IDENTIFICATION

SCIENTIFIC NAME
Xiphias gladius

SPECIES NAME(S)
Swordfish

COMMON NAMES
Aja para, Chichi spada, Empereador, Espada, Peixe espasa, Pez espada

STOCK IDENTIFICATION
The stock structure of swordfish in the Pacific is fairly well known. A number of specific regions of spawning are known, and analyses of fisheries and genetic data indicate that there is only limited exchange of swordfish between geographical areas, including between the eastern and western, and the northern and southern, Pacific Ocean (ICAAT 2016).

RELATED LINKS:
- Vietnam Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)

ASSESSMENT

Strengths
Swordfish are managed by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). Swordfish in the southwestern Pacific Ocean are not overfished or undergoing overfishing. An updated assessment was conducted in 2017.

Weaknesses
There are no formally adopted harvest control rule or target reference points. Longline fisheries have interactions with protected, endangered and threatened species including sea turtle, sea birds and sharks. Mandated observer coverage is low (5%) in this fishery and not always achieved by individual countries.

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

FIPS
Vietnam swordfish - handline:
- Stage 4, Progress Rating A, Type: Fip, Evaluation Start Date: 4 Feb 2019

MSC
No related MSC fisheries

RECOMMENDATIONS

CATCHERS & REGULATORS
1. Ensure member countries comply with all Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commissions (WCPFC) conservation and management measures (CMMs), including measures aimed at both target and incidental market and non-market species, and all other obligations. Through your delegation to WCPFC, encourage the compliance committee to make information on non-compliance by individual members and cooperating non-members publicly available and transparent. Based on recommendations from the 9th Regular Session of the Scientific Committee, promote the adoption by the Commission of an updated CMM that limits fishing to levels from 2007-2010 and to adopt additional measure specific to swordfish captured between the equator and 20 degrees south.

2. Promote the adoption by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commissions (WCPFC) and member countries of precautionary and ecosystem-based management measures, including biological reference points, harvest control rules, increased observer coverage for longline fleets, national management measures and monitoring efforts adequate to ensure harvest strategy objectives are being met.

3. Improve data collection and reporting through measures such as electronic logbooks, to ensure complete data sets (i.e. catches, effort, size), which are needed for robust stock assessments. The Scientific Committee specifically mentioned that continued improvements in the collection of size composition data is of great importance to the assessment and that operational data (i.e. number of hooks, number of fish landed, use of light sticks, bait type and hook type) would improve the analysis of catch rate data.

4. Conduct studies, increase monitoring and publish information to assess longline interactions with endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) and other bycatch species. Identify and mandate best practice bycatch mitigation techniques. Provide evidence of full compliance with recently implemented WCPFC management measures prohibiting the retention of silky and oceanic whitetip sharks.

RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN
1. Encourage both the WCPFC and individual member countries to adopt precautionary and ecosystem-based management measures. Demand that member countries comply with all WCPFCs Conservation and Management Measures, and request the WCPFC make information on monitoring and compliance publicly available.

2. Explore implementation of control documents to ensure supplier compliance with WCPFC conservation and management measures (CMMs) (e.g. around bycatch through) such as recording and reporting.
interactions, use of dehooking devices and line cutters for sea turtles, sea bird mitigation measures and prohibition on retaining silky and oceanic whitetip sharks.

3. 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.

4. Encourage and support the WCPFC and member countries to conduct studies, increase monitoring and publish information to assess fishery interactions with protected, endangered and threatened (PET) and other bycatch species. Explore opportunities to support studies and data gathering.

Contact SFP to learn more about fishery improvement projects (FIPs) and SFP’s Supplier Roundtables.