

**SIXTH SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE RESEARCH (SPAR) WORKSHOP**

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**INFORMATION ON THE ALBACORE FISHERY  
IN NIUE'S EEZ/TERRITORIAL SEAS**

by

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## **INFORMATION ON ALBACORE FISHERY IN NIUE'S EEZ/TERRITORIAL SEAS.**

Niue does not have any National fishing vessels involved in the albacore fishery, and local domestic vessels do not directly target this species. Varying amounts of albacore have however been taken from Niue waters over the last three years by Taiwanese longliners. These vessels are licensed under a bilateral albacore fishing Agreement between the Niue Government and The Taiwan Deepsea Tuna Boat Owners and Exporters Association.

It is uncommon to hear of or see albacore being caught in Niue. Of the few reported albacore that have been caught by local fishermen, most have been in the range of 7 - 15 Kg.

The majority of the few reported catches have been by dinghies fishing around FAD's using small vertical longliners, and canoes fishing deep with hand lines. Personal observation tends to suggest that there has been a decrease in the occurrence of albacore in local catches over the last five or so years, with very few reported catches for the last two years, however there is no recorded data available to verify this.

Reporting from the Taiwanese vessels has improved to some extent over the three licensing periods, yet remains far from satisfactory. Poor reporting has made it hard to calculate accurate catches in zone as well as fishing effort. Attached below are summary tables of in zone catches by the Taiwanese vessels showing Total catches and catch composition for the three licensing periods (broken into quarters), the last quarter (Mar 1996) is yet to be completed. Niue currently licenses 16 Taiwanese vessels at US \$2500/vessel, a decrease in numbers on the 1994/95 licensing period of 48 vessels (US \$2000/vessel).

### **TAIWANESE REPORT SUMMARIES** **1993/1994/1995**

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>MAR QTR 93</b>	<b>JUNE QTR 93</b>	<b>SEPT QTR 93</b>	<b>DEC QTR 93</b>	<b>TOTAL 1993</b>
Albacore	63.65	0	194.4	86.452	344.502
Bigeye	0.75	0	10	0.21	10.96
Billfish	18.4	0	14.3	2.585	35.285
Yellowfin Tuna	16.7	0	33.8	2.445	52.945
Other	17.3	0	42	8.13	67.43
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>116.8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>294.5</b>	<b>99.822</b>	<b>511.122</b>
<b>No. TRIPS</b>			<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Av.catch/trip</b>			<b>14.74</b>	<b>14.26</b>	

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>MAR QTR 94</b>	<b>JUNE QTR 94</b>	<b>SEPT QTR 94</b>	<b>DEC QTR 94</b>	<b>TOTAL 1994</b>
Albacore	200.13	156.9	243.64	62.32	662.99
Bigeye	2.238	3.3	1.97	0.17	7.678
Billfish	11.24	3.49	12.28	5.18	32.19
Yellowfin Tuna	12.08	8.835	11.535	5.01	37.46
Other	0.053	2.012	1.495	3.23	6.79
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>225.741</b>	<b>174.537</b>	<b>270.92</b>	<b>75.91</b>	<b>747.108</b>
<b>No. TRIPS</b>					
<b>Av.catch/trip</b>					

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>MAR QTR 95</b>	<b>JUNE QTR 95</b>	<b>SEPT QTR 95</b>	<b>DEC QTR 95</b>	<b>TOTAL 1995</b>
Albacore	41.593	0	18.3	150.62	210.513
Bigeye	0.05	0	0.18	5.42	5.65
Billfish	4.18	0	1.05	2.75	7.98
Yellowfin Tuna	4.495	0	6.07	11.35	21.915
Other	0.04	0	4.41	129.342	133.792
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50.358</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30.01</b>	<b>299.482</b>	<b>379.85</b>
<b>No. TRIPS</b>					
<b>Av.catch/trip</b>					

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>MAR QTR 96</b>	<b>JUNE QTR 96</b>	<b>SEPT QTR 96</b>	<b>DEC QTR 96</b>	<b>TOTAL 1996</b>
Albacore	107.89				
Bigeye	6.32				
Billfish	5.06				
Yellowfin Tuna	15.66				
Other	2.63				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>137.56</b>				
<b>No. TRIPS</b>					
<b>Av.catch/trip</b>					

It would appear from the summary tables that the potential does exist for local longlining ventures from the perspective that albacore can be caught in Niue's EEZ in reasonable numbers. However little investigation has been carried out as to the economic feasibility of such ventures. An attempt was made late 1993 under the "Vakamanu Agreement" to carry out a longline feasibility study amongst other things, this however failed after only two short fishing trips due to poor weather conditions.

Niue is currently in support of a Multilateral Subregional Agreement with the TDSTBEA as apposed to a renewed bilateral Agreement. The idea of nationals entering into the longline fishery in the region continues to be discussed yet Niue's isolation and lack of a safe harbour continue to be major constricting factors.