



OPRT

NEWSLETTER INTERNATIONAL

Sankaido Bldg. (9th Floor)
1-9-13 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan 107-0052
Tel: 03-3568-6388; Fax: 03-3568-6389
Website: <http://www.oprt.or.jp>

NOV. 2013, No. 46

FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF TUNAS

Southern Bluefin Tuna

CCSBT agrees on increase of SBT catch

The Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) agreed at its 20th annual meeting to increase the total allowable catch (TAC) of southern bluefin tuna next year to 12,449 tons and to 14,647 tons per year also in 2015-2017 as shown in the table. The annual meeting was held in Adelaide, Australia, 14-17 October. The decision is based on the finding by the Scientific Committee that the recruitment of juvenile fish is on an increasing trend, although the biomass of the parental spawning fish is still at a low level. The TACs for 2016-2017 will be reviewed next year.

Regarding the use of the stereophonic camera scheduled from December this year, Australia further delayed the schedule because of a domestic reason. By using the camera, counting, measuring and weighing in farming cages is more accurate and thus contributes to improved stock assessment and catch quota management.

Surprise was expressed by some observers at the CCSBT annual meeting at the continued delay in implementation of video monitoring of the SBT farm cages. Australia had

undertaken to have the system in place by now and failure to do so must inevitably raise suspicions.

TAC by Country

	2014	2015-2017	(Ref.)2013
Japan	3,361t	4,737t	2,703t
Australia	5,151t	5,665t	4,713t
Korea	1,036t	1,140t	948t
Taiwan	1,036t	1,140t	948t
Indonesia	750t	750t	709t
New Zealand	910t	1,000t	833t
South Africa *	150t	150t	40t
Philippines	45t	45t	45t
EU	10t	10t	10t
Research Purpose	-	10t	-
Total	12,449t	14,647t	10,949t

* subject to its accession to the CCSBT

ICFA

Tuna Issues discussed at ICFA

The International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA) held its annual meeting in Rome on Oct.18. Members reviewed various issues related to fisheries. Mr. Toshiro Shirasu, president of the Japan Fisheries Association (JFA), representing Japan's fisheries industry, updated 2011 Tsunami disaster and Fukushima nuclear power plant situation. He also presented Pacific tuna issues (Pacific bluefin tuna, overfishing capacity of large scale purse seiners and inappropriate and excessive enforcement for protecting sharks).

Regarding sharks, he reported that excessive enforcement is being carried out by certain countries for protection of sharks and it hampers legitimate fishing operation. There is reportedly a country which prohibits retention of any sharks on board even if the sharks are legitimately caught and retained in compliance with the rules. Being afraid of seizure, fishing vessels can not even conduct the innocent passage around the area concerned.

He appealed that inappropriate and excessive enforcement should not be made under the name of protection of sharks.

He also mentioned Japan's initiative to tackle IUU tuna fishing, introducing activities conducted by OPRT,



Shirasu (center) addressing the ICFA meeting

established in Japan with cooperation of tuna fishing industries in major tuna fishing nations under support of the Fisheries Agency of Japan in order to address IUU tuna fishing. He said that the strict implementation of measures taken by Regional Tuna Fisheries Management Organizations such as the publication of the positive list and the catch documentation scheme are effectively working to eliminate IUU tuna fishing.

(ICFA is a coalition of the national fish and seafood industry trade associations from the world's major fishing nations. The group was formed in 1988 to provide decision-makers a unified voice on global fish and seafood issues. ICFA members advocate policies for the long-term sustainable use of living marine resources for the benefit of global food security and prosperity. ICFA members are deeply committed to science-based and fully participatory fishery conservation and management processes.)

Topics

OPRT requests Taiwan to control small scale longliners

On the occasion of his visit to Japan, Mr. James Sha, Director General, Fisheries Agency of Taiwan, visited OPRT and exchanged views with Mr. Daishiro Nagahata, Managing Director of OPRT, concerning the current issues of tuna fisheries management in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

After welcoming Mr. Sha, Nagahata emphasized the urgent need for WCPFC to develop and adopt at its forthcoming Regular session scheduled for December a multi-year effective and fair conservation and management measures to recover the bigeye tuna stock in the region, while expressing serious concerns about the current declining status of the stock. He requested Sha that Taiwan make efforts to realize the adoption of such measures. Sha stated that he supports OPRT's mission to ensure sustainable use of tuna resources through promotion of responsible tuna fisheries.

