



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE  
SIXTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

**ELECTRONIC MEETING**  
11-20 August 2020

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**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION**  
**PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH, AND STATISTICS**

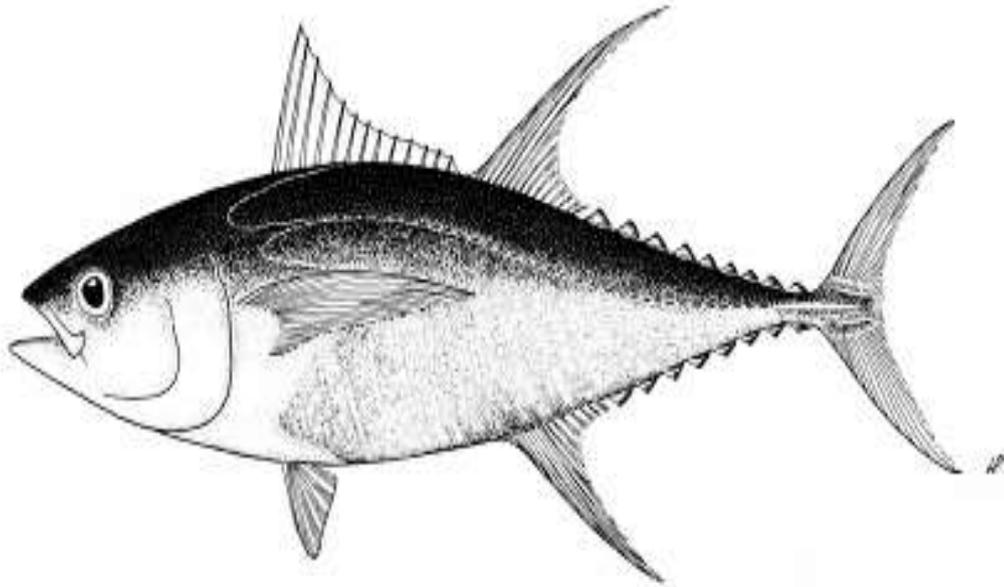
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**WCPFC-SC16-AR/CCM-17**

**NIUE**

**WCPFC-SC16**

**COUNTRY FISHERIES REPORT – NIUE**



**Fisheries Division**

**Ministry of Natural Resources  
Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries  
Niue**

**2020**

## **1. Abstract**

The number of offshore longline vessels in Niue's increased from 5 vessels in 2018 to 7 in 2019. 7 vessels also fished in Niue waters in 2016 to 3 in 2017.

Similar to previous years Albacore remained as the dominant catch making up just over ??? of the total weight, followed by yellowfin and bigeye.

Niue's newly established protected area, covering 40% of the total EEZ will enhance protection and management of important habitats and species and all types of fishery in general.

## **2. Background**

Niue's catch composition has remained consistent for a number of years. Albacore always dominates at almost 80% of the total weight every year. Yellowfin tuna and bigeye follow with very low but notable numbers compared to other species.

Taiwan and Cook Islands flagged vessels were those that were License by Niue to operate in our EEZ for 2018. These vessels were all based and offloaded in Samoa. Vessels flagged to Fiji were also License in the pass years.

At the peak of the Niue Fishing Factory processing plant, 2010 was the best catch rate being recorded with the timeline of 3 months fished. At this stage only a few Long Line operators were engaged in the Fishery.

Niue's management of its artisanal fishery was improving steadily. As of the first quarter of 2016, a Fisheries data officer was dedicated to collect catch data all year round. However, this stopped from begging 2018 to mid 2019 due to staff turnover once again.

As tourism is growing, so has the diversification of marine activities. Niue Fisheries is working alongside the Niue Ocean Wide project to set up management of Niue's newest and largest marine protected area. The area will encompass management for significantly important inshore and offshore habitats, species, fishing and non-fishing activities. Sports like game fisheries where catch are released may be permitted within this area but under license arrangement.

At the 10th Annual WCPFC meeting in Cairns, Niue declared its longline and purse seine limits. These limits are incorporated into the National Pelagic Management and Development Plan and it also highlights in the Part 2 report.

## **3. Annual Data Summary and Species Catch Distribution by Longline vessels from 2009-2019.**

The longline total catch in Niue's EEZ in 2019 increased from the previous year (Table 1). This is due to the increase on the number of vessels and in turn the number of trips and effort subjected on Niue's offshore fishery. Albacore was the only species with a notable catch weight where the rest barely made 5% tonnes. However the reduction for albacore from the previous year was still very large at almost 80%. Yellowfin and bigeye follow with low catches.

