



# Sri Lanka Longline FIP Bulletin No.2

The new Sri Lanka longline fishery improvement project (FIP) is an initiative of the Seafood Exporters' Association of Sri Lanka (SEASL). The FIP is a tripartite collaboration by the SEASL with government authorities responsible for regulating and managing the fishery and promoting exports, and the longline boat owners' associations engaged in harvesting yellowfin & bigeye tuna & swordfish. The FIP's goal is to ensure that these fisheries can continue indefinitely at a level that maintains the biological health & abundance of yellowfin & bigeye tuna & swordfish stocks & the diversity, structure & function of the habitats and ecosystem upon which the fisheries depend. The FIP aims to minimize any adverse effects the fishery may cause by means of a management system implemented in conformity with national & international laws, to maintain the present & future economic and social options & benefits arising from the fishery, in a manner that meets international norms for social responsibility & promotes equity in supply chains for Sri Lankan seafood. Details of actions implemented by the members of the new FIP over the last six months to improve the status of the fisheries are described in this the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Sri Lanka Longline FIP Bulletin.

**The following organisations, agencies and exporters are members of the new Sri Lanka longline FIP**



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## Improving the biological status of fisheries



In March the SEASL published a Pre-Assessment (PA) report of Sri Lanka's longline fishery, against the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) Fishery Standard. The PA was conducted by MSC approved consultants through CapMarine Pvt Ltd. The results of the PA suggest that the biological status of Sri Lanka's longline bigeye and swordfish fisheries is equivalent to an unconditional pass of the MSC Fishery Standard. The longline yellowfin tuna fishery's score suggests the fishery would also pass MSC Principle 1, but with conditions. *The MSC approved PA was co-financed by New England Seafood International, the first partner of the new Sri Lanka longline FIP.*

Performance Indicators	≥80	60-79	<60	P1 SG
Target Species				
Yellowfin Tuna	02	04	--	0.67
Bigeye Tuna	03	02	--	0.80
Swordfish	03	02	--	0.80



Senior officers and staff of the Department of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources (DFAR) and the National Aquatic Resources, Research & Development Agency (NARA) continued to maintain Sri Lanka's high level of [compliance](#) with Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) requirements during the first half of 2018. Nominal catch data and foreign fish landings data were reviewed and finalised by DFAR and NARA during the reporting period. Final reports were submitted to the IOTC by the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development & Rural Affairs (MFARD&RA) in accordance with the IOTC's [requirements](#).

In June the MFARD&RS responded to a request from IOTC for data to develop the socio-economic indicators for the G16 proposal on the allocation of fishing opportunities. The G16 proposal was agreed in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the IOTC held in Thailand in May. The list of socio-economic indicators included the number of fishermen and women in workforce, the number of processing plant workers, the number of informal ancillary sector workers, the total workforce, yellowfin tuna exports, total seafood exports, total seafood imports, fishing's contribution to gross domestic product and per capita fish consumption. The socio-economic indicators for the G16 proposal on the allocation of fishing opportunities were submitted by the ministry to the IOTC at the end of June.

## Improving the ecological status of the fisheries



SEASL

The MSC approved PA suggests that the ecological impact of longline fishing on non-target species (NTS), marine habitats and the broader Indian Ocean marine ecosystem is at a level equivalent to a conditional pass of the MSC Standard. However the assessment found that all three fisheries failed two of MSC's 15 Performance Indicators for Principle 2, specifically PI 2.3.1 (ETP Outcome) and PI 2.3.3 (ETP Information). As a result all three target fisheries failed the second of MSC's three principles; the ecological impact of the fishery on NTS (including endangered, threatened and protracted (ETP) species), marine habitats and ecosystem. *The MSC approved PA was conducted by CapMarine and co-financed by New England Seafood International.*