Nagahata also raised his concern regarding the rapidly



Nagahata (left) meets Sha at the OPRT office

growing capacity of small scale tuna longliners in the region. He said, "It was recognized as a serious concern by all OPRT members when OPRT held its members' meeting last June in Tokyo. Growing capacity of small scale longliners, if left uncontrolled, would eventually nullify the joint efforts by OPRT members not to increase large scale longliners in the world. To follow up, OPRT sent a letter last July to the Executive Director of WCPFC, requesting to introduce measures to control the capacity of small scale longliners (Please refer to the OPRT Newsletter International No.45). Sha responded," Taiwan has already introduced measures to limit the number of small scale longliners as well as large scale longliners. The small scale longliner association of Taiwan has also been established aimed at effectively managing them."

Further reduction of fishing mortality needed for Pacific Bluefin Tuna

The Northern Committee (NC) of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) took place in Fukuoka, Japan from 2-5 September 2013.

The NC agreed to recommend the Commission to reduce at least 15 % the catch of juvenile Pacific bluefin tuna from 02-04 annual average for 2014, given the conservation advice from the International Scientific Committee (ISC). The advice provided by ISC is that further reduction of fishing mortality, especially juvenile fish is needed to reduce the risk of spawning stock biomass (SSB) falling below its historically lowest level. Korea only reserved its position on the recommendation. Korea is urged by all other members to withdraw the reservation by the December Commission meeting. The NC also agreed to develop at its next year's meeting a rebuilding program based upon new information to be provided by ISC. The recommendation is to be adopted at the annual meeting of WCPFC scheduled for December.

OPRT urges WCPFC to introduce measures for recovering bigeye tuna

"Adoption of an effective and fair program for recovering bigeye tuna stock at this year's WCPFC regular session is crucially important." OPRT appealed in a presentation at the 4th Pacific Tuna Forum.

Daishiro Nagahata, Managing Director of OPRT, was invited to the 4th Pacific Tuna Forum (organized by the INFOFISH) held in Honiara, Solomon Islands September 18-19, 2013, and made a presentation with respect to the Japanese tuna market.

He elaborated on the recent situation and outlook of the Japanese sashimi grade tuna market. He indicated that Japanese consumers have a strong demand for tuna served fresh as sashimi but are more sensitive to the price than before. He also said that stable supply of good-quality tuna at reasonable prices is essential to maintain its status in competition with other food items in the Japanese market, the world's largest sashimi grade tuna market. He mentioned that bigeye tuna is a popular sashimi grade tuna in the Japanese market. In this context, he stated that



the declining bigeye tuna stock in the western and central Pacific region is a matter of OPRT's serious concern. He then appealed for the need of urgent solution by the WCPFC, pointing out the declining stock is chiefly caused by the FAD operation by purse seiners.

In conclusion, he emphasized that the adoption of an effective and fair conservation and management program for recovering the bigeye tuna stock in this region at this year's WCPFC regular session is crucially important.

Dr. Miyake's Tuna Chat

How can a TAC be divided?

In fishery management, the most effective and practical measure would be the establishment of a "Total Allowable Catch" (TAC) for a given stock and to keep the catch below that level. However, even with the same TAC level, the size of fish being caught makes a big difference in its effect. The catch of a thousand tons of 2 kg fish would give much greater impact on the stock than the catch of the same weight of fish of 70kg. As discussed in this column previously, if tuna are allowed to grow up to an adult size, sustainable yield from that stock would be far larger than in the case where many juveniles are caught. Besides, larger tuna can be sold at a substantially higher price than small tuna. Hence there is an even greater economic profit in catching tuna after they have grown up. The problem is that the management of fishery in the real world cannot be adopted based on only biological and economical yields. Many fishers' livelihoods are dependent on their own fishing. Also an establishment of a TAC to one species of fish can have an effect upon the fisheries on other species.

Tuna fisheries have multi-species, multi-national and multi-gear aspects. For example, small bigeye tuna are caught by purse seine together with skipjack and yellowfin tuna, while large fish are caught by longline, also with other species of tuna and billfish. Pacific bluefin tuna are caught: at ages 0-1 by trolling along Japanese coasts; at ages 2-4 by purse seine in the Japanese, Korean and Mexican waters, as well as by trap and longline in Japan; matured fish are caught by Taiwanese and Japanese longline. These fishing

practices have a direct and real-life relation to fishers' livelihoods.

Therefore, we cannot give all the TAC to big fish fishery in order to maximize biological and/or economical yields. When adopting a conservation measure, that measure should be based on biological and socio-economic balance. Nonetheless, it is difficult to find a practical method for distributing a TAC among fisheries which take different sized fish. The easiest way out of this dilemma - which has been practiced so far in many cases - has been to cut down the current catches by a certain percentage, regardless of the fisheries catching different size of fish. But there is a significant exception to this rule: management of Atlantic bluefin tuna. For the fishery of this species, a minimum size limit has been introduced (30 kg as a minimum allowable size, adopted in 2010, with an exception for the Adriatic Sea). This means that the managers decided to give the priority to increasing sustainable biological catch per given stock. Consequently, all the coastal bluefin tuna fisheries that had been catching a significant amount of small juvenile bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean Sea have been banned. One wonders whether the decision to recover the stock by sacrificing coastal small-fish fisheries was motivated by a desire to prioritise the survival of fish farming (fattening)?



