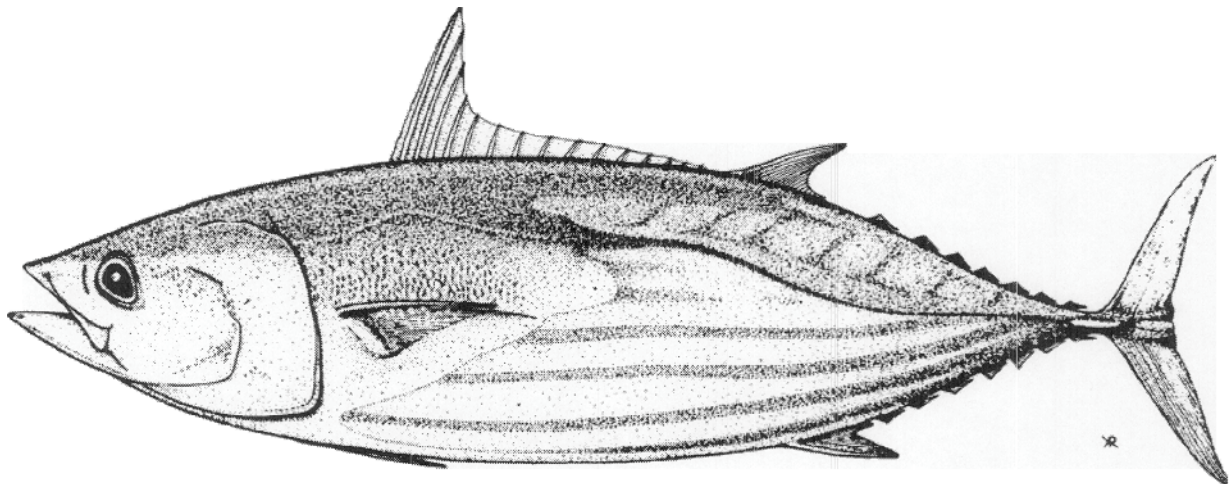


## **NFR - 14**



### **Domestic Tuna Fisheries in the Solomon Islands**



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# **Domestic Tuna Fisheries in the Solomon Islands**

A National Tuna Fishery Report

*prepared for*

The 14th Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish,  
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## **Introduction**

Solomon Islands (SI) domestic tuna fishery began in 1972 with the establishment of Solomon Taiyo Limited (STL). Since then the fishery has grown to become one of the major foreign exchange earners and the largest employer in the country. The current domestic fleet comprised of pole-and-line, purse seine and longline fleets. In addition to this, Japanese (PL,LL&PS), Taiwanese (LL &PS) and Korean (PS) foreign fishing vessels also fish in the SI waters under bi-lateral arrangements, whilst US purse seiners have access to a restricted zone of the EEZ under the Multi-lateral Treaty arrangement. Arrangements to have the restricted zone extended is awaiting member countries' endorsement.

2000 saw the down-turn of SI tuna fisheries as a result of a two years social unrest. The unrest forced fishing companies to cease operation. STL, Solomon Islands' veteran tuna company also suffered greatly and this has resulted in Taiyo Gyogyo having to withdraw its shares in July 2000. STL is now 100% owned by the SI Government's Investment Corporation of Solomon Islands (ICSI).

The commercial tuna fishery sector is largely based on the country's rich tuna resources and has previously been managed based on a quota system, which allocates catch quotas to various licence holders. Since 1999, under the new Tuna Development and Management Plan however, licence limitations and area restriction have become the two strategies used to regulate the tuna fisheries.

## **Total Catches**

An overview of historical annual catches in the SI waters, from 1971 -2000, is presented in **Table 1**. The catches for the years 1995 -1998 have all exceeded 100,00 mt per year, with domestic fleets accounting for an average of 39% and foreign 61 %. This was a fall in domestic fleet's dominance in the early 90s of which it had been contributing an average of 74% (1990 -1994) as compared to foreign's 26%. The 1999 catch dropped to 47,240 mt and slashed further down to an all time low of 7,496 mt in 2000. The falls in 1999 and 2000 were direct results of the exodus of fishing vessels from the SI waters and the closure of many locally based fishing companies due to the social unrest situation, which devoured the country during the past two years.

**Table 2.** presents the total domestic catches by number of companies and number of fishing vessels.

Domestic Pole-and-line(DPL) catches have revolved around 20,000 mt between 1996 -1999 and then dropped to 2,695.7 mt in 2000. Like the DPL fleet, the domestic single purse seine (DSPS) fleet catch has dropped from 20,011 in 1999 to just 2,365 mt in 2000, whilst the domestic group purse seine (DGPS) fleet catch dropped from 4,186 mt to 1,040 mt during the same period. The domestic longline (DLL) catch was least affected during the period, having only dropped from 1,212 mt to 1,057 mt.