Performance Indicators	≥80	60-79	<60	P2 SG
Target Species				
Yellowfin Tuna	07	06	02	0.67
Bigeye Tuna	06	07	02	0.63
Swordfish	06	07	02	0.63



blue  
resources

In 2013 Sri Lanka became the 32<sup>nd</sup> country or regional authority to publish a National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks ([SLNPOA – Sharks](#)). The SLNPOA – Sharks is a response global concerns about the lack of management measures to mitigate or manage the impact of fishing on sharks and data indicating increases of targeted and non-targeted shark landings ([IPOA–SHARKS](#)). The SLNPOA - Sharks expired in December last year. In May the [Blue Resources Trust](#) - a platform for scientists and conservationists to expand research and improve marine resource management in Sri Lanka and the region - agreed to support DFAR to review the SLNPOA – Sharks and published Sri Lanka's second NPOA by December 2018. In June officers and staff of the DFAR's Fishery Management Division commenced an internal review of new regulations that have been introduced since 2013, related to the management of fisheries, as well as conservation and tourism. An evaluation of the 29 tasks under the seven Priority Areas in the four-year Action Plan, as well as the four overall objectives of the SLNPOA – Sharks is on-going.



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An analysis of shark data submitted to the IOTC by the ministry is also underway. The analysis aims to identify the main shark species and fisheries (by geography and gear) in Sri Lanka. The analysis will enable stakeholders to develop species / fishery specific management measures to manage or mitigate the impact of fishing on these species. Work is also underway to create *species profiles* for each main Sri Lankan shark species. The *species profiles* are being developed using information and data available on [FishBase](#), the International Union for Conservation of Nature's [Red List](#) and the

Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife and Flora ([CITES](#)). DFAR is also creating profiles for the main fisheries associated with 'targeted' and 'non-target' shark catches. Each *fishery profile* will include information on the districts, harbours, vessels, gear type, seasonality of fishing and fishing grounds.

The results of the internal review, analysis of shark catch data, identification of main species and fisheries, and the main species / fishery profiles will be used by DFAR to national management and conservation for sharks. The SLNPOA – Sharks (2018 – 21) will generate new information and management measures to improve the longline fishery's score against PI 2.3.3 (ETP Information) and PI 2.3.3 (ETP Management). The new data and management measures will enable the fishery to achieve a level equivalent to a conditional pass for PI 2.3.1 (ETP Outcome) before December 2019.

## Improving the management of the longline fishery



Governance and policy introduced and implemented by the IOTC for Indian Ocean yellowfin and bigeye tuna and swordfish fisheries, as well as the fishery specific management systems introduced and implemented by the Government of Sri Lanka were scored as equivalent to a conditional pass in the MSC approved PA report. *The MSC approved PA was conducted by CapMarine and co-financed by New England Seafood International.*

Performance Indicators	≥80	60-79	<60	P3 SG
Target Species				
Yellowfin Tuna	03	04	--	0.71
Bigeye Tuna	03	04	--	0.71
Swordfish	03	04	--	0.71



Only six of Sri Lanka's 4,359 multi-day fishing vessels (see left) licensed to fish in Sri Lanka's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ – 3,103 vessels) and on the High Seas (HS & EEZ – 1,256 vessels) are more than 24 metres in length. Sri Lanka's small scale, artisanal offshore and high seas fishing fleet is unique among Indian Ocean coastal states, both in terms of the number and the size of the vessels. According to IOTC's list of authorised [vessels](#) Sri Lanka has registered the highest number of vessels (32% / 1<sup>st</sup>), but is ranked only 9<sup>th</sup> in terms of the Gross Tonnage of the Indian Ocean fleet (3.9%). The average length of a Sri Lankan multi-day vessel is only 12.4 m (9.7 – 28.6 m). The average of length of the Indian Ocean fleet is 24.7 m (4.2 m to 150.3 m).



In 2011 the IOTC adopted [Resolution 11/04](#) - On a Regional Observer Scheme. The resolution's objective is *to collect verified catch data and other scientific data related to the fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species in the IOTC area of competence*. Article 2 states that *in order to improve the collection of scientific data, at least 5% of the number of operations/sets for each gear type by the fleet of each CPC while fishing in the IOTC area of competence of 24 meters overall length and over, and under 24 meters if they fish outside their EEZ shall be covered by this observer scheme*. Sri Lanka has more than a thousand vessels of less than 24 metres fishing outside its EEZ. However due to the small size of these vessels it has so far not been possible to collect *verified catch data and other scientific data related to the fisheries for tuna and tuna-like species*, by deploying Scientific Observers on-board these vessels.



