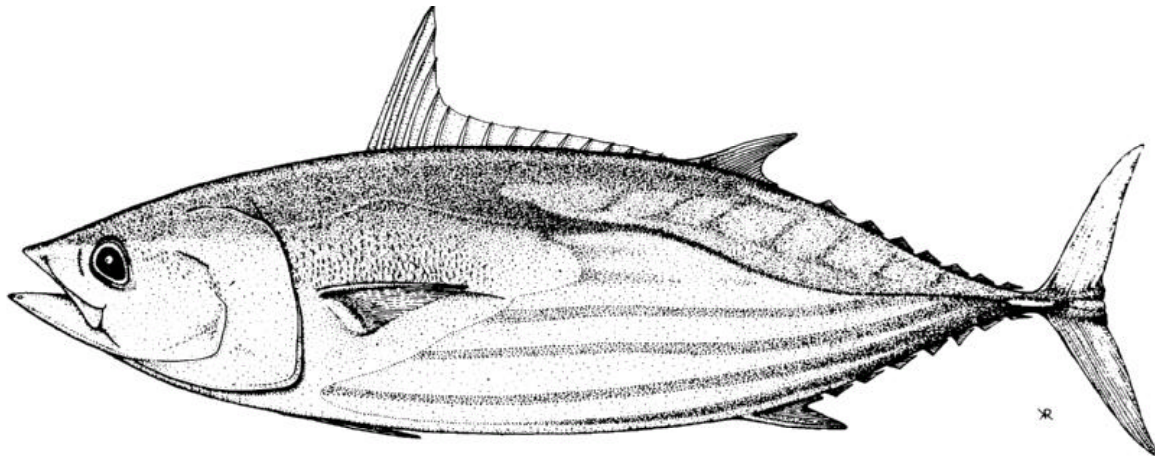




**National Report of China**



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## 1. Brief information to the fishery

Mainland of China began to develop its distant water tuna longlining in the later 1980s due to the decreasing fisheries resource from overfishing in the inshore and offshore waters of China. As the result of fishing operation diversity, seven tuna longliners reconstructed from the ex-trawlers arrived at the WCPO waters and began its trial tuna fishing experiments in 1988. After then, more and more such type of Chinese tuna longliners appeared in the South Pacific Ocean, which mainly based on Paula, Micronesia, Fiji and Marshall Islands. The peak time was in 1994 when the number of fishing vessels reached 457, with the total nominal catch of 12,885 Mt. After 1999 the number of tuna longliners began to reduce because of the low fishing efficient. In 1998, the number of fishing boats came down the bottom, on 66 longliner were in active operation, with total tuna catch of 1024 MT. In 1999, the number of tuna longliners increased again and since then scale of the fleet has maintained at the level of about 100 –120 longliners during last three years, with the total catch of between 7300 to 8330 MT (see table 1).

Bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna have been the main targeting species by Chinese tuna fleet since its operation; the proportion of the two species in the catch has been over 40% and 30% before 1998. From 1999 on, albacore catch has rapidly increased and become one of the three main species caught by the fleet as a result seasonal shift of some large-scale longliners to north Pacific Ocean (Table1).

Before 2000, longlining is the only fishing method applied by China for tuna and tuna-like species in the WCPO. In 2001, one purse seiner joined in the Chinese tuna fishing fleet for skipjack and yellowfin tuna. The purse seiners began to operate in June and fished for 210 days and caught 3090 MT of Skipjack and yellowfin tuna (Table 2).

Most small scale tuna longliners were mainly operating inside the EEZ waters of Palau, Fiji and Micronesia. As usual, small scale longliner operates 800-1000 hooks every day, with 5-7 hooks each basket, large scale tuna longliners operates 2500 – 3000 hooks every day, with 7 – 15 hooks per basket depending on the fishing season. The total fishing efforts of Chinese tuna fleet in WCPO waters in 2000 and 2001 are respectively 24,707 thousand hooks and 26,103 thousand hooks.

Purse seiner was operating at tropic waters between 10N-10S and 147E-175E, by adopting FADs method. The boat began to operate in June and spend 210 days in fishing ground last year.

