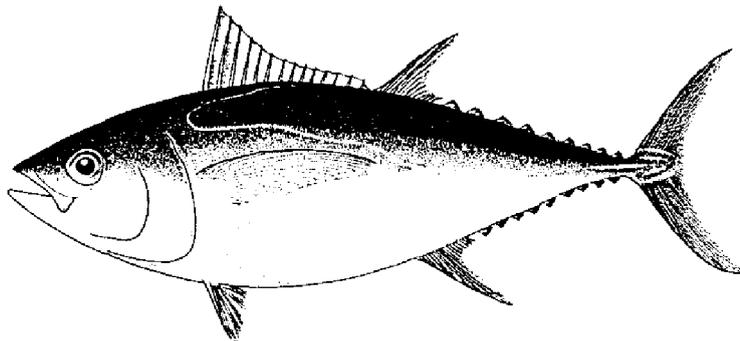




Nauru Tuna Fishery Report



Peter Jacob

Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority
Nauru

August 2004

Nauru Tuna Fishery Report

17th Standing Committee on Tuna & Billfish

August 2004

Majuro, Marshall Islands

BACKGROUND

The Nauru Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) measures only 320,000 km² in size. However the size is a deception with respect to tuna stock abundance as the Nauru EEZ is know for its tuna abundant particularly with respect to skipjack and yellowfin and to a lessor extent bigeye. These tuna stocks are abundant all year round and are harvested mainly by distant water fishing nations (DWFNs) utilising the purse seine method of fishing and to a lessor extent, longline fishing undertaken by the DWFNs and a very small scale domestic industry. Tuna is also harvested on a small artisanal level by Nauruan fishers for subsistence purposes.

PURSE SEINE FISHERY

There are currently 153 purse seiners licensed in Nauru waters as illustrated in the chart below.

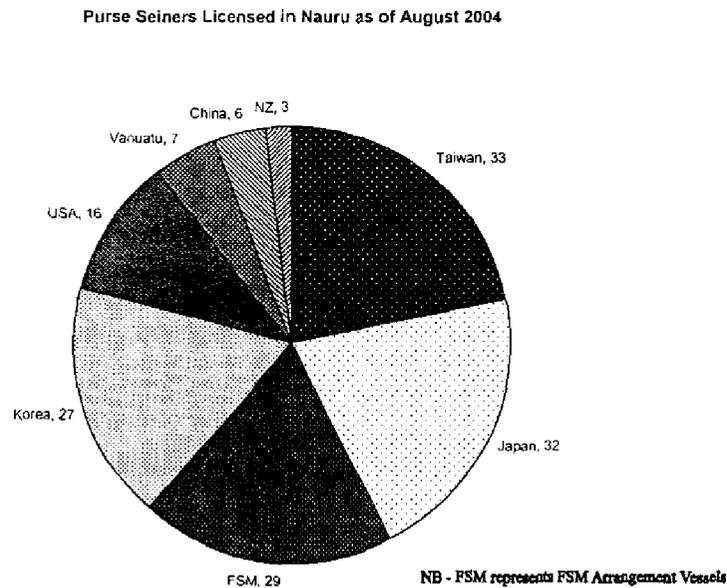


Figure 1 – Total Number of PS

Tuna catches in the Nauru EEZ although are abundant all year round, they are however heavily influenced by the El Niño Southern Oscillation events. While *El Niño* brings very good fishing to Nauru's EEZ and around the central Pacific region, its' sister *La Niña* is the opposite and brings very poor catches in Nauru as the fishing grounds shifts to the western part of the Pacific region. Illustrated in the table below are the purse seiner catches for the period 1999-2003. The 2003 data is incomplete as more log sheets from purse seiners are yet to be received.

Table 1 – Total PS Catch by Species, Weight and Year

Year	Species	Weight (kg)
1999	Bigeye Tuna	505.90
	Skipjack Tuna	31,591.20
	Yellowfin Tuna	15,967.90
	Others	242
	Total	48,307
2000	Bigeye Tuna	114
	Skipjack Tuna	43,695.70
	Yellowfin Tuna	16,505.60
	Others	67
	Total	60,382.30
2001	Bigeye Tuna	110.30
	Skipjack Tuna	34,076
	Yellowfin Tuna	14,608
	Others	209
	Total	49,003.90
2002	Bigeye Tuna	405.90
	Skipjack Tuna	97,543.40
	Yellowfin Tuna	8,835.20
	Others	139
	Total	106,923.50
2003	Bigeye Tuna	177.30
	Skipjack Tuna	16,012.30
	Yellowfin Tuna	3,294.40
	Others	162.19
	Total	19,646.19

