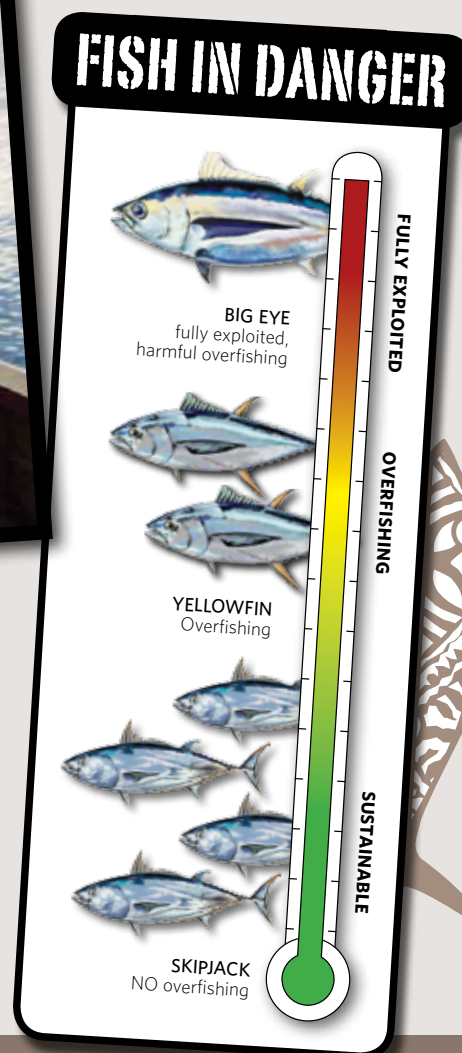


# THE WESTERN & CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION



**PACIFIC POSTCARD:**  
Food to millions living on small islands, tuna are critical to economic growth in the Pacific, worth US \$4 billion a year.

## FISH IN DANGER



### MANAGING A GLOBAL FOOD RESOURCE: A Fisheries Commission and Convention for the Pacific

Almost half of the world's annual tuna catch – around 2 million tonnes a year, comes from the waters of the Pacific, and mostly from the Western and Central Pacific region which includes the many islands of the Pacific, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Good management of that huge natural resource involves all 17 Pacific Islands members of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and other fishing nations – jurisdiction as set out by an international convention called the United Nations Law of the Sea.

To guard against overfishing and ensure oceanic fishing for the future,

the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean was opened for signature in Hawaii, in 2000, after many years of meetings.

The Convention aims for one key goal: making sure that the Pacific Ocean, as host to the world's richest source of tuna, will provide fish and fishing revenues to Pacific people into the future. The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), implements and monitors the Convention from its secretariat in the Federated States of Micronesia.

*There are just over 20 species of tuna in the world's oceans. The four species most found in Pacific waters are also the basis of the regional commercial fisheries: skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye and albacore*



The largest stocks of tuna and related species in the world migrate across the world's largest geographic feature, the Pacific Ocean with large populations the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. The Convention area shown falls under the legal control of the WCPFC member nations, most being Pacific Island countries. Between them, the 17 Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency member nations are custodians of an area of some 30 million square kilometres, about 10 percent of the Earth's surface.



# Q&A

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### the Tuna Convention

#### What exactly do countries agree to when they sign the Convention and join the Commission?

Member nations of the Commission agree to act on the Convention without delay. They also promise to implement conservation and management measures, called CMMs, and file annual progress reports to the Commission.

#### What makes this Convention different from other Fisheries agreements?

The convention was built on input from the Pacific Islands in spite of a strong global agenda from Distant Water Fishing Nations, or DWFNs. It is the first international fisheries agreement to include new ways of protecting tuna and other species of fish since the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement.

#### Who attends Commission meetings and what happens there?

Commission meetings are attended by members (including Pacific Islands and other fishing entities such as the US and EU), participating territories and observers. Branching off from the main Commission, special subsidiary committees hold regular meetings in preparation for annual events.

#### What do members make decisions about and how do they reach them?

Commission members make decisions on Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) binding rules applying to fishing across the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. Countries around the table balance their national and regional interests with input from the scientific and technical committees of the WCPFC to make decisions by consensus or vote.

#### What does this mean for small island developing states?

Fisheries are vital for local jobs and food security in small island developing states. At the same time, increased costs of communication, energy and transportation (and often a lack of education and human resources for public administration) mean higher costs of government and implementation of rules regarding fishing. These needs of small island developing states are generally recognised by international organisations and in the case of the WCPFC, recognition is in the Convention (Part 8). The WCPFC also has two funds to address these needs: the Special Requirements Fund, administered by the WCPFC Secretariat, and the Japanese Trust Fund, administered by the WCPFC Secretariat with advice from the Japanese Trust Fund Committee.

Regional cooperation is important so that all Pacific countries benefit from the sustainable use of our tuna worth over \$4 billion a year and important for many people's livelihoods in the Pacific

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