In June [Sea PACT](#) - a group of leading North American Seafood Companies dedicated to driving stewardship and continuous improvement of social, economic, and environmental responsibility throughout the global seafood supply chain - agreed to co-finance the development and implementation a Crew-based Observer pilot programme with DFAR. The pilot programme seeks to address the challenge of collecting verified catch data and other scientific data from vessels less than 24 m operating on the High Seas.

The *User Requirement Specifications* (URS) for a smartphone '**Observer app**' have been developed by DFAR. The app will enable a crew member to record details of a vessel's voyage and its fishing activities, as well as scientific data, including details of ETP species. The URS has been shared with local software developers. DFAR is now preparing to conduct training programmes with District Fisheries Offices in the two main longline fishing centres in the Western (Negombo) and North Western (Chilaw) provinces. Similar programmes will be conducted with longline boat owners and skippers. DFAR aims to deploy the first Crew-based Observer by the beginning of September, to improve the fishery's compliance with IOTC Resolution 11/04 - On a Regional Observer Scheme.

## Social responsibility and improving economic equity

Sri Lanka's small scale, artisanal offshore and high seas fishing fleet grew out of the traditional, coastal fishery. The evolution began in the late 1960s with the introduction of 8.8 m (3.5 ton) one-day boats. Over the last forty years vessels have gotten longer and the distances travelled by Sri Lanka's multi-day boats have gotten larger, but the pattern of ownership remains largely the same. Thousands of boat owners - many of whom were formerly fishermen - employ relatives or people from their village or surrounding villages, to skipper and crew their vessels. **No child labour, foreign labour, migrant labour or forced labour is employed on Sri Lanka's small scale, artisanal longline fishing fleet.**



Once the catch is landed at one of half a dozen small harbours around Sri Lanka, short, swift supply chains deliver the fresh fish to members of the SEASL. SEASL members operate modern processing factories, in compliance with national and international standards for occupational health and safety and food hygiene. High quality seafood products are manufactured by members of the SEASL and delivered to markets for premium seafood in Europe, North America and Japan. **No child labour, foreign labour, migrant labour or forced labour is employed in the manufacture of Sri Lankan seafood products.**



The Sri Lanka Export Development Board (SLEDB) recently appointed a Technical Committee comprising government representatives and members of the SEASL to explore market opportunities associated with developing a brand identity for *Sri Lankan seafood*. The brand will build on Sri Lanka's global reputation for high quality seafood products and emphasise the unique selling points associated with *Sri Lankan seafood*.

## SLL FIP / Fishery Status Report



The final MSC score for each of the three fisheries under the new FIP suggests that the longline yellowfin and bigeye tuna and swordfish fisheries are operating at a level consistent with a conditional pass of the Fishery Standard. However the MSC approved PA report concluded that the three fisheries would all fail the Fishery Standard overall, because two of the 28 Performance Indicators scored < 60. *The MSC approved PA was conducted by CapMarine and co-financed by New England Seafood International; the first partner of the new Sri Lanka longline FIP.*

Performance Indicators	≥80	60-79	<60	Overall
Target Species				
Yellowfin Tuna	12	14	02	0.68
Bigeye Tuna	12	13	02	0.69
Swordfish	12	13	02	0.69



Consultations were held with members of the new FIP throughout the reporting period. Information about the new FIP was shared with World Wide Fund for Nature Pakistan, International Sustainable Seafood Foundation, FishWise, Sea Delight LLC, the Food & Agricultural Organization of the United Nations and Saltwater Inc. Clarifications were sought from the MSC (regarding certification) and Sustainable Fisheries Partnership. The new longline FIP was published by **FishChoice** on **fisheryprogress.org** in June. To view more details about the new FIP please click [here](#).



Seven of Sri Lanka's leading seafood manufactures - **Ceylon Fresh Seafood, Global Seafood, Jay Seafood, Lihini Seafood, NorthWest Fishery, Taprobane Seafood & Tropic Sri Lanka** - are Corporate Members of the new FIP

Ceylon Fresh Seafood



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Soft copies of this edition of the Sri Lanka Longline FIP Bulletin are available in English and Sinhala. For more details about the new longline FIP please email [steve@pelaqikos.lk](mailto:steve@pelaqikos.lk)