Yellowfin tuna
Western and Central Pacific Ocean

**IDENTIFICATION**

**SCIENTIFIC NAME**
Thunnus albacares

**SPECIES NAME(S)**
Yellowfin tuna

**STOCK IDENTIFICATION**

Yellowfin tuna are considered a single population in the western and central Pacific Ocean for stock assessment purposes. There is the potential for some mixing between eastern and western stocks to occur (Davies et al. 2014).

**RELATED LINKS:**
- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

**ASSESSMENT**

**Strengths**

- Yellowfin tuna in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean are managed at the international level by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).
- The Secretariat of the Pacific Community conducts regular assessments of tuna and tuna-like species.
- The biomass is above target levels and fishing mortality rates are sustainable.
- There are limit reference points in place for this species.

The National Tuna Management Plan of Indonesia has 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 2012). Indonesia has also launched a National Plan of Action for tuna, skipjack and neritic tuna in November of 2014 (MMAF 2014). Yellowfin tuna populations are healthy and fishing mortality rates are currently sustainable.

**Weaknesses**

- In recent years, there has been an increased lack of transparency with regard to the WCPFC decision-making process.
- Significant amounts of juvenile yellowfin tuna are caught in fish aggregating device (FAD)-based purse seine fisheries.
- No harvest control rule is imposed and there are no target reference points.
- Timely submissions and data accuracy from some member countries, including Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines, has been identified as an issue by the WCPFC Scientific Committee.
- Mandated observer coverage rates by the WCPFC in the longline fishery is low (5%) compared to other fisheries (i.e. purse seine, 100%) and many fleets still do not reach this threshold.
- Bycatch of ecologically important species such as sharks, sea turtles and sea birds continues to be a problem in many fisheries targeting yellowfin tuna.

There is no harvest control rule, internationally or domestically. Several depleted species (nurse, white tip and silky sharks) are caught as bycatch in the purse seine fishery. Bycatch reporting is limited in Indonesia and an observer program is in place but coverage is very low. Catches of yellowfin tuna from eastern Indonesia are considered highly uncertain. There are no catch limits in place for yellowfin tuna despite the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Scientific Committee (WCPFC) suggesting they are currently fished at capacity.

**SCORES**

- **Management Quality:**
  - Management Strategy: $\geq 6 \rightarrow \geq 8$
  - Managers Compliance: $\geq 6 \rightarrow \geq 8$
  - Fishers Compliance: $\geq 6 \rightarrow \geq 10$

- **Stock Health:**
  - Current Health: 9.5
  - Future Health: 9

**FIPS**

- Indonesia Southeast Sulawesi yellowfin tuna and skipjack tuna - purse seine:
  - Stage 2, Type FIP, Evaluation Start Date 27 Nov 2018

**MSC**

- No related MSC fisheries

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Work with WCPFC Members, Cooperating Non-Member, and Participating Territories to:
  - Implement catch limits to prevent harvest from increasing beyond 2012 levels.

**FISHSOURCE**

https://www.fishsource.org/fishery_page/2634
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-wetting 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 IFWFS bycatch requirements and take additional imitative 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.

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.