

## NFMRA withdraws invitation to Spanish purse-seiners to fish in Nauru after refusal to abide by high seas closure

**Source:** *Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources News*, 3 December 2011<sup>1</sup>

**On 2 December 2011, the Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority (NFMRA) withdrew the invitation that it had offered to Spanish tuna purse-seiners of the Organización de Productores de Grandes Atuneros Congeladores (OPAGAC) to fish in Nauru waters in 2012.**

NFMRA has invited all purse-seine fleets with a history of fishing in the Nauru exclusive economic zone (EEZ) to purchase vessel-days from the limited pool of fishing opportunities in the Nauru EEZ in 2012. However, any purse-seiner that fishes in Nauru must abide by the laws of Nauru,<sup>2</sup> and one of these laws<sup>3</sup> — which reflects a formal agreement by all PNA<sup>4</sup> countries that they will not licence purse-seine fishing vessels that fish on large areas of the high seas — apparently stuck in the throat of the Spanish fleet.

Following informal enquiries by OPAGAC asking, in effect, if Nauru still intended to uphold the PNA agreement prohibiting fishing on the high seas, NFMRA withdrew its offer to OPAGAC to bid for fishing days.

The Chairman of the NFMRA Board of Directors, Mr Jesaulenko Dowiyogo said, “This decision to withdraw the offer to the Spanish fleet has my full blessing. We are tired of foreign fleets using their economic leverage to undermine conservation actions by Pacific Island countries.”

Chairman Dowiyogo went on to point out that Nauru can afford to do without the Spanish fleet because other fleets already have the capacity to purchase and use all of the purse-seine vessel-days fishing opportunities available in the Nauru EEZ for 2012.

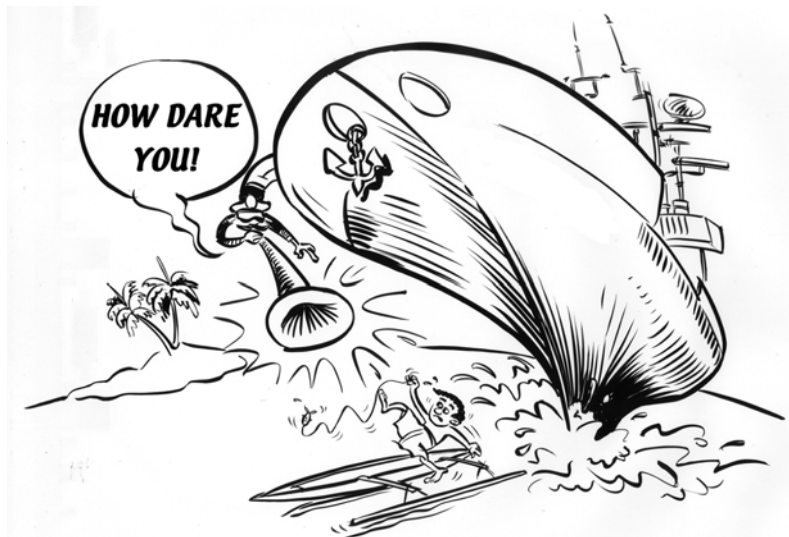
He said, “Because of the PNA Vessel Days Scheme, we can maximise the revenue from our zone without needing to resort to licensing every last fishing vessel out there. Pacific tuna fisheries have reached the limit of their expansion. Any more and they will be overfished, and then we will all lose out — foreign fleets as well as Pacific Island economies.

Nauru has learned many lessons about the sustainability of natural resources over the past few years, and we are determined that our tuna resource should go the same way as some of our other resources. With sound national management and effective PNA cooperation there is no reason why the regional skipjack tuna stock should not be fully sustainable, at present levels of catch, into the foreseeable future.”

The main purse-seine fleets fishing in Nauru in 2011, in decreasing order of days spent in zone, are:

- the FSM Arrangement<sup>5</sup> (comprising vessels fishing on behalf of other PNA members)
- USA
- Taiwan
- Korea
- Vanuatu

All other fleets spent less than 100 days each in the Nauru EEZ in 2011.



*Adapted from an original illustration by Jipé LeBars*

<sup>1</sup> <http://nfmra.blogspot.com/2011/12/nfmra-withdraws-invitation-to-spanish.html>

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://ronlaw.gov.nr/>

<sup>3</sup> See: [http://sites.google.com/site/naurufisheries/home/legislation/Nauru\\_Fisheries\\_Amendment\\_Regulations\\_2010.pdf?attredirects=0&d=1](http://sites.google.com/site/naurufisheries/home/legislation/Nauru_Fisheries_Amendment_Regulations_2010.pdf?attredirects=0&d=1)

<sup>4</sup> PNA = the group of Pacific Island countries that are Parties to the Nauru agreement, a regional fisheries institution that collectively aims to secure the long-term sustainability of tuna fisheries in the western tropical Pacific, and to obtain maximum economic benefit within those sustainability limits for the member countries whose waters are fished.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ffa.int/node/30>