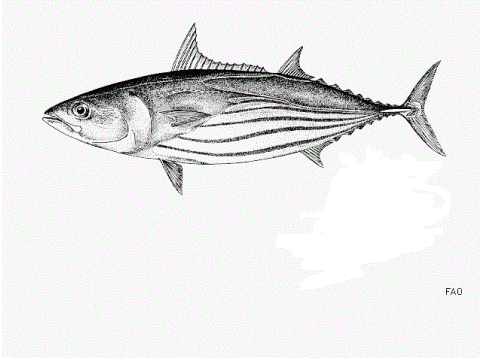


# Skipjack tuna Eastern Pacific Ocean

Fishery:  Eastern Pacific Ocean  IATTC  Ecuador  Purse seines

## IDENTIFICATION



### SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Katsuwonus pelamis*

### SPECIES NAME(S)

Skipjack tuna

### COMMON NAMES

Skipjack tuna

### STOCK IDENTIFICATION

It is likely that skipjack are distributed throughout the Pacific as a single population. Exchange of fish between the eastern and western region is not common. The majority of catches occur in the eastern and western regions. Therefore assessments are conducted for both the eastern and western regions (Maunder 2015).



### RELATED LINKS:

- [Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission \(IATTC\)](#)

## ASSESSMENT

### Strengths

- Fishing mortality rates and biomass are currently thought to be sustainable.
- Discarding of tunas is prohibited.
- There is a multi-year conservation plan in place, which has just been extended, for skipjack tuna (and other tuna species).
- A harvest control rule has been adopted.
- There is 100% observer coverage on large purse seine vessels operating on the high seas.

At the national level, there are adequate regulations for protecting PET species (ban on sea turtle and whale fishing); closed season for lesser pelagics while fishing in territorial waters; required use of special screen on purse seiners for safe release of marine mammals; Ecuador is signatory to the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) under the IATTC; Ecuador implements the IATTC resolution which bans transshipment of tuna on the high seas; Mandatory use of excluder screen on class six tuna vessels to prevent capture of juvenile fish (Prieto 2009). Fishing mortality rates are sustainable and the biomass is healthy. Interim limit reference points have been defined and  $F_{MSY}$  and  $B_{MSY}$  are used as informal reference points. There are time/area closures in place for the purse seine fleet fishing in high seas waters and all tuna must be landed. There is a multi-year conservation plan in place under IATTC, which has just been extended, for skipjack tuna (and other tuna species). There is 100% observer coverage for purse seine vessels operating in the high seas.

### Weaknesses

- There are no MSY based reference points used for skipjack tuna in the EPO.
- There are time/area closures in place for the purse seine fleet but these measures are not sufficient to manage the fish aggregating device (FAD) fishery.
- Purse seine fisheries can interact with ETP species.

The stock structure is uncertain for skipjack tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in comparison to the Western and Central Pacific stocks (IATTC 2012). Tuna monitoring is poor in artisanal fisheries, especially for catch records; enforcement of artisanal fleet is difficult due to large number of small vessels that target tuna and other pelagic fish (Prieto 2009). There is shortage of information on catches of skipjack tuna in other surface fisheries prior to 1970. There was no observer scheme prior to 1993 and hence no discards are assumed before this period (Maunder 2012). Formal reference points and harvest control rules have not been adopted at the international RFMO level.

## SCORES

### Management Quality:

Management Strategy	Managers Compliance	Fishers Compliance
≥ 6	≥ 6	≥ 6

### Stock Health:

Current Health	Future Health
≥ 8	≥ 8

## FIPS

- Eastern Pacific Ocean tropical tuna - purse seine (TUNACONS):

Stage 4 , Progress Rating A , Type: Fip , Evaluation Start Date: 2 Jan 2017

## MSC

No related MSC fisheries

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN

- Work with IATTC Members and Cooperating Non-Members to:
  - Adopt purse seine set limits during the 2018 Commission meeting.
  - 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 IATTC 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.