Contribution wise, the DPL fleet have during the past five years, been contributing an average of 50% of the domestic catch per year, DSPS fleet 35%, the DGPS 11% and DLL fleet 4%.

**Fleet Structure**

The current fleet structure is presented in **Table 3**. A total of 5 locally based companies were licensed to fish for tuna in 2000. Of these, 3 companies were licensed to operate purse seiners, 2 companies poie-and-liners, one company tuna longliners, and 2 companies shark longliners. Only STL has continued to operate its GPS fleet in 2000. In 1999, 15 locally based companies were registered. In addition to the domestic fleets, 3 Japanese associations have been granted licence to operate foreign longline, poie-and-line and purse seine vessels in the SI waters under a bi-lateral arrangement. Taiwan Deep Sea Tuna Association (PS&LL) and Korea Deep Sea Tuna Association (PS) have also been granted licence to operate under similar bi-lateral arrangements, whilst US seiners also have access under the multi-lateral treaty arrangement to operate purse seiners. Two companies have been licensed to do shark longlining.

In total, 201 fishing vessels were licensed to fish in the SI waters in 2000. This comprised of 35 (IS local & 20 foreign) tuna longliners, 54 (23 local & 31 foreign) pole-and-liners, 91 (8 local & 83 foreign) purse seiners and 13 shark longliners.

As of July, 2001, 142 (22 domestic &120 foreign) fishing vessel have been registered to fish in the SI EEZ. The domestic pole-and-line fleet has drastically reduced its fleet from 23 boats in 2000 to just two (2) in 2001. This was a direct result of STL' s closing of most operations and closing down. Currently there are only two pole-aDd-line vessels licenced to fish. STL's group purse seine fleet operation has also been terminated indefinitely.

**Catch by Species for EachGearType**

**Table 4(a)**. presents the annual catch composition, by species for each gear type for the domestic fleets for 1995 -2000. The highest domestic catch of 48,241 mt was recorded in 1998 and this comprised of 38,028 mt skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), 8,041 mt yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*), 740 mt bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*), 370 mt Albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), 91 mt marlin and 20 mt others. During the last three years, skipjack (~70%) and yellowfin (~20%) have accounted for an average of about 90% of the domestic catches. Skipjack has always been the predominant species of poie-and-line catches, accounting for around 90% of total catches. Yellowfin accounts for the remaining 10%.

Skipjack and yellowfin were the major species caught by purse seining, whilst yellowfin and bigeye were the predominant species caught by longline.

For the foreign fleets, **Table 4(b)**, the catch fluctuated around 67,000 mt from 1995 to 1998 until it slashed down to 2,428 mt in 1999 and further down to just 338 mt in 2000.

## **Final Market Destination of Catches (1996)**

**Table 5(a) & (b)** gives the export destinations of SI tuna products from 1990 -2000. Major buyers of frozen fish are Japan and Thailand; canned products are UK, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea; fishmeal are Taiwan and Singapore. Only Japan imports smoked fish from the SI. SI's fresh(chilled) tuna are principally exported to Japan and Taiwan.

## **Onshore Developments**

### ***Transshipment***

A total of 532 transshipments were made at the three designated SI ports between 1997 -2001. Most of these transshipments took place towards the end of 1997 and through the first half of 1998. These activities have earned the Government substantial income through levies and port entry fees. Transshipment activities have reduced greatly during the past two years, with only 7 transshipments recorded for 2000.

### ***Processing***

Only STL had continued to do canning and operate a fishmeal and a fish smoking (arabushi) plants. The new STL company will continue to do canning and fish smoking.

Solgreen Enterprises Limited alone is currently engaged in onshore packaging of fresh tuna and billfish for export. A total of 1,485 mt and 816 mt of fresh tuna was exported in 1999 and 2000 respectively.

## **Future Prospects and Developments**

### ***Tuna policy review***

A review of the Solomon Islands Tuna Fisheries was undertaken in 1998 and this has resulted in the production of the Solomon Islands National Tuna Management and Development Plan. The Plan provides for a clear and transparent procedure in the decision-making process with the aim of sustaining exploitable stocks, minimising environmental, social and cultural impacts, increasing domestic participation, increasing foreign revenue, enhancing administrative support and ensuring accountability.

