



Sustainable Tuna Roundtable



Sustainable Tuna Roundtable Meeting Report

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Manos Conference Centre, Brussels, Belgium

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Sustainable Tuna Roundtable

Goal and Objectives

GOAL

The Tuna Roundtable brings key industry interests together to reach agreement on how to employ market-driven incentives from eco-labeling, certification, and retailer and buyer sustainable seafood sourcing policies to contribute to producing sustainable tuna fisheries.

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Summary and Conclusions

The Sustainable Tuna Roundtable brought key industry interests together to reach agreement on how to employ market-driven incentives to contribute to producing sustainable tuna fisheries. Participants were from the tuna fishing industry, retail/foodservice industries, buyers, distributors, processors, and intergovernmental organizations, including regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and other regional fishery bodies.

Environmental non-governmental organizations, and to a degree, consumers, are increasingly demanding that seafood (both from marine capture fisheries and aquaculture) sold by retailers and restaurants be produced and processed in an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible manner. Approaches by major grocery retailers to demonstrate that their seafood comes from sustainable fisheries have been diverse, with each individual chain employing different measures. There has been a recent proliferation of programs assessing the sustainability of individual fisheries or seafood species available to retailers. These include in-house retailer programs, ranging from the assessment of fisheries against retailer-established sustainability criteria; individual retailer partnerships with environmental non-governmental organizations who conduct assessments and make recommendations for sustainable seafood sourcing; and use of a retailer eco-label. There are also numerous third-party programs for marine capture fisheries, including eco-labeling programs, and consumer guides, which assess the sustainability of individual fisheries, rank the relative sustainability of individual seafood species, or rank retailers based on the sustainability of their seafood sourcing practices.

Roundtable participants agreed that international management of commercial tuna fisheries' sustainability through regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) requires improvements. Tuna fishing companies want RFMOs to be successful, recognizing that the long-term viability of their businesses rely on the availability of tuna resources at sustainable and optimal levels. In some areas, RFMO management improvements are required to address the overcapacity of tuna fleets, allow rebuilding needed for some tuna stocks and avoid and minimize adverse ecosystem effects of tuna fisheries, including bycatch of sensitive species groups and the catch and discarded bycatch of juvenile and undersized tunas. Furthermore, international management has generally not been successful in addressing problems created by substantial illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which hampers the effective management of tuna fisheries.

RFMO management ineffectiveness has occurred, in part, due to low compliance by member states with RFMO measures and because consensus-based decision-making has often prevented the adoption of appropriate measures. The tuna industry recognizes it can play a significant role towards preventing overexploitation of tuna stocks and reversing it when it occurs, addressing bycatch issues, enhancing data collection and communication, and improving management. **To address these problems, participants agreed to increase retail, processor, buyer, distributor and tuna fishing industry participation in RFMO activities to push for adoption of and compliance with legally binding measures to achieve**

sustainable tuna fisheries. Participants discussed benefits from the establishment of national competent authorities for fishery sustainability certification and labeling.

Eco-labeling and other certification programs were seen as having the potential to provide an important, complementary, market-driven incentive to improve tuna fisheries' sustainability. There was discussion, but a lack of consensus, regarding the utility of certification programs in providing independent, third-party (in some cases, peer-reviewed) verification of the success of fishery management. Participants discussed how third party assessments rely largely on government-collected fishery data, including fish

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

Fishing industry: Hawaii Longline Association, Luen Thai Fishing Venture Ltd., National Fisheries Institute, OPAGAC (Organización de Profesional de Grandes Atuneros Congeladores), Pacific Islands Industry Tuna Association, Western Fishboat Owners Association, World Tuna Purse Seine Organization (WTPO), and Organisation Des Producteurs de Thon Congele (Orthongel).

Retailers, buyers, exporters and processors: Lidl Stiftung & Company KG, Migros (MICARNA SA), Tesco Stores Ltd., Whole Foods Market, Connors Bros. (parent company of Bumble Bee Foods U.S. and Clover Leaf Seafoods, Canada), Atuna, New England Seafood International Ltd., Seachill (Division of Icelandic Group UK Ltd.), MW Brands, and Maldiva Marine Products.

Intergovernmental organizations, including regional fisheries management organizations, and environmental non-governmental organizations: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, Sea Fish Industry Authority, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Standards Norway (ISO/TC 234 Secretary), IUCN, and Marine Conservation Society.

