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EUROPEAN UNION

FISHERIES REPORT OF EU-SPAIN FOR THE YEAR 2006.

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Purse seine activities.

The Spanish purse seine fleet fishing in the Pacific Ocean is carried out mainly in the EPO (IATTC areas) but since 1999 it also operates sporadically in the WPO. This fleet has been made up of five large purse seine vessels, the total hold volume of these vessels is 11997 m³ (ranging from 1881 to 3161 m³). Catches are held and frozen on board in salt vats.

The fishing logbooks filled out by the skippers (nominal catch per set type without making corrections for the species composition) are recorded by IATTC staff. Preliminary data for 2006 obtained from observer data suggest nominal catches of around 10862 t in total (YFT 1980 t, BET 688 t and SKJ 8194 t) in areas of the WCPFC made with three purse seine vessels.

There is not an EC-Spain research program aimed at this fishery. Samplings from those vessels, in order to obtain data on species composition and size distribution of the catches must be carried out by staff from either the WCPFC or IATTC at the ports where the fish are unloaded or transferred.

Those vessels fishing in the Pacific Ocean have 100% coverage of on board observers in keeping with the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) managed by the IATTC.

Table 1; Tuna catches taken by Spanish purse seiners in the WCPFC area

	2004	2005	2006
YFT	1196	321	1980
SKJ	3479	817	8194
BET	842	2293	688
Total	5517	3431	10862

Surface longline activities

Delays on the collection of 2006 surface longline fishery data due to the very far fishery make it difficult to process on time and these data are not yet available at the moment.

The Spanish surface longline fleet started their fishing activity in areas of the SE Pacific in 1990. However this fleet did not carry out fishing activity in the western and central zones of the Pacific Ocean prior to 2004. As has already been reported, experimental fishery activities were conducted during the first quarter of the year 2004 targeting the swordfish with the surface longline gear in areas located between Melanesia, New Zealand and Australia. Five Spanish flag longliners took part in this pilot fishery starting from the port of Djakarta (Indonesia).

All Spanish flag longliners process the swordfish on board in dressed weight (eliminating the head, viscera and fins) and keep it frozen. The gear used by the 8 vessels previously cited was the monofilament surface longline 'American style' gear (Florida style modified), using an average of 1055 hooks per set.

During the year 2005 a total of 8 Spanish flag longline vessels targeting swordfish were operating in the WCPFC convention area, all year round or temporarily. The average characteristics of the vessels involved in the fishery in 2005 were 291.8 GTR, 861.8 HP and 40.8 m in length. Preliminary estimated landings for 2005 are also provided (table 2).

Although there is no EC-Spain research project aimed at this longline fishery, the Spanish longline vessels' activity within the WCPFC areas, the sampling scheme and some research activities were included in the same scientific protocols used in other regions (Pacific, Atlantic and Indian), contingent upon staff and budget availability. Log book coverage was maintained at 100% of the fishing activity. The quality and quantity of the size sampling was high, reaching, in 2004, an individual sampling coverage of 95% of the number of swordfish caught, although, in the coming years, such a high coverage it is not expected to be attained. All by-catches by this fishery are also well recorded on the log books. Opportunistic tagging and release activities also continued on several species during the 2004 experimental fishing activities and during the regular fishing activity of this fleet during 2005 under the voluntary joint program already established in all oceans. Biological observations and samples of swordfish were also collected to be used in future studies on reproduction, sex ratio patterns, genetic analyses, etc. Data on fin-body weight ratios of shark species and other biological parameters were also recorded to update previous analyses already reported.

Specific observations to evaluate the interaction of the incidental bycatch of turtles were incorporated in the protocols of the scientific observers

Table 2. Scientific estimates of landings and by-catches (tons of round weight) for the year 2004 and preliminary estimates for the year 2005, in the WCPFC area

Fish species /year	2004 ¹	2005 ²
swordfish	730.0	1226.4
blueshark	582.9	1299.5
porbeagle	1.7	0.7
shortfin mako	184.9	303.5
albacore (tuna)	5.1	3.6
bigeye (tuna)	42.2	17.2
yellowfin (tuna)	22.6	0.9
other tuna (indet.)	0.9	22.4
billfish	38.3	66.7
other species	117.3	67.3

¹: Data updated in June 2005. ²: Preliminary data