Bigeye tuna

**Western and Central Pacific**

**Fishery:** Western and Central Pacific (WCPFC), Indonesia

### IDENTIFICATION

- **Scientific Name:** Thunnus obesus
- **Species Name(s):** Bigeye tuna
- **Common Names:** Bigeye tuna

**Stock Identification:**

This fishery improvement project (FIP) occurs in territorial waters (EEZ) and high seas waters of the Western and Central Pacific and Indian Oceans. It covers longline, purse seine, hand-line, pole and line, troll and line, drift gillnet, and ring net fishing gears for skipjack, yellowfin, and bigeye tuna. The FIP is run by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

### ASSESSMENT

#### Strengths

Bigeye tuna in the western and central Pacific Ocean are managed at the international level by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). The WCPFC has an agreement with the Secretariat of the Pacific to undertake regular assessments of target tuna and tuna-like species. Therefore, the status of the stocks is known and regularly monitored. Catch limits have recently been put into place for six countries (United States, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan) longline fisheries operating on the high seas. The most recent assessment (2017) indicates that bigeye tuna are no longer underfished or undergoing overfishing.

The WCPFC has recently implemented catch limits for bigeye tuna caught in longline fisheries operating within the Convention Area for the years 2014-2017. Catch limits for 2014 have been set at 70% of the average catches from 2001-2004 or from 2004 identified in a previous WCPFC management measure (2016). Six countries, including Indonesia have been given individual catch limits under this management measure. Prior to this, the WCPFC required a phased in reduction (50-80%) of bigeye tuna longline catches to occur between 2009-2011 (based on same average catches identified above). Catches in 2012 were under the allotted phased in catch limit. Information for 2013 is not available yet. The National Tuna Management Plan of Indonesia has recently been developed as a product of a joint cooperation between the Directorate General of Capture Fisheries, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia and the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). The aims of the management plan are to support the effective implementation of the tuna fisheries management in a sustainable way (MMAF and WCPFC, 2012). Vessels are participating in a fishery improvement project (FIP).

#### Weaknesses

There is no formally adopted harvest control rule or target reference points. Information on compliance and monitoring by member countries has historically not been available in recent years. There has also been an increased lack of transparency with regard to the WCPFC decision making process. Timely submissions and data accuracy from some member countries, including Indonesia and the Philippines, has been identified as an issue by the Scientific Committee. Mandated observer coverage rates by the WCPFC in the longline fishery are low (5%) compared to other fisheries (i.e. purse seine) and many fleets still do not reach this threshold. The WCPFC does not allow for the international exchange of observers, which is considered best practice needed to maximize data quality. Smaller countries may lack resources to achieve adequate observer coverage. Bycatch of ecologically important species such as sharks, sea turtles, and seabirds continues to be a problem in many fisheries targeting bigeye tuna.

### SCORES

#### Management Quality:

- **Management Strategy:** ≥ 6 to ≥ 8
- **Managers Compliance:** ≥ 6 to ≥ 8
- **Fishers Compliance:** ≥ 6 to ≥ 8

#### Stock Health:

- **Current Health:** 99
- **Future Health:** 8.5

### FIPS

No related FIPs

### MSC

No related MSC fisheries

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN

- Work with WCPFC Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories to:
  - Develop and implement comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategies with specific timelines for all tuna stocks, including the adoption and implementation of limit and target reference points, harvest control rules, monitoring strategies, operational objectives, performance indicators, and management strategy evaluation.
  - Strengthen their compliance processes and make information on non-compliance public and continue to provide evidence of compliance with all WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures in a timely manner.

#### RELATED LINKS:

- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) (WCPFC)

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For more information, visit [FishSource](https://www.fishsource.org/fishery_page/2220).
Implement a 100% observer coverage requirement for at-sea transshipment activities, as well as other measures that ensure transshipment activity is transparent and well-managed, and that all required data are collected and transmitted to the appropriate bodies in a timely manner.

Increase compliance with the mandatory minimum 5% longline observer coverage rates by identifying and correcting non-compliance.

Implement a 100% observer coverage requirement – human and/or electronic – within five years for longline fisheries. Adopt a 100% observer coverage requirement for purse seine vessels where it is not already required and require the use of the best available observer safety equipment, communications and procedures.

Adopt effective measures for the use of non-entangling FAD designs as a precautionary measure to minimize the entanglement of sharks and other non-target species, and support research on biodegradable materials and transition to their use to mitigate marine debris.

Increase compliance with the mandatory minimum 5% longline observer coverage rates by identifying and correcting non-compliance.

Adopt effective measures for the use of non-entangling FAD designs as a precautionary measure to minimize the entanglement of sharks and other non-target species, and support research on biodegradable materials and transition to their use to mitigate marine debris.

Ensure all products are traceable back to legal sources. Verify source information and full chain traceability through traceability desk audits or third party traceability certification. For fisheries without robust traceability systems in place, invest meaningful improvements to bring the fisheries and supply chain in compliance with best practices.

Continue to improve data collection systems and timely submission of datasets (e.g. catches, effort, size) needed for robust stock assessments as required by the WCPFC.


Support the National Indonesian Tuna Fishery Improvement Project being initiated by the Global Fresh and Frozen Yellowfin and Bigeye Tuna Supply Chain Roundtable.