



Fish catches in American Samoa

The Fisheries Division of the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) regularly monitors fish catches of its nearshore fisheries, and the data are used to track the status of fish stocks. The Fisheries Division runs creel programmes that cover commercial and non-commercial fisheries, commercial vendors' receipts, and sportfishing. Creel survey methods follow reviewed and accepted protocols. The pelagic fisheries catch forms a minor part of the data that the United States submits to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. The pelagic, bottomfish and coral reef fisheries data form part of the Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs) developed by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

Nearshore commercial fisheries

In 2018, 19 *alia* boats landed 15,014 kg of pelagic fish through trolling, mix bottom fishing-trolling, and longlining. These pelagic fisheries data do not include the catch of purse-seine and longline vessels that offload to the cannery in American Samoa. Yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) accounted for 5125 kg, skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) 3220 kg, albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) 2270 kg, and wahoo (*Acanthocybium solandri*) 1950 kg. When compared with 2014 pelagic fish landings (18,600 kg), landings have been nearly stable for the last three years, despite the fact that the number of active vessels has declined from 22 in 2015 to 10 in 2018.

Six *alia* boats landed 6440 kg of bottomfish in 2018. The major species were longtail snapper (*Etelis coruscans*) with 1,720 kg, gray jobfish (*Aprion virescens*) 770 kg, silverjaw jobfish (*Aphareus rutilans*) 680 kg, ruby snapper (*Etelis carbunculus*) 545 kg, humpback snapper (*Lutjanus gibbus*) 410 kg, and redgill emperor (*Lethrinus rubrioperculatus*) 320 kg. The landings of bottomfish have consistently declined since 2015, when 23,100 kg were landed, and the number of active boats has declined from 21 in 2014 to 6 in 2018.

In 2018, four *alia* boats landed 14,060 kg of fish caught by free-dive spearfishing. Twenty-two percent of this catch consisted of blue-lined surgeonfish (*Acanthurus lineatus*), 10% red-lip parrotfish (*Scarus rubroviolaceus*), 7% bluespine unicornfish (*Naso unicornis*), and 6% dark-capped parrotfish (*Scarus oviceps*). Imported reef fish from Samoa amounted to around 2800 kg (20%). The number of spearfishing boats ranged from three to five boats operating each year since 2014.

Recreational and subsistence fisheries

American Samoa's major fisheries include gleaning, throw-netting, spearfishing, handlining, and rod and reel. Cultural practices include fishing for *palolo* (*Eunice viridis*), *atule* (*Selar* spp.) and *ia'sina* (juvenile *Mulloidichthys* spp.). Around 4850 kg of fish were landed and the major catches were *atule* from handlining, octopus from gleaning, blue-lined surgeonfish from spearfishing, and jacks *Caranx* spp. from rod and reel. There was a strong *palolo* rise on October 2018.

Recreational trolling landed 3300 kg of pelagic fish in 2018, while yellowfin tuna accounted for 34%, wahoo 24% and dogtooth tuna (*Gymnosarda unicolor*) 10%. The International *Ia Lapoa* Fishing Tournament landed 2200 kg of pelagic fish, with yellowfin tuna accounting for 56% of this and wahoo 33%.

The commercial invoice system recorded 36,300 kg of pelagic bycatch fish sold from longline vessels.

For more information:

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