

YELLOWFIN TUNA LANDINGS IN AMERICAN SAMOA, 1976-1992

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This report describes landings of yellowfin tuna in American Samoa, including (1) commercial landings of distant-water yellowfin for processing at canneries, and (2) artisanal and recreational catches within American Samoa's EEZ.

Yellowfin tuna account for 23% of all fish landed at American Samoa's canneries. The first deliveries of yellowfin tuna by US purse seiners were made in 1976 (Fig. 1). In recent years (1988-1992), yellowfin landings have ranged 20,000-45,000 mt (Table 1). Most of this was caught by US purse seiners (93%), the remainder was bycatch from US trollers and foreign longliners.

In the artisanal fishery, yellowfin account for 18-32% of the total pelagic harvest. Catches of yellowfin in coastal waters have averaged 17 mt/y over the past decade (Fig. 2), and CPUE has been fairly stable (Fig. 3).

In sportfish tournaments, yellowfin catches average 1.3 mt/y and account for 35% of the harvest. Average and maximum weights of sport-caught yellowfin are 25.5 lb (11.6 kg) and 185 lb (84.1 kg) (Fig. 4).

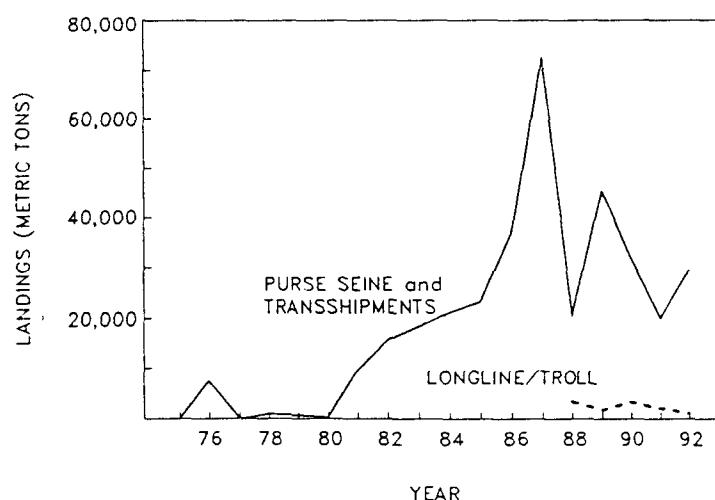


FIGURE 1. Yellowfin tuna landings in American Samoa.

TABLE 1. Estimated landings of yellowfin tuna in American Samoa, 1976-1992. Longline data prior to 1988 are not available.

----- YELLOWFIN TUNA (Metric tons) -----

Year	Artisanal	Purse-seine and Transship.	Longline and Troll	Total Distant Water
1975	-	0	-	
1976	-	7,500	-	
1977	-	200	-	
1978	-	1,000	-	
1979	-	700	-	
1980	-	370	-	
1981	-	9,700	-	
1982	3	15,900	-	
1983	9	18,500	-	
1984	26	21,200	-	
1985	17	23,200	-	
1986	24	37,000	-	
1987	12	72,700	-	
1988	23	20,500	3,500	24,000
1989	24	45,500	1,800	47,300
1990	11	31,900	3,300	35,200
1991	15	20,000	2,200	22,200
1992	11	29,500	1,100	30,600

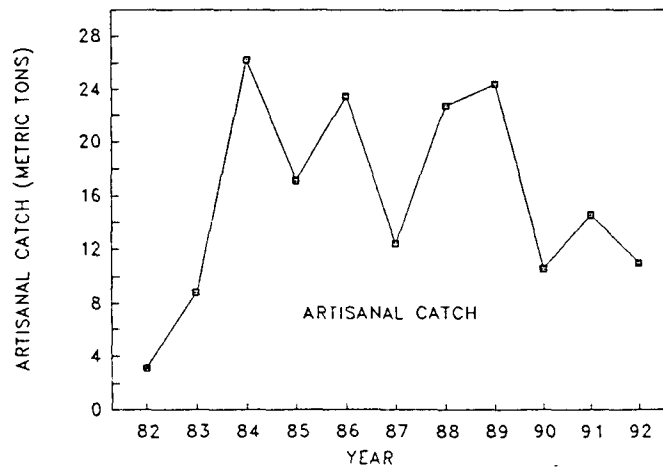


FIGURE 2. Artisanal catch of yellowfin tuna in American Samoa.

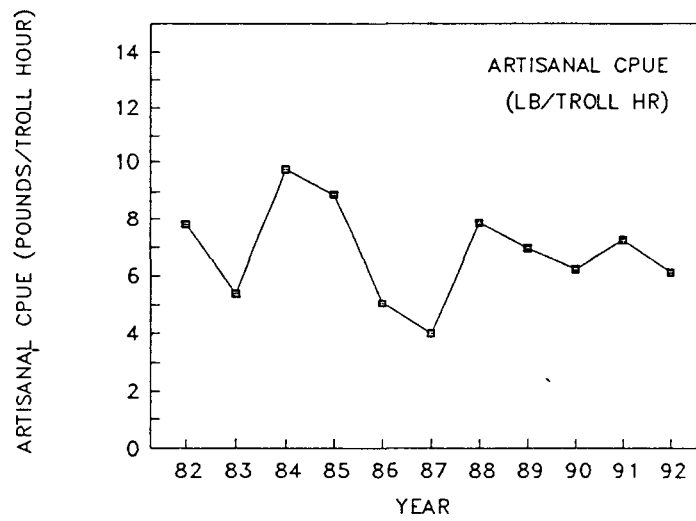


FIGURE 3. Yellowfin tuna CPUE in artisanal fishery in American Samoa.

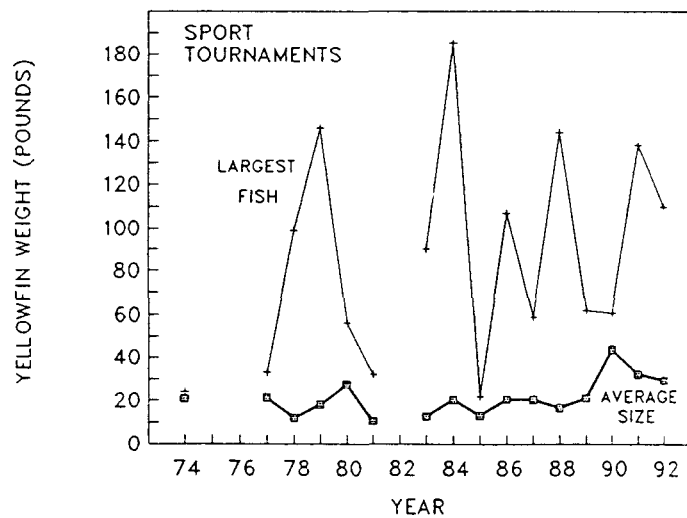


FIGURE 4. Largest and average sizes of yellowfin tuna caught in tournaments in American Samoa.