Total Purse Seine Catch 1999-2003 (mt)

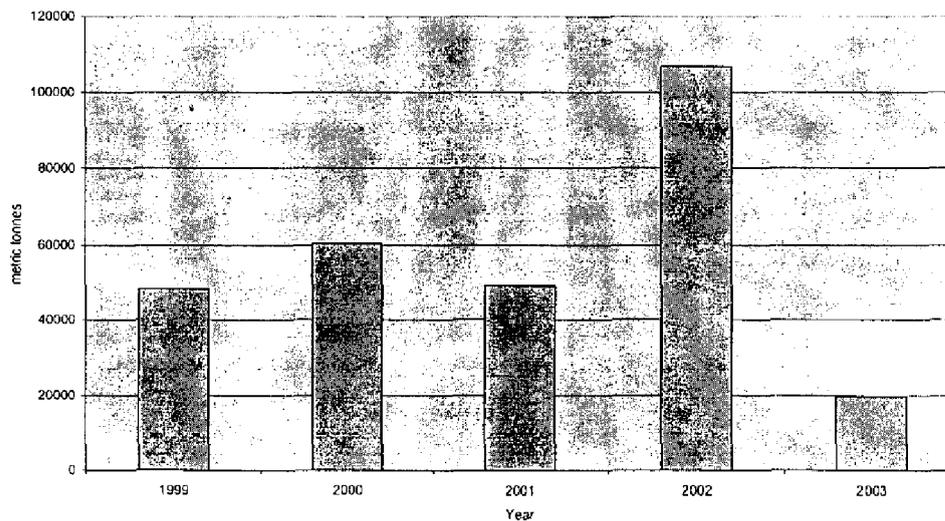


Figure 2 – Total PS Catch

Figure 2 shows that the catch trend is on the increase (data for 2003 incomplete) and this would be attributed to a range of factors with increasing vessel capacity being a major contributing factor, *inter alia*.

Figure 3 below illustrates that skipjack is by far the most important tuna resource in the purse seine fishery in Nauru with yellowfin a distant second and bigeye and other species being of less significance in terms of quantity.

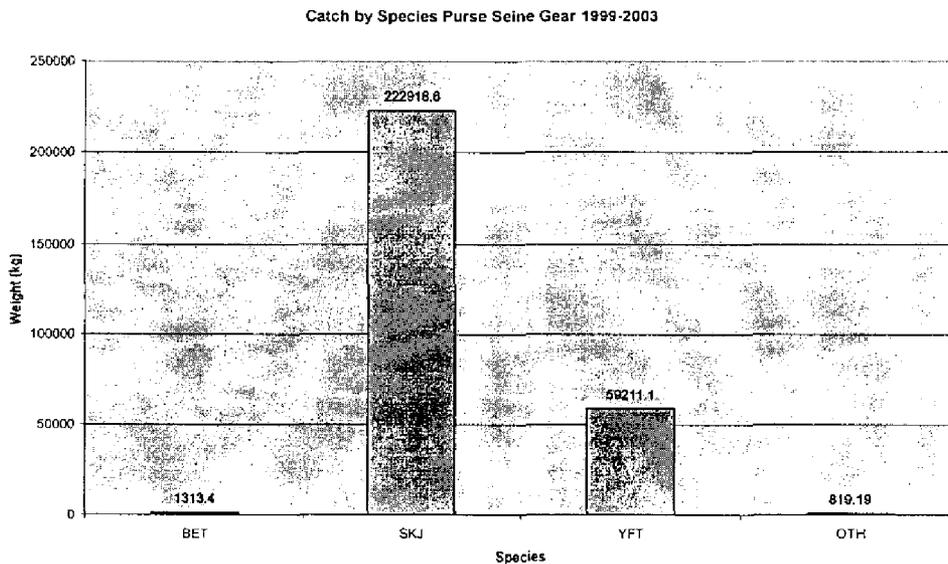


Figure 3 – PS Catch by Species

LOONGLINE FISHERY

The longline fishery is small and insignificant when compared to the purse seine fishery. The warm tropical waters are not ideally suited for the longline fishing industry and tuna species caught around the central equatorial Pacific are generally known to contain less fat, thus the value of the fish is much lower in the sashimi markets such as Japan.

Nevertheless, longline fishing had been undertaken in Nauru in the past. Data is not freely available from the DWFN since no license agreement had been entered into in the past, with the exception of Japan, although, on a very small scale.