## 2. Fleet Structure

The size of Chinese longliners ranged from 50 to 500GRT, with 24-30m LOA in dominance, which is equivalent to 50-149 GRT (Table 4). Before 1998, almost all the tuna longliners operating in WCPO waters belonged to small-scale type, with the dimension between 50 -149 GRT, and 24m - 30m in LOA. All the small-scale boats are those re-constructed from trawlers, which were made of steel, wood or concrete cements in the hull and used to operating in China offshore waters. Before 2001, all the larger longliners larger

than 40 m in LOA are introduced from outside Mainland of China. They are mainly targeting albacore and other species. Purse seiner operated in WCPO is 57.48m LOA, 1152GT, the main engine is 2205Kw. Its carrying capacity is 345 tons.

### **3. Disposal of Catch**

Bigeye and yellowfin tuna are the main targeting species caught by small scale tuna longliners operated in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Pacific Island countries, including Palau, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Fiji, Samoa. These species are all exported to Japanese sashimi market if the quality is met the requirement. Other species caught as by-catch are sold at local market. Larger boats were generally operating in the high seas of Southern Pacific Ocean and targeting on albacore, which are processed for canned products and sold to the U.S.A. market.

### **4. Research and Statistics**

Bureau of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture of China has been paid attention to the management of the tuna fishing fleets operating in three oceans in the line with international level. Since becoming the contracting party of ICCAT and IOTC, Chinese Fisheries Authority has submitted the catch data to both ICCAT and IOTC according to the requirements set by the two organizations since she became one of the contracting parties. Under the support of the Bureau of Fisheries and China Fisheries Society, the “Tuna technical working group” was set up in Shanghai Fisheries University in 1999, two of the working group members have spent more than one year on board the Chinese Atlantic tuna longliners and understood every process about tuna fishing from setting out the line to the handling of the catch on deck. One year later, “Tuna working group” which consisted of the managers of all Chinese tuna fishing companies was established, one of the main tasks of the working group is support the tuna technical working group in catch data collection besides doing some necessary coordination work among the members about issues related to the tuna fisheries, such as quota distributions in ICCAT waters.

The tuna technical working group has been responsible for designing the data collection sheet and collecting and summarizing the catch data according the requirement of ICCAT and IOTC. Under the financial support of China Fisheries Authority and China Fisheries Society, the technical tuna-working group had sent three observers on board the Atlantic deep frozen tuna longliners. They three all have spent six months on the Sea, taking biological measurements as well as the measurements of the environment factors, which are important for us to check the quality of the catch data submitted by the fishing companies and to do some analysis about the species. This year, the tuna technical working group will send one scientific observer to Chinese Pacific tuna fishing fleet. The observer is supposed to get to the fishing boat during September.

**Table 1 Nominal Catch of tuna and tuna-like species by the tuna Longliner in WCPO waters from 1990-2001 Unit : MT**

Year	No. of Vessels	ABL	BET	YFT	SWD	BIL	SKJ	Others	Total	Note
1990	23	4	244	148				117	513	
1991	39	0	465	413				160	1038	
1992	72	0	1238	1128				103	2469	
1993	310	1	3245	2368				1377	6991	
1994	457	8	6978	4157				1742	12885	
1995	416	13	3713	4440				1049	9215	
1996	314	11	2368	1978				458	4815	
1997	148	12	1695	1080				149	2936	
1998	66	6	740	222				56	1024	
1999	115	3473	1805	2237	396	114	160	148	8333	
2000	106	2056	1981	2207	142.8	528	-	375.8	7290.8	
2001	117	2711	2227	1919	286.2	240.6	-	298.1	7681.9	

**Table 2 Catch by Tuna Purse seiners in WCPO waters in 2000-2001**

**Unit of Catch : MT**

Year	No. of boats	Bigeeye	Yellowfin	Skipjiack	Other	Total
2001	1	0	340	2750		3090

**In Round Weight**

**Table 3 Fishing Effort by Chinese Tuna Fishery in 2000-2001 in WCPO waters**

year		Fishing Effort	Note
2000	Longline	24707 (× 1000 Hooks)	in WCPO
	Purse seine	--	
2001	longline	26103(× 1000 Hooks)	
	Purse seine	210 days	(including search for fishing ground)

**Table 4 Tuna Fishing Fleets in the WCPO waters from 1990 to 2001**

Year	< 24m	24m-30m	30m-40m	40m-50m	> 50m	total
1990						23
1991						39
1992						72
1993						210
1994						457
1995						416
1996						314
1997						148
1998						66
1999	0	100	4	8	3	115
2000	0	90	5	8	3	106
2001	0	90	7	16	4	117