



US Pelagic Fisheries

in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

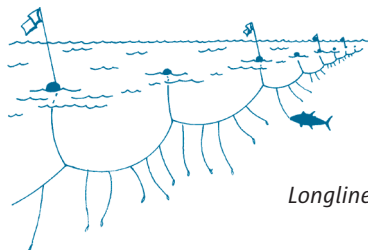
US pelagic fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean include a variety of hook-and-line commercial and non-commercial fisheries managed by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, a commercial albacore fishery managed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council and a commercial purse seine fishery managed by the US Department of State. These US fisheries comprise a small segment of the international fisheries for pelagic species in the Pacific.

The US **longline fishery** in the Western Pacific Region is based primarily in Hawaii and American Samoa. The Hawaii fishery is a limited entry fishery that allows a maximum 164 vessels with 130 currently active. Vessels in this fishery set shallow to target swordfish or deep to target tuna. Other landings include yellowfin tuna, mahimahi (dorado), wahoo, blue and striped marlins, opah (moonfish) and monchong (pomfret). The Hawaii fishery does not freeze its catch, which is sold in the fresh fish and sashimi markets in Hawaii, Japan and the US mainland. Hawaii-based vessels targeting swordfish have also fished seasonally out of California. The American Samoa limited entry longline fishery allows a maximum of 60 vessels with 28 currently permitted. Vessels in this fishery almost exclusively target albacore, which is canned locally. The combined landings from the Hawaii and American Samoa longline fisheries in 2008 amounted to **14,000 mt**, with about two-thirds coming from Hawaii.

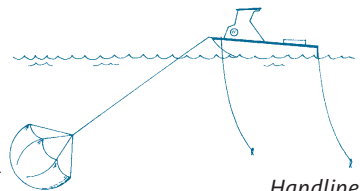
Trolling and handline fishing is the largest commercial pelagics fishery by US vessels in the Western Pacific Region in terms of participation, although annual catches are relatively modest, amounting to about **1,700 mt**

in 2008. Part of this catch is made by charter or for-hire fishing vessels, and about 75 percent of the troll landings are made by Hawaii vessels. There are 1,404 troll vessel in Hawaii, 385 in Guam, 50 in the Northern Mariana Islands and 17 in American Samoa. Hawaii also has 156 handline vessels. Troll and handline catches are dominated by yellowfin tuna, mahimahi and blue marlin in Hawaii and by skipjack in Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa. Other commonly caught troll catches include mahimahi, wahoo and blue marlin.

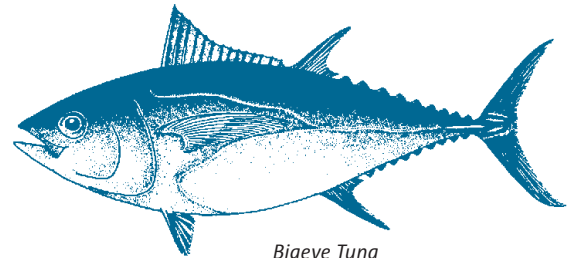
Troll fishing for pelagics is the most common **recreational fishery** in the islands of the Western Pacific Region. Many of these recreational fishermen sell some of their catch to cover fishing expenses. However, federal regulations consider the sale of even



