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**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ALBACORE TUNA FISHERY
IN FIJI FROM 1993 - 1995**

by

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Introduction

The impact Albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) Fishery in Fiji had been felt for the last 3 years. Not only the increase in Taiwanese landings were recorded, but the shashimi market by the local longliners had been making an impact with increase in landings for the period. This report summarises the trend in the albacore fishery in Fiji for the last 3 years and compares it to the previous seasons of 1990 to 1992.

Overview

The rapid expansion of the tuna industry in Fiji had been indicated by the increasing in number of tuna vessels fishing in the Region for the last 8 years. The local longliners increased from 5 in 1989 to 48 in 1995 while foreign vessels unloading at PAFCO remained at approximately 17 to 25 per year.

Table 1: Summary of Landings from 1990 - 1992 (tonnes)

Year	Vessel No.	Albacore	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Other	Total	% of Total
1990	31	2400.2	23	28	1014.8	3466	69
1991	45	3557.9	106	123	936.7	4723.6	75
1992	58	4061.1	205.4	186	707.4	5159.9	78
% increase	20-30	12-30	48-78	34-78	7-24 decrease	8-27	

When compared to the next triennium (1993 - 1995) as shown below in Table 2 vast increases had been recorded for albacore and other species.

Table 2: Summary of Landings from 1993 - 1995 (tonnes)

Year	Vessel No.	Albacore	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Other	Total	% of Total
1993	47	4548.3	335.35	206.14	601.78	5691.6	80
1994	61	4950.6	744.13	272.76	965.66	6933.2	71
1995	67	7611.8	1076.86	405.77	1196.8	10291.2	74
% increase	9 -23	8-35	30-55	25-32	19-38	18-32	

From 1993 to 1995 albacore tuna landings had shown a marked increase (Table 2). These were noted for the Taiwanese vessels landing catches at PAFCO and the same could be said for local longliners. Overall there had been increase of an average 27% of the total catch from 1993 to 1995 (Table 3).

Table 3: Total Albacore and Other species landings at PAFCO from 1993 -1995 (tonnes)

Year	Albacore	Other	Total	% of Total	Av/month
1993	4224.7	9866.1	14090.81	30.0	352.1
1994	4108.6	9799.2	13907.8	29.5	342.4
1995	6909.8	7629.8	14539.6	47.5	575.8
	15243.1	27295.1	42538.2	35.8	423.4

Albacore landings had been gradually increasing for the last 3 years, illustrated from the PAFCO landings and the same applies for the Local Longliners unloading for the shashimi market (Tables 3 & 4). Notice the high percentage of albacore compared to other species. More than 70% of the total tuna catches for longliners in Fiji were made up of albacore for the last triennium (Table 2).

Table 4: illustrate Albacore and other species Landed by local Longliners for 1993 - 1995 (tonnes)

Year	Albacore	Other	Total	% of Total	Av/month
1993	323.7	855.1	1178.8	27.5	27.0
1994	842.0	1581.3	2423.3	34.7	70.2
1995	702.0	2366.5	3068.5	22.9	58.5
	1867.6	4803.0	6670.6	28.0	51.9

Although the albacore percentage of the total had dropped last year compared to the two previous years for local longliners, this was accounted by non fishing of some vessels for most part of the year and the withdrawal of the American chartered fleet.

Table 5: Summary of the total Albacore and other fishes landed in Fiji from 1993 - 1995. (tonnes)

Year	Albacore	Other	Total	% of Total	Av/month
1993	4548.3	10721.3	15269.6	29.8	379.0
1994	4950.6	11380.5	16331.1	30.3	412.5
1995	7611.8	9996.3	17608.1	43.2	634.3
	17110.7	32098.1	49208.8	34.8	475.3

When Catch Per Unit Effort was calculated (No. of vessels employed for this fishing record), changes shown in Figure 1 illustrate the trend for longliners unloading at PAFCO (Taiwanese Vessels). Although the number of vessels (effort) had decreased CPUE for albacore had increased in 1995. Could this be a result of new stock coming in or the method of fishing is improving, or the effort are now concentrating on albacore. These assumptions could be answered if further analyses were made on the data.

Figure 2 shows CPUE for Local Longliners depicting the reverse of Figure 2 whereby the vessel had increased in number (effort) but CPUE had decreased. Almost 30

percent of the registered vessels were either inactive for most part of 1995 and therefore had affected the data to a large extent. Otherwise 1993 and 1994 showed an increase in CPUE as the effort increases. Overall further work on acquiring and follow up work on data from vessels in Fiji should be strengthen, so that reliable data interpretation would be possible.

