**Skipjack tuna**  
**Western and Central Pacific Ocean**

**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 (WCPO) (WCPO)

**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 (WCPO). 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, 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 tuna purse seine fisheries currently in place through the WCPO.

**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 WCPO 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 devices (FAD) purse seine fishing on ecologically important species, continues to be an issue. The WCPO has yet to formally adopt management measures that require the use of non-entanglement FAD designs. The WCPO 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 WCPO 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.

**SCORES**

**Management Quality:**

- Management Strategy: ≥ 6
- Managers Compliance: ≥ 6
- Fishers Compliance: ≥ 6

**Stock Health:**

- Current Health: 10
- Future Health: 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 (WCPO) requesting continued work on the development and adoption of a harvest control rule, and encourage the WCPO to take demonstrably effective actions to keep the spawning biomass near the adopted target reference point.
- Request improved transparency of catch data by the WCPO, and to improve timeliness of data submissions. The WCPO 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 WCPO 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.
- Improve data collection (i.e. catches, effort, size), on both target and related species.

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

Fishery Profile
https://www.fishsource.org/fishery_page/5150