



pelagic update

December 2011

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Updates on the season

2011 looks to have been another good year for southern bluefin tuna (for an update, see below), with total commercial catches hitting 547 tonnes from a limit of 558 tonnes. Swordfish catches have also been strong (730 tonnes in total from a TACC of 885 tonnes). Catches of other HMS continue to be lower, with particular concern about yellowfin.

Stock	TACC (t)	Catches 2010–11 (t)	% caught
Bigeye	714	181.1	25.4
Southern bluefin tuna	558t of ACE	547.3	98.1
Swordfish	885	730.1	82.5
Pacific bluefin tuna	116	27.4	23.6
Yellowfin tuna	263	2.8	1.1
Blue shark	1 860	770.3	41.4
Mako	406	89.5	22.0
Porbeagle	215	73.2	34.0



Ministry of
Fisheries
Te Tautiaki i nga tini a Tangaroa

New Zealand Government

CCSBT – outcomes from the annual meeting

We recently participated in the annual meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT). Key outcomes from the meeting were:

- CCSBT adopted a science-based management procedure; this means there should be a sound, scientific basis for setting future catch limits to rebuild the fishery.
- New Zealand's preference was not to have any increase in global catches for the first 3-year block since we wanted to be more confident of the stock rebuilding first. We didn't quite achieve that, but did hold back the substantial increases that some members were advocating.
- CCSBT also agreed some basic principles for allocating a global TAC between members, based on members' nominal shares of the fishery. For New Zealand this

	2012	2013	2014
TAC	10 449	10 949	12 449
Members			
Japan	2 519	2 689	3 366
Australia	4 528	4 698	5 147
New Zealand	800	830	909
Republic of Korea	911	945	1 036
Fishing Entity of Taiwan	911	945	1 036
Indonesia	685	707	750
Co-operating Non-Members			
Philippines	45	45	45
South Africa	40	80	150
European Union	10	10	10

nominal share is 1000 tonnes.

- The agreed global catches and country allocations are in the table above.
- The TAC for 2014 will be subject to further scientific review in 2013; it may be 12 449 tonnes or less depending on the outcome of this assessment, as well as assessment by CCSBT's compliance committee.

- An **in-season review** process will be used to set the TAC and ACE for the current 2011–12 fishing year. It will be up to the Minister to determine the level thought appropriate.

The report from the meeting is publicly available at www.ccsbt.org/site/reports_past_meetings.php

Getting ready for the next southern bluefin tuna season

As everyone is now well aware, we are required to operate a tagging and documentation scheme for southern bluefin tuna. There has been positive feedback internationally that it is helping to reduce potential loopholes and prevent illegal catches from reaching the market.

For fishers, this means:

- If you catch any southern bluefin tuna between now and the end of December (it sounds like there is still some out there), use your existing (green) tags.
- Over the next month we will start sending out packages with your new tags to use in 2012. The new tags are yellow. We will base the amount we send out on your catches this season; if you know you intend to catch less (or more) this year, please let us know so we can adjust how many we send out.

- If you know of any new vessels starting up, please let us know – we will need to issue them tags and also make sure they are on the list of vessels authorised to catch southern bluefin tuna.
- We will be asking you to return any unused green tags to us at the end of the year.

Thanks also to the LFRs who do all the paperwork side of things. We've had good feedback for this year that the forms are generally being filled out completely and correctly, which helps your product get into market with no hold-ups. Little things like making sure tag numbers are recorded correctly are important.

Your key contact for CDS matters is Michael Backhurst, michael.backhurst@maf.govt.nz or 09-820-7688.



WCPFC and Pacific updates

Revised measure for management of bigeye, yellowfin, and skipjack tuna

Development of a revised Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for **bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack** tuna stocks is the priority issue for the next Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) meeting to address overfishing of bigeye tuna and ensure responsible management of skipjack and yellowfin tuna. The meeting was to take place in December 2011, but is now deferred until the start of 2012. Key elements of the existing measure are due to expire at the end of 2011. The measure will likely involve a combination of controls on purse seine fisheries, for example, continuing or extending seasonal bans on the use of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs); catch limits for large-scale longline countries, and possibly continued or extended high seas closures to purse seine fishing. There is a shift from just focusing on bigeye and yellowfin tuna to also directly managing the expansion of effort in skipjack fisheries. This could have implications for New Zealand's domestic fishery and could lead to a need to put a catch limit in place next year.

