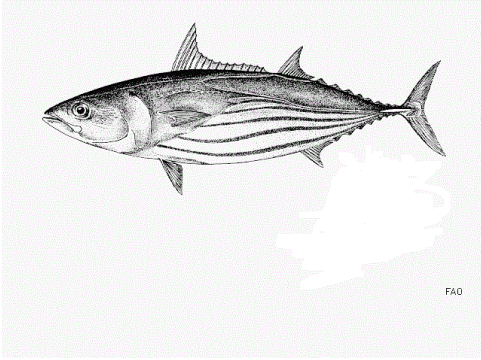


# Skipjack tuna Western and Central Pacific Ocean

 Fishery:  Western and Central Pacific Ocean  WCPFC  New Zealand  Purse seines

## 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}.



### RELATED LINKS:

- [Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission \(WCPFC\) \(WCPFC\)](#)

## 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) (EEZ's of Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, FS 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 tuna 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 mainly contributes 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 dominates the equatorial catches, is difficult. The impact of fish aggregating device (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 WCPFO, 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 had reduced fishing pressure.

There is a need to quantify and report data on by-catch and interactions with protected, endangered, and threatened species for New Zealand based purse seiners operating in the high seas area of WCPFC. Observer reports for purse seiners monitored 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 WCPFO. There are no harvest control rules or target reference points at the stock level. Catch limits have been suggested as a potential management option – at the international level.

## SCORES

### Management Quality:

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

### Stock Health:

Current Health	Future Health
10	10

## FIPS

No related FIPs

## MSC

No related MSC fisheries

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN

Stock-wide recommendations

- 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 encourage 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 fins 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.