Bigeye tuna

Western and Central Pacific

**FISHERY**

Western and Central Pacific, WCPFC, United States, Drifting longlines

**IDENTIFICATION**

**SCIENTIFIC NAME**

Thunnus obesus

**SPECIES NAME(S)**

Bigeye tuna

**COMMON NAMES**

Bigeye tuna

**STOCK IDENTIFICATION**

Western and Central Pacific Ocean bigeye tuna is caught by four U.S. longline fisheries: (i) West Coast – State of California, (ii) Hawaii deep-set (tuna-targeting), (iii) Hawaii shallow-set (swordfish-targeting), and (iv) American Samoa. Each of these fisheries operates in the US EEZ and on the high seas.

This profile is for (ii) the Hawaii pelagic longline deep-set fishery, which targets primarily bigeye tuna, at grounds in the western and central Pacific. Note that this fishery also operates in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, where it catches the ETP bigeye tuna stock – which is not covered in this profile.

**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 Community 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 in the high seas. The most recent assessment (2017) indicates that bigeye tuna are not longer overfished.

**Weaknesses**

- Fishing permits, logbooks and observer programs are in place to monitor compliance and bycatch issues. The observer program coverage rate is much higher than the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) mandated 3% intersections with sea turtles, sea birds and marine mammals have been minimized (~80% reduction) through bycatch mitigation measures. Catch limits for bigeye tuna longline fisheries have recently been put into place.
- Several bycatch mitigation and monitoring measures for sea turtles and seabirds in place in the Hawaii deep-set longline tuna fishing targeting, including several gear requirements and ~25% on-board observer coverage. This suite of regulations and measures for address ETP bycatch is virtually unparalleled in commercial fisheries globally. In addition, the US is a member of both the WCPFC and IATTC, and is thus obligated to comply with several conservation measures in place in those RFMOs that address ETP bycatch.
- Quality and availability of information to assess ETP bycatch in the Hawaii longline fishery is among the best of any commercial fishery in the world, and comparable to data used to assess target stocks in many cases. This should be the standard for ETP bycatch monitoring and reporting, not the exception.

**SCORES**

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<tr>
<th>Management Quality</th>
<th>Management Strategy</th>
<th>Managers Compliance</th>
<th>Fishers Compliance</th>
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<td>≥ 6 ≥ 8</td>
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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 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.
  - 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.
  - More effectively implement, and ensure compliance with, existing RFMO bycatch requirements and take additional mitigation action, such as improving monitoring at sea, collecting and sharing operational-level, species-specific data, and adopting stronger compliance measures, including consequences for non-compliance for all gear types.
  - 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 in meaningful improvements to bring the fisheries and supply chain in compliance with best practices.

Stock Health:

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<th>Current Health</th>
<th>Future Health</th>
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<td>8.5</td>
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FIPS

- Hawaii tuna and large pelagics - Longline:
  - Stage 5, Type: Fip, Evaluation Start Date: 1 Feb 2015

MSC

No related MSC fisheries