Year	No. of Ves	ALBACORE	BIGEYE	SKIPJACK	YELLOWFIN	BLUEMARLIN	STRIPEMARLIN	SWORDFISH	OTHER	TOTAL
2009	3	138	7	5	12	1	4	1	8	176
2010	6	97	4	1	8	1	0	0	5	116
2011	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2013	6	416	18	9	44	19	2	4	31	543
2014	5	325	26	13	84	19	1	3	22	493
2015	3	57	4	1	11	3	0	0	3	79
2016	7	233	12	3	31	9	1	0	7	296
2017	3	53	4	0	5	3	0	1	3	69
2018	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	7	1007.135	46.47	37.815	132.455	16.8	0	8.94	43.438	1293.05

Table1. Annual catch estimates in Niue's EEZ. Data Source: Operational (logsheet) catch/effort data, unraised. The catch for 2010 is for the first 4 months of the year before fishing operations by the fisheries partner ceased.

#### 4. Flag State Reporting

Niue is not a flag state

#### 5. Coastal State Reporting

Niue has a Management plan for pelagic fishing, with limits set on main tuna species targeted based on the best catch rates and those neighbouring countries catches that are similar in size and rate. Niue reports its tuna fisheries catches to the Scientific Committee of the WCPFC.

#### 6. Socio-economic factors

All catch caught in Niue's EEZ for 2019 are offloaded in Apia Samoa. Fish that is caught by small artisanal vessels remains the main source of fish for locals. It is sold to restaurants and to the general public at between 12-\$16 per kilo. All fishermen whether they are subsistence or chartered sell fish to general stores and restaurants or directly to the general public. Similar to 2018 Chartered artisanal fishing has been very popular with tourists. Trolling is the most popular followed by blue water spearfishing. Tourist have also expressed interest in night grayfish activity however this is not encouraged by National Authority. The number of boats and average trips per day fluctuates over each year.

#### 7. Disposal of catch

The Disposal of catch is at the designated port of transshipment. Sharks that are caught in Niue's waters must be discarded as per Niue's legislation and the National Pelagic Management plan.

#### 8. Onshore developments

The processing plant is still inactive with no immediate forecast to reactivate. and most shore developments are of access to onshore facilities (wharf upgrade).

The wharf upgrade is to provide ease of access and safer offload to fishing vessels given the open nature of Niue's only port. This was identified by the last operations as one key area for improvement.

A boat and canoe launching site located to southern side of the island was also utilised during these time to offload catch from vessels due to port being rough and unsafe for usual offloading operation.

### **9. Future Prospects of the fishery**

The Pelagic Development and Management plan is a mechanism to drive current and future prospects which can be aided by long term and short term partnerships.

One of the long term partnerships is with the Niue Ocean Wide (NOW) project to set up management of Niue's newest and largest marine protected area. The area will encompass management for significantly important inshore and offshore habitats, species, fishing and non-fishing activities. Work is already underway with NOW project for surveillance tools to be utilised for monitoring parts if not of the MPA.

There is also ongoing negotiation with the High Seas Allocation for Niue.

### **10. Status of tuna fishery data collection systems**

The process of data collection is enshrined in the Licensing terms and conditions of foreign vessels fishing in Niue waters. Reporting and data collection is mandatory with authorised Officers rights to set the terms, though these are based on data requirements of SPC and WCPFC.

Penalties are imposed on denying or refusal of access to data. For Artisanal data, a data officer has been identified and appointed to recommence collecting of data 4 days per week. In some cases including Saturday to cover Fishing competitions held by various Communities. In previous years fishermen were relied upon to record their own data. Along with the offshore data, this data is entered and stored in the TUFMAN database developed by SPC.

### **11. Research activities covering target and non-target species**

Research of pelagic species is subject to the availability of funding and requirements under the National Pelagic Management and Development Plan.

In 2010, a wahoo tagging program was carried out using satellite tags and the ARGOS satellite tracking device to track the movement of wahoo. Further research in these areas is expected subject to funding availability.

Tuna and Shark tagging was also done last year 2019 in collaboration with NOW Project and

In 2016, Niue was very fortunate to acquire the assistance of Pristine Seas of National Geographic to conduct a research on pelagic fish assemblage characteristics using mid-water baited remote underwater video stations. At this same time, the Pacific Community undertook finfish and invertebrates surveys with Niue Fisheries staff.