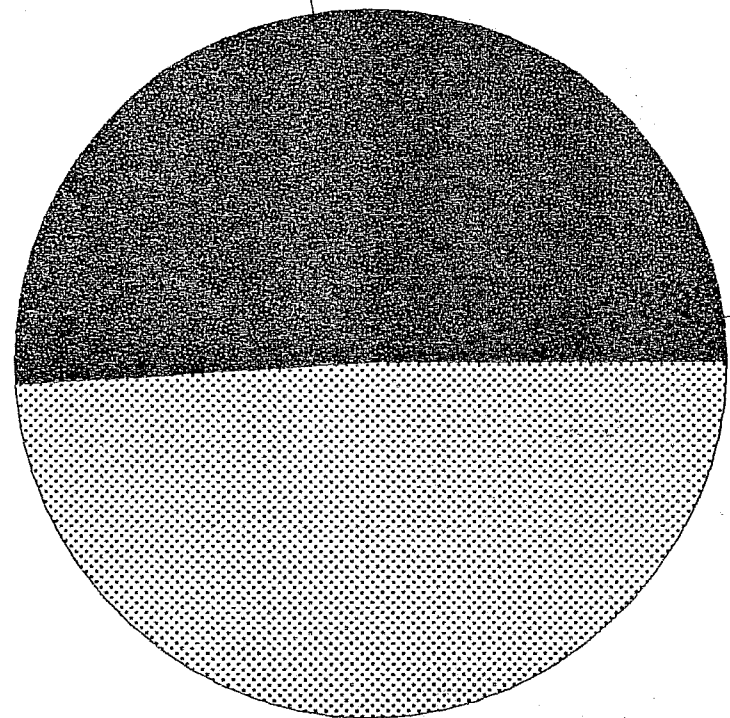
Details of catch, effort and CPUE, by Province, 1990.

PROVINCES	HAULS	BUCKETS	BOAT NIGHTS	BKTS/ HAUL	BKTS/ BOAT NIGHT	HAULS/ BOAT NIGHT	HAULS AS A % OVERALL	BUCKETS AS A % OVERALL	NIGHTS AS A % OVERALL
CENTRAL	510	15,061	225	29.5	66.9	2.3	2.7	1.7	3.4
WESTERN	14,384	713,294	5,026	49.6	141.9	2.9	76.0	82.6	75.7
MALAITA	83	6,093	49	73.4	124.3	1.7	0.4	0.7	0.7
MAKIRA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ISABEL	3,531	116,374	1,192	33.0	97.6	3.0	18.7	13.5	18.0
GUADALCAN	402	11,774	139	29.3	84.7	0.2	2.1	1.4	2.1
others	13	567	7	43.6	81.0	6.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
TOT/MEAN:	18,923	863,163	6,638	45.6	130.0	2.9	100.0	100.0	100.0

FIG 1

Percentage export by product for 1991

Tuna & related products (47.0%)



other marine product (4.0%)

others 49.0%

PERCENTAGE TUNA CATCH BY GEAR FOR 1991

FIG 2