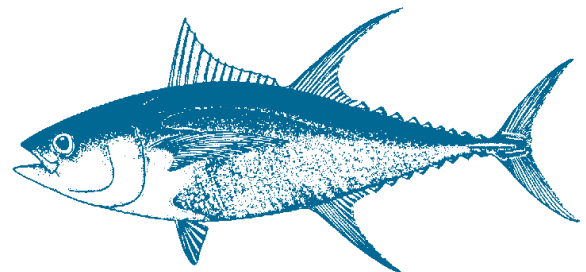
Longline



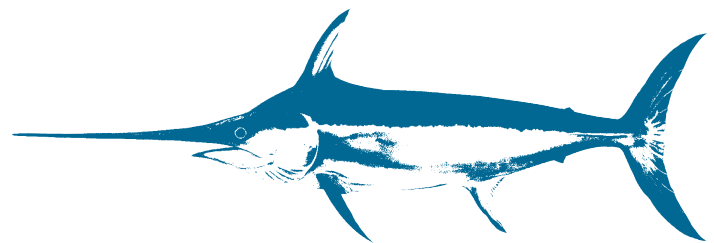
Handline
with parachute sea anchor



Bigeye Tuna



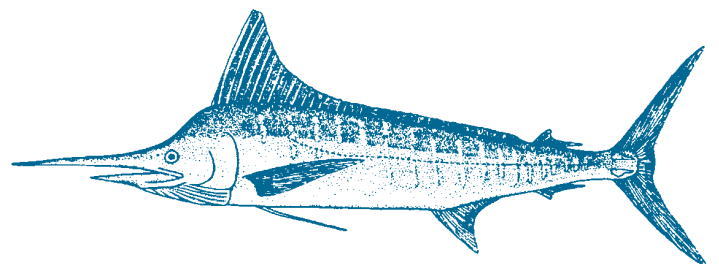
Yellowfin Tuna



Swordfish
Artwork: Les Hata, © SPC

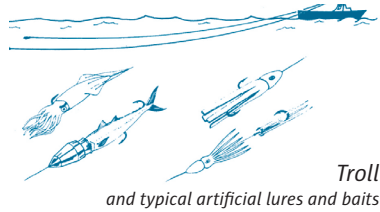


Blue Marlin



Striped Marlin

one fish to be commercial. Hawaii's recreational fishery landings amount to about **12,700 mt** annually, based on surveys of fishermen, with blue marlins catches ranging from 150 to 1,500 mt.



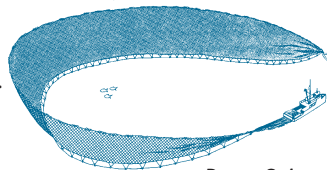
Troll and typical artificial lures and baits

Recreational or non-commercial landings in Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa amount to about **265 mt** of pelagic fish, of which about 5 mt is blue marlin.

Historically, the **pole-and-line fishery** was the largest commercial fishery in Hawaii. Landings consist primarily of aku (skipjack tuna) with small amounts of yellowfin tuna. This fishery declined with the closure of the Hawaii tuna cannery in 1985. In 2008, catch and effort by the fishery reached a record low with six boats making 147 trips and landing about **3,500 mt**, 54 percent below the long-term average since the cannery's closure.

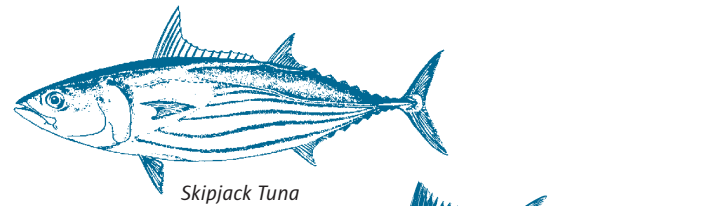
The US fleet of about 450 to 500 **albacore trollers**, based at West Coast ports, fishes primarily in the temperate waters of the North Pacific. In 2008, they landed about **10,000 to 11,000 mt** of fish. Some vessels from this fleet also fish seasonally for albacore in the South Pacific, catching on average **50 to 1,500 mt** of albacore.

The largest fishery in terms of tonnage of fish landed is the US **purse-seine fishery**, with catches of skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye tuna amounting to **157,849 mt** in 2008. This fleet decreased in size from a peak of 61 vessels in 1984 to 12 vessels in 2006, but has since rebuilt to about 40 vessels in 2009. The fleet is based in American Samoa and the Federated States of Micronesia.

