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**Taiwan Fisheries for Yellowfin Tuna in the
Central and Western Pacific, 1992-94.**

Chi-Lu Sun and Su-Zan Yeh

Institute of Oceanography
National Taiwan University
Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

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Introduction

As we reported during the WPYRG2 and WPYRG3 meetings of the last two years, Taiwan has three main fisheries for yellowfin tuna in the central and western Pacific Ocean. These are the distant-water longline fishery, the distant-water purse seine fishery and the offshore longline fishery. This paper briefly reviews the landings and vessel participation data from these fisheries for the period 1992-1994. Also reviewed are the yearly nominal catch rate data for the distant-water longline and purse seine fisheries.

The Distant-Water Tuna Longline Fishery

The numbers of distant-water tuna longliners operating in the Pacific Ocean in 1992, 1993 and 1994 were 92, 119 and 122, respectively (Table 1). The total yearly yellowfin catches for the two years 1992-1993 in the central and western Pacific were 841 and 1,088 MT, respectively (Table 2). In 1991, most of the catch (80% of the total) was from the WPYF-4 and WPYF-5 areas. By contrast, most of the catch in 1992 (78% of the total) was from the WPYF-3 area (Table 3). The yearly nominal catch rate decreased from 0.72 fish/1000 hooks in 1991 to 0.65 fish/1000 hooks in 1992.

The Distant-Water Tuna Purse Seine Fishery

The numbers of distant-water purse seiners operating in the western Pacific Ocean during 1992, 1993 and 1994 were 44, 43

and 43, respectively (Table 1). The landings of yellowfin tuna rose from 44,459 MT in 1992 to 62,241 MT in 1993, an increase of 17,782 MT. The yearly nominal catch rate increased from 5.64 MT/day in 1992 to 10.64 MT/day in 1993.

The purse seine fleet is currently operating in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of the Federated States of Micronesia and Papua New Guinea as well as both countries' adjacent high seas (i.e. WPYF-3 and WPYF-4 areas). There are six purse seiners which, before the end of this year, will be bound for the EEZ of Kiribati for the experimental exploitation of new fishing grounds.

Offshore Tuna Longline Fishery

The number of Taiwanese offshore tuna vessels participating in the fishery decreased from 1,898 in 1992 to 1,791 in 1993. The landings of yellowfin, however, increased from 6,819 MT to 8,450 MT over the same period (Table 2). Clearly, the decrease of 107 vessels did not produce a proportional decline in the catch, which actually increased by 1,631 MT. Most of the offshore fleets are currently operating in the WPYF-3 area.

Total Yellowfin Catch

The total annual catch of yellowfin rose from 52,663 MT in 1992 to 72,097 MT in 1993. The increase in catch was produced mainly by the purse seine fishery.

Table 1. Annual number of Taiwan tuna boats operating in the central and western Pacific, 1992-94.

Type of boat	1992	1993	1994
Longliner			
Distant-water	92	119	122*
Offshore	1,898	1,791	NA
Purse seiner	44	43	43

* up to February 1994
NA data not available

Table 2. Taiwan yellowfin catches (in MT) by type of fishery in the central and western Pacific, 1992-94.

Type of fishery	1992	1993	1994
Longliner			
Distant-water	841	1,088*	NA
Offshore	6,819	8,450	NA
Purse seiner	44,459	62,241	NA
Other**	544	318	NA
Total	52,663	72,097	NA

* preliminary estimate
** includes catches by troll, pole and line, etc.
NA data not available

Table 3. Taiwan distant-water longline catches of yellowfin in metric tons in the central and western pacific by month and by WPYF area, 1992.

Month	WPYF area							Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	-	-	-	-	121.7	-	0	121.7
2	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
3	-	-	0	-	-	-	0	0
4	-	-	0	-	-	-	0	0
5	-	-	0	-	-	-	0	0
6	-	-	81.2	-	-	-	1.7	82.9
7	-	-	96.8	-	-	-	7.2	104.0
8	-	-	55.7	-	38.4	-	4.0	98.1
9	-	-	91.9	-	11.4	-	0.6	103.9
10	-	-	182.3	-	0	-	0	182.3
11	-	-	84.4	-	0	-	0	84.4
12	-	-	63.5	-	-	-	0	63.5
Total	-	-	655.8	-	171.5	-	13.5	840.8

'-' no data

'0' no yellowfin catch