### IDENTIFICATION

**SCIENTIFIC NAME**
Katsuwonus pelamis

**SPECIES NAME(S)**
Skipjack tuna

**COMMON NAMES**
Skipjack tuna

**STOCK IDENTIFICATION**
Skipjack tuna in the western and central Pacific Ocean are considered a single stock for assessment purposes (Rice et al. 2014).

### ASSESSMENT

**Strengths**
Skipjack tuna in the western and central Pacific Ocean are managed at the international level by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). Regular assessments of target tuna and tuna-like species are conducted. Therefore the status of the stocks is known and regularly monitored. The Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA)'s EEZ's of Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, FSM Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu purse seine (unassociated or free school sets) fishery is MSC certified for skipjack tuna. Skipjack tuna have a healthy population size and fishing mortality rates are sustainable. There are several management measures specific to skipjack purse seine fisheries currently in place through the WCPFC. The purse seine fishery is well regulated and catches of commercial species and by-catch landed by these vessels is well quantified and available for stock assessments. Catches are adequately monitored throughout the supply chain from vessels to receiver centers prior to exports. Skipjack tuna populations are healthy and fishing mortality rates are sustainable.

**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 been an increased lack of transparency with regard to the WCPFC decision making process. Skipjack tuna are difficult to assess because of their high and variable productivity. Timely submissions and data accuracy from some member countries is a problem which may contribute to the significant uncertainties in the stock assessment results. The Japanese pole and line fishery, which represents less than 4% of the total catch in this region is the only long term abundance data set. Calculating an index of abundance for the purse seine fishery, which eliminates the equational catches, is difficult. The impact of fish aggregating devices (FAD) purse seine fishing on ecologically important species, continues to be an issue. The WCPFC has yet to formally adopt management measures that require the use of non-entanglement FAD designs. The WCPFC Scientific Committee management advice included concerns over high catches of skipjack in equatorial waters. The Scientific Committee suggested that there should be management of total effort in the WCPO, including stricter rules surrounding purse seine fishing. In 2012, the WCPFC adopted a measure prohibiting the discard of skipjack (bigeye and yellowfin) tuna caught in purse seine fisheries, but it is too early to determine if this has reduced fishing pressure.

There is a need to quantify and report data on by-catch and interactions with protected, endangered, and threatened species in New Zealand based purse seiners operating in the high seas area of the WCPFC. Observer reports for purse seiners monitoring in the high seas through the regional SPC observer program should be made available for a more robust estimation of by-catch of non-target species in the high seas area of the WCPFC. There are no harvest control rules or target reference points on the stock level. Catch limits have been suggested as a potential management option - at the international level.

### SCORES

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<tr>
<th>Management Quality:</th>
<th>Managers Compliance</th>
<th>Fishers Compliance</th>
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<td>≥ 6</td>
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<tr>
<th>Stock Health:</th>
<th>Current Health</th>
<th>Future Health</th>
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### FIPS

No related FIPs

### MSC

No related MSC fisheries

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN**

Conduct outreach to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) requesting continued work on the development and adoption of a harvest control rule, and amending the WCPFC to take...
demonstrably effective actions to keep the spawning biomass near the adopted target reference point.

- Request improved transparency of and by the WCPFC, especially regarding the Compliance Committee and issues of non-compliance by individual members (nations). Press individual members to provide evidence of compliance with all WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures in a timely manner.

- 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 into compliance with best practices.

- Encourage the supply chain to adopt voluntary shark fin naturally attached regulations and promote the adoption of this rule by the WCPFC.

- Improve data collection (i.e. catches, effort, size) on both target and bycatch species, and reporting through measures such as electronic logbooks (e-reporting).

- Identify and mandate the use of best practice bycatch mitigation techniques.

- Contact SFP to learn how to initiate your own fishery improvement project (FIP), engage in an ongoing FIP, and/or SFP's Supply Chain Roundtables.