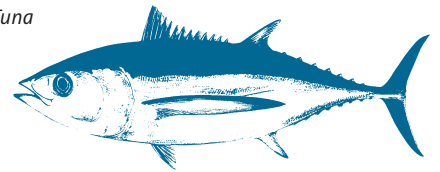


Purse Seine

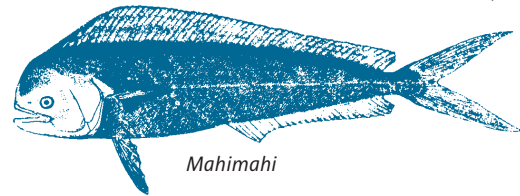
International tuna fleets in the Pacific Ocean as a whole catch about **2.8 million mt** of fish, with US fisheries catching about 6 percent of the total. Most of the catch is taken by high seas longliners and purse seiners from countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Korea and the nations of Central and South America. More recently, the large scale purse-seine and longline fisheries of Pacific Island countries, such as Papua New Guinea, have grown in importance. Small scale artisanal longlining and trolling are also conducted by thousands of small vessels plying the coastal waters of South America and Pacific Island countries like Samoa, Fiji and French Polynesia.



Skipjack Tuna



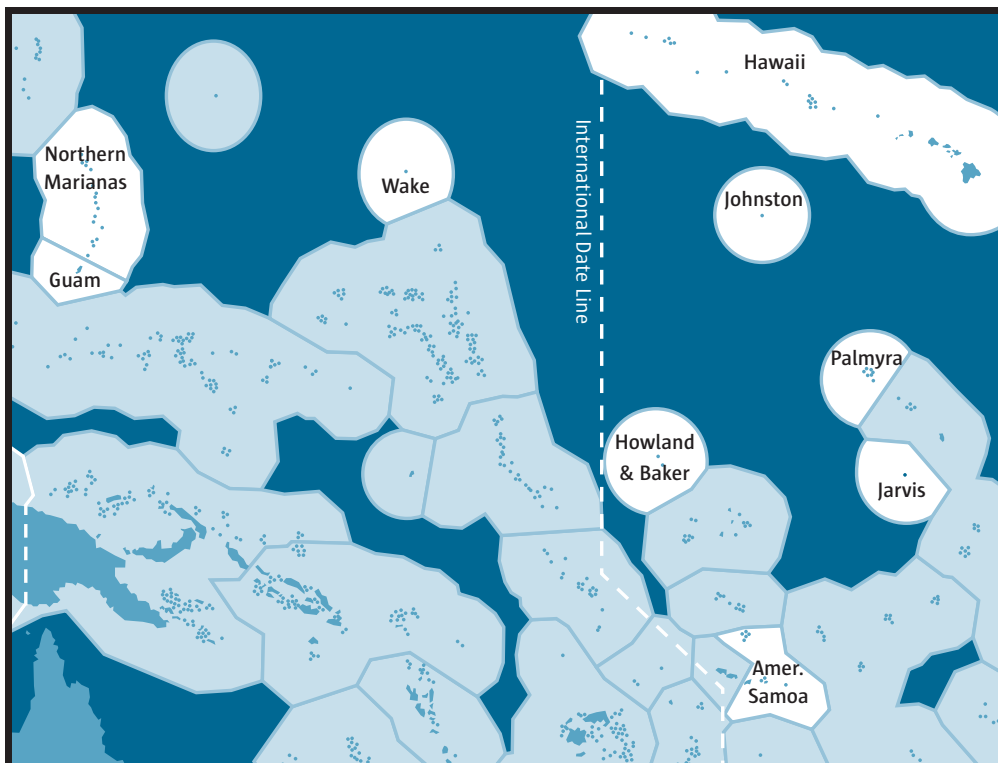
Albacore Tuna
Artwork: Les Hata, © SPC



Mahimahi



Wahoo



The Western Pacific Region includes the exclusive economic zone waters surrounding the State of Hawaii, the Territories of Guam and American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands and the US Pacific remote islands (Baker, Howard, Jarvis, Johnston and Wake Islands; Palmyra and Midway Atolls; and Kingman Reef).



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