

High Seas South Pacific Tuna Fisheries

Fishing gear type: Purse seine, longline, and troll.

Current category: Category II – all gear types.

Basis for current classification on the LOF: While there is a formal observer program for fishing in the South Pacific Tuna Treaty (SPTT) area, information on marine mammal stock abundance in the area is scarce and observer reports of interactions between marine mammals and fisheries are not yet specific enough to determine the level of marine mammal serious injury and mortality.

Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed: The LOF states that the species/stocks killed/injured in each fishery are “undetermined.” While observer data from January 1997–June 2002 show that 11 sets resulted in interactions with marine mammals, the data do not indicate the species interacting with the fishery, only that the animals were “unidentified whales, marine mammals, or dolphin/porpoise.”

Estimated number of current participants: Purse seine- 36; Longline- 3; Troll- 3.

Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery: N/A

Year added to the LOF: 2009

Category when originally listed: Category II- all gear types.

Basis for original classification on the LOF: While there was a formal observer program for fishing in the SPTT area, information on marine mammal stock abundance in the area was scarce and observer reports of fishery interactions were not specific enough to determine the level of marine mammal serious injury and mortality. Therefore, all gear types were listed as Category II, the appropriate classification for new fisheries on the LOF for which there is little information on which to base a classification.

Estimated number of participants when originally listed: Purse seine- 23; Longline- 2; Troll- 1.

Past names, if any: None.

Gear description/method for fishing: The SPTT was intended to apply only to U.S. purse seine vessels; however, provisions have been made to accommodate high seas fishing by U.S. albacore tuna troll and U.S. longline vessels within the Treaty Area.

Target species: Albacore tuna.

Spatial/temporal distribution of effort: The SPTT manages access of U.S. purse seine vessels targeting tuna (skipjack and yellowfin) within the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of 16 Pacific Island Countries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean that are party to the Treaty. The SPTT Area includes the waters from north of 60° S. lat. and east of 90° E. long. subject to the fishing jurisdiction of Pacific Island parties, and all waters within rhumb lines connecting multiple geographic coordinates, and north along the 152° E. long. out to the border of the Australian EEZ. The Treaty Area includes portions of waters in the EEZs of most of the Pacific Island Countries included in the Treaty.

Levels of observer coverage each year: Under the SPTT, observers are recruited from the Pacific Island Countries and then trained and deployed by the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) in Honiara in the Solomon Islands. Many of the FFA deployed observers serve in and have experience from domestic observer programs active in each observer’s respective country. The target observer level coverage is 20% of U.S. purse seine vessels, the full costs of which are the responsibility of the U.S. purse seine vessel owners.

Management and regulations: Both a SPTT and a High Seas Fishing Compliance Act (HSFCA) permit are required to fish in SPTT waters.

History of Changes on the LOF

2010 LOF:

- Purse seine: Estimated number of participants was updated from 23 to 36.
- Longline: Estimated number of participants was updated from 2 to 3.
- Troll: Estimated number of participants was updated from 1 to 3.