This is in support of the Fisheries Act 1998, which provides for the long-term conservation and sustainable utilisation of fishery resources that enhances the maximisation of benefits and participation of nationals in the exploitation, management and development of fishery resources including tuna.

### ***Observers Programme***

The Solomon Islands has been running a domestic observers programme since the early 70s. **In** 1997 the programme was been re-strengthened with the training of 25 observers, 18 of which were immediately recruited on contract basis. A total of 172 trips were made from 1998 -2000, and of this 57% were on domestic boats and 43 on foreign. The program was temporarily suspended early this year due to the closure of many operations, but has now been reactivated with the recalling of six observers.

Four(4) port samplers, with funding assistance from SPC, were stationed at the two major landing fishing ports, Noro (STL) and Tulagi (NFD). Because of the social unrest problem the port sampling project was also affected badly.

### ***Eligibility Point Evaluation System***

An eligibility point evaluation system has been introduced to ensure that vessels and companies to be involved in tuna fishing, especially joint-venture companies, are genuine, hence maximise benefits derivable from the country's tuna resources.

Table 1: Annual Tuna Fishery Catch Overview by Gear Type for Domestic and Foreign Fleets.

DOMESTIC						FOREIGN				
YEAR	Pole & line	Group seiner	Seiner	Longline	Total	Pole & line	Seiner	Longline	Total	Grand total
1971	4,711.0				4,711.0	-	-	-	-	4,711.0
1972	7,905.0				7,905.0	45.0	-	-	45.0	7,950.0
1973	6,512.0			132.0	6,644.0	269.0	-	-	269.0	6,913.0
1974	10,331.0				10,331.0	6,831.0	-	-	6,831.0	17,162.0
1975	7,169.0				7,169.0	8,255.0	-	-	8,255.0	15,424.0
1976	15,799.0			212.0	16,011.0	19,865.0	-	-	19,865.0	35,876.0
1977	12,115.0			287.0	12,402.0	8,138.0	-	-	8,138.0	20,540.0
1978	18,354.0			300.0	18,654.0	270.0	-	234.9	504.9	19,158.9
1979	23,801.0			715.0	24,516.0	535.1	-	2,565.0	3,100.1	27,616.1
1980	21,935.0			818.0	22,753.0	546.0	979.0	2,718.9	4,243.9	26,996.9
1981	22,626.0			209.0	22,835.0	801.6	2,793.0	4,700.2	8,294.8	31,129.8
1982	17,322.0			403.0	17,725.0	384.5	2,836.0	3,157.0	6,377.5	24,102.5
1983	29,266.5			503.0	29,769.5	-	5,226.0	2,178.5	7,404.5	37,174.0
1984	30,599.6	3,556.0		324.0	34,479.6	415.5	1,368.0	1,127.2	2,910.7	37,390.3
1985	25,234.9	2,472.0		244.0	27,950.9	3,323.7		4,576.0	7,899.7	35,850.6
1986	38,822.7	5,537.0			44,359.7	61.5		3,059.0	3,120.5	47,480.2
1987	23,925.0	6,616.0			30,541.0	79.8	923.0	997.0	1,999.8	32,540.8
1988	33,051.7	4,469.0	2,294.0		39,814.7	188.0	262.0	7,972.0	8,422.0	48,236.7
1989	25,868.8	6,560.0	3,730.0		36,158.8	73.0	-	4,906.0	4,979.0	41,137.8
1990	18,559.7	6,161.0	2,009.0		26,729.7	6,839.9	9.1	3,830.0	10,679.0	37,408.7
1991	36,221.7	6,618.0	4,101.0		46,940.7	766.5	2,740.9	4,399.9	7,907.3	54,848.0
1992	19,736.5	4,738.0	6,441.0		30,915.5	104.5	6,878.0	2,453.1	9,435.6	40,351.1
1993	17,832.2	6,398.0	4,973.0		29,203.2	18.0	5,720.2	3,107.0	8,845.2	38,048.4
1994	21,261.1	6,238.0	6,530.0		34,029.1	4,673.5	17,020.9	3,244.0	24,938.4	58,967.5
1995	31,344.8	3,904.0	13,941.0	530.6	49,720.4	800.6	58,707.0	8,340.3	67,847.9	117,568.3
1996	21,106.1	5,941.0	10,209.0	1,082.3	38,338.4	758.6	56,937.0	4,341.8	62,037.4	100,375.8
1997	21,651.3	2,628.0	12,413.0	1,793.0	38,485.3	1,413.0	66,224.3	2,409.4	70,046.7	108,532.0
1998	24,119.8	5,240.0	17,016.0	1,865.6	48,241.4	-	67,533.6	145.6	67,679.2	115,920.6
1999	19,402.0	4,186.0	20,011.0	1,212.5	44,811.5	-	2,428.1	-	2,428.1	47,239.6
2000	2,695.7	1,040.0	2,365.1	1,057.0	7,157.8	-	338.3	-	338.3	7,496.1