Observer coverage on fishing trips outside the New Zealand zone

The WCPFC has adopted a Regional Observer Programme that includes target coverage rates for different fisheries. For tropical purse seine fisheries, the required coverage rate is 100 percent. From 1 January 2012, requirements will also take effect for surface longline fisheries fishing on the high seas (starting with 5 percent coverage). That means we will be looking at placing observers on some trips next year – we will be in touch with high seas permit holders to discuss this further.

MSC certification for New Zealand albacore troll fisheries

As you may already know, the New Zealand troll fishery for albacore tuna has now received conditional certification from the Marine Stewardship Council, meaning it has been internationally recognised as a sustainably managed fishery. The Ministry will be working with industry stakeholders to meet the conditions of the certification. More information: see www.msc.org

Regional management of albacore fisheries

In a previous newsletter we mentioned the work the Ministry has been doing with other Polynesian countries to help improve regional management of South Pacific fishstocks. There has been a particular focus on albacore, triggered by the economic importance of albacore for many Pacific countries, as well as a concern about expanding distant water catches. The idea is to get management in place before the stock declines to a level of concern. WCPFC will discuss a revised management measure for South Pacific albacore next year. Depending on the outcome, it could lead to a need for an **albacore catch limit** for New Zealand. This could be implemented through the QMS or by other means (for example, competitive catch limits).



Winner of the WWF Smart Gear competition for 2011

A Japanese fishing captain, Kazuhiro Yamazaki, has won this year's Smart Gear competition, with a prize of US\$30 000, as well as a special tuna prize valued at \$7500.

Mr. Yamazaki's winning design is a double-weight branch line, which is designed to sink hooks rapidly and reduce injuries to crew in doing so. In 2010, over 95 000 branch lines with the double-weight system were hauled, reducing seabird bycatch by 89 percent compared with un-weighted branch lines, with no injuries and with no effect on fish catch rates. More details can be found at:

www.smartgear.org/smartgear_winners/2011/grand_prize/



Landing tuna (left) and (above) the winner of this year's Smart Gear competition, Kazuhiro Yamazaki's double-weight branch line. Photos: WWF.

Introducing the HMS team

A team of four manage New Zealand's fisheries for highly migratory species, including:

- Manager **Arthur Hore**, who most of you will know by now.
- **Steph Hill**, who is often your first point of contact. Steph will be on maternity leave from next March.
- **Michael Backhurst**, who works on both HMS and deepwater fisheries, and is your contact person for the CDS.
- **Silver Bishop**, who has a particular focus on Pacific fisheries.

And your chance to develop your own seabird bycatch solutions—

The Southern Seabird Solutions Trust – a group made up of both fishers and environmentalists – wants to help fishers test and develop promising ideas to keep seabirds away from fishing gear.

“We can help you turn a great idea into a tip, technique or technology that’s good for trawl or line fishing, and good for seabirds,” says Southern Seabird Solutions Convenor Janice Molloy.

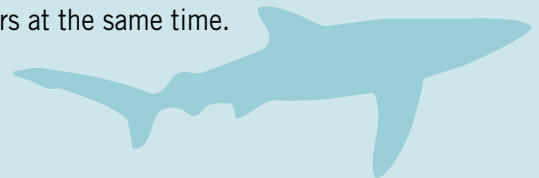
Interested fishers and inventors can find out more at www.southernseabirds.org or by emailing info@southernseabirds.org.

The organisation is making a special call for people to contact them with their ideas over the next few months (up until the end of February), but is available to provide advice and support any time.

Upcoming review of HMS shark fisheries

Blue, mako and porbeagle sharks

These HMS sharks were introduced into the quota system in 2004, and it is timely to take another look to ensure the catch limits continue to be set at the right level. This review will take place in 2012, and will involve examination of any available information on conversion factors at the same time.



Hammerhead sharks

We will also look closely at how hammerhead sharks are managed, particularly because of international concerns about the sustainability of hammerhead shark populations. Hammerheads look to be widely distributed through harbours and bays around the North Island, and low numbers are caught as bycatch in a range of fisheries.



A Southern Buller's albatross, one of the great ocean travellers. Photo: Bruce Mockett.

More information:

If you would like more information on any of the items in this newsletter, please contact Steph Hill, stephanie.hill@maf.govt.nz or phone 04-819-4230.