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Donors

The following organizations have kindly contributed financial support for convening the Sustainable Tuna Roundtable:

Sea Fish Industry Authority, UK <<http://www.seafish.org>>

Royal Caribbean International <<http://www.royalcaribbean.com>>

Hawaii Longline Association <<http://www.hawaii-longline.org/>>





- 14:30 – 15:00 **Discussion Session 2: Opportunities to improve communication of fishery data – optimizing the factual basis of fishery sustainability assessments and seafood sourcing policies.**
- 15:00 – 15:30 Coffee break
- 15:30 – 16:30 **Discussion Session 3: Options for (IUCN? FAO? ISO?) development and ownership of an agreed, single set of standards for the ecological sustainability, social responsibility and food safety of commercial tuna fisheries and retailer tuna sourcing practices.**
- 16:30 – 17:30 **Recap main meeting conclusions and agreed next steps.**

(Agenda, page 2)



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Presentation Abstracts

The Sustainable Seafood 'Movement', Current and Potential Future Retail Markets for Value-Added, Sustainable and Eco-Labelled Tuna Products

Lucy Pelham Burn, New England Seafood International Limited and
Nigel Edwards, Seachill, division of Icelandic Group UK Ltd

The UK market is seen as one of the leaders in the sustainable and responsible sourcing

Increasingly, the larger vessels are being replaced by smaller more cost efficient vessels working more locally than on the High Seas.

Despite the pressures being placed on the catching sector, demand for *Sashimi* quality in world markets is increasing as more people outside of Japan see Sashimi and Sushi as a healthful food alternative. The price return to the fisherman has not matched market demand – this being much as a consequence of the lower US dollar and Yen.

In this situation the smaller Pacific Island states – the commercial interests of which the Pacific Islands Industry Tuna Association (PIITA) represents – seeks to increase its involvement in providing a sustainable supply of quality tuna to world markets. The scenario now being played out in the Western Central Pacific - home to one of the World's largest tuna resources – is an interesting mix of fishery politics, rights allocation and sustainability. Associated with commercial concerns lies the inevitable complex issue of the ecologically related species and bycatch.

That the Regional Fisheries Management Organisation in the Western Pacific has not resolved matters of overfishing of bigeye and yellowfin and that it proceeds at an inordinately slow pace is of serious concern. The future economic well being of many of the smaller nations in the Pacific lie in balance and subject to wise decisions on sustainability which need now to be taken. Notwithstanding these concerns, a future robust and financially stable longline fishing industry from the Pacific can offer a sustainable food source. Environmental issues can and will

With the entry into force of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention and the introduction of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management by FFA members, the western and central Pacific tuna fishery is entering into a new phase of enhanced sustainable fisheries management at both the regional and national level.

In addition, steps are being taken in major markets to promote the supply of fish from certified sustainable fisheries. For example, in 2006, the US's leading supermarket, Wal-Mart announced that over the next 3 – 5 years, all of its wild-caught seafood would be purchased from fisheries that have been certified as sustain

No agreement was reached on the boundary when a fishery should cease to be considered solely a capture fishery.

As for minimum substantive criteria, it was suggested not to attempt to distinguish between small-scale and large-scale fisheries, but to develop criteria that will allow sustainable fisheries to be certified regardless of their scale.

Management systems:

The system is based on good practices.

A documented management approach takes uncertainty and imprecision into account.

Adequate data and/or information are collected. This includes relevant traditional fisher or community knowledge, provided its validity can be objectively verified.

Stocks under consideration:

Not over-fished. Their availability should be maintained for present and future generations.

The stock is not considered to be over-fished if it is above the limit reference point.

If over-fished, action must be taken to decrease fishing mortality.

In the absence of specific information, generic evidence on similar stocks with low risk can be used.

Ecosystem considerations:

Adverse impacts of fishing on the ecosystem should be assessed and addressed.

Non-target catches to be monitored so as not to threaten them with serious risk of extinction.

Avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.

Damage by fishing gear on highly vulnerable habitats to be avoided, minimized or mitigated.

The above issues and their implications for future work will be discussed in the presentation.

FACT SHEET ON COMMERCIAL TUNA FISHERIES

Excerpt from Gilman E and Lundin C. 2008 (in progress). Principles and Methods to Minimize Bycatch of Sensitive Species Groups in Marine Capture Fisheries: Lessons from Commercial Tuna Fisheries. In

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