**Table 2: Domestic fleets by number of company and vessels and total catches from 1995 – 2000**

YEAR	Pole and Line			Long line			Single Purse Seine			Group Purse Seine		
	No. of Companies	No. of vessels	Catch (mt)	No. of Company	No. of vessels	Catch (mt)	No. of Company	No. of vessels	Catch (mt)	No. of companies	No. of vessels	Catch (mt)
1995	2	32	31,344.8	4	9	530.6	2	2	13,941.0	1	1	3,904.0
1996	2	34	21,106.1	7	13	1,082.3	2	2	10,209.0	1	1	5,941.0
1997	2	31	21,651.3	5	18	1,793.0	2	3	12,413.0	1	1	2,628.0
1998	2	28	24,119.8	2	21	1,865.6	2	3	17,016.0	1	1	5,240.0
1999	2	26	19,402.0	1	16	1,212.5	2	3	20,011.0	1	1	4,186.0
2000	2	18	2,695.7	1	14	1,057.0	2	2	2,365.1	1	1	1,040.0



Table 3: Fleet structure (2000 and 2001 up to July 15<sup>th</sup> )

	Company/ Agent	FREEZER	LIGHT/ SCOUT BOAT	LONGLINE	POLE & LINE	PURSE SEINE	SHARK LONGLINE	Grand Total
<b>Domestic 2000</b>								
	<i>GLOBAL INVESTMENT</i>	0	0	0	0	4	9	13
	<i>NFD</i>	0	4	0	2	3	0	9
	<i>SOLFISH &amp; TUNA CO.</i>	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
	<i>SOLGREEN</i>	0	0	14	0	0	0	14
	<i>STL</i>	2	1	0	21	1	0	25
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Foreign 2000</b>								
	<i>JAPANTUNA</i>	0	0	4	26	0	0	30
	<i>KINKATSUKYO</i>	0	0	7	5	0	0	12
	<i>Japan Farseas PS Fish. Ass</i>	0	0	0	0	12	0	12
	<i>Taiwan Deep Sea Tuna</i>	0	0	9	0	38	0	47
	<i>US Vessels</i>	0	0	0	0	33	0	33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>Domestic 2001</b>								
	<i>GLOBAL INVESTMENT</i>	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
	<i>NFD</i>	0	1	0	0	2	0	3
	<i>SOLFISH &amp; TUNA CO.</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
	<i>SOLGREEN</i>	0	0	11	0	0	0	11
	<i>STL</i>	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Foreign 2001</b>								
	<i>JAPANTUNA</i>	0	0	4	26	0	0	30
	<i>KINKATSUKYO</i>	0	0	7	5	0	0	12
	<i>Japan Farseas PS Fish. Ass</i>	0	0	0	0	17	0	17
	<i>Taiwan Deep Sea Tuna</i>	0	0	3	0	36	0	39
	<i>Korea Deep Sea Tuna Ass</i>	0	0	0	0	27	0	27
	<i>Hainan Quebec Fishing</i>	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
	<i>Tuna Pacific Agency</i>	0	0	6	0	0	0	6
	<i>US Vessels</i>	0	0	0	0	-	0	-
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>120</b>



e) 1996

VESSEL TYPE	No. of V	SKJ	YFT	BET	ALB	BFT	STM	BLM	BKM	BBS	SLF	SHK	OTH	TOTAL
Single Purse Seine	2	4,249.0	5,940.0	20.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,209.0
Group Purse seine	1	2,778.0	3,146.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17.0	5,941.0
Pole and Line	34	19,214.5	1,874.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16.8	21,106.1
Longline	13		532.9	403.4	100.3	-	1.9	17.2	4.5	3.5	1.9	14.6	2.3	1,082.5
TOTAL (mt)		26,241.5	11,493.7	423.4	100.3	-	1.9	17.2	4.5	3.5	1.9	14.6	36.1	38,338.6
Catch composition		68%	30%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