Editorial

Seafood Ecolabel and Tuna

Seafood Eco-label aims to ensure the sustainability of seafood through consumers' purchase decision. Many eco-labels compete with one another, asserting their own advantages.

It is an acceptable intent to promote sustainably managed fisheries through eco-label scheme, but it is inappropriate to apply the scheme to all fisheries. It is quite clear if we take tuna as an example. Highly migratory tuna is caught in many countries through various fishing methods. Even if a specific tuna fishery is certified as an eco-label candidate, the sustainability of this specific tuna resource can not be secured if other tuna fisheries do not observe the required international management measures for the specific tuna.

To conserve and manage tuna resources for sustainability, all related countries and industries utilizing the resources need to cooperate to implement managing measures, and only by doing so, effective result should be attained. The sustainability is not attained through partial efforts by a single tuna fishing country or tuna fishing industry. This is why the Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) is established in each ocean and takes responsibility on conservation and management of

tuna resources.

Furthermore, tuna caught by Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishery should be kept out from all markets of the world all together. IUU fishery undermines the management measures implemented by the RFMOs and disturbs stock sustainability. Even if only a part of markets in the world keep out such illegal products, IUU fishery can use the markets without any regulations to eliminate IUU products. Then, it is impossible to eliminate IUU fishery completely.

The use of seafood eco-label is left in the hands of distributors; therefore it is impossible to keep out all IUU tuna out of the world markets all together by the ecolabel. On the other hand, the RFMO identifies an IUU fishing nation when such country does not implement the management measures adopted by the RFMO. Then, the harvests by such country can be kept out of the markets of the world. If this mechanism is definitely functional, the sustainability of tuna resources can be secured.

The problem occurs when the RFMO loses or weakens its management capacity. The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) was once held in doubt with regard to its capability to manage Atlantic Bluefin Tuna, but it has successfully recovered its capability by implementing strict management measures.

Currently, the management capability of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) is in question. Due to the difference of opinions between the distant water fishing countries and coastal island countries, the WCPFC has failed to stop overfishing of bigeye tuna stock.

At the upcoming annual meeting in December, the WCPFC needs to adopt an effective management plan to secure sustainable tuna resources in the areas it manages, while overcoming the difference of opinions among member countries. (This is an excerpt from the article in Minato Fisheries Daily.)

Sashimi Tuna Campaign

OPRT carries out the 2013 Sashimi Tuna Campaign

On October 1-10, OPRT carried out the 2013 Sashimi Tuna Campaign with cooperation of approximately 230 fish retailers in major cities of Japan. This marked the 10th anniversary of the nationwide campaign conducted by OPRT. Since last year, October 10 was specially featured as "the Day of Tuna." The Day was originally established by the Federation of Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Associations in 1986 based on a poem in Japan's oldest anthology "Man'yoshu" compiled by the Imperial command during the Nara Era (710-794).

With the support of 19 OPRT members including tuna longline fishing organizations in major countries as well as distributors and consumers organizations in Japan, OPRT distributed 400 posters, 18,000 pamphlets and 12,000 sheets (72,000 adhesive patches in total, with each sheet having six patches), which appealed "the Day of Tuna" to the fish retailers.

OPRT also distributed the campaign materials to the

restaurants, fish markets and fisheries cooperatives that had expressed their hope to use them in their independent sashimi tuna campaigns. Through the campaign, OPRT stressed the importance of the sustainable use of tuna resources and the promotion of responsible tuna fisheries.



Seal logo of the Tuna Day

Also, on October 4, OPRT held a seminar in Tokyo, in which experts dealing with tunas—a wholesaler in the Tsukiji fish market and a traditional sushi restaurant owner in downtown Tokyo—explained how attractive and suitable the tuna is for family party dishes.

After the seminar, a tuna party was arranged providing various dishes using tunas. In the opening remarks, OPRT Managing Director Daishiro Nagahata said: "Consumers play an important role in ensuring sustainable tuna fisheries. Consumers' interest in the resource conditions as well as the fishing activities, and reflection of these aspects in the purchase of fish products supports responsible tuna fisheries. If consumers purchase more relevant tuna products, it means that responsible tuna fishers can receive a greater support for their activities."



Photos: Above: OPRT Seminar; Below: Tuna Party