Future Direction

1. A new section (OFFSHORE) had been established in the Fisheries Division to entirely looked after the Tuna and Other deep water related species in resource assessment and research.
2. The proposal for local observer program had been drawn and awaiting final endorsement.
3. Research and stock assessment training for the officers is our priority.
4. The quota for the Taiwanese vessels to remain at 20 for EEZ licenses.
5. An intensive stock assessment monitoring program to be carried out during the next triennium.

Figure 1: CPUE for Albacore Tuna from Longliners unloading at PAFCO from 1993 - 1995

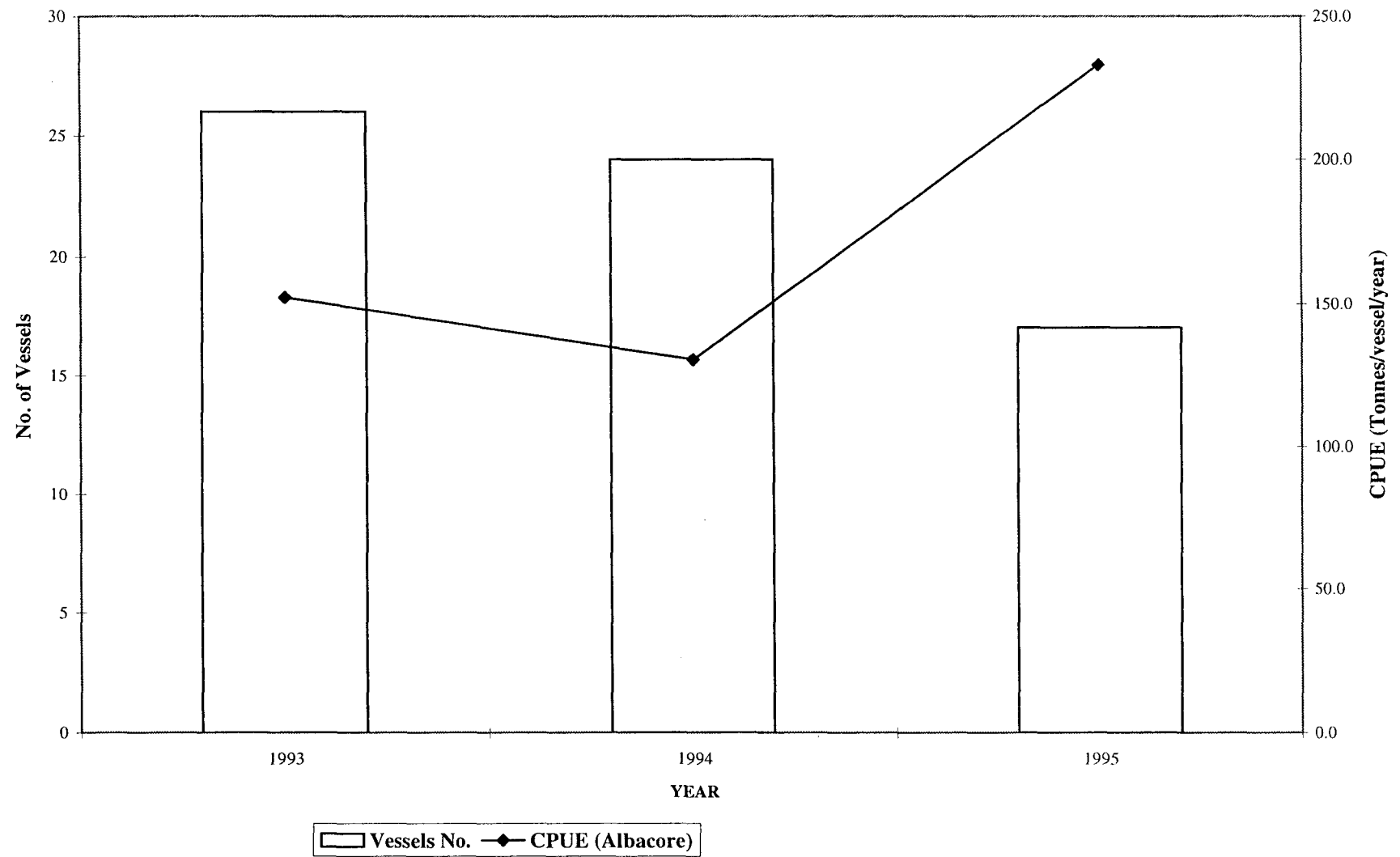


Figure 2: CPUE for Albacore Tuna by Local Longliners from 1993 - 1995 in Fiji