f) 1995

VESSEL TYPE	No. of V	SKJ	YFT	BET	ALB	BFT	STM	BLM	BKM	BBS	SLF	SHK	OTH	TOTAL
Single Purse Seine	2	8,977.0	4,940.0		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.0	13,922.0
Group Purse seine	1	2,235.0	1,656.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.0	3,904.0
Pole and Line	32	28,923.8	2,391.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29.8	31,344.6
Longline	9	-	198.7	300.5	23.8	-	-	5.0	0.5	0.8	0.2	-	0.6	530.1
TOTAL (mt)		40,135.8	9,185.7	300.5	23.8	-	-	5.0	0.5	0.8	0.2	-	48.4	49,700.7
Catch composition		81%	18%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Code: SKJ - skipjack; YFT - yellowfin; BET - bigeye; ALB - albacore; BFT - bluefin; STM - striped marlin; BLM - blue marlin; BKM - black marlin; BBS - broadbill swordfish; SLF - sailfish; SHK - shark; OTH - other species.

The drop in catch for year 2000 is direct result of the ethnic tension that resulted in closure of all fishing operations.

a) 2000

[illegible]

b) 1999

[illegible]

**c) 1998**

VESSEL TYPE	No. of V	SKJ	YFT	BET	ALB	BFT	STM	BLM	BKM	BBS	SLF	SHK	OTH	TOTAL
Single Purse Seine	85	41,818.9	25,688.2	25.0									1.5	67,533.6
Pole and Line	0													-
Longline	2		36.0	64.0	21.1		0.2	3.2	1.5	0.5		19.2		145.7
TOTAL (mt)		41,818.9	25,724.2	89.0	21.1	-	0.2	3.2	1.5	0.5	-	19.2	1.5	67,679.3
Catch composition		62%	38%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

d) 1997

[illegible]

## e) 1996

VESSEL TYPE	No. of V	SKJ	YFT	BET	ALB	BFT	STM	BLM	BKM	BBS	SLF	SHK	OTH	TOTAL
<i>Single Purse Seine</i>	57	44,301.3	12,633.8	0.9									1.0	56,937.0
<i>Pole and Line</i>	13	751.5	7.1											758.6
<i>Longline</i>	36	0.1	1,988.2	704.2	1,289.0		5.4	103.9	40.8	15.8	4.1	151.7	38.7	4,341.9
<b>TOTAL (mt)</b>		<b>45,052.9</b>	<b>14,629.1</b>	<b>705.1</b>	<b>1,289.0</b>	-	<b>5.4</b>	<b>103.9</b>	<b>40.8</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>151.7</b>	<b>39.7</b>	<b>62,037.5</b>
<i>Catch composition</i>		73%	24%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

## f) 1995

VESSEL TYPE	No. of V	SKJ	YFT	BET	ALB	BFT	STM	BLM	BKM	BBS	SLF	SHK	OTH	TOTAL
<i>Single Purse Seine</i>	55	44,481.1	14,213.9	12.0										58,707.0
<i>Pole and Line</i>	5	524.3	7.5											531.8
<i>Longline</i>	70	-	4,333.7	1,527.2	1,761.5	0.1	25.3	390.5	53.9	51.4	63.4	64.5	69.1	8,340.6
<b>TOTAL (mt)</b>		<b>45,005.4</b>	<b>18,555.1</b>	<b>1,539.2</b>	<b>1,761.5</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>390.5</b>	<b>53.9</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>64.5</b>	<b>69.1</b>	<b>67,579.4</b>
<i>Catch composition</i>		67%	27%	2%	3%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

**Table 5 (a): Major Tuna Product Export Destinations**

<b>Tuna Product</b>	<b>Destination</b>
Frozen tuna	Indonesia, Japan(*), Thailand, Phillipines, Pagppago
Canned	Australia, Japan, Vanuatu, PNG, Greece, UK (*)
Smoked tuna	Japan (*)
Fish meal	Japan, Taiwan (*), Hong kong, Singapore
Chilled tuna	Japan (*)

**Key** \* (major importer)

**Table 5 (b): Summary of Tuna Products Export, 1990 – 2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Frozen fish</b>	<b>Canned fish</b>	<b>Smoked fish</b>	<b>Fishmeal</b>	<b>Chilled Fish</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
1990	17,090	2,794	521	-	-	20,405
1991	47,558	4,854	406	-	-	52,819
1992	27,845	5,449	429	-	-	33,723
1993	15,435	5,774	504	-	-	21,712
1994	23,065	7,712	839	-	-	31,616
1995	38,698	6,554	1,545	-	-	46,798
1996	22,605	6,236	899	8	-	29,749
1997	25,910	7,524	945	70	2,760	37,209
1998	37,292	1,446	149	118	2,153	41,158
1999	24,417	-	-	-	1,486	25,903
2000	-	-	-	-	816	816