Catch data with Japan shows over a half a tonne of fish (0.671mt) were caught in year 2000 and nearly one and half tonne (1.401 mt) in 2003. There were no Japanese longline catches in 2001 and 2002 in Nauru's EEZ with the available data.

In the development endeavours of the Nauru fisheries sector, the Nauru Fisheries & Marine Resources Authority acquired two small catamaran longliners (18m and 13m in length) for the purpose of undertaking trial longline fishing to gather data and a small scale commercial undertaking. The data below illustrates the catches for 2003

and 2004. Data for 2000-2002 are not available due to the information being corrupted on the computer and hopefully could be retrieved.

Table 2 – Domestic LL Catch by Weight (kg) and by Species-2003

Bigeye Tuna	Yellowfin Tuna	Skipjack Tuna	Albacore	Black Marlin	Sail Fish	Sword Fish	Wahoo	Barracuda
8,898	4,839.30	2,301.90	1,489.30	119.05	265.10	238.55	112	107.40
Shark	Oil Fish	Rudder Fish	Broadbill	Moon Fish	Dolphin Fish	Blue Marlin		Total
497	56.05	63.10	195.50	43.70	35.50	464.65		19,726

Table 3 – Domestic LL Catch by Weight and by Species-2004

Bigeye Tuna	Yellowfin Tuna	Albacore	Black Marline	Sail Fish	Shark	Broadbill	Dolphin Fish	Total
414.95	634.050	9	39.60	37.80	53.70	2.30	19.90	1,211.30

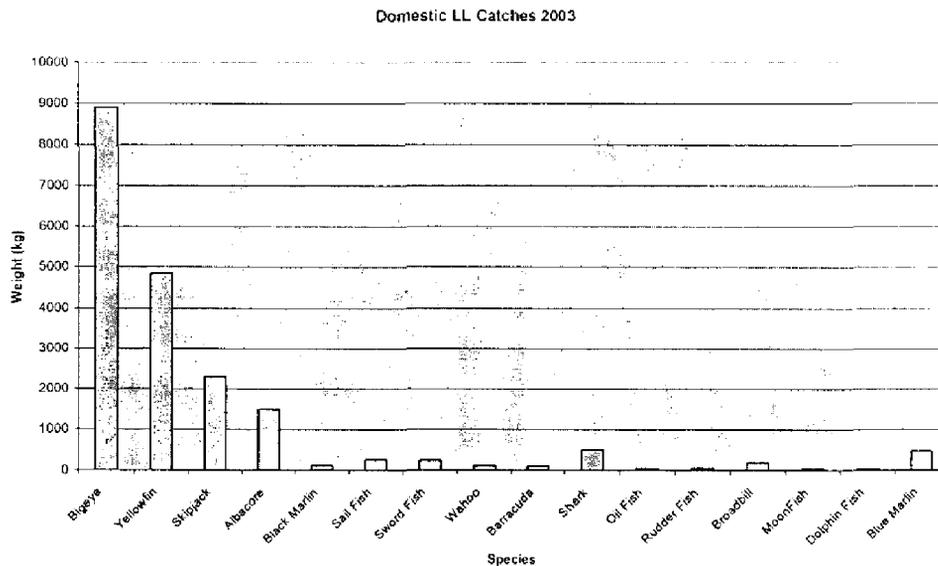


Figure 4 – Domestic LL Catch 2003

Figure 4 illustrates bigeye and yellowfin being the two main species harvested. The catch for the year 2003 were all made between the months August – December. From November to December a large longline vessel from Fiji (30m in length) under a joint venture arrangement with the Nauru Fisheries & Marine Resources Authority landed significant catches in Nauru which are included in table 2 and illustrated in Figure 4.

The two Nauru longline vessels are currently not fishing due to technical reasons and are to undergo major repairs by the end of the year.

MARKETS

The longline catches were sent to Japan on a trial basis with a significant portion sold on the domestic market.

Purse seine catches were sent to canneries around the Asia-Pacific region.

FUTURE PROSPECTS & DEVELOPMENT

The tuna fishery on Nauru will basically remain in its current form for many years to come, that is Nauru will continue to rely heavily on DWFNs harvesting the tuna resources in return for paying access fees which are an important and reliable source of income for the country.

Domestic industry development has the potential to be developed but it needs to be viable and funds have to be secured which are increasingly difficult to source in a very competitive and poorer world.

Closer cooperation between island countries in managing their tuna resources and developing it on a sustainable basis is most probably the best way forward. DWFNs should seriously consider lending more assistance not only to Nauru but all Pacific island countries in developing their tuna industry as tuna is the resource that most Pacific island countries rely